

**Abbreviated Course Syllabus - Draft**  
**TRB 3831HF/ 6831HF**  
**Land, Food and Justice: The Biblical Witness**  
**Trinity College**  
**Toronto School of Theology**  
**Fall 2020**

***Instructor Information***

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***Course Identification***

Course Number: TRB3831HF / TRB6831HF  
Course Format: Online  
Course Name: Land, Food and Justice: The Biblical Witness  
Course Location: N/A  
Class Times: N/A  
Prerequisites: None

***Course Description***

Throughout the biblical story, land, economic justice, and food justice are intimately linked. These themes, in turn, are rooted in a vibrant relationship between creation and the Creator, not to mention creation and humanity. This course will explore such biblical themes in light of competing views of land, economics and justice both in biblical times and in our own context, locally and internationally. Interactions with indigenous views of land, land justice and food security for immigrants and the poor in our city, the transition movement, bioregionalism and watershed discipleship, will all contribute to a biblical vision for a sustainable creation locally and on a global level. This course will include two or three virtual site visits (to a community garden, and a food co-op). Includes course material recorded at the professor's farm.

***Course Resources***

**Required Course Texts/Bibliography**

- \*Berry, Wendell, "The Whole Horse" in Norman Wirzba, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002).
- \*Brueggemann, Walter, "The Land and Our Urban Appetites" in *From Interpretation to Obedience* (Fortress, 1991), 161-189.
- \*Brueggemann, Walter, "The Liturgy of Abundance and the Myth of Certainty" in *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope*, edited by Patrick D. Miller. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) pp. 69-75.
- Davis, Ellen *Scripture, Culture, Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

- \*Hawkin, David J, “The Critique of Ideology in the Book of Revelation and its Implications for Ecology” *Ecotheology* 8.2 (2003) 161-172.
- \*Keesmaat, Sylvia C, “The Beautiful Creatures: Trees in the Biblical Story” published online in *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology and Culture* (www.thotherjournal.com). Issue #15. The Aesthetics Issue.
- \*Keesmaat, Sylvia C. and Brian Walsh, “Land, Ecology and The Defilement of Home” Chapter 5 of *Romans Disarmed* (Brazos Press, 2019).
- \*Myers, Ched, “From Garden to Tower: Genesis 1-11 as a Critique of Civilization and an Invitation to Indigenous Re-visioning” in *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land, Justice and Life Together*. Ed. Steve Heinrichs (Waterloo: Herald Press, 2013), 109-121.
- \*Rossing, Barbara R, “River of Life in God’s New Jerusalem: An Eschatological Vision for Earth’s Future” in Deiter T. Hessel and Rosemary R. Ruether (eds.), *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of the Earth and Humans*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000. pp. 205-224.
- Wirzba, Norman, *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- \*Woodley, Randy, “Early Dialogue in the Community of Creation” in *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land, Justice and Life Together*. Ed. Steve Heinrichs (Waterloo: Herald Press, 2013), 92-103. *I have also included with this article the two poems entitled “Talking Waters” by Rose Marie Berger that bookend the article in the anthology.*
- Various additional texts chosen to fit the presentation topics of AD students.

\*Readings marked with an asterisk will be available digitally.

## Course Website(s)

- Quercus

## Evaluation

### Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three (BD) or four (AD) areas:

#### Basic Degree Students:

- (1) Participation and Discussion (30%) – Participation in online discussion forums.
- (2) Reflection papers (20%) – Students are expected to submit two five-page reflection papers on a biblical text.
- (3) Final paper (50%) – A substantial scholarly research paper of 12-15 pages based on a particular biblical text or theme. The paper should locate the text or theme within the larger biblical canon, as well within its historical context. In addition, the paper should explore how this biblical text or theme illuminates or critiques contemporary environmental issues or practices.

Advanced Degree Students:

(1) *Participation (20%)* – Participation in online discussion forums.

(2) *Reflection papers (20%)* – Students are expected to submit two five-page reflection papers on a biblical text.

(3) *Class Presentation (10%)* - Students are expected to prepare and record a video of a short (10-15 minute) presentation on one of the required readings.

(3) *Final paper (50%)* – A substantial scholarly research paper of 15-20 pages based on a particular biblical text or theme. The paper should locate the text or theme within the larger biblical canon, as well within its historical context. In addition, the paper should explore how this biblical text or theme illuminates or critiques contemporary environmental issues or practices. A more extensive bibliography is required for AD students than for BD students.

## **Course Schedule**

**NB: Draft only; order subject to change before the start of the course.**

**Week 1 Introduction: The Issues and the Story**

**Week 2 A Good Creation: The Responsiveness of Creation and An Agrarian Vision**

Readings: Davis, ch. 1-3; Keesmaat, “Beautiful Creatures”; selections from the Bible

**Week 3 Food Justice in the City: Site Visit**

Readings: TBA

**Week 4 Image-bearing, Servanthood and Indigenous Visions/1st reflection paper due**

Readings: Wirzba, Intro and ch. 1; Myers, “From Garden to Tower”; Woodley, “Early Dialogue”; selections from the Bible

**Week 5 Image bearing and Idolatry**

Readings: Wirzba, ch. 2, 3, 4; selections from the Bible

**Week 6 Creation in the Shadow of Empire: Land and Food Security**

Readings: Davis, ch 4 & 5; Brueggemann, “Liturgy of Abundance”; selections from the Bible

**Week 7 Indigenous Food Security: Site Visit or Guest Lecture/2nd reflection paper due**

Readings: TBA

**Week 8 Creation in the Shadow of Empire: Land-Destroying Economics**

Readings: Hawkin, “The Critique”; Rossing, “River of Life”; Berry, “The Whole Horse”; Keesmaat and Walsh, *Romans Disarmed*, ch 5; selections from the Bible

**Week 9 Sabbath Economics and Jubilee/paper proposal due**

Readings: Davis, ch. 6 & 7; Brueggemann, "The Land"; selections from the Bible

**Week 10 Resilient Farming and Food Systems: Site Visit**

Readings: TBA

**Week 11 Resurrection and the Land: Permaculture and Transition Towns**

Readings: Davis, ch. 8 & 9, postscript; selections from the Bible

**Week 12 The New Earth: Watershed Discipleship/ Final Paper Due**

Readings: Wirzba, ch. 5 and conclusion; selections from the Bible