EL3530: Education Two

Religious Education in Relation to Creation

Course Workbook

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One intensive weekend:
        April 4-6 held at   GH107
        Shalom Hill Farm   Office hours by appointment
http://meh.religioused.org/web/Home.html

Old Celtic prayer

There is no plant in the ground
But tells of your beauty, O Christ.
There is no life in the sea
But proclaims your goodness.
There is no bird on the wing
There is no star in the sky
There is nothing beneath the sun
But is full of your blessing.
Lighten my understanding
of your presence all around, O Christ.
Kindle my will
to be caring for creation.

Welcome to *Religious Education in Relation to Creation*. I hope that this class will be a fruitful learning experience for you. Towards that end I present this workbook. It contains most of the typical elements you'd find in any standard syllabus, but it also includes as much of my own thinking and design consideration for this course as I thought would be helpful, as well as all of the handouts and other materials from EL1515 that should be useful in this class, as well as new pieces specific to this content area.

If you are pursuing an MDiv degree, this course will most often occur at the end of your degree work. As such, it fulfills the *Education Two* requirement of helping you to integrate and summarize your work in educational leadership. If you are pursuing an MA in some form of leadership, then this course will provide a framework for you to concentrate on specific elements of the necessary learning competencies. A central element of this course — no matter your degree goal — will involve analysis and synthesis of your learning processes to date, and planning for your future learning once you've graduated. At the same time, we will also be exploring what we, as religious educators, can learn from the experiences and insights of environmental educators.

This course assumes that you have already completