

**AUIDS 286/386 / Rel 271
Spirit of the Land
A Roads Scholar Course
Fall 2016**

Instructor: Dittmar Mündel

Our support team includes: Rajan Rathnavalu, and many other community members

Office Hours: Dittmar: Thursdays 1:30pm - 4pm (meet in the Forum Building near fireplaces).
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Support Team Member Raj Rathnavalu: rathnava@ualberta.ca or phone 780-672-7033

Required texts:

Our Only World, Wendell Berry

Hope Beneath our Feet (ed. Martin Keough)

“Reconciling Land, Life and Livelihood” conference (\$25)

Purpose and Approach of the Course and Conference

The central goal of the Spirit of the Land course is to find intellectual, contemplative and practical ways of reconnecting us to the land, air, water, ourselves, human and nonhuman communities. The course seeks to explore our connections between ecology, economy, community, and spirituality.

While we are very aware of the threats that surround us – from climate change to loss of topsoil, to the erosion of communities -- the course is guided by a pedagogy of hope. What can we do concretely to heal ourselves, our land, our relations between indigenous and “settler” people? We are convinced that ecological health and spiritual health go hand in hand. And both need positive examples and concrete actions.

One of the subthemes of the Spirit of the Land class, and the focus of this year’s fall conference [“Reconciling Land, Life and Livelihood”] is: How can we make a living without damaging or further exploiting what our lives together (including future generations) depend on? If our work, our jobs, or our university studies make us act against what we believe and value, we will end up in a serious moral or personal crisis sooner or later.

This course will be in part a Roads Scholars' course, that is, we will take you on the road to both rural and urban areas to see positive alternatives to exploitative, extractive and fossil-fuel dependent ways of living and making a living. The course also builds community between students and community members. It practices concrete ways of "eating locally" and thankfully at the beginning of each class.

Some of our major "text books" will be the farms and urban people that practice a way of producing food that are enriched by the spirit of the land, as well as the speakers and participants at the conference. Therefore, it is a Roads Scholars course, that sees us going to experience different positive options about every other class.

Another key textbook includes our own lives as embedded in the world. The contemplative component of the course will encourage reflection and engagement with both inner and outer aspects of "climate change" / transformation in the world.

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. Begin to understand how ecological health is connected to spiritual and cultural health.
2. Become aware that there are many positive examples of "ways of living and making a living" that do not damage, but rather heal the land, air, water, ourselves, and human and nonhuman communities.
3. Be able to articulate the differences between an 'extractive' and fossil-fuel dependent life-style and economy and one that has a more interconnected view of life and the economy.
4. Begin to appreciate the role a "contemplative practice" can play in reconnecting us to land, people, ourselves and community.

Course Requirements/Assignments

1. **Active Participation: Trips, Small group meetings, Cooking, Organizing Conference, Conversations: 30%**

a. **10 small group meetings** (approx. 1 hour per week):

Regular Group Meetings:

1. **Reads (or re-reads)** 1 or 2 of the brief readings (maybe first 20 minutes of a small group gathering)
2. **Discusses** the reading and how it relates to our road trips and life experiences.

Cooking:

3. **Cooks a** local light soup supper 2 or 3 times per term.
(See food coordinator, Carley, for details.)

Conference:

4. Takes responsibility for various tasks in **organizing and hosting** the "Reconciling land, life and livelihood "conference"(Nov 4-6)

b. **Engaged conversations** on the Thursday class meetings based on readings, field trips, personal experience.

c. **Planning, organizing, and facilitating** the Spirit of the Land conference (mostly done in your small groups).

d. **Attendance:** Small group and total class sessions are crucial for building community and learning what the course is about through dialogue. Each Thursday class represents a whole week. Therefore after 2 unexcused absences, you will begin to lose 10% of your participation mark for each absence after the first two.

Evaluation of your "active participation" will be "self-evaluation (10 %), group leader evaluation,(10%) and instructor evaluation (10%).

2. **Reflective, analytical journal entries: [full marks can only be assigned when handed in before class, since your thoughts/reflections are key to our class discussions].**

The top 9 (out of 11) will count toward your grade: 30%

Normally provide a 1-2 page reflection (3-5 pages, i.e., 2 to 3 reflection equivalents for Nov 17th class following the conference) on one of the readings for the day and when possible relate it to any of our "road scholar" experiences or your life's experiences. Half of the entry will be on

major themes of at least one of the readings for the day; the other half relates the reading to your experiences/life. [Note: IDS 386 students write at least 2 pages a week.]

Submit by Thursdays at 5pm, at least 1-2 pages (and of course you can write more)- by email to hmundel@ualberta.ca.

3. Contemplative reflection paper: “My Life Journey”... 10%

This paper can draw upon and expand your journal reflections to consider the broader scope of your inner life with your outer life journey (3-6 pages).

4. Final oral/visual presentations to the community based on rough draft of final paper.... 10%

5 . Final Paper (5-10 pages for 200 level; 8-12 pages for 300 level) or alternative project to be determined w/ instructor... 20%

“How can land, life, and livelihood be reconciled (e.g. in my life / in my community)?” or topic of your choice to be approved by instructor.

