

DM9010W Rural Ministry

Offered: 2018: Intensive - September
[Unit offered alternatively as CT9010W]

This unit engages with the distinctive and diverse culture of rural Australia with a view to exploring the needs and opportunities for ministry. Interaction with and observation of agricultural life will provide a basis for theological reflection on agriculture, the land, social and family life, the environment and economics in a rural setting. Out of reflections on these themes using the Bible and contemporary discussions, appropriate models for pastoral care, church life, community involvement and support in times of natural disaster will be developed and evaluated. The unit will orientate those who have not previously worked in rural communities. It will also be valuable to rural clergy and other professionals, including farmers and lay workers who seek tools to be more effective in their roles.

Upon successful completion of this unit, it is expected that students will be able to:

1. Articulate the ways in which theology relates to context, with particular reference to Australian rural contexts
2. Identify and interpret the social, environmental and spiritual needs of a rural community.
3. Describe and engage both challenges and opportunities of missional work in a rural context.
4. Create a personal and community-based plan of missional engagement within a particular rural context.
5. Identify and apply biblical passages which shape faith in a rural context.

Prerequisites: Nil

Class Time: Residential intensive of five days in a rural context

Assessment:	One book review (1,000 words)	(20%)
	One essay (3,000 words)	(40%)
	One ministry/survey plan (2,000 words)	(40%)

Faculty: Geoff Leslie

Recommended Reading:

* = set texts recommended for purchase

Berry, Wendell and Norman Wirzba. *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2002

Brodie, Marc and Graeme Davison. *Struggle Country: The Rural Ideal in Twentieth Century Australia*. Melbourne: Monash University ePress, 2005

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002

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

Gammage, Bill. *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2011

Habel, Norman C. *The Birth, the Curse and the Greening of Earth: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 1–11*. The Earth Bible vol. 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011

Hawkes, Nicholas. *The Country Is Different: Ministry and Hope in Rural Australia*. Collingwood, Victoria: JBCE, 1995

Inge, John. *A Christian Theology of Place*. Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, VT, USA: Ashgate, 2003

Theodore Hiebert, "The Human Vocation: Origins and Transformations in Christian Traditions," in Hessel, Dieter T. and Rosemary Radford Reuther (eds). *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of Earth and Humans*. Cambridge, Mass.: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000

Main, George. *Heartland: The Regeneration of Rural Place*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005.

- Muenstermann, Ingrid "Too Bad to Stay or Too Good to Leave? Two Generations of Women with a Farming Background: What Is Their Attitude Regarding the Sustainability of the Family Farm?," in Luck, Gary W. *Demographic Change in Australia's Rural Landscapes Implications for Society and the Environment*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2011.
- Rickard, Lauren. "Critical Breaking Point?" The Effects of Drought and Other Pressures on Farming Families." Department of Agriculture. January 1, 2008. Accessed February 12, 2014.
http://www.daff.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/842246/Birchip_Cropping_Group.pdf
- Stehlik, Daniela "Australian Drought as Lived Experience: Social and Community Impacts," in Fisher, Melanie. in *Beyond Drought People, Policy and Perspectives*. Collingwood, Vic.: CSIRO, 2003
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004