

(22-857B) THE OIKOS OF GOD: ECONOMY AND ECOLOGY IN THE GLOBAL HOUSEHOLD

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to theological reflection on economy and ecology in a globalized world. 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 interconnected households we inhabit are increasingly marked, not by the kind of sustaining relations on which home life depends, but by various forms of injustice and degradation. There is also a growing recognition that the ecological and economic crises facing people worldwide are mutually constitutive and that singular, disconnected responses are therefore inadequate. The goal of this course is to draw upon diverse theological and ethical resources in thinking critically about the economic and ecological crises facing our common global household *and* constructively toward a more charitable, just, and sustainable future.

Course Objectives

Knowing – To sharpen one’s understanding of the dominant economic, socio-political, and environmental forces shaping contemporary existence as well as several key theological and ethical responses being proposed today.

Being – To deepen one’s personal hope in God’s power for life over death.

Doing – To gain proficiency communicating and engaging theologically and ethically to empower Christian individuals and communities to upbuild a more just, sustaining, and hopeful world.

Course Texts

Chang, Ha-Joon, *Economics: The User’s Guide*. Bloomsbury Press, 2014 (ISBN: 978-1620408124, Price \$18.98 at www.amazon.com).

Gorringe, Timothy and Beckham, Rosie, *Transition Movement for Churches*. Canterbury Press Norwich, 2013 (ISBN: 978-1848255074, Price \$12.62 at www.amazon.com).

Keller, Catherine. *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement*. Columbia University Press, 2014 (ISBN: 978-0231171151, Price \$31.50 at www.amazon.com).

Meeks, M. Douglas, *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy*. Fortress Publishers, 2000 (ISBN: 978-0800623296, Price \$26.10 at www.amazon.com).

Shiva, Vandana. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*. South End Press, 2005 (ISBN: 978-0896087453, Price \$14.98 at www.amazon.com).

Wirzba, Norman. *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age*. Oxford University Press, 2007 (ISBN: 978-0195333503, Price \$31.59 at www.amazon.com).

Wolff, Richard. *Democracy At Work: A Cure for Capitalism*. Haymarket Books, 2012 (ISBN: 978-1608462476, Price \$10.59 at www.amazon.com).

Course Requirements for Full Credit

1. Reading of all assigned literature and active participation in class discussions.
2. Weekly two-page response papers to the Meeks, Wirzba, and Keller readings, which include text summary, critical response, and 3 questions for class discussion.
3. Final Paper (15-18 pages for masters students, 22-25 pages for doctoral students). Drawing on the course readings, lectures, and discussions, provide a critical theo-ethical assessment of one aspect of the present management of our planetary household, as well as a constructive theo-ethical proposal for alternative ways of managing our ecclesial, national or global households.

* All written work is to be submitted in Microsoft Word format, double-spaced, Times Roman font, 12pt type, 1 inch margins.

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 – 25 %
2. Weekly Response Papers – 25%
4. Final Paper – 50%

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.

Grading Criteria for Weekly Response Papers

1. You accurately summarize the key content and basic argument of the text.
2. You critically engage the basic argument of the text.
3. You raise three substantive questions for class discussion.

Grading Criteria for Final Paper

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.

Course Schedule

I. Introduction

Feb. 5: Chang, 1-144

II. Economy: Management of the Household

Feb. 12: Meeks, xi-45
Chang, 145-248

Feb. 19: Meeks, 47-97
Chang, 249-334

III. Ecology: Studied Knowledge of our Planetary Household

Feb. 26: Wirzba, 1-122

Mar. 5: Keller, 1-86
Shiva, 1-72

IV. Oikoumene: Connection to the Worldwide Household

Mar. 12: Keller, 87-167
Shiva, 73-108

Mar. 19: Keller, 168-236
Shiva, 109-144

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

- Mar. 26:** No Class for MTSO (Spring Break)
Keller, 237-316
Shiva, 145-186
- Apr. 2:** No Class for GETS and MTSO
- Apr. 9:** No Class for GETS (Spring Break) and MTSO
- Apr. 16:** Meeks, 99-125, 157-180
Wolff, 1-84
- Apr. 23:** Meeks, 127-155
Wolff, 85-183
- Apr. 30:** Wirzba, 123-148
Gorringer & Beckham, 1-43
- May 7:** Wirzba, 149-202
Gorringer & Beckham, 45-82
- May 12:** Presentations of Final Papers