

FOOD, FAITH, AND JUSTICE: HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE WHOLE CREATION

Instructor: Timothy R. Eberhart
Office Phone: 847-866-3972
Email: timothy.eberhart@garrett.edu

Office: 715
Location:
Time: Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm

Course Description

God's call to participate in the abundant life of loving communion is given to us in the form of a meal invitation: "Take, eat (Matt. 26:26). "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8). But how are we to gather together in holy meals when the food we consume is bound up in the earth's degradation and the exploitation of neighbors near and far? This course will integrate a critical theology of food and agriculture with practical encounters with the emerging holistic food economy (e.g. urban organic agriculture, community food cooperatives, ecological garden design) in the Chicago area.

Course Objectives

Knowing – To understand the economic logic, industrial processes, political dynamics, and environmental implications of our present food system, as well as the holistic perspectives and practices of the emerging alternative food movement.

Being – To deepen one's appreciation for the limits and needs of the good creation, the power of healthy interrelationships, and the mysteries gathered up in the food and fellowship we eat.

Doing – To gain basic practical knowledge about common land ownership, holistic gardening techniques, cooperative business models, integrative production design, and urban ecological food ministries.

Required Course Texts

Berry, Wendell. *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, Norman Wirzba, ed. Counterpoint, 2003 (ISBN: 9781593760076, Price \$12.05 at www.barnesandnoble.com).

Davis, Ellen. *Scripture, Culture, Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*. Cambridge University Press, 2008 (ISBN: 9780521732239, Price \$21.50 at www.barnesandnoble.com).

Kirschenmann, Frederick. *Cultivating an Ecological Conscience: Essays from a Farmer Philosopher*. University of Kentucky Press, 2011 (ISBN: 9781582437521, Price \$15.34 at www.barnesandnoble.com).

Shiva, Vandana. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*. South End Press, 2005 (ISBN: 9780896087453, Price \$17.77 at www.barnesandnoble.com).

Wirzba, Norman. *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*. Cambridge University Press, 2011 (ISBN: 9780521146241, Price \$17.56 at www.barnesandnoble.com).

Recommended Course Text

Hemenway, Toby. *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture, 2nd Edition*. Chelsea Green Publishing, 2009 (ISBN: 9781603580298, Price \$20.67 at www.barnesandnoble.com).

Course Requirements for Seminary Credit

1. Reading of all assigned literature and active participation in class discussions.
2. Submission of one substantive question per assigned reading per day (24 total). **Due May 19.**
3. Final Paper (18-20 pages). Framed by a theology of food and eating, provide a critical analysis of one area of our present food and agro-economic system as well as a constructive and practical vision for how people of faith might participate in the emergence of a new food economy. **Due June 3.**

Course Requirements for Continuing Education Credit

1. Active participation in class discussions based upon a demonstrated knowledge of reading assignments.

Final Grading for Seminary Credit

1. Class Participation – 40%
2. Reading Questions – 10%
4. Final Paper – 50%

Grading Criteria for Papers

1. You accomplish what the assignment asks of you.
2. Your paper offers a clear thesis statement, follows a logical organization, is well developed, and is free of grammatical and spelling errors.
3. You enter into intelligent, critical conversation with the course texts and lectures.
4. You demonstrate a depth of insight in your theological and ethical claims.

Grading Criteria for Class Participation

1. You attend every class period and are on time.
2. You demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings for the day.
3. You listen carefully to the instructor and to your classmates.
4. You are an active participant in the class discussions.

Course Schedule

May 20: Jesus Christ Invites All: Land, Soil, and Access

Shiva, 1-61
Davis, 1-20, 120-138
Berry, 35-64
Wirzba, 35-70
Kirschenmann, 284-289
(Hemenway, 3-12, 71-95)

Community Gardens

May 21: The Holy Spirit Joins Everyone Together: Community of Creation

Shiva, pp. 109-143
Berry 93-143, 144-158, 159-181, 267-275
Wirzba, 71-109
Kirschenmann, 15-21, 121-140
(Hemenway, 21-67)

Permaculture Design

May 22: The Father/Mother Nourishes Every Body: Economics for the Earth

Shiva, pp. 73-107
Davis, pp. 21-41, 80-100, 139-154
Berry, pp. 65-80, 207-235, 279-292
Wirzba, 1-34, 110-143
Kirschenmann, 99-117, 214-225, 238-240, 290-305
(Hemenway, 96-172)

Integrated Business Design

May 23: The Triune God Arranges Guests as Companions: Cooperative Power

Shiva, 61-72
Davis, 101-119
Berry, 195-204, 236-261
Wirzba, 144-178
Kirschenmann, 48-62, 71-91, 271-278
(Hemenway, 175-229)

Food Cooperative

May 24: The Lord God Grants Permission to Begin: Feasting toward a New Creation

Shiva, pp. 145-186

Davis, pp. 42-79, 155-180

Berry, 81-90, 262-266, 293-327

Wirzba, 179-234

Kirschenmann, 153-178, 322-357

(Hemenway, 230-272)

Community Empowerment