

CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PEACEBUILDING
CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Food, Farming, and Faith:
Living in God's Creation

PCTS/BTS – 3950/3
JUNE 16-20, 2014

Course Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR: Norman Wirzba, Ph.D.

TIMES: JUNE 16-20, 9AM-5PM

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What would it mean to take seriously God's desire to be in reconciled relationship with the whole creation? This course examines this possibility by considering the doctrine of creation as it is presented in scripture, and then developing this teaching in terms of the salvation of the whole world. We will develop together a theological understanding of agriculture and food production as a particular lens and avenue by which to consider God's reconciling ways with the world.

Understanding today's food system is prerequisite to developing a spirituality of eating that honors God and creatures together. By week's end participants will have a deep sense of God's love for every created thing. They will also be able to articulate practices of eating that bring healing to our world.

The course is offered either for training or for 3 hours of academic credit.

CORE TEXTS (students must order these ahead of time on their own)

Norman Wirzba. *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Ellen F. Davis. *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Wendell Berry. *The Art of the Commonplace* (Counterpoint, 2002)

N.B. Students are expected to bring a Bible to each class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES (for credit)

The following are the general outlines of requirements for those taking the class for credit. Others are encouraged to read as much as possible, however, in order to receive maximum benefit from the course. Assignments can be submitted via email to the instructor or, when appropriate, directly to the instructor.

1. Pre-Class Reading (30%). Students must read in their entirety all three core texts before the first day of class. They must turn in three 3-page (double-spaced) essays in which they describe the *main themes* of each book. Each essay will conclude with *four substantive questions* each book prompts you to ask. These synopses and questions will be shared with the class and will help frame our week's conversation together. DUE: June 16 at the start of class.
2. In-Class Participation (10%) Students must attend each class and make substantive contributions in the forms of asking good questions, sharing personal insights, and actively contributing to the class discussion.
3. In-Class Presentation (20%) On the last day of class each student will make a presentation to the class that demonstrates how God's reconciling ways with the world are being realized (or might potentially be realized) in some sector of the food and agricultural system that is familiar to them. Your presentation can be based on something happening where you live, or it can be of a place that you have learned about. Your presentation should provide a clear description of the place and organization, and a rationale for why and what you think we can learn from it.

4. Final Paper (40%) Students will write a 10-12 page (double-spaced) essay in which a personal theology of eating is developed. This essay must demonstrate a clear understanding of the wide range of theological topics that can be brought to bear on the question. It will be graded for the clarity and coherence of its presentation. DUE: August 4

STYLISTIC REQUIREMENTS

CMU as adopted the following as its standard guide for all academic writing:

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. Fifth edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

The final paper should follow an accepted academic format for citations, bibliography, etc. (e.g. APA, Chicago). You may choose the format but whichever you use, be sure to use it properly and consistently.

EVALUATION

In general, I expect you to *follow the guidelines* of the assignment and to discuss deviations from them with me before turning it in. In evaluating your work, *quality* is more important than quantity. I appreciate creativity, clear expression of ideas, evidence of engagement with the reading and class sessions, and projects that are of real interest and value to you.

In your papers, be sure to avoid any form of *plagiarism*. If you have doubts about what is appropriate, a useful website is <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>. Plagiarism is a serious issue and will result in grade reduction or action by the university (see university policy on this). Appropriately attribute and footnote all sources that make your way into your work.

Good communication skills are essential for justice and peacebuilding work. Students will be expected to communicate knowledgeably, clearly, effectively, concisely and persuasively. All written work should be well informed, well

organized and well documented.

Each completed assignment will be given a numerical grade (according to its value toward the final grade) and the corresponding letter grade. The final mark for each student is determined by the sum total of all numerical grades, which is then assigned a letter grade according to the scale below.

LETTER GRADE/PERCENTAGE SCALE

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Descriptor
A+	95-100	4.5	Exceptional
A	88-94	4	Excellent
B+	81-87	3.5	Very Good
B	74-80	3	Good
C+	67-73	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-67	2	Adequate
D	50-59	1	Marginal
F	0-49		Failure

Criteria	A - Excellent	B - Competent	C - Below Expectations
CONTENT (quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them)	- has clarity of purpose - has depth of content - displays insight or originality of thought -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources	- has clarity of purpose - has substantial information and sufficient support - contains some originality of thought -uses quality resources	- has clarity of purpose -lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - has little originality of thought -uses mostly quality resources
STRUCTURE (logical order or sequence of the writing)	- is coherent and logically developed -uses very effective transitions	- is coherent and logically developed -uses smooth transitions	- is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed -has some awkward transitions

CONVENTIONS (appearance of the writing: sentence structure, usage, mechanics, documentation)	- has virtually no errors of conventions	- has minimal errors of conventions	- is understandable but has noticeable problems of sentence structure, usage, mechanics or documentation
STYLE (personality of the writing: word choice, sentence variety, voice, attention to audience)	- is concise, eloquent and rhetorically effective -has nicely varied sentence structure -is engaging throughout and enjoyable to read	- displays concern for careful expression -has some variation in sentence structure -is generally enjoyable to read	- has some personality but lacks imagination and may be stilted and may rely on clichés -has little variation in sentence structure -is not very interesting to read

NOTE: The *CMU Student Handbook* is a useful guide for further information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, and appeals. Grades are not final until vetted and approved by the Dean's Office.

FINAL DATE FOR WITHDRAWAL

The final date to withdraw from this course without academic penalty is July 15, 2014.

SCHEDULE AND TOPICS (Tentative)

Note: Coffee Breaks are normally 10:30-11:00 am and 3:30-4 pm.

Monday

9 -12:30 Introductions, syllabus & requirements, discussion of pre-class reading assignment

1:30– 5 What is Agrarianism?

Tuesday

9-12:30 Thinking about Creation – Scripture

1:30-5 Thinking about Creation – Theology

Wednesday

9-12:30 Thinking Theologically About Agriculture

1:30-5 Thinking Theologically about Food

Thursday

9-12:30 Practices in Faith Communities

1:30-5 A Spirituality of Eating

Friday

9-12:30 The Work of Reconciliation

1:30-5 Student Presentations & Wrap-Up