LAIDLAW COLLEGE

Te Wananga Amorangi

212.715 Ecology, God and Community Course Assessment and Delivery Outline

Campus: Distance Learning

Semester 2, 2015

NQF Level 7, 15 credits

CONTENT OVERVIEW:

Section 1 explores the wonder of creation, the desecration of creation and an exploration of various explanations for this.

- 1. What a wonderful world (God, Community and Ecology)
- 2. The Plight of the planet (What is the Problem?)
- 3. Understanding the Predicament (What are the roots of the current environmental crisis?)

Section 2 picks up on the theme of Lesson 3 – that our ethical behaviour is determined by the stories/communities that shape us – and offers a brief Christian theology of creation care.

- 4. Inhabiting a New Story Creation & Trinity
- 5. Inhabiting a New Story Anthropology & Christology
- 6. Inhabiting a New Story Pneumatology and Eschatology

Section 3 reflects on how inhabiting the Biblical narrative/being part of the Christian community should shape our ethics and explores different metaphors for our relationship with the rest of creation and the necessary virtues and practices required to live peacefully with creation.

- 7. Human Vocation Models of Relationship
- 8. How do we Care? (Character & Virtues)
- 9. How do we Care? (Ecological Practices)

Section 4 puts this theology into practice by engaging with specific issues: Consumerism & lifestyle, food, and animal welfare.

- 10. Putting it into Practice #1: Lifestyle and sustainability / Consumption and Desire
- 11. Putting it into Practice #2: The Ethics of Food
- 12. Putting it into Practice #3: Animal Welfare

ASSESSMENT TASKS AND DUE DATES:

There are 4 assessment tasks.

1. Participation in online discussions

Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 6

Due Dates: Midnight Sunday of semester weeks 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11

Percentage Weighting: 15%

Length: 200 words per initial post, at least 50 words for follow-up

posts.

Online discussion topics require you to engage with various themes that will have been raised during the course. These tasks will require you to prepare an initial post of 200 words, followed by at least one response to at least one class member of at least 50

words. Specific instructions will accompany each online discussion task. Students are expected to participate in all six online discussions.

2. Field Experience and Journal Reflection

Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

Due Date: Journal due Midnight Sunday at the end of Study Week 1

Percentage Weighting: 30%

Length: 2000 words

Critical to this course is an understanding that a Christian ethic of 'creation-care' is formed by exposure to both theoretical and practical activities/exercise. As part of the course you are required to spend 15 hours involved in a practical conservation/ecological restoration project (e.g. an A Rocha, Forest & Bird, or any other appropriate **community-based** conservation/restoration project or community garden etc.) These 15 hours could be composed of two full-days, or a couple of hours each fortnight/week. Ultimately, the choice is yours. Likewise, you can choose to do more than the minimum requirement of 15 hours.

After undertaking this practical activity, you are to write a journal reflection upon your experience (it is a good idea to write your journal reflection as close to the experience as possible). As well as noting what you did, who you did it with, the number of hours etc, the primary emphasis is for you to reflect upon the learning/transformative aspect of the experience. Questions worth asking are:

- What have you learnt about yourself? God? Creation? Your relationship with each of these?
- What theological/ethical questions are raised by your involvement in this activity?
- What did you find difficult/challenging?
- What emotions were evoked during your involvement in the activity (wonder, surprise, joy, despair, sorrow?)
- In what ways did you experience God's presence/grace?

Your journal should show that you have integrated your personal experience with the material you have learned in this course, and made appropriate theological and ethical reflections.

3. Biblical-Theological Resource

Learning Outcomes: 1, 3, 4, 6

Due Dates: Midnight Sunday at the end of semester week 6

Percentage Weighting: 20%

Length: 2000 words

Choose a single biblical passage **or** a Christian ecological saint /theologian (not Saint Francis of Assisi!) Based around your chosen passage or person, develop (and if possible, trial) a pedagogical resource that would assist the Church/faith community in understanding its 'creation-Care' mandate. This may involve writing and delivering an ecological sermon, Sunday school lesson, youth group/small group bible study or creating a whole liturgy for a service. While the resource may involve a traditional written sermon, you are encouraged to be creative (remember, the medium is the message). To ensure that the resource is kept within manageable limits it is suggested that you base your resource/sermon/study/reflection around one biblical passage or the writings/life of one ecological saint/theologian and note how this passage/theologian/saint offers us wisdom in our contemporary context.

4. Research Essay

Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 6

Due Dates: Midnight Sunday at the end of Study Week 2

Percentage Weighting: 35%

Length: 2500 words

Research **one** of the following four topics, and write an essay in which you explore the issues raised by the topic you choose. Your essay should show evidence of considerable engagement with literature and an awareness of the spectrum of views on your chosen topic.

- a. Write an essay on what you regard as two Christian ecological practices (other than feasting and fasting). Outline how individual and corporate participation in/exercise of these practices would assist in the development of a Christian ecological ethos. Students should pay attention both to the role the practice has played historically and also contemporary expressions of the practice.
- b. "An authentic Christian-biblical response to the ecological problems we face and the mistreatment of animals should lead to an embracing of a vegetarian diet."

 Write an essay detailing why you agree or disagree with this statement.
- c. A major part of conservation practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand consists of killing introduced predator species. Such action is often regarded with horror by overseas visitors. As a Christian, is such killing morally justifiable? Write an essay which offers an ethical reflection upon this conservation practice.
- d. Much of our current ecological problems (in particular global climate change) stem from our use of fossil fuels. How might the Church (globally and locally) offer a vision of a new post-fossil fuel way of life? What might this mean for the way we work, live, travel, eat, invest and the way our Churches function?

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT:

1. Online Discussion

Before beginning your first online discussion, please see the grading grid (rubric) on the "online discussion grading guide and indicative mid-semester feedback" for further details on how these criteria will be applied.

- Engagement with material
- Constructive engagement with others
- Structure and presentation
- Timeliness

2. Field Experience

- Evidence of at least 15 hours of practical participation in an ecological/conservation activity/experience.
- Depth of reflection in journal.
- Critical engagement with theological and ethical issues discovered.
- Evidence of integration of personal experience with course content.
- Evidence of insightful and theologically-informed personal interaction.

3. Biblical-Theological Resource

- Evidence of creativity in developing resource
- Usefulness of resource in Christian ministry setting
- Critical interaction with biblical passage or chosen person
- Perceptive theological insights woven into resource
- Thoughtful linkages made between passage or person and contemporary context

• Communication & Presentation: Clarity, format, spelling, grammar; annotation and bibliography

4. Research Essay

- Well-reasoned and convincing response
- Evidence of critical engagement with a broad range of literature on the subject.
- Evidence of an understanding of the different positions/perspectives on the chosen topic
- Perceptive theological/ethical insights
- Communication & Presentation: Clarity, format, spelling, grammar; annotation and bibliography

LEARNING HOURS:

212.715 is a 15 credit course consisting of 150 learning hours. The tasks and associated learning hours are as follows:

Interaction with course materials and reading	50 hours
Participation in online discussions	15 hours
Field Experience	30 hours
Biblical-Theological Resource	20 hours
Research Essay	35 hours

Total: 150 hours

Although this guideline regarding learning hours is not intended to be applied rigidly, it should help ensure a balanced workload.

TEXTBOOKS:

There are no set texts for this course.

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b) A Rocha History

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