

Asbury Theological Seminary
January 12–16 (M–F), 20-23 (Tu–F), 2015
8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Professor Howard A. Snyder
Appointments: Arrange by email
Home: 216-6011

MS750 / MD950. CHRISTIAN MISSION & THEOLOGY OF CREATION

DESCRIPTION

This course studies the biblical theology of creation, particularly as it relates to the mission of God and thus the role of the church. We focus on the place of the created order in God's redemptive plan, on earth stewardship, and on the meaning of "the restoration of all things" in the New Creation by the Spirit through the saving and healing work of Jesus Christ. The course draws on biblical, historical, and systematic theology, cross-referencing to contemporary missiological, ecological, and environmental issues.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective is to understand, biblically and operationally, the close biblical relationship between creation and mission.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an informed understanding of a biblical theology of creation.
2. Demonstrate understanding of biblical teachings about the land/earth.
3. Articulate a theology of mission that coherently incorporates a theology of creation.
4. Articulate a sound biblical theological basis for creation care in relation to other priorities.

COURSE METHOD

Class sessions will be conducted as a graduate seminar. Each participant will be expected to contribute to our shared learnings based upon their readings, research, and experience.

The course will combine lecture, discussion, and engagement with Scripture, assigned readings, and student's experiences. The final paper will be based on focused research and will seek to draw relevant missiological implications from the study.

TEXTS

Bouma-Prediger, Steven. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*, Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.

Brown, Edward R. *Our Father's World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2008.

Louv, Richard. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books, 2008.

Rice, Delbert. *Basic Upland Ecology*. Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2007. 166 pp.

Snyder, Howard A., with Joel Scandrett. *Salvation Means Creation Healed: The Ecology of Sin and Grace*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011.

ALTERNATE TEXT

Note: The following text was not available in time to be included in the original textbook selection, but is now available. Students may substitute this text for either the Bouma-Prediger book or the Brown book, if they wish:

Middleton, J. Richard. *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Note: The following resources are useful, but not required (or not currently available) for purchase. Some are now available online.

[Farley, Joshua, and Herman E. Daly. *Ecological Economics: Principles and Applications*. Island Press, 2003. 488 pp.](#)

Van Dyke, Fred, David C. Mahan, Joseph K. Sheldon, and Raymond H. Brand. *Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship*. InterVarsity, 1996. 214 pp.

Swartley, Willard M. *Health, Healing and the Church's Mission: Biblical Perspective and Moral Priorities*. InterVarsity, 2012. 268 pp.

Bauckham, Richard. *Living with Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology*. Baylor University Press, 2011. 256 pp.

Wright, N. T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. HarperOne, 2008. 352 pp.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete the reading of the assigned texts and study the biblical passages assigned for each class session, and be prepared to participate in class discussion (20% of final grade).

2. Each student will lead a discussion of one of the assigned Scripture readings. The presenter should give a brief summary of the Scripture, note its relevance for Christian mission, and guide the class in discussing the passage(s) and the questions it raises or guidance it gives for Christian mission. Total discussion time: Up to 30 minutes.

3. Write a brief reflection paper responding to this question: What is the significance of Genesis 9:1-17 for the church and its mission today? (1,000 to 1,200 words.) Note: This is not a research paper and does not require a bibliography or references other than biblical references. Due Friday, Jan. 16 (15% of final grade).

4. Write a critical reflection paper on any two of the required or recommended texts (other than Snyder and Scandrett, *Salvation Means Creation Healed*, or Rice, *Basic Upland Ecology*). Identify the main or central argument(s) of each book; compare and contrast these; and add your own assessment of these arguments. (1,500 to 2,000 words.) Due Friday, Jan. 23 (25% of final grade).

5. Write a research paper articulating your own biblical theology of creation and new creation in relation to Christian mission (4,000 to 7,000 words). This should be based mainly on Scripture, though you may use secondary sources as relevant. Include a section on missional implications for the church today. Scripture references should be given in-text; for secondary works, use reference notes and bibliography. As an alternative, this assignment may be done as a video project, either individually or with two or more students working collaboratively, subject to the professor's approval in advance. Due Friday, Jan. 30 (40% of final grade). Faculty must submit grades by Feb. 6, so there is no possibility of an extension of the due date.

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPER

1. You may use either the anthropological style (recommended by the ESJ School) or the Chicago/Turabian style, but be consistent. The paper must be computer-printed, and should include appropriate documentation of sources cited or consulted.

2. Attach a title page giving the paper's title, your name, course name and number, professor's name, and date. Staple in upper left-hand corner. *Please do not use a cover or binder.* (I may later request a second clean copy of your paper for my files.) Papers may be submitted by email (Word file, not pdf file).

3. Follow the syllabus guidelines as to the length of the paper. The grade will depend on the content, development of the argument, proper form and style, and evidence of adequate research—not on length.

4. Papers should contain no spelling errors. Use a spell-checker.

5. Students for whom English is not their natural language may want to get editorial assistance. I will evaluate only the final product. Correct English tends to have a favorable influence on grade.

Papers that do not conform to these guidelines may be returned for correction and revision.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Required Reading and Class Participation	20%
Reflection Paper	15%
Critical Reflection Paper	25%
Research Paper	40%
Total Grade	100%

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READING

Classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion.

