

AUIDS 286/386/ Rel 271
Connecting ecological and spiritual health

Instructor: Dittmar Mündel

Our support team includes:

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and many other community members

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Required texts:

Sarah van Gelder (ed), Sustainable Happiness

Hope Beneath our Feet (ed. Martin Keough)

Thomas King, The Inconvenient Indian

Online readings as per outline

Purpose and Approach of the Course

The central goal of the Spirit of the Land course is to find intellectual, contemplative and practical ways of reconnecting us to ourselves as well as to the land, air, water, and human communities. The course focuses particularly on the connection of ecological health to spiritual health. How can we help heal nature, if we are not healed ourselves from our need to exploit and extract rather than receive with gratitude and humility what nature and human communities offer?

Some of our major “text books” will be the Olson, Ruzicka and Coen farms themselves and the people that grow food in way that learns from nature. So we will try to spend as much time as possible “on the land” rather than in an on-campus classroom. Another major text will be your own personal experiences and inner journey. How does your spiritual health intersect with the outer world? How is this dialogue unfolding, and in what ways are you able to find both inner and outer health?

Course objectives:

1. Begin to understand how ecological health is connected to spiritual and cultural health.
2. Be able to do a rapid diagnostic of the ecological health of an area
3. Be able to understand the economic, political, and social-cultural impacts on ecology
4. Begin to appreciate the role a “contemplative practice” can play in reconnecting us to ourselves and the land
5. Become aware of some different perspectives on life and nature as sacred.
6. Begin to appreciate the concrete actions people are and can take to care both for nature and for themselves.

Course Requirements/Assignments

A. Standard Template

1. **Active Participation: 20%**
2. **Reflective Journal (one entry every two days: a total of 5) 15%**
3. **Portfolio that shows visually and in reflective writing, how you have met the learning objectives... 25%**
4. **Final presentations to the community 10%**
5. **Final Paper (or alternative project to be determined with instructor): "Spiritual and Ecological Health" ... 30%**

B. Individual Learning Contract: you show how you will meet the course objectives by focussing on your own learning interests, and how you want to be evaluated. (Has to be approved by instructor on Sept 5th.) E.g. you could choose to have your portfolio as your final project and be worth 40% or more, instead of also having a final project/paper. Or you could choose to write a longer final paper, and not do a portfolio...

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:

In addition to your individual engagement in reading, researching, discussing, active participation includes work in your small group..

Each small group does 1) the various research projects (photovoice, tree of life, etc.) 2) discusses readings together; 3) together with a community member helps cook one "soup lunch". (We plan to have 2 soup lunches and 2 "pot luck suppers (on the 18th and 19th of Sept. at the end of our presentations. The people who present will be treated by the other half of the class and community members.)

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL:

You use one of the readings for the day, and spend ½ of your paper on articulating the key theme(s) or topic, and the other ½ of the paper on your own personal relationship to this theme/topic and how it relates to broader societal issues. Each of the reflections will be about 2 pages (minimum)

PORTFOLIO: You use images or other records of the various activities you have done during the course and combine them with some reflective writing, that shows how a given activity has helped you meet each of the 6 learning objectives.

FINAL PAPER:

The general theme is the connection of spiritual and ecological health. You choose what specific topic you want to address. If you are taking this at a 200 level, your final paper should be a minimum of 6 pages. If you are taking this at a 300 level, it should be 10 or more pages. If you are taking this as a "religious studies" credit, you should make sure to include work around the understandings of the sacred, or the role religious perspectives can play in understanding ourselves in the world in an ecologically healthy way. Beyond a careful reading of the materials for this course, you may want to do "text" research beyond that. However, remember that our primary texts are the land, the farms, the community members we will have met and their stories.

