



BIBL 7170-01: SYMPOSIUM 2023: CREATION CARE
Campus Symposium 9/22-9/23 with additional online meetings TBA
Course Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is held in conjunction with the annual North Park Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture. The course will foster concentrated reflection on the papers presented at the Symposium and allow students to participate more meaningfully in the Symposium event.

This year's symposium focuses on the topic of Creation Care. The center of the course will be the two-day seminar (meeting from Friday September 22 to Saturday, September 23), which includes the Symposium itself with additional cohort sessions each day after the Symposium lectures. Two additional online gatherings will also be arranged, one before and one following the Symposium. Attendance at all sessions is required and reading of the entire symposium materials is assumed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of the class, students will be able to:

1. Articulate major biblical, historical, and theological issues in the study of Creation Care
2. Engage the theme of Creation Care in the theological interpretation of Scripture
3. Assess potential implications of the theme for understanding the Christian life and the pastoral practice of the church.

STYLE OF LEARNING: This course is intended to develop your skills as a lifelong learner, equipping you to define issues and formulate projects for yourselves so that you can do this beyond your degree program without the support of a class structure. The role of the instructor is therefore not tightly to define the work you will do for the class, but to help you to define that work for yourself. For this reason, you are encouraged to consult the instructor and it is your responsibility to be in touch and request conversations as necessary. You may contact the instructor and arrange for a conversation prior to the symposium about your choice of books for review if you are uncertain about which books to choose; and you may contact the instructor after the symposium and arrange for a conversation about your research paper proposal (see below under Assessments).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students will:

1. Read **all** the Symposium papers in advance
2. Attend the **entire** Symposium and ask at least one question in a session of their choosing
3. Attend and enter discussion in online live meetings once before and once after the Symposium (dates TBA)
4. Participate in an online Discussion Board pursuing questions identified by the

class as arising from papers presented at the symposium, and then write a formal post (1000 words) outlining an answer to one of the questions

5. Write a book analysis of 1000 words each of two books from the list provided or approved by the instructor
6. Write a 4000-word research paper choosing from a list of possible projects according to student interests and vocational goals (see below for details).

Late submission without good reason and clear communication with the instructor will result in reduced grades.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Texts selected for book review
- Symposium papers (to be distributed when they are available from the authors)
- Additional personal readings selected by each student for final paper research paper (approved by the instructor)

ASSESSMENTS IN BRIEF:

Class Participation	10%
Pre- and Post-Symposium Online Discussions	30%
Book Analysis	30%
Research Paper	30%

Final course grades follow the policy found in the NPTS catalog:

Superior work (A = 95–100; A- = 93–94)

B: Above average (B+ = 91-92; B = 88-90; B- = 86-87)

C: Average (C+ = 84-85; C = 80-83; C – = 78-79)

D: Unsatisfactory (D+ = 76-77; D = 72-75; D – = 70-71)

F: Failure (69 and below)

ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL:

Class Participation (10%): Students must participate in the following ways:

1. Post in the initial discussion forum on Canvas
2. Attend the pre and post-symposium virtual meetings
3. Attend the entire online symposium
4. Ask at least one question during the discussion period after one of the presentations

Pre and Post-Symposium Online Discussions (30%):

1. Pre-Symposium online discussion

Creation Care includes all of our senses. Appreciation for God’s world often comes from the right side of the brain, often intuitively out of non-linear thinking. This activity is designed to foster that kind of creativity as we also become a learning community. In order to make this event more engaging you are asked to present how you personally connect with the theme of Creation Care in one of the following ways:

- Write a poem or prose that describes how you connect with Creation care (minimum 200 words). Recite it to the class.

- Compose a song, rap, or interpretive dance that expresses your connection with the theme of Creation care. Perform it for us, either live or pre-recorded.
- Take a photograph that represents an aspect of Creation care that is important to you. Post it and explain its significance for you to the group.
- Create an original art piece that conveys how you view Creation care and present it with your personal interpretation to the class.

Your work should be posted on the day of presentation so it can be seen by all. Afterwards, students will post comments of encouragement to one another in the Canvas discussion board within the week following the presentations. 15% of course grade.

2. Post-Symposium

On the Friday and Saturday of the Symposium on campus, the class will meet as a cohort to debrief the day's sessions. On our last hour together on Saturday we will identify some of the papers presented for further discussion and talk about the questions we wish to pursue. The instructor will immediately post these questions on the Discussion Board on Canvas. By **Monday, October 2**, each student will contribute at least ONCE to discussion of at least TWO of the papers in a 100-200 word post. Students will then choose ONE of the discussions and write a more formal submission (1000 words) detailing their answer to the question. This must be posted by **Monday, October 16**. 15% of course grade.

Book Analysis (30%): Compare and contrast two books from this list. If you like, you may suggest other books, but you must submit those to the instructor for approval at least a week before the due date.

