



CHTH 224/324

Theology and the Environment Course Outline 2021

PRE-CHRISTMAS SUMMMER SCHOOL 2021 (15 November - 18 December)

Classes:

Mon: 9.00 am - 11.50 am
Wed: 9.00 am - 11.50 am

(Distance students are able to join
in live via Zoom
Videoconferencing)

Lecturer:

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Welcome to CHTH 224/324: Theology and the Environment.

This Pre-Christmas Summer School paper will be taught on campus from November 15th – Dec 18th. Distance Students will be able to join class via Zoom Videoconferencing.

In an era of climate change, sea-level rise, species extinction, and the widespread destruction of natural habitats, environmental ethics is an urgent global concern. This paper explores the contribution of the Christian tradition to the understanding of our environment and to responsible human habitation of the world.

LECTURER'S INTRODUCTION

Dr Andrew Shepherd is the Theology Programme Lecturer in Theology and Public Issues, based in Wellington. His working life has alternated between academic teaching roles and leadership responsibilities in Christian and non-profit organisations. His research interests include:

- Ecological Theology and Environmental Ethics
- The Ethics and Practice of Hospitality
- Theology and Phenomenology
- Theology and Economics
- Peace Theology
- Contemporary theologies of protest and social transformation

For further information, see: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/staff/otago720307.html>

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students completing this paper at 200-level will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the key elements of ecological theologies.
- Outline and critically evaluate a range of ethical approaches to human relationships within nature.
- Describe the significance of virtues and practices within the development of a contemporary Christian ecological ethic.
- Offer critical theological/ethical reflection upon the ecological impact of human patterns of consumption.

In addition, students completing this paper at 300-level will:

- Offer a critical evaluation of the ecological merit of one ecological theologian/ethicist.

This paper is designed to foster the following graduate attributes identified in the University of Otago Teaching and Learning Plan (2013-2020) and Graduate Profile:

- **GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE:** Appreciation of global perspectives in the chosen discipline(s) and the nature of global citizenship.
- **INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE:** Commitment to intellectual openness and curiosity, and the awareness of the limits of current knowledge and of the links amongst disciplines.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Ability to communicate information, arguments and analyses effectively, both orally and in writing.
- **CRITICAL THINKING:** Ability to analyse issues logically, to challenge conventional assumptions, to consider different options and viewpoints, make informed decisions and act with flexibility, adaptability and creativity.
- **CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING:** Knowledge and appreciation of biculturalism within the framework of the Treaty of Waitangi; knowledge and appreciation of multiculturalism; and an ability to apply such knowledge in a culturally appropriate manner.
- **ETHICS:** Knowledge of ethics and ethical standards and an ability to apply these with a sense of responsibility within the workplace and community.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY:** Basic understanding of the principles that govern natural systems, the effects of human activity on these systems, and the cultures and economies that interact with those systems.
- **RESEARCH:** Ability to conduct research by recognising when information is needed, and locating, retrieving, evaluating and using it effectively.

EXPECTATION OF STUDY HOURS

Theology and the Environment is offered as either a 200-level or 300-level paper. The University expects students to put in 10 hours of study per point. As an 18-point paper CHTH224_324 therefore requires 180 hours of study. This will involve:

- **30** Contact Hours (10 classes x 3 hours)
- **60** hours of Reading/Preparation for Class (10 classes x 6 hours)
- **10** hours of Participation in Online Discussion: (4 discussions x 2.5 hours)

- 30 hours for Assessment #2
- 20 hours of Private Study
- 30 hours of Exam Revision and Final Exam

COURSE STRUCTURE

Module 1 – Theology in an Ecological Age

- Definitions & Challenges
- How do we see the world?
- God & the World
- Anthropology & Human Vocation
- Apocalyptic Visions & Ecological Hope

Module 2 – Christian Ecological Ethics

- A Land Ethic and Ecological Virtues
- Moral Formation – Limits and Attachment
- Moral Formation – Place and Attentiveness

Module 3 – Applied Ethics

- Food Production & The Politics of Water
- Species Extinction & Conservation

TEACHING

This paper will be taught from 15th November – 18th December via twice-weekly classes on the Dunedin campus. Distance Students will be required to join and participate in this class via Zoom.

