



# Overall Description of the Creation Spirituality & Leadership Program

Are the Climate Emergency and the Democracy Meltdown that are happening all around us a wake-up call to go deeper into what it means to be human and to rediscover the sense of the Sacred? If so, then we need to deepen our awareness of self and the Sacred and this is the purpose of the CSLP program.

There is no greater crisis on the planet today than climate change. But the crisis of climate change is about more than information or technology; *it is a spiritual crisis, a crisis of what it means to be human and our place in the cosmos and “all our relations,”* relations with one another and with ourselves as well as with other species whether forests and rainforests, oceans and rivers, fishes and whales, elephants, polar bears, dogs and cats, soil and air, and much more.

Creation Spirituality addresses these and other relationships and provides practices and a lineage of courageous and dynamic individuals who call us to be the mystics and prophets and warriors for change that they were in their own time. We will draw on their wisdom and truth-seeking.

In this certificate program on Leadership and the Creation Spirituality tradition, we will draw from the principles of CS to deepen our understanding of our place in the cosmos and in our cultures; to explore who we are in our depths; to discover and learn from the deepest wisdom teachers of our culture; to learn the new creation story from science and how to apply the principles of CS to diverse challenges facing us as a species including Education and Reinventing of work and Reinventing our citizenship in the world. We will explore How to bring spiritual values to our work in the world and our work with people of other spiritual traditions than our own and who also honor creation as sacred and as a source of revelation that it so often is.

Our goal is to render participants to become deeper and more grounded mystics—that is, lovers of creation—and prophets—that is, courageous warriors ready to defend creation.

In short, our goal is how we might bring forth a more just and ecologically sound and sustainable civilization.

Our program consists of **five online seminars** that will ground the student in a basic understanding of the CS lineage and how it prepares us for the challenges that lie ahead for our species and for the planet. *It is strongly advised that students take courses 1 and 2 in that order. Other courses may follow any order.* The seminars include the following:

- 1. Original Blessing, Cosmic Christ and other Foundational Teachings of Creation Spirituality**
- 2. Ecology and the New Cosmology**
- 3. What the Mystics Teach us about Courage, Love and Responsibility**
- 4. Reinventing Culture and Work**
- 5. Deep Ecumenism or Interfaith**

**In addition, students will choose two Art as Meditation classes from these offerings:**

1. Creating Haikus
2. Scribing for the Soul, Journaling from the Heart, Illuminating the Mind
3. Yoga: The Art of Living Virtuously

Descriptions for seminar and art as meditation classes follow below.

**Seminar classes will be two hours in length with a minimum of 30 minutes in small discussion groups. Some will run 10 weeks; others 8 weeks. Books and articles will be recommended, and a few will be required reading. *Matthew Fox will “drop in” on some classes once per class. He will also teach the Mystics class alone or with others. (Mirabai Starr and he will co-teach a class on “Meister Eckhart and Julian of Norwich” in summer of 2020). He and Andrew Harvey will teach a course on “Deep Ecumenism” the first year as well.***

**Art as Meditation classes will be 90 minutes in length and run for 8 weeks.**

**The certificate can be achieved in about 14 months of work or one may proceed at a slower pace if one wishes.**

## II. Seminar Course Descriptions and Faculty:

### **1. Original Blessing, Cosmic Christ and other Foundational Teachings of Creation Spirituality**

Creation Spirituality is a modern movement with a rich lineage. In this course we'll explore the basic differences between a fall/redemption version of Christianity and a creation-centered one. This includes the historical Jesus—who was Jewish and therefore never heard of Original Sin.

In the Western tradition CS begins with the first writer of the Bible (the Yahwist source) and is integral to both the prophetic and wisdom traditions. Thus CS is the lineage of the historical Jesus who derives from the wisdom tradition. CS is found in many great mystics, artists, prophets from Thomas Merton to Mary Oliver in our day. And it was especially strong in the medieval renaissance characterized by such mystic warriors as Hildegard of Bingen, St Francis, Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart, Mechtild of Magdeburg, Julian of Norwich, Dante, Nicolas of Cusa, etc.

In this class on the foundational principles of CS we will explore such teachings as that of Original Goodness (Aquinas) or Original Wisdom (Hildegard) or Original Blessing (Fox); the Cosmic Christ (as distinct from an Imperial Christ); Panentheism (as distinct from theism); the Four Paths of Creation Spirituality; the call to be both mystics (lovers) and prophets or warriors defending what we love, prayer therefore as a “radical response to life.”