- Armstrong, Karen. *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World*. Knopf, 2022.
- Augustine, Sarah and Sheri Hostetler. *So That We and Our Children May Live: Following Jesus in Confronting the Climate Crisis*. Herald Press, 2023.
- Bell, Colin and Robert S. White, eds. *Creation Care and the Gospel: Reconsidering the Mission of the Church*. Hendrickson Academic, 2016.
- Berry, R.J. and Laura Yoder. *John Stott on Creation Care*. InterVarsity Press, 2021.
- Blasu, Ebenezer Yaw. *African Theology: Studies in African Religious Creation Care*. Wipf & Stock, 2020.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions, 2015.
- Moo, Douglas and Jonathan A. Moo. *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World (Biblical Theology for Life)*. Zondervan Academic, 2018.
- Richter, Sandra L. *Stewards of Eden: What Scripture Says About the Environment and Why It Matters*. IVP Academics, 2020.
- Thanissara. *Time to Stand Up: An Engaged Buddhist Manifesto for Our Earth -- The Buddha's Life and Message through Feminine Eyes (Sacred Activism)*. North Atlantic Books, 2015.
- Woodley, Randy. *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision*. Eerdmans, 2012.

In dialogue with Symposium content, consider the following in your analysis: *Why did you choose these two texts? What is the primary argument of each text? What kind of approach is*

being taken to the theme? Is the book primarily biblical, historical, or theological? Who are each author's principal dialog partners? How does each author situate his or her own work in relation to previous work? How do the texts discuss/define the relationship between the Bible and politics? What do you regard as the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument? What are the theological and pastoral implications for the texts' approach?

This analysis should be about 2,000 words in length and is due by **Monday, October 11.**

Research Paper (30%): In dialogue with symposium papers and other readings, students may choose from the following:

- Trace the theme of Creation Care in a single biblical book
- Write a series of four sermons in detailed outline or manuscript form on Creation Care (each must be an exegetically informed proclamation of the Gospel as it is encountered in one or two passages of scripture)
- Compare biblical commentaries, theological reflections, or sermons on the theme of Creation Care by two theologian/reflective practitioners, one historic and one contemporary (e.g. Luther and Richter, or Stott and Woodley)
- Propose a biblically grounded position or activity on a specific aspect of Creation Care for a specific cultural context

These options are meant to stimulate student imagination rather than limit possibilities. Students are welcome to propose other writing projects for instructor approval. A form on which to submit proposals appears at the end of this syllabus. The form must be submitted by **Monday, October 23.** The paper is due on **Monday, November 27.**

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

Inclusive Language

NPTS encourages all students to follow the Statement of Inclusive Language from the Board of Publication Policy of the Evangelical Covenant Church which states, "We are committed to being inclusive in language and imagery in an effort to eliminate prejudice, whether gender, racial, ethnic, national, religious, denominational, cultural, or physical. This way of proceeding in no manner seeks to deny personal identity; rather, it guards against any use of word or phrase that tends to exclude people." Consider how you can best incorporate inclusive language into all of your communication (written and oral) during the course particularly in your references to God and to humanity.

Academic Honesty

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park Theological Seminary is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.

3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

Incomplete Policy

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, illness, personal and family issues, or military assignment), a student anticipates she will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student must submit the request form for a grade of incomplete to the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see the Seminary catalog.

TITLE IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773-244-6276 or TitleIX@northpark.edu) for information about reporting, campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking.

Please refer to North Park's [Safe Community](#) site for reporting, contact information and further details.

Accommodations

North Park is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this class related to a disability, contact the SRA program director. If you are struggling in your coursework due to Covid-19 or other factors and need to take the course pass/fail, please let instructors know and we will modify the course requirements accordingly. In the event that we are unable to get materials in and out from our SRA students due to lockdown, please continue the course schedule as listed below.



Course Schedule

Pre-Symposium Online Discussion – Date and time TBA

Friday Sept 22 On Campus Symposium Day 1, Nyvall Hall

8:30-12:00 Morning Presentations

12:00-1:00 Lunch Break

1:00-3:30 Afternoon Presentations

3:30-4:30 Informal conversation opportunities

4:30-5:00 Personal time

5 :00-6 :30 Dinner on your own or with friends

6:30-8:30 Cohort discussion time. Campus location TBA

Saturday Sept 23 On Campus Symposium Day 2, Nyvall Hall

8:30-12:00 Morning Presentations

12:00-1:00 Lunch Break

1:00-2:45 Afternoon Presentations

2:45-3:00 Break

3:00-4:00 Cohort discussion time. Campus location TBA.

Post-Symposium Online Discussion - Date and time TBA



BIBL 7170 SYMPOSIUM 2023: Creation Care
Proposal for Research Paper

(Proposal Due: October 23, 2023)

STUDENT’S NAME:

PROPOSED TOPIC/TITLE

PROPOSED BIBLIOGRAPHY/PRIMARY SOURCES

OUTLINE STRUCTURE OF ESSAY/PAPER

INSTRUCTOR’S COMMENTS

Signature of Instructor..... Date.....