The course consists of two elements: *independent* learning and *collaborative* learning.

Independent learning involves doing the necessary pre-reading before classes, additional reading, and research and writing for assessment tasks. Day to day, the bulk of your study hours will be spent completing the course readings (**all reading material for the course is available on e-Reserve via Blackboard**) alongside the accompanying Reading Guide notes. “Completing” the reading means:

- 1) Carefully and attentively reading the assigned texts for each class/topic.
- 2) Utilising the Reading Guide notes to ensure that you have understood and engaged deeply with the readings.
- 3) Making notes responding to the questions linked to these readings.

NOTE: Tasks 3 (above) is *especially* important. A proportion of our class times will involve facilitated discussions around the assigned readings. Being prepared for class discussions includes being able to identify things that remain unclear to you and being ready to share your critical thoughts and reflections.

The 10 morning classes are an opportunity for *collaborative* learning. While classes will take place on campus in Dunedin, distance students will be able to join and participate in class via Zoom. For each class I will usually open the class by delivering some material to help frame the topic and focus attention on some of the key issues that need addressing. This lecture-style input is not intended to *replace* or *repeat* the pre-reading material but rather is designed to *complement* and *complexify* the content you have already engaged with. A significant part of class sessions will be of an interactive nature, utilising break-out rooms for small-group discussion. Part of the class time will also take a more traditional tutorial approach and I will employ a Socratic-method to facilitate deep and critical reflection upon the set readings and encourage open-discussion from the themes that arise.

Attendance at class times is strongly recommended. If you are unable to attend, then please, out of courtesy to myself and your classmates, inform me of your intended absence. All classes will be recorded, uploaded to Blackboard, and thus will be available for viewing later. If you are a distance-student and unable to participate in class sessions due to work or family commitments, then, upon request, there is the option of running two evening tutorial sessions during the course to provide the opportunity to engage in discussion on course material.

Outside of class times I will be available for meetings with students, either in person (in Dunedin) or by phone or Zoom. To arrange a meeting time, please contact me by email: andrew.shepherd@otago.ac.nz

ASSESSMENT TASKS

CHTH224

Online Discussion (1200-1500 words)	20%
Book Review/Critical Essay (2000 words)	30%
Exam (3 hours)	50%

CHTH324

Online Discussion (1200-1500 words)	20%
Book Review/Critical Essay (2500 words)	30%
Exam (3 hours)	50%

Please ensure that you select assignment options from the correct level, 224, or 324.

CHTH224

Assignment 1: Online Discussion

Due date: Midnight on Friday November 19th, November 26th, Dec 3rd, December 10th.

Length: 1200 words (minimum contribution of 4 posts of 300 words each)

Description:

Students to contribute to the online discussion forums. Discussion will *continue* and *extend* themes raised in class by seeking to deepen the critical reflection and/or by offering a new perspective. Good contributions will ask pertinent questions and/or enter into constructive dialogue with another student's contribution. Concise contributions should be backed up by

reasons and explanations and draw on reading material and personal experience. Each week's discussion involvement will be worth 5%.

Key assessment criteria:

- Students should make at least four posts (one each week for the first four weeks) and also contribute follow-up comments/reflections in at least two weeks of the course.
- Contributions should make significant points relevant to class material/discussions.
- Contributions should be clear, concise and considered.
- Contributions should be well-written and interact respectfully with other students.
- Brief references should be included at the end.

