**AUIDS 286/386/ Rel 271**

**Making Peace with the Land**

***We have spiritual, religious, scientific and human resources “ as we try to write a new story,   
one that emphasizes the need for people to back off, to allow the planet to operate on its own (God’s) terms instead of ours”* – Bill McKibben**

**Instructor: Dittmar Mündel**

**Our support team includes:**  Rajan Rathnavalu, Carmelle Mohr, Petra Cegielny, Nathalie Olson, Steve Olson, Linda Gervais and many other community members

**Office Hours:**

**Dittmar:** Thursdays 1:30pm - 4pm (meet in the Forum Building near fireplaces).

**email:** [**hmundel@ualberta.ca**](mailto:hmundel@ualberta.ca)

**phone: 780 672 1581 (cell)**

**Required texts:**

**The Essential Agrarian Reader ( ed. Norman Wirzba)**

**Making Peace with the Land ( Wirzba and Bahnson)**

**The Inconvenient Indian ( Thomas King)**

**Hope Beneath our Feet ( ed. Martin Keough)**

**John Chryssavgis , Chester Ronning Centre booklet**

**Purpose and Approach of the Course and Conference**

Drawing from many of the relationships developed over the last years in the “Spirit of the Land” courses and conferences, *Making Peace with the Land* continues to deepen its look at the relationship of our society to the land and its people. At its heart, the course and its Nov 13 -15 conference hopes to create space to have a deeper conversation about land and community, especially about how we move from exploiting and abusing the land and its people to one of reconciliation and living in peace with the land, its people, and community. In particular, the course and conference seek to draw a connection between the healthy spiritual and relational life of a community and wise land stewardship.

Recognizing that discussion of making peace with the land involves the participation of, and learning from this land’s First Peoples, [we are on Treaty 6 land after all], this course and conference seek to deepen the relationship between indigenous peoples and settlers.

Some of our major “text books” will be the farms and people that practice a way of producing food that is reconciled to the land and acknowledges the land’s gifts and limits. Therefore it is a Roads Scholars course, that sees us going to experience different positive options about every other class.

Experiencing differences is not enough in itself. We also have to reflect deeply on what we have seen, felt, and heard. Therefore we have a variety of ways of trying to deepen our way of seeing. One significant feature of the course is that the participants learn contemplative practices to awaken us to reality and cultivate an affection for our body, for the earth, and for each other. Another aid to deepen our reflection and analysis comes through participants meeting as “reflection partners” outside of class in small groups, which reflect together, cook together, study together and engage in a variety of activities that strengthen our relationship to the land, to ourselves, and to community.

Since we learn from elders often better than from books, we have invited community members to be present and to be willing to take on mentoring or supporting roles, as the students request it.

**Course objectives:**

1. Become aware of: the ways our dominant economics, politics and culture exploits lands and peoples; injustices as interconnected manifestations of the same; and thus, aware of the place from which change truly arises.

2. Begin to understand the human and religious/spiritual gift and mandate that we “make peace with the land”.

3. Become aware of the connection between spiritual health and ecological health

4. Cultivate a contemplative practice and nurture qualities of being (humility, gratitude, courage, body awareness, listening/attunement, other…)

5. Become aware and develop a textured understanding of the history and frequently troubled relationships of Native and Settler peoples, and the more ancient, singular history beyond.

6. Learn how to organize and facilitate safe space that is hospitable and opens conversations about our relationship to our fragile planet in a way that diverse voices are heard and respected.

**Course Requirements/Assignments**

**Active Participation: Trips, Reflection Partners, Cooking, Reading, Organizing Conference: …… 30%**

Active participation in this group means:

* 1. **Weekly reflection meetings:**

i) Individual contemplation: 15-20 minutes per week (more if you like!)

ii) Reflection partners: at least 30 minutes per week

iii) Small group (team of 2 sets of reflection partners): 1-2 hours per week

“Reflection partners” will be two people (around 30 minutes each week); two teams will form small groups of 4 people who commit to meet weekly (around 1-2 hours each week) before the Thursday class to either read the selection from “Hope Beneath our Feet” (or other text) aloud together and to discuss the assigned readings (which you read normally before your get together as they relate to your “experiences on the road”).Community members will join your small group, as they are available.