*In the first round of the certificate this course will be taught by Dr. Gianluigi Gugliermetto.*

### **2. Ecology and the New Cosmology**

The new creation story from science calls us to recover a sense of the sacred by way of encountering with fresh eyes and hearts the sacramental nature of the universe and its capacity to arouse awe, wonder and gratitude. Since, as Thomas Berry teaches, “ecology is functional cosmology,” a renewed cosmology empowers us to enter the call of responding to the wounds of Mother Earth with strength, creativity and vigor. Thus we will explore the basic teachings of the new cosmic story and its implications for action to save Earth as we know it. “Awe,” says Rabbi Heschel, “is the mind confronting the universe.” Today’s new story

from science is awe-filled and a springboard for rebooting our mystical awareness for prophetic action.

A cosmology is the way in which a culture understands its world through symbol and story. It isn't merely about how the universe is put together; it's about our place and purpose in it. Since the modern era, we've been beset with a dualistic spirituality that focuses on individual salvation and has contributed to a dangerous split between psyche and cosmos. A dualistic cosmology views our world as a mere machine and nature as mere resources to be exploited. Our institutions reflect this cosmology: from our economic system to our educational system, we favor competition over cooperation, efficiency over beauty, control over justice. But a new story has emerged. Today's science has revealed an interconnected, seamless, evolving cosmos.

In this course, we will draw from the principles of Creation Spirituality to deepen our understanding of our place in the cosmos; discover or create spiritual practices that reflect this deeper understanding; and explore how we might bring forth a more just and ecologically sound civilization.

*This course will be taught by Dr. Theodore Richards.*

### **3. What the Mystics Teach us about Courage, Love and Responsibility.**

Mystics live at the edge of consciousness and the edge of love and justice-making. In this course we will ask them what they have to teach us at this pivotal time in human and planetary history. How can our consciousness expand with their help? Of course what is really at stake is this: How can all of us become the mystics we are called to be? Studying other mystics is an important tool to accomplish that vocation for ourselves.

This course will at times treat one mystic in depth or else treat two or more together around common themes. Such great mystic-prophets as Hildegard of Bingen; Meister Eckhart; Thomas Aquinas; Mechtild of Magdeburg; Julian of Norwich; Nicolas of Cusa from the pre-modern era may be treated. And from our times, Thomas Merton, Mary Oliver, Dorothy Day, Howard Thurman or Adrienne Rich. Rumi, Hafiz, Ibn Arabi from the Sufi tradition may be chosen as subjects as well. The Four Paths of CS assist greatly in pulling out the deep courage and creativity of the mystics and allows us to relate their wisdom to our own.

*Our first round of classes will be taught by Mirabai Starr and Matthew Fox who will treat Meister Eckhart and Julian of Norwich.*

#### **4. Bringing Creation Spirituality into Reinventing Culture and Work**

In his book, *The Reinvention of Work*, Matthew Fox insists that our work is sacramental: it is how we future generations out of our gratitude for existence; it is how most of us leave a mark on the world. Indeed, he proposes that an understanding of the “priesthood of all workers” reminds us of the dignity and responsibility of our work to the extent that it is work that is good for our own souls, for the environment and future generations of human and more-than-human dwellers on the planet.

What happens when we bring a CS value system to our work worlds? **How can we discover meaningful work as our economic system puts us in debt and imperils the planet?**

By bringing CS principles into our work worlds we can awaken our professions and our souls. The inner work becomes the outer work. Mystics the world over have pronounced on the holiness of good work. As Meister Eckhart puts it, “The outward work can never be small if the inward one is great, and the outward work can never be great or good if the inward is small or of little worth. The inward work always includes in itself all size, all breadth and all length.” The Bhagavad Gita teaches: “They all attain perfection when they find joy in their work.” The Tao te Ching says: “In work, do what you enjoy.” Thomas Berry calls us all to participate in the “Great Work” of our time which is about restoring healthy relationships between ourselves and the Earth.

Students will be invited to bring CS principles to our work worlds to reinvent our professions. Among these worlds might be the following: Education; Religion; Art and Creativity; Therapy; Social Work; Politics; Economics; Media; Medicine; Farming; Engineering.

Reinventing the relationship of Elders and Youth is also a crying need in our time when it is so important that Elders and Youth search together to find a common wisdom.

*The first round of the Certificate Program will consider the Wisdom of Youth and Dr. Theodore Richards will oversee a circle of youth leaders discoursing on their visions for the future.*

## **5. Deep Ecumenism or Interfaith**

Thomas Aquinas teaches that the Holy Spirit works through all religions and all cultures and that prophets can be found within them all. In our time of the shrinking of the global village, from technology and the internet to immigration and globalization, we find ourselves in the presence of others of different faith traditions or none. We search for what we share in common and what we can learn from one another, and above all how we can pool the wisdom of world religions to save our common planet.

