

SPIR 70970/80970: Soul Care Amidst Climate Crisis  
3 Semester Hours

Instructor: Timothy Robinson

Prerequisites: None

Description of Content:

Climate change—or climate chaos—has been called an “existential crisis” for humanity. Eco-theologian Willis Jenkins has stated that the “environmental crisis forms a new global dimension of religious experience.” As the scope and scale of climate crisis becomes ever clearer, and evidence of its toll on human communities, the human psyche, and the human spirit mounts (eco-anxiety, climate-related trauma, and the material impacts of environmental racism and eco-colonialism), this course explores what it means to nurture a spirituality of hope in the presence of this grave threat to planetary life. We will examine what it means to practice care of souls—our own and those of others—amidst the mounting impacts of climate crisis.

Class Procedures:

Seminar discussion, occasional lecture, group work

Requirements:

1. Attendance and informed participation in the class sessions, 20%
2. Reading journal, 30%
3. Research essay (6-8 pages), 30%
4. ONE of the following: 20%
  - a. Interview with a pastoral caregiver
  - b. Case analysis
  - c. Creative project (liturgy or ritual; musical composition; short film; podcast, theatrical production; sermon; poetry; painting; etc.)

Texts:

1. Belden Lane, *The Great Conversation: Nature and the Care of the Soul* (Oxford University Press, 2019): ISBN: 978-0190842673, \$29.95
2. Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Milkweed Editions, 2013): ISBN: 978-1571313560, \$18.00
3. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katherine K. Wilkinson, eds., *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis* (One World, 2020) ISBN: 978-0593237083, \$18.00
4. Daniel Castillo, *An Ecological Theology of Liberation: Salvation and Political Ecology* (Orbis, 2019): ISBN: 978-1626983212, \$40.00

5. Wangari Maathai, *Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual Values for Replenishing the Earth* (Doubleday, 2010): ISBN: 978-0307591142, \$16.00
6. We will also be reading excerpts of the following works: Melanie Harris, *Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth Honoring Faiths*; Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies*; Joanna Macy and Molly Brown, *Coming Back to Life*; Bruce Rogers-Vaughan, *Caring for Souls in a Neoliberal Age*; Sarah Jaquette Ray, *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety*; and a few other articles