* 1. Once during the semester a team of 4 “reflection partners” will do their discussing while helping prepare the communal Thursday meal with a community member using mostly local ingredients if possible.
  2. **Engaged conversations on the Thursday class meetings based on readings and field trip.**
  3. **Active involvement in planning, organizing, and facilitating the Spirit of the Land conference.(mostly done in your small groups.)**
  4. **Beyond the assigned readings in the outline, each person will read one of the books completely. It is recommended that those taking the course for Rel 271 credit read *Making Peace with the Land* completely.(There will be a reading test/ book review on this book… with an oral option for those who want it.)**
  5. **Post 5 reflections on** [**www.spiritoftheland.ca**](http://www.spiritoftheland.ca) ( which can be based on your journals.). If you are not comfortable with posting reflections online, you can email them directly to [hmundel@ualberta.ca](mailto:hmundel@ualberta.ca). Leslie Lindballe will give you author status for the webpage postings (onepercentyellow@gmail.com)

Evaluation of this part will be “self-evaluation(10 %), peer evaluation,(10%) and instructor evaluation (20%) of your “active participation” .

**“JOURNEY OUTWARD / JOURNEY INWARD”: Reflective, analytical, field journal ..30%**

Submit on a weekly basis, at least 2- 3 pages ( and of course you can write more)- in print or by email to [hmundel@ualberta.ca](mailto:hmundel@ualberta.ca)

**The journal includes the following components each week:**

1. **Description of your activities as the total group( e.g. road trip), small group gathering, reflection partner conversation, and/or individual contemplative activities. Your descriptions can use photos with good subtitles or descriptions of what is going on.**
2. **Reflect on the key issues (related to the objectives of the course) that surfaced in your activities, discussions, etc.**
3. **Analyze some of the key issues in terms of what causes them (why, why, why, why. why?) or what the consequences of this state of affairs will be.**

E.g. You notice rural depopulation as a significant issue as you drive to one of our farms. You ask yourself? Why are so many main street stores boarded up? Because there are less farmers shopping there? Why are there less shopping there? Because there are less farmers? Why are there less farmers? Because technological advances have replaced people? etc. And what are the consequences? Less community. School and store and church closures. Villages and towns being dissolved. Less sense of community. Less capacity to attend to the health of the topsoil and to “learn from the land” what can be grown well in a certain area. etc. etc.

4) **Self-examination. (journey inward) How are you part of the issue you are exploring? E.g. what has driven you away from the rural? Or what are your dreams of the good life? Or in what ways are you disconnected from land, air, water, people, community, self? When do you feel connected or re-connected? What insights did you get from your contemplative practices this week?**

**3. Final Paper (or alternative project to be determined**:… **20%**

**4. Book review of the one book you have read completely (4 pages).... 10% [note you can have an oral conversation about the book with the instructor)**