SCHEDULE:

Date	Themes and Readings	Activities
Aug 31	1. Introduction to the connections of ecological and spiritual health 2. Analytical, contemplative, place-based education 3: Getting organized in small groups 4. Learning contracts 5. Photovoice assignment for small groups to be done by tomorrow 6. Waiver forms	Meet in Wahkohtowin Lodge Classroom (downstairs of Forum) FL 1-055
Sept 1	<p>Rapid Diagnostic of the sustainability of the rural areas around Camrose <i>Readings:</i> “Active Hope in the Midst of the Babylonian Captivity of the Rural” https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B544kMn_xZ0dbGVWTGFQNTThWaUE/view</p> <p>Contemplation as a Practice: <i>Reading: Sustainable Happiness</i>, “This is your life – show up for it mindfully” (chap 7) <i>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>Directions to Olson Farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go north out of town on 68st. You will pass Safeway on left and the golf course on the right. (68st becomes 66st at the golf course). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will pass Victoria Park residential area where the road turns to gravel. • Turn left (West) at Township Road 472 (the first road you come to). • We are the third house on the right (North side). 	Small groups do “photovoice” and readings in morning 2- 5pm total group at Olson’s farm Small groups present their “photovoice” analysis
Sept 5	<p>Road Trip to Don and Marie Ruzicka’s farm: http://www.sunrisefarm.ca/ <i>Readings:</i> a. <i>Sustainable Happiness</i>, pp. 1-17 b. <i>Hope Beneath our Feet</i>, “A Sense of Place—A Sense of Self”, pp. 145-149 ; “The Healing Power of Nature”, pp. 140-144 “Earth Rights”, pp 166 -169; Wendell Berry, “It all turns on affection”, https://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/wendell-e-berry-lecture</p>	Leave Augustana with bus at 9 am sharp (Faith and Life Parking Lot)

Sept 6	<p>Real Wellbeing: for ourselves and nature <i>Readings: Sustainable Happiness, pp. 20-50.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking at the political-economic and social-cultural impacts on nature and its wellbeing 2. Looking at ourselves and our way of searching for happiness. 	Soup lunch at 12pm
Sept 7	<p>Reconnecting to Land, People, Community <i>Readings: Dittmar Mundel, Karsten Mundel "Reconnecting to Land, People, Community" (pdf will be sent to class)</i></p> <p>Contemplative ways of reconnecting to self, others, and the land.</p>	<p>Reading includes a description of the "tree of life" diagnostic. Small groups: interview farmers, Battle River Watershed, Camrose County, City of Camrose Development Office, MLA and MP – to get a sense of political and economic factors impacting the ecology/farming/urban development.</p>
Sept 8	<p>"Every Part of this Earth is Sacred to My People" (Chief Seattle) <i>Readings: Thomas King, The Inconvenient Indian "Three Perspectives on the Sacred: Desert, Mountain, Cosmos" https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B544kMn_xZ0dMmpkdTI2bTFtMmM/view</i></p> <p>What do we hold as sacred? How we see/contemplate the world? <i>"Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass, chapter 1: "Skywoman Falling" (p.3-10). https://goo.gl/uoJ2hj</i></p>	<p>"Three perspectives on the Sacred" is mandatory for students taking this for Religious Studies credit.</p>
Sept 11	<p>Road Trip to Mascwacis http://samsoncree.com/ <i>Readings: Thomas King, The Inconvenient Indian Hope beneath our Feet: "Indigenous Mind", pp. 170 -174; "Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass, chapter: "The Three Sisters" (pp. 128-140).</i></p>	Bus leaves from Faith and Life parking lot at 9 am.

Sept 12	Tree of Life Diagnostic	a.m. finish your tree of life diagnostic in small groups 2- 5pm Share your trees of life at the Olson Farm.
Sept 13	The Practice of Happiness <i>Readings: Sustainable Happiness, pp.52-85`</i>	Morning: work on your portfolios and final projects Soup Lunch at 12 pm 2 pm meet at Olson farm
Sept 14	Road Trip to Coen's Grass Roots Family Farm: http://www.grassrootsfamilyfarm.ca/ <i>Readings: a. Aldo Leopold, "Thinking Like a Mountain", http://www.uky.edu/OtherOrgs/AppalFor/Readings/leopold.pdf].</i> b. Hope Beneath our Feet: "Thinking like an Island", pp.115-121	Bus leaves from Faith and Life parking lot at 9 am.
Sept 15	Practical Ways of Working on Spiritual and Ecological Health	Morning: work on portfolios and final project 2pm meet at Olson's farm
Sept 18	First Half presents their work to the class/community	In the Epp Centre 2 to 5 pm end with a potluck supper
Sept 19	Second half present their work to the class/community members	In the Epp Centre 2 to 5 pm. End with a potluck supper All papers and projects are due on this date!!

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)