Instructor: Dr. Emily DeMoor  
edemoor@loyno.edu

Important! You will be notified by email when your course web site is available (normally the week before class begins). Please check your Loyola email account for instructions. (To find your Loyola email address, go to the Loyola home page: www.loyno.edu. At the upper right section of the home page (grey area), go to “Find People.” Enter your first and last name and select “student,” then hit return. You should see your email address. In the same grey area of the home page, you may select “webmail” to access your Loyola email. Additional help on email is available at: <http://www.loyno.edu/infotech/docs/index.html>.

Please reply to the instructor’s email when you receive it to confirm that you are ready to begin the course. If you experience difficulties in finding your email address, please contact Diane Blair: dbblair@loyno.edu.

Course Description

The course engages students in a process of discernment, interpretation, and response to the natural world as revelation, as a primary mediation and distinctive locus of divine presence and activity, as the comprehensive religious curriculum. Our exploration will begin with searching out this revelation in the cosmological order through scientific insights into the structure and functioning of the universe. From this macrophase perspective, the course will shift to the more proximate witness to the divine as this finds expression in and through the planet Earth. The first four sessions plumb the depths of the universe to discover what the universe discloses to us about the Creator; Sessions Five through Eight focus on the Earth as a unique and distinctive aspect of this revelation. Out of this experience and insight we will articulate the meaning of this revelation for ourselves and for people of faith in our time. We will examine environmental problems and their solutions through the lenses of spirituality and religion.

Course Objective

By the end of this course, it is hoped that students are disposed to discern, appreciate, and celebrate the divine presence and activity that permeates Creation.
Key Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- perceive and experience the presence and activity of the divine within the natural world and relate this to the teachings of the Christian tradition;
- articulate your own experience and interpretation of the revelation mediated throughout the natural world;
- identify five models of Christian spirituality that are rooted in an appreciation of Creation;
- identify and describe some of the significant contributions of contemporary scientific investigations of the natural world for theology, spirituality, religion, and other disciplines;
- demonstrate a familiarity with contemporary theology’s affirmation of and emphasis on the meaning and significance of Creation;
- discern and integrate the insights and understanding you achieve through the course in your life and work;
- appreciate the contribution of the nature writers whose literary works evoke a sense of the sacred within Creation;
- bear witness to the wonders of Creation in your life and practice of ministry.
- Understand environmental problems and their solutions through the lenses of spirituality and religion.

Required Readings


Additional readings will be scanned into the Course Material.

**Course Videos (available in the Blackboard course)**

“Aqua” a powerpoint meditation
https://exchange.loyno.edu/exchange/ogorman/Inbox/water.EML/1_multpart_xF8FF_2_Aqua.pps/C58EA28C-18C0-4a97-9AF2-036E93DDAFB3/Aqua.pps?attach=1#5.

*The Blue Planet.* Prod. IMAX, 1990. VHS. ASIN B-0000-5BCO-S. This IMAX video can be ordered at [http://www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).


*The Earth is the Lord’s.* Prod. the United States Catholic Conference, 3211 Fourth Street NE, Washington, DC 20017-1194. VHS. USSC, 1995. Publication #058-3. This video is out of print, but may be obtained through Loyola’s Distance Library Services; see contact information below.

*Journey of the Universe.* Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker. Educational Series.


*Renewal, Stories from America’s Religious-Environmental Movement.*
Evaluation and Course Requirements

Participation in Weekly Sessions (50% of Graduate Student evaluation; 100% of CEU evaluation)

The sessions of this course include assignments for reading, audio segments and discussion questions. These are provided in the Assignments section of the course website. In addition to reading all the materials assigned and listening to assigned audio segments, all students will also be expected to participate in the class discussions by way of the Discussion Board. Participation in class discussions accounts for 50% of the grade for graduate students. CEU credit (100%) is also determined by weekly participation in the discussions and session assignments. Students are asked to read all posts and respond substantively to at least three of your colleagues' postings (i.e., more than "I agree." or "I like your ideas." -- say why and include your own reflections on the specific question being addressed, drawing from course materials, and experience). Ideally, each discussion “thread” of the course will become a conversation. Be sure to check responses to your own postings and respond to any questions that others may have posed for you.

Graduate Student Cumulative Assignment due at the end of the course (50%)

Graduate students will complete two cumulative assignments, integrating the course material and the student’s ministry experience and research. Students choosing the Reflective Essay option should follow the guidelines provided in the LIM Guide to Written Theological Reflection, which is posted in the Resources>General Resources section of your Blackboard website. It provides examples of the MLA citation style required by the program. You may also consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (latest edition) for proper writing and citation style in reflection papers.