**4. Final (small group) presentations to the community…. 10%**

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| **Sept 3** | **Introduction**:  The Spirit of the Land project and Spirit of the Course and Conference | **Activities/Facilitation**  Dittmar/Raj/ Carmelle | **Contemplation:**  Silence & Stillness  ~ finding a Sit Spot | **Hope beneath our Feet**  Munju Ravindra, “Wonder: A Practice for Everyday Life”, 177-182 |
| **Sept 10** | **Read:** *The Essential Agrarian Reader, pp. 1-33;*  *The Rootless Professors* by Eric Zencey in “Rooted in the Land” (Vitek & Jackson, eds.), pp. 15-19 [U of A electronic resource].  Visit to Sunrise Farm  (by Don Ruzicka):  [http://spiritoftheland.ca/2015/05/10/visit-sunrise-farm](http://spiritoftheland.ca/2015/05/10/visit-sunrise-farm/) | Don and Marie Ruzicka’s “Sunrise Farm”. Bus leaves Faith and Life at 5pm sharp. | Contentment:  **“Always be content.  If you practise contentment, even though you have no wealth, you are rich.”**  ~ Nagarjuna | Kelly Coyne & Erik Knutzen,**“**Become an Urban Homesteader”, 102-105 |
| **Sept 17**  ***Sept 19*** | *The Essential Agrarian Reader, 34- 51;*  *Making Peace with the Land, 11-40;* | ***Battle River Watershed Alliance****… getting to know our watershed*  *Harvest Hoedown at Nathalie and Steve’s barn, Saturday evening (optional)* | Gratitude:  “**If the only prayer you say your entire life is ‘Thank you’, that would suffice**.”  ~ Meister Eickart  *Watch: “Sacred Economics”* (12 min.): [www.sacred-economics.com](http://www.sacred-economics.com) | Michael Ablemann, “Thinking like an Island”,  115- 121 |
| **Sept 24**  **Sat**  **26** | *Essential Agrarian Reader, Ch 6* “Current state of agriculture”  Takota suggests we watch: “Living Lightly” www.youtube.com/user/LivingLightlyfilm  Further resources:  <http://www.deeprootspermaculture.ca/resources.html> | Takota Coen’s permaculture and forest garden. **Bus leaves F&L at 5pm**  ***Healing Walk at Battle Lake****, bus or car-pool leaves F &L at 9 am Saturday (optional)* | Interdependence:  “**Compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings,**  **which are all part of one another and all involved in one another.**”  ~ Thomas Merton | Kaylynn Sullivan Twotrees,  “Indigenous Mind”, 170- 174 |
| **Oct 1**  ***Oct 4*** | *The Essential Agrarian Reader, chap 8 “*The agrarian mind”;  *Making Peace with the Land, chap.2*  “learning to see”. | Carmelle, “Speaking with the enemy”. Leah Johnson, “Experiences in Colombia”  Potluck at Laura, Michael, and Takota Coen’s Place (optional) | Natural Cycles:  Life and Death,  Day and Night | Barry Lopez, “Eden is a Conversation”, 209-212 |
| **Oct 8** | *The Essential Agrarian Reader, chap 5* “Placing the soul” | Steve and Nathalie Olson  **“road trip to their farm”**  **bus leaves at 5pm** | Body Awareness | Nala Walla, “Body as Place: A Somatic Guide to Re-indigenization”, 150 -157 |
| **Oct 15** | *Making Peace with the Land, chap 3, “*Reconciliation”  Myles Horton, “The Long Haul” 19-32, 36-39, 41-44.  **Essay:**  -Akomolafe and Mohr, “An Oriki for our Times”  **Podcast:**  John Paul Lederach, “The Art of Peace” (onbeing.org podcast)  John O-Donohue “The Inner Landscape of Beauty” | Fred Stenson – special guest TBC - author and essayist (e.g. Alberta Views)  ~ Alberta Voices / Augustana Fracking Group | Natural Cycles:  Life and Death, Day and Night | Chia Heller, “What Keeps Me Alive, Making it Real”  Vivienne Simon, “ Fostering Light in Dark Times”, 213- 216 |
| **Oct 22** | NO CLASSES: READING BREAK |  | Peace… :) |  |
| **Oct 29** | *The Inconvenient Indian, pp*  Rabbi Jonathan Saks, “THe Dignity of Difference” (onbeing.org podcast) | Visit to Mascwacis  **Bus leaves at 5pm from F&L** | Listening | Dr. Vandana Shiva, “ Earth Rights”, 166-169 |
| **Nov 5** | *The Inconvenient Indian, pp*  ***“****Non-Indigenous Culture”: Implications of a Historical Anomaly. ( Yes! magazine online)*  *Leanne Simpson …* |  |  | Wade Davis, “Shadows in the Sun: Travels to Landscapes of Spirit and Desire”(video lecture)  Ann Rosencranz and Jyoti,  “ The Grandmothers speak”, 260-264 |
| **Nov 12** | *Making Peace with the Land, chapter 5* “Reconciliation through Eating”  “Anoriki for our Times” by Bayo Akomolafe ( online) | Norman Wirzba guest lecture | Love |  |
| **Nov 13 &14, 15** | **Making Peace with the Land Conference** | **All hands on deck.** | Intention  Reading from *Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life* |  |
| **Nov 19** | “Laudato Si’”, Pope Francis ( online)  John Chryssavgis, “ Ronning Centre Booklet“  *Healing the Wounded Soul:* “Learning from the Early Desert Fathers and Mothers”;  Healing the Wounded World: Peacemaking, Spirituality, and Creation Care”  “Healing the Wounded Planet: Transforming Perspectives & Practices” | (location TBA; probably at St. Francis ) | Compassion | Tzeborah Berman, “In the Climate Era the Personal is Political”, 197-200 |
| **Nov 26** | Myles Horton, *The Long Haul, f*inal chapter. |  | Interdependence  and Vision  **“Let yourself be silently drawn by the stronger pull of what you really love”** ~ Rumi | Linda Buzzell, “Coping with Realities”, 201-206 |
| **Dec 3** | Sharing your reflections and research and creative projects and |  | Celebration*!* |  |
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**Policy about course outlines:**

:"Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar." (See also your student handbook)

**Academic Integrity:**

:"The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University."( See also your Student handbook.)

**Grade Assessment: The Alpha-Point Grading Scale**

Excellent 94 – 100% = A+ (4.0); 88 – 93% = A (4.0); 81 – 87% = A- (3.7)

Good 77 – 80% = B+ (3.3); 74 – 76% = B (3.0); 70 – 73% = B- (2.7)

Satisfactory 67 – 69% = C+ (2.3); 64 – 66% = C (2.0); 60 – 63% = C- (1.7)

Poor 55 – 59% = D+ (1.3)

Minimal Pass 50 – 54% = D (1.0)