6. CSL option: (You will make individual learning contracts with the instructor, substituting CSL requirements for one other assignments.)...10%

- a. **Group Leaders:** (strongly suggested you take CSL option specifically designed for you)
- b. **Other Class members:** (you will be involved in more leadership in preparing and facilitating the conference, though all class members are involved.)
- c. **Community Partner Supervisor:** Carley Angelstad

Date	Readings, Activities (additional resources may be added as needed)	
Sept 1	<p>1.Introduction to the Connections of Ecology, Spirituality, Community <i>Reading (in class):</i> Wordsworth, “Tintern Abbey” & / or “The World is Too Much With Us...</p> <p>2. History & Approach of this Course <i>Readings: Hope Beneath our Feet</i> “Sabbath VI”, pp.283-285 (individual reading, partners),” <i>River Gods</i>”,pp. 232-237. Berry, <i>Our Only World</i>: “Paragraphs from a Notebook” (selections)</p>	<p>https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/45564</p> <p>https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/45527</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>CLASS THEME: <i>Land, body, spirit and the human journey</i></p> <p>Road Trip to Don and Marie Ruzicka’s farm (www.sunrisefarm.ca)</p> <p><i>Readings:</i> a. Berry, <i>Our Only World</i>, “Local Economies to Save the Land and the People” b. <i>Hope Beneath our Feet</i>, “A Sense of Place—A Sense of Self”, pp. 145-149; “Body as Place: A Somatic Guide to Re-indigenization”, pp. 150-157; “The Healing Power of Nature”, pp. 140-144 “Earth Rights”, pp 166 -169 c. Don Ruzicka introduction (see link right)</p>	<p>Also read a short intro by Don Ruzicka:</p> <p>http://spiritoftheland.ca/2015/05/10/visit-sunrise-farm/</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>CLASS THEME: <i>Contemplation as an ecological practice</i></p> <p>1. Urban gardening and solar as examples of how gratitude as humility, generosity and care plays itself out in a household economy: <i>Reading:</i> Berry, “A Forest Conversation” <i>Hope Beneath our feet:</i> “Become an Urban Homesteader”, pp. 102-105.</p> <p>2. Gratitude: thankfulness as the basis for the new economy-- Raj <i>Viewing:</i> Eisenstein’s video “Sacred Economy”: http://sacred-economics.com/film <i>Reading: Hope Beneath our Feet:</i> “Wonder: A Practice of Everyday Life”, pp.177-182; “Eyes Wide Open”, pp.137-139;”Fostering Light in Dark Times”, pp. 213-216</p>	<p>Supper and visit at Craig Wentland’s urban homestead; listening to Craig’s story as grandchild of initial European settlers. 4618-45 Street</p> <p>Look at solar installation at K Mundel’s place</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>CLASS THEME: <i>Interconnectedness, Wahkohtowin</i></p> <p>Road Trip to Coen’s Grass Roots Family Farm: http://www.grassrootsfamilyfarm.ca/</p> <p>a. <i>Readings:</i> a. Aldo Leopold, “ Thinking Like a Mountain”, http://www.uky.edu/OtherOrgs/AppalFor/Readings/leopold.pdf</p> <p>b. Berry, “Less Energy, more Life” c. <i>Hope Beneath our Feet:</i> “Thinking like an Island”, pp.115-121</p>	

29	<p>CLASS THEME: <i>Limits to human "productivity": Death & vulnerability</i></p> <p>a. <i>Readings:</i> Berry, <i>Our Only World</i> "Our Deserted Country, Part 1"</p> <p>b. <i>Readings: Hope Beneath our Feet:</i> "From Mourning into Daybreak", pp.217-224; "Waking up from Despair", pp.225-231;"Questions for a Sacred Life", pp.238-242 "Living with Purpose in the End Times", pp.53-57;</p>	
Oct. 6	<p>CLASS THEME: <i>Interconnectedness, Wahkohtowin, Community: Our movement forward is not in isolation</i></p> <p>Road Trip to Mascwacis</p> <p><i>Readings: Hope beneath our Feet:</i> "Eden is a Conversation", pp. 209-212; "Indigenous Mind", pp. 170 -174; "Grandmothers Speak", pp.260-264</p>	
13	<p>CLASS THEME: <i>Human frailty, human capacity: Evil, faith & hope</i></p> <p><i>Readings: Hope Beneath our Feet:</i> Living with Losing, pp.15-23; "The Ultimate Miracle Worker", pp. 265-268; "Little by Little", pp. 256-259; "Commencement Address to the Class of 2009", pp. 3-7 Berry, "Our deserted country, Part II"</p>	
20-21	FALL BREAK	
27	<p>CLASS THEME: <i>Nurtured by Nature: Feasting & Fasting</i></p> <p>Road Trip to Miquelon Lake Provincial Park</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Rootless Professors, Eric Zenecy (handout) 2. Thomas Berry, The (chapter 3, The Dream of the Earth) 	Augustana's Miquelon Research Station as "home base"
Nov 3	<p>CLASS THEME: <i>Love and compassion</i></p> <p><i>Readings: Hope Beneath our Feet:</i> "Letter from the Future", pp.41-47; "Love the things we love", pp.58-61; "Embodying Change", pp.183-187</p>	Final prep for conference

Nov 4-6	"Reconciling Land, Life, Livelihood conference" organizing and hosting.	Required participation (talk to instructor if you need to be absent for team sports, e.g.)
Nov 10	No class: in lieu of conference	
Nov 17	CLASS THEME: <i>Interconnectedness, Wahkohtowin & Responsibility</i> <i>Readings: Hope Beneath our Feet: "Why Bother?", pp.29-37;"Every Day We Choose", pp. 76-81; "Fight it Head On", pp.99-101; "In the Climate Era the Personal is Political", pp.197-200</i>	Journal entry will be based on the conference experience (3-5 pages)
Nov 24	First half present their work to whole class and community members	
Dec 1	Second half present their work to whole class and community members	

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)