

**(21-801) THE OIKOS OF GOD:
ECONOMY AND ECOLOGY IN THE GLOBAL HOUSEHOLD**

Instructor: Timothy R. Eberhart
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Location: UMC, Whitefish Bay, WI
Time: Friday 6:00-9:00pm, Saturday 8:30-11:30am, 12:30-3:30pm

Course Description

This course is an introduction to theological-ethical reflection on “household” existence in the context of global life together today. The Greek word for household is *oikos*, which means the words ecology (*oikos-logos*, the studied knowledge of our planetary household), economy (*oikos-nomos*, the management of the household), and ecumenicity (*oikou-menikos*, an openness to the worldwide household) all share a basic orientation to “home.” There is growing awareness that the various households in which we presently live are increasingly marked, not by the kind of sustaining relations on which home life depends, but by countless manifestations of economic injustice, environmental ruination, and social fragmentation. There is also a growing recognition that these multiple problems are mutually constitutive and that singular, disconnected responses are therefore inadequate. The goal of this course is to draw upon diverse theo-ethical resources in thinking critically about the economic and ecological crises facing our common global household *and* constructively toward charitable, just, and sustainable solutions.

Course Texts

Berry, Wendell. *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, Norman Wirzba, editor. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2003 (ISBN-13: 978-1593760076, Price: \$10.85 at amazon.com).

Cavanaugh, William T. *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008 (ISBN-13: 978-0802845610, Price: \$8.57 at amazon.com).

Heinberg, Richard and Daniel Lerch, eds. *The Post Carbon Reader: Managing The 21st Century's Sustainability Crisis*. Healdsburg, CA: Watershed Media, 2010 (ISBN-13: 978-0970950062, Price: \$16.14 at amazon.com).

Martenson, Chris. *The Crash Course: The Unsustainable Future of Our Economy, Energy, and the Environment*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2011 (ISBN-13: 978-0470927649, Price: \$18.45 at amazon.com).

McFague, Sallie. *A New Climate For Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008 (ISBN-13: 978-0800662714, Price: \$15.02 at amazon.com).

McKibben, Bill. *Eaarth: Making A Life On A Tough New Planet*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 2010 (ISBN-13: 978-0312541194, Price: \$10.19).

Meeks, M. Douglas. *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989 (ISBN-13: 978-0800623296, Price: \$21.17).

Peters, Rebecca Todd. *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2004 (ISBN-13: 978-0826418586, Price: \$27.95).

Course Requirements for Seminary Credit

1. Reading of all assigned literature and active participation in class discussions.
2. Weekly one-page response papers with re-description, analysis, and reaction of assigned texts.
3. Midterm Paper (8-10 pages). Drawing on the course readings, lectures, and class discussions, provide a critical theo-ethical assessment of the modern management of our planetary, worldwide household. Due Mar 20.
4. Final Paper (12-15 pages). Drawing on the course readings, lectures, and discussions, offer a constructive theo-ethical proposal for alternative ways of managing our ecclesial, national or global households. Due May 4.

Course Requirements for Auditors

1. Reading of all assigned literature and active participation in class discussions.
2. Weekly one-page response papers with re-description, analysis, and reaction of assigned texts.

Final Grading

1. Class Participation – 20 %
2. Weekly Response Papers – 15%
3. Midterm Paper – 25%
4. Final Paper – 40%

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

I. Introduction

Feb. 3: Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace*, pgs. 305-320

II. Economy: Management of the Household

Feb. 4: Meeks, *God the Economist*, pgs. 1-73

Martenson, *The Crash Course*, pgs. 1-122

III. Ecology: Studied Knowledge of our Planetary Household

Mar. 2: Martenson, *The Crash Course*, pgs. 125-216
McFague, *A New Climate For Theology*, pgs. 1-40
McKibben, *Eaarth*, pgs. xi-101

IV. Ecumenicity: Connection to the Worldwide Household

Mar. 3: Peters, *In Search of the Good Life*, pgs. 35-170

Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*, pgs. vii-100

V. Home Economics: Charitable, Just, and Sustainable Life Together in the Household of God

Apr. 13: Meeks, *God the Economist*, pgs. 75-183

Apr. 14: McFague, *A New Climate For Theology*, pgs. 41-176

Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace*, pgs. 207-304, 321-327

May 4: Martenson, *The Crash Course*, pgs. 217-275
Heinberg and Lerch, *The Post Carbon Reader*, pgs. 63-73, 140-150, 184-203,
259-278, 295-313, 335-344, 385-418, 442-458

May 5: McKibben, *Eaarth*, pgs. 102-219

Presentations of Constructive Proposals