Assignment 2: Book Review/Critical Essay

Due date: Midnight on Tuesday December 7th

Length: 2000 words

Description:

Read a book from the provided bibliography (or, get approval from Andrew Shepherd for another book you choose). ***In dialogue with other reading and lecture material, write a critical essay/book review outlining the key features of the Christian ecological theology that the book offers and the key elements of the ethical framework it proposes.*** Consider:

- How does the author conceive of the relationship between God and the world?
- What is the significance of Christ and the Spirit in their theology?
- How does the author understand the place of humanity in the world and their role and responsibilities?
- What resources does the author draw upon in developing their argument? (Scripture? Tradition? Reason? Experience?). Which is given the most emphasis?
- What does the author understand as the key issues that give rise to the current ecological predicament?
- What does the author believe should be our response?
- What is the motivation/basis for ethical action?
- What is the author's basis for hope?
- What is the place of the Church in the author's theological ethic?
- What do you make of the ethical responses offered by the author? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Key assessment criteria:

- Communication: A well-structured and well-reasoned argument.
- Evidence of understanding of key features of a Christian ecological theology.
- Evidence of critical engagement with at least three readings from the Course Reader.
- Presentation: Spelling and grammar, and formatting and referencing which adheres to Style Guide.

Final Exam

Date: tba

Length: 3 hours

Description: Students will be expected to answer 3 questions.

CHTH324

Assignment 1: Online Discussion

Due date: Midnight on Friday November 19th, November 26th, Dec 3rd, December 10th.

Length: 1200 words (minimum contribution of 4 posts of 300 words each)

Description:

Students to contribute to the online discussion forums. Discussion will *continue* and *extend* themes raised in class by seeking to deepen the critical reflection and/or by offering a new perspective. Good contributions will ask pertinent questions and/or enter into constructive dialogue with another student's contribution. Concise contributions should be backed up by reasons and explanations and draw on reading material and personal experience. Each week's discussion involvement will be worth 5%.

Key assessment criteria:

- Students should make at least four posts (one each week for the first four weeks) and also contribute follow-up comments/reflections in at least two weeks of the course.
- Contributions should make significant points relevant to class material/discussions.
- Contributions should be clear, concise and considered.
- Contributions should be well-written and interact respectfully with other students.
- Brief references should be included at the end.

Assignment 2: Book Review/Critical Essay

Due date: Midnight on Tuesday December 7th

Length: 2500 words

Description:

Read a book from the provided bibliography (or, get approval from Andrew Shepherd for another book you choose). ***In dialogue with other reading and lecture material, write a critical essay/book review outlining the key features of the Christian ecological theology that the book offers and the key elements of the ethical framework it proposes.*** Consider:

- How does the author conceive of the relationship between God and the world?
- What is the significance of Christ and the Spirit in their theology?
- How does the author understand the place of humanity in the world and their role and responsibilities?
- What resources does the author draw upon in developing their argument? (Scripture? Tradition? Reason? Experience?). Which is given the most emphasis?
- What does the author understand as the key issues that give rise to the current ecological predicament?
- What does the author believe should be our response?
- What is the motivation/basis for ethical action?
- What is the author's basis for hope?
- What is the place of the Church in the author's theological ethic?
- What do you make of the ethical responses offered by the author? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Key assessment criteria:

- Communication: A well-structured and well-reasoned argument.
- Evidence of understanding of key features of a Christian ecological theology.
- Evidence of critical engagement with at least three readings from the Course Reader.
- Presentation: Spelling and grammar, and formatting and referencing which adheres to Style Guide.

Final Exam**Date:** tba**Length:** 3 hours**Description:** Students will be expected to answer 3 questions.**RESOURCES**

- Blackboard, the University's online learning tool;
- This Course Outline and the Reading Guide notes;
- eReserve, which you can access via Blackboard (for all assigned course readings);
- The Department's "Study and Style Guide" which recommends students use the 16th edition of the Chicago citation style when writing essays. It is available online at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>
- The handbook *Distance Learning Information and Support 2019*, providing advice on administrative matters not covered in this course book and on the Distance Library Service. (You may download the PDF from the 'Essential Information' web page).

THIS IS IMPORTANT!

Please Note: You **must have access to Blackboard and your University email address** in order to complete this paper. You will receive access once your enrolment is complete. Communications from your lecturer regarding teaching matters will be provided only through Blackboard and your University email address, as outlined in the University's Student Communications Policy, so you must check these emails regularly. Student Administration (eVision) will also send important messages through your University email.