Indigenous religions, for example, often hold in-depth teachings and practices about relating psyche to cosmos; of meaningful rituals; of eco-attentiveness and caring. Wisdom emerges from Eastern traditions, Taoist, Buddhist, Hindu and more; from Islam and Sufism; and many other sources, including humanism. We will explore the shared wisdom of the rich diversity of spiritual sources and practices while honoring and respecting differences as well.

*In the first round of the certificate program Matthew Fox and Andrew Harvey will team up to teach this class which will pair up Aquinas & Kabir; Eckhart & Rumi; Hildegard & Rabi; Thomas Merton & the Dali Lama.*

## **III. Art as Meditation: The Way of the Prophets. Course Descriptions and Faculty**

Art as Meditation as a spiritual practice has been called “the way of the prophets.” It is fitting therefore that we offer courses on art as meditation in a program that is to train leaders as mystic-prophets or mystic-warriors.

What is Art as Meditation and why is it the way of the prophets? Art as Meditation is centering by giving birth; focusing by creating. Creativity is often an invitation that invites the Holy Spirit in. Matthew Fox’s book title alone: *Creativity: Where the Divine and the Human Meet* speaks to that truth.

All art is bodily, as M. C. Richards, renowned potter and author of the classic book *Centering: In Poetry, Pottery and the Person* insists. That may be one reason art as meditation prepares us so well for our work in the world, including our work in the body politic. Creating can be fun and child-like—many of us had our play tools snatched from us when we were in high school or college. Art as meditation brings the child alive—which is after all the *puer, puella* or mystical self. Art as meditation can be revealing and instruct us in a discipline or craft but also fun.

We will be offering a variety of Art as Meditation classes at different times in the course of the year. Courses may range from Creative painting and Poetry to clay; from Yoga to Tai Chi; from Dreams to Dances of Universal Peace; from Zen Meditation to Drawing; from drumming to journaling or Haiku Making. When we gather in person at a retreat, we may offer Movement as Meditation.

Students will choose two Art as Meditation classes from among those offered. Currently we are offering three choices. Descriptions and Faculty follow.

### **1. “Scribing for the Soul, Journaling from the Heart, Illuminating the Mind”**

#### **Description:**

Illumination, an art form dating back more than a thousand years, bridges the bilateral brain; its analytical aspects call on the ability of the mind to plan and problem solve, while the aesthetic component draws upon the imagination and spirit.

In this Art as Meditation attention will be given to words as well as images, design as well as expression through journaling, simple art techniques, and multi-media “found” collage. No art experience required.

Several methods of written and non-verbal meditation will be explored through a creative “illumination” process stimulating self-discovery including a “word cluster” method of creating a daily journal entry, meditation, or prayer.

In combination, the Analytical and the Aesthetic artist within each of us exercise the imagination which lights up (or illuminates) the brain, enhancing emotional and spiritual development assisting in the development of empathy and compassion and transforming our conscious perception of “reality.”

***Instructor: Paula Artac***

## **2. Yoga: The Art of Virtuous Living**

### **Description:**

This class will explore a sampling of the various tools within the vast yogic toolkit in order to assist you in creatively expressing your deepest or truest self in the world. The lessons will include exercises in breathing, meditation and movement that support this process. Breathing exercises assist in regulating mental and emotional states. Meditation practice helps one learn how to train the attention and gain insight into mental phenomena. Mindful movement facilitates mind body integration that is vital to unlocking fixed patterns of being and subsequently creating new ones. All practices ultimately facilitate a deeper understanding of self and provide a means for aligning oneself with one's divine nature.

*Instructor: Broderick Rodel*

## **3. Creating Haikus**

### **Description:**

“Haiku is simply what is happening in this place, at this moment.” - Basho

In this course, you will practice awareness of “what is happening in this place, at this moment” – a kind of meditation that is vital for the process of creating the poetry that is haiku. We will draw from the teachings of the CS seminar classes you are taking surely insofar as they affect your soul. You will be treated to samples of both classical and contemporary haiku, learn the basics and essentials of the art form, and write your own haiku poems – receiving feedback from your peers and the instructor in the encouraging and nurturing tradition of GMU.

*Instructor: Mary Ann Cejka*

## **IV. Current Faculty**

### *Seminar Instructors*

**Matthew Fox, Ph.D.**, Author of 37 books on Spirituality and Culture that have been translated into 74 languages, he graduated from the Institut catholique de Paris. Among his books are *Original Blessing; The Coming of the Cosmic Christ; A Spirituality Named Compassion; Naming the Unnameable: 89 Useful and Wonderful Names for God...Including the Unnameable God; Meister Eckhart: A Mystic-Warrior for Our Time; Order of the Sacred Earth*. He founded and directed the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality for seven years at Mundelein College in Chicago and then 12 years at Holy Names College in Oakland, Ca. Silenced for a year and pursued by the Vatican and then expelled from HNC and his Dominican Order after 34 years, he started the University of Creation Spirituality that flourished for nine years. He then created a pilot program for inner city youth using pedagogic principles he developed for his adult spirituality programs over the years,