Jan. 12 – INTRODUCTION: CREATION, TRINITY, & MISSION

Genesis 1-2; Job 38:1 – 42:6; Revelation 21:1 – 22:5
 Snyder & Scandrett, Intro. & Chaps. 1-2
 Bouma-Prediger, Intro. & Chap. 1
 Recommended: Zahniser, “Trinity”; Farley & Daly, Chaps. 1-3

Jan. 13 – AN ECOLOGICAL / MISSIONAL WORLDVIEW

Genesis 3-9; Romans 1:18 – 2:16
 Snyder & Scandrett, Chaps. 3-4
 Bouma-Prediger, Chap. 2
 Louv, Intro. & Chap. 1
 Recommended: Farley & Daly, Chaps. 5, 6, 10-12

Jan. 14 – CREATION, FALL, & GOD’S EARTH COVENANT

Gen. 13:14-18, 28:10-22; Lev. 25-26; Deut. 8; Isa. 61:1-11; Luke 4:14-29
 Snyder & Scandrett, Chaps. 5-6
 Bouma-Prediger, Chap. 3
 Louv, Chaps. 2-3
 Recommended: Farley & Daly, Chaps. 15-16

Jan. 15 – THE KEY ROLE OF ESCHATOLOGY

Isaiah 11, 42-43, 66
 Snyder & Scandrett, Chap. 7
 Bouma-Prediger, Chap. 4
 Louv, Chaps. 4-6
 Recommended: Van Dyke *et al.*

Jan. 16 – THE PROMISE OF NEW COVENANT / NEW CREATION

Jeremiah 31; Isaiah 53; Luke 22:7-45; Hebrews 8
 Snyder & Scandrett, Chap. 8
 Brown, Chaps. 1-2
 Bouma-Prediger, Chap. 5
 Louv, Chaps. 7-8
 Recommended: Swartley

Jan. 19 – NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Jan. 20 – THE “ECONOMY” AND “ECOLOGY” OF GOD

Ephesians 1-3; Philippians 2:1-18
 Rice, Foreword, Preface, & Chaps. 1-4
 Snyder & Scandrett, Chaps. 9-10
 Brown, Chaps. 3-5
 Bouma-Prediger, Chap. 6
 Louv, Chaps. 9-12

Jan. 21 – 8:30-11:30 AM – THE CENTRAL ROLE OF JESUS CHRIST

Lev. 16; Matt. 20:20-28; Luke 24; John 1, 3-4, 17, 20; Heb. 10; Rev. 1

Snyder & Scandrett, Chap. 11

Rice, Chaps. 5-12

Bouma-Prediger, Chap. 7

Brown, Chaps. 6-8

Louv, Chaps. 13-15

Recommended: Bauckham

Jan. 22 – 1:00-4:20 PM – BODY OF CHRIST, NEW CREATION, & THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 1-2; Rom. 8 and 12; 1 Cor. 12 and 15; Eph. 4-6; Phil. 3-4; Heb. 12-13

Snyder & Scandrett, Chap. 12

Rice, Chaps. 5-12

Bouma-Prediger, Chap. 8

Brown, Chap. 9-13

Louv, Chaps. 16-19

Jan. 23 – 1:00-4:20 PM – CREATION, NEW CREATION, & THE KINGDOM OF GOD

2 Peter 3, Revelation 4-5, 11, 20, 22

Snyder & Scandrett, Chap. 13

Rice, Chaps. 21-32

Louv, Chaps. 20-23

Recommended: Wright

BIBLIOGRAPHY – Christian Mission and Theology of Creation

Note: Sections on creation and new creation in standard works of biblical, historical, and systematic theology should also be consulted, as appropriate. For additional resources, see also this bibliography:

<http://seminaryalliance.org/creation-care-bibliography/>

- Ball, James Gregory. "Evangelical Protestants, the Ecological Crisis and Public Theology." Ph.D. Diss., Drew University, 1997.
- Ball, Jim [James Gregory]. *Global Warming and the Risen Lord: Christian Discipleship and Climate Change*. Washington, DC: Evangelical Environmental Network, 2010.
- Basney, Lionel. *An Earth-Careful Way of Life: Christian Stewardship and the Environmental Crisis*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994.
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- Bergman, Sigurd. *Creation Set Free: The Spirit as Liberator of Nature*. Trans. Douglas Scott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Berry, Wendell. *The Gift of Good Land*. New York: North Point Press, 1981.
- Boff, Leonardo. *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm*. Trans. John Cumming. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995.
- Boff, Leonardo. *Trinity and Society*. Trans. Paul Burns. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988.
- Bookless, Dave. *Planetwise: Dare to Care for God's World*. Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity, 2008.
- Brown, Edward R. *Our Father's World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2008.
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- Coleson, Joseph, ed. *Care of Creation: Christian Voices on God, Humanity, and the Environment*. Indianapolis, Ind.: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2010.
- Daly, Herman E., ed. *Economics, Ecology, Ethics*. San Francisco: Freeman, 1980.
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- Edwards, Denis. *Ecology at the Heart of Faith: The Change of Heart that Leads to a New Way of Living on Earth*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2006, 2011.
- Farley, Joshua, and Herman E. Daly. *Ecological Economics: Principles and Applications*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2003.
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- Gnanakan, Ken. *God's World, A Theology of the Environment*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988.
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- Gunton, Colin E. *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 2nd ed. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997.
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- Hayhoe, Katharine, and Andrew Farley. *A Climate for Change: Global Warming Facts for Faith-Based Decisions*. New York: Faith Words, 2009.

- Houghton, John. *Global Warming: The Complete Briefing*. Oxford, UK: Lion Publishing, 1994.
- Howard, Albert. *An Agricultural Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1943.
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- McKibben, Bill. *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*. New York: Henry Holt, 2010.
- Merritt, Jonathan. *Green Like God: Unlocking the Diving Plan for Our Planet*. New York: Faith Words, 2010. Includes resources (websites, bibliography, creation care organizations.)
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