If you have any concerns about your access to Blackboard or to other course resources, please contact the lecturer or administrative staff immediately so that these can be resolved.

You will find there is a lot of helpful information and resources on the Department's website. In particular, we require you to read the section called "Essential Student Information." You will find it here:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

This page provides a number of useful resources such as the *Study and Style Guide* and the Plagiarism Declaration Form you must attach to your assignments. It supplies detailed information on assessment and student support. In particular, it contains guidance on the topics of plagiarism and deadlines, both of which can incur penalties if not heeded. This also is where you will find instructions for making online discussion posts and submitting

assignments electronically. So it is very important you make yourself familiar with this material. Our assumption is that you have read it.

We will make reference to information on the website in the following pages, so do take the time to follow the links and absorb the material. It will save you from making costly mistakes and help to make the practical experience of distance study a straightforward one.

READINGS

The required readings for the course will be available through the eReserve link on Blackboard.

REFERENCING SYSTEM

For writing essays, the Department requires that you use the 16th edition of the Chicago Style Guide, which is the norm for many academic journals in the Humanities and is often recommended for theses in the humanities. The Department has prepared a *Study and Style Guide*, which outlines the Chicago Style and offers other advice on essay presentation. You may find it via the Department's "Student Resources and Information" page: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

SUBMITTING WRITTEN WORK

The Book Review/Critical Essay (Assignment #2) should be submitted **electronically** via the "Assignment" feature on Blackboard by **midnight** on the due date notified. Likewise, the four online discussions (Assignment #1) will take place on Blackboard. Please do not submit paper copies. For full instructions about how to submit assignments electronically via Blackboard as well as other important information on plagiarism, grading, and deadlines, please see the "Essential Information" web page.

All Assignments submitted in the Theology Programme must be prefaced with a student Plagiarism Declaration Form (or the plagiarism declaration on Blackboard must be ticked). They will not be deemed to have been submitted unless and until the Plagiarism Declaration Form has been submitted or box ticked. The form can be downloaded from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

It is also on the Blackboard site for this course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All Assignments submitted in the Theology Programme must be prefaced with a student Plagiarism Declaration Form (or the plagiarism declaration on Blackboard must be ticked when submitting an assignment).

It can be downloaded from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/> It is also on the Blackboard site for this course.

Academic integrity means being honest in your studying and assessments. It is the basis for ethical decision-making and behaviour in an academic context. Academic integrity is informed by the values of honesty, trust, responsibility, fairness, respect and courage. Students are expected to be aware of, and act in accordance with, the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

Academic Misconduct, such as plagiarism or cheating, is a breach of Academic Integrity and is taken very seriously by the University. Types of misconduct include plagiarism, copying, unauthorised collaboration, taking unauthorised material into a test or exam, impersonation, and assisting someone else's misconduct. A more extensive list of the types of academic misconduct and associated processes and penalties is available in the University's Student Academic Misconduct Procedures.

It is your responsibility to be aware of and use acceptable academic practices when completing your assessments. To access the information in the Academic Integrity Policy and learn more, please visit the University's Academic Integrity website at www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity or ask at the Student Learning Centre or Library. If you have any questions, ask your lecturer.

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116838.html>

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116850.html>

STUDENT SUPPORT

The “**Essential Information**” web page provides helpful information on how to access the University Library's resources, as well as a guide to the support services available to students at the University of Otago, including the Student Learning Centre and Disability Support: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/>

For **administrative enquiries**, please contact the Theology Administrator:
Email: theology@otago.ac.nz, Phone: 03 479 8639

For after-hours enquiries or assistance with IT support, eVision, and other University services, please contact **AskOtago: ask.otago.ac.nz or phone 0800 80 80 98.**

We recommend that you contact the Theology Programme as soon as possible if you have any problems participating in the course or accessing resources, or if you are late in enrolling. Please remember to check your University email account regularly for updates and announcements.

THEOLOGY PROGRAMME

University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand
www.otago.ac.nz/theology