Fox is an internationally known lecturer and scholar on Meister Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen, Thomas Aquinas and other notable spiritual masters including Thomas Merton who coached him to go to Paris for his studies. He is currently an Episcopal priest who lives in northern California. [www.matthewfox.org](http://www.matthewfox.org)

**Theodore Richards, Ph.D.**, is the founder of *The Chicago Wisdom Project* ([www.chicagowisdomproject.org](http://www.chicagowisdomproject.org)) and the author of seven books and numerous literary awards. He is a graduate of The University of Chicago, The New Seminary, The California Institute of Integral Studies (where he studied with cosmologist Brian Swimme), and Wisdom University. Richards currently is an adjunct professor of philosophy at Becker College and also teaches philosophy through Bard College at the Odyssey Project in Chicago. Among his seven books are: *Creatively Maladjusted: The Wisdom Education Movement Manifesto; Cosmosophia* and *A Letter to My Daughters: Remembering the Lost Dimension & the Texture of Life*, winner of the Independent Publisher Awards Gold Medal in memoir. He lives on the south side of Chicago with his wife and three daughters. Find more about him and his work at [www.theodorericards.com](http://www.theodorericards.com).

**Mirabai Starr** has taught philosophy and world religions at the University of New Mexico and is author of *God of Love: A Guide to the Heart of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam Caravan of No Despair, Wild Mercy: Living the Fierce and Tender Wisdom of the Women Mystics*. She has offered fresh translations of John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, and Julian of Norwich. She was a close friend and co-worker with the late Ram Dass for many years. She lives with her extended family in the mountains of northern New Mexico.

**Gianluigi Gugliermetto, Ph.D.**, is an Episcopal priest and theologian. He helps Christian communities to develop a critical reflection and a deepened approach to their own theological, prophetic, and mystical tradition. He has published essays on North-American theology, interreligious dialogue, and desire/eros in Christianity. He has translated ten of Matthew Fox's books into Italian and acts as his interpreter when he lectures in Italy. He is the founder of Creation Spirituality Italy [www.spiritualitadelcreato.it](http://www.spiritualitadelcreato.it) and is the parish rector and director of the Center for Spirituality at Christ Church, Ontario, California [www.christchurchontario.net](http://www.christchurchontario.net)

**Andrew Harvey** is an internationally acclaimed religious scholar, teacher and author of more than 40 books, including *The Hope, Son of Man, The Return of the Mother, The Direct Path, Essential Mystics, Turn Me to Gold: 108 Poems of Kabir*. Born in India in 1952, Harvey has devoted his life to studying the world's mystical traditions and is currently devoted to seeking an awakening of humanity to sacred activism in order to stand up to the life-threatening challenges of our time.

### *Art as Meditation Instructors*

**Paula Artac D.Min, ATR-BC**, is a professional watercolor artist, board certified art therapist, university instructor, liturgical art designer, illuminator, and author, who holds the position of Professor in Charge of the Expressive Arts Therapy concentration within the Master of Arts in counseling graduate program at Ottawa University, Phoenix, AZ.

**Broderick Rodell, PhD, ND**, is an educator whose passion and calling is to aid others in the art of practicing a life well lived. He sees his role as a guide to those interested in acquiring the knowledge, skills and practices that will enable them to develop the characteristics that are conducive to self-realization, wellbeing and flourishing. A holistic approach to yoga that embraces a broad spectrum of truth claims from past to present over various traditions and disciplines is his means. Capoeira, a Brazilian dance/martial art, is also one of his teaching instruments for developing character and building community.

**Mary Ann Cejka, Ph.D.**, A psychologist, writer, and activist, Mary Ann Cejka holds a B.A. in Religious Studies from Loyola Marymount University, an M.Div. from Yale, and a Ph.D. in psychology from Purdue. She has had many years of experience in teaching, research, ministry, development, nonprofit management,

and support services for overseas humanitarian work. Her articles have appeared in a number of periodicals including *America*, *The Christian Century*, *National Catholic Reporter*, and *Sojourners*. *Artisans of Peace: Grassroots Peacemaking among Christian Communities*, a volume that she edited with Thomas Bamat, received the Pax Christi Book Award for 2004. In addition to being a writer and teacher of haiku, Dr. Cejka has taught courses in multicultural psychology for the University of Phoenix, in peace studies for Global Ministries University, and in personality psychology as well as culture and psychology for Walden University. She currently serves as provost of Global Ministries University, while continuing to offer dissertation advisement in Walden University's Graduate Program in Psychology.