

PT 615 – Prophetic Hope and Creative Practice

Dr. Tim Van Meter

Associate Professor of Christian Education and Youth Ministry

Fall 2015

Thursday 2:00 – 4:50

Catalog Description: Contemporary human cultures rely on systems that exploit our earth and diminish its capacity to sustain life. Many people find it increasingly difficult to articulate hope or sustain a vision for a future in which all creatures can thrive on our abundant earth. This course engages the creative work of poets, artists, musicians, and filmmakers as spiritual practices supporting communities in the midst of ecological, economic, political, and cultural challenges. Students will explore theology and the arts as sources for articulating hope, constructing resilient communities, and renewing heart and spirit.

Course Objectives:

- . 1) articulate a practical theology for hope and creative action
- . 2) explore creative practices for teaching hope in the midst of ecological, economic, and political challenges
- . 3) envision a teaching event or ongoing creative practice embodying hope

Required Texts

Brown, William P. *Wisdom's Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible's Wisdom Literature*. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2014.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Reality, Grief, Hope: Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014.

Christie, Douglas E. *The Blue Sapphire of the Mind: Notes for a Contemplative Ecology*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Rukeyser, Muriel. *The Life of Poetry*. Paris Press, 1996.

Supplemental Texts

(see Populi optional booklist)

Course Schedule

8/27 – Introduction and Overview

9/3 – Read Brueggemann through Chapter 3

9/10 – Read Brueggemann Chapter 4 to end

9/17 – Readings in Lament and Grief – Poetry, Essays, Reflections

9/24 – Read Rukeyser through Part 2

10/1 – Read Rukeyser Part 3 to end

10/8 – Readings about Prophetic Vision – Poetry, Essays, Reflections

10/15 - Fall Break

10/22 – Read Brown through Chapter 2

10/29 – Read Brown Chapters 3 & 4

11/5 – Read Brown Chapter 5 to end

11/12 – Readings seeking Creative Hope – Poetry, Essays, Reflections

11/19 – Read Christie through Chapter 5

11/26 – Thanksgiving Break

12/3 – Read Christie Chapter 6 to end

12/10 – Final meeting and Course review

Assignments

Discussion and Class Participation (30% of final grade) Discussion will be a central part of this seminar and students are expected to attend each class having completed all of the assigned reading and ready to interact in an informed and helpful manner.

Reflection Journal (bring to each class) (10% of final grade) **Three (3)** entries per week of at least 200 words. You need to choose a poet and an artist as primary conversation partners. Your reflections may also be on course readings, a poem, essay, or other items related to the themes of this course. You will be asked to submit your journal or a selection of writings from your journal on December 10.

Readings Days (30% of final grade)

There are three days in the syllabus designated Readings. You will need to find or create three contributions (poetry, art piece, short film, etc.) (3-5 min each) for our work expressing the theme for that day (Lament, Creativity, Hope). Be ready to read, show or otherwise present what you bring.

Final Paper or Project: - (Due December 13) (30% of final grade)

For your final paper develop a theological foundation for hope. Alternatively you can create a retreat or curriculum that explores these themes.

Class Attendance and Participation

Individuals will have different styles for demonstrating full engagement with the class. Introverts and extroverts can participate without penalty. If you choose to do the required reading and bring your best ideas to the course, you will fully participate. If you have any concerns about this or other requirements, please set up a meeting and we will discuss it.

Due Dates and Course Extensions

All assignments are to be completed by the date assigned. If life circumstances beyond your control interfere with the completion of your work, you should speak with me to set a subsequent deadline. A course extension cannot be granted by the faculty but must be requested through the procedures described in the student handbook (pages 5-6).

Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment. Please contact me by e-mail tvannmeter@mtso.edu.

Please see Student Handbook for sections providing policy details on the following:

ADA—MTSO seeks to remove barriers to inclusion in its learning communities. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs at the beginning of the semester. Please contact the Director of Student Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any accommodation must be agreed upon prior to the due date of the affected course requirement.

Class attendance—Regular attendance is expected in all classes. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. An excessive number of absences may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will not be allowed credit for a course if he or she is absent for 25% of the class sessions. As it relates to blended courses, students may not be allowed credit if they are absent for 25% of class meetings or if 25% of online course work is not completed. Use of Skype or similar technology is not a substitute for attendance in class.

Electronic Devices—Turn mobile devices off or “vibrate only” during class. Browsing the Internet or engaging in email or social network conversations during class is discouraged. Instructors have the right to impose grading penalties for disruptions due to electronic devices.

Human Subjects Research—Research by MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel that collects non-public information from and/or about living individuals or contemporary organizations/groups for purposes of publication or public presentation (including class assignments) must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel should err on the side of caution and apply for committee approval of any activity that may fit this description.

Inclusive Language—In accordance with MTSO’s policy on inclusive language, all students are expected to use gender inclusive or gender neutral language in their writing and in the classroom discussions when referring to human beings.

Incompletes—To receive a course grade of Incomplete, students must submit the petition form from the Registrar with all signatures to the Dean’s Office before the last day of regularly scheduled classes. See Student Handbook for intensive term deadlines. Any petition submitted without a due date for outstanding work will be denied. If work is not complete by the due date the Registrar will record the grade of F for the course.

Pass/Fail—The decision to exercise this option must be made before the end of the second week of the course by completing the appropriate form available through the Registrar. To receive a grade of "pass" the student must do at least the equivalent of C minus work in the course.

Plagiarism—Plagiarism is a serious matter of academic, professional, and personal integrity. All students at the masters level are expected to understand the requirement to provide attribution when the work of others is used. Students are also expected to be familiar with and understand the school’s policy on Academic Misconduct found in the Student Handbook. If students have questions about attribution, citation, and how to avoid plagiarism they should consult the course instructor, the school’s writing instructor, or library staff. When in doubt it is better to provide attribution even if one is uncertain about the proper citation form. Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that results in disciplinary actions per the Student Handbook that may range from failing an assignment or course to expulsion.