

## **MN 294W Rural Ecosystems and Ministry: Connecting Land and People, Creation and Community**

**Name of Instructor** Mark Yackel-Juleen **Semester and Year:** Spring 2023

Fulfills the Rural Ministry requirement, Open to all students, 1 Credit Hour, Credit/No Credit only

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Environmental sustainability is at the forefront of societal concerns and in rural contexts there are deep socio-economic and cultural relationships between environment and community. This course will explore those relationships through a biblical/theological lens and reflect on connections to rural cultural contexts and how that informs our practice of ministry—particularly preaching, teaching, and worship.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1) Become conversant with issues of care of creation (environmental sustainability) and develop an understanding of how they play out in Small Town and Rural (STaR) contexts [Practice of Complex Analysis];
- 2) Explore biblical texts and theological concepts that pertain to care of creation issues [Practice of Biblical and Theological Wisdom]; and,
- 3) Engage in practical reflection on integrating 1 & 2 above in the practice of preaching, teaching, and leading worship [Practice of *Missio Dei* in Word and Sacrament].

### **PROCEDURE**

The class will meet for one hour synchronously on Friday morning. The class times will be devoted to discussion. Content will take the form of the assigned readings, recorded lectures, videos, and interviews to be viewed prior to class time. The discussions will address the content presented the prior week or the expected readings. Please inform the instructor if you need to be absent from class in any given week.

**Writing Style Guidelines & plagiarism:** Please see the Style Sheet (found on MyWTS) for information about style guidelines for academic writing as well as Wartburg's plagiarism policy. For a helpful and brief discussion regarding plagiarism, see Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald. *The Craft of Research*. 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016, 206-10.

**Accommodations Policy:** It is seminary policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students are responsible for informing their instructor of any documented disability by the end of the first week of class or upon subsequent diagnosis. Documentation on disability conditions is kept in a confidential file in the ADA Compliance Officer's office.

### **EVALUATION**

- 1) **Attendance, and engagement with presentations, class discussion, and course readings (30%);**
- 2) **Due Midterm (20%),** choose a scripture passage (preferably one that we addressed in class, but you are not limited to those) texts and write a 1-to-2-page reflection paper that:
  - a) Identifies how the text speaks to you personally in regard to care of creation and community; and
  - b) How that text might speak in a small town and rural ministry context.
- 3) **Final Assignment. (50%)**  
A six-to-eight-page written project in which the student briefly analyses an issue related to rural ecosystems and ministry, and then creates either a four-session plan for a Christian education offering or a manuscript for a sermon addressing the issue. Specific details for the project will be given during the semester.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

#### **Required:**

Bowens, Natasha, *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming*, (British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2015) **ISBN-10:** 0865717893

Yackel-Juleen, Mark L., *Everyone Must Eat: Food, Sustainability, and Ministry*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021) **ISBN-10:** 1506448381

#### **Recommended:**

Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*, (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2008) **ISBN-10:** 0521732239

Gary W. Fick, *Food, Farming, and Faith*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2008) **ISBN-10:** 0791473848