Reflective Essay Number One (25%): Choose one of the following:

The fourth of Thomas Berry's “Twelve Principles for Understanding the Universe and the Role of the Human in the Universe” explains that the three basic tendencies of the universe are differentiation, inner spontaneity or subjectivity, and communion. Identify some forms in which these fundamental dynamics find expression in your world of experience and what the revelation of that is with regard to who God is and how we should live. Your essay should be 8 - 10 pages in length.

Or

Develop a strategy or proposal approximately 10 pages in length for implementing the course goals and insights and experiences drawn from the course with your life and work. For example, you might leaven an existing curriculum with Creation references and applications if you are Religious Educator, a liturgical program if you are a liturgist, a seminar if you work in the marketplace, a discussion group with your friends or
colleagues, etc. The point is to propose strategies and initiatives to “green” your ministry (like the illustrations provided in *Green Sisters*).

**Reflective Essay Number Two (25%): Choose one of the following**

In the third of Twelve Principles, Thomas Berry refers to various voices of the natural world when he writes that “the universe as a whole and in its various modes of expression speaks to us of itself and of the deep mysteries of existence…”. Choose a distinctive feature or aspect of your bioregion – flora, fauna, landform, watershed, etc. – about which to write. In the spirit of nature writing, write a 6 - 8 page essay in which you describe what you saw/heard/felt and interpret it as a sacred text.

*Or*

Prepare a selection of 10 nature writings that are inspired by the Universe as Divine Manifestation. Or, create a piece of artwork, a video or PowerPoint slide presentation (in consultation with the Instructor) in which you identify and elaborate five correlations that you discern between the texts of the Christian tradition and the “texts” of the natural world.

Remember to interact with course readings and other resources included in the learning design of the course.

All citations and formatting should follow the MLA style. Consult the *LIM Guide to Written Theological Reflection* for examples and guidance on the format of your paper.

**Grading Scale**

Please note that the LIM grading scale uses B as the standard for graduate-quality work. A and B+ indicate graduate work done with distinction, with B- and below signifying levels below graduate standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
<th>Characteristics of Student Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Work done with distinction. An outstanding use of all four evaluation criteria as a catalyst for critical reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Work done with distinction, with a few minor corrections needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Work of very good quality. The assignment is addressed in an exceptional manner with a good balance of personal insight and academic documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>The standard for the master’s degree. The assignment is adequately addressed in a clear and concise manner with appropriate documentation. If subsequent work meets this standard of quality, the degree</td>
</tr>
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Loyola Institute for Ministry Focus Courses

General Introduction

The LIM focus area courses are designed to assist you in developing some depth of perspective, knowledge, and reflection in a specific area of ministry praxis. As you probably know, the Loyola Institute for Ministry offers Focus Courses in eight areas: Pastoral Life and Administration, Small Christian Community Formation, Religion and Ecology, Christian Spirituality for Pastoral Ministry, Marketplace Ministry, Religious Education, Hispanic Ministry and Youth Ministry. These courses were designed as an integral part of the curriculum leading to either the Masters degree or the Certificate in Pastoral Studies or Religious Education. Students may participate in these courses for graduate credit or CEU’s (continuing education units for certificate students).

The focus area courses will ask you to continue to reflect on your ministry/religious education experience in light of the course readings and collateral materials that are provided to you. If the ministry or religious education focus area you have chosen is new to you, we strongly suggest that you find a setting related to your chosen focus area in which you might volunteer to serve. By so doing, you will develop some beginning experiences in that praxis area, and you will be able to test some of your understandings of your experiences against the course materials you are studying.

Format of Online Focus Courses

As in all LIM courses, the strength of our program is the intentional learning community and its ongoing invitation to disciplined conversation. Through the on-line course, you will be part of an intentional learning community that will carry on extended...
and disciplined conversation by way of the internet. Through the medium of technology you will interact with the instructor and fellow students.

This focus course involves eight sessions, each of which last for one week. The weekly sessions involve your work in reading, listening to audio conversations and input, and discussing the questions listed for that session. After completing these eight sessions, all students will complete a course evaluation and graduate students will submit their final written assignment.

Each of the online courses will have a set beginning and ending date. For convenience sake, the courses will be divided into session weeks and each week will begin on Monday at noon and conclude the following Monday at noon. The discussions and assigned activities must be completed within that week. Normally, one student will be asked to begin the threaded discussion. We ask that the “lead” student complete his or her initial postings no later than Wednesday of the week. Everyone else will respond to the discussion question on that same thread and should post their first respond by at least Saturday. The conversation will continue until Monday noon.

The heart of the conversation in these online courses will take place by way of a discussion board, an asynchronous or time-independent application. This means that you will have no set times or schedules of when you must be in class. We do expect that you will come to class three times a week. At that time you will be able to read the comments of your instructor and fellow students and you will be able to share your comments as well.

To participate in these online students will need a computer with high-speed internet access. Check requirements: http://library.loyno.edu/browser_check.php. You will also need sound capability in order to listen to the weekly audio segments. (You will need to download the free Quicklinks program to listen to audios, please install the latest version. See the “Plug-in” section of the Resources>General Resources section of the course web site.)

**Course Materials and Resources**

Course audios are available under each week’s session folder. The LIM *Guide to Written Theological Reflection* is found in the Resources>General Resources section of the course web page. It provides graduate students with a shortened version of the MLA citation style used in LIM reflective essays. In addition to the materials provided, you will need to purchase the required textbooks listed in this syllabus and obtain the web-based documents for the course. Each focus area course also provides an annotated bibliography that may be used by you in your course research (Resources>Course Resources). You may wish to purchase some of these additional texts for your own library.
Web Browser

Blackboard recommends that students and faculty use the Mozilla Firefox web browser. There are some compatibility issues with the Microsoft Explorer web browser. To download the Mozilla Firefox web browser, go to: http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/products/download.html

Obtaining Textbooks

Please order your required textbooks as early as possible from your local book store, directly from the publisher (this is especially helpful for documents from the U.S. Bishops Conference), or from an internet source such as www.amazon.com or http://www.barnesandnoble.com. Some texts are available only from special sources, so please check any notes listed in the “Required Texts” section of the syllabus.

Library and Technical Assistance

Directions on how to use the Loyola library databases and e-books are in the DIY (Do It Yourself) section of the library web site: http://library.loyno.edu/ask/diy/handouts

Direct links to handouts and tutorials are also available through the Blackboard course: Resources>General Resources>Library and Blackboard Tutorials. If you encounter any difficulties, you may also connect in live chat with a librarian: http://library.loyno.edu/ask/ask_librarian_live.php

If you have questions about Blackboard, you may:

Visit the Learning Commons desk at the Monroe Library
Call our 24/7 Blackboard assistance numbers: 1-866-562-7278.

Live internet support, a comprehensive collection of Bb FAQs and troubleshooting guides, and animated tutorials on how the system works can be found on the Blackboard Web Support Portal.

To Contact the Loyola Institute for Ministry

Loyola Institute for Ministry
Campus Box 67
6363 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118

Email: lim@loyno.edu
Phone:
Toll Free in the U.S. and Canada: 1 (800) 777-5469
Toll Free in the U.K. 0800-896-344
OR: (504) 865-3728

For course questions, please contact your instructor directly. The email and contact information is listed in the Faculty section of the Blackboard site.

University Policy

Statement on Intellectual Honesty: Intellectual honesty is simply acknowledging, through documentation, all those sources that the writer has used in preparing any written work. Plagiarism, the obverse of intellectual honesty, is the use of any form of material, whether written or verbal, without formal indebtedness through documentation. The paraphrasing of any work, either written by other students or found in print or in an electronic form, without acknowledgement, is plagiarism. Not properly identifying the source of a quotation, even though the quotation is enclosed in quotation marks, is also plagiarism. Not only the exact language of a sentence or phrase, but any material falsely presented as one’s own – an ideal, a concept, data, graphs, or a line of argument – constitutes plagiarism. Any material that neither originates with the student nor is common knowledge among educated persons must be formally acknowledged.

It must be remembered that written work stands on its own, not on the intention of the writer. The burden of academic honesty rests on the student, not on the instructor. If students have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism or what is required, they should inquire before the work is submitted. Otherwise, they open themselves to charges of plagiarism.

The penalties for plagiarism are severe: a student who is found to have plagiarized or to have assisted another student in plagiarizing may be given a failing grade for the course on the first violation; a second offense may result in exclusion or dismissal from the university.

Statement of Incomplete Grades: Grades of “I” (incomplete) change to “F” automatically if the course is not completed and the grade changed by the sixth week of the subsequent term, excluding summer terms.

Disability Statement: Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services at 504-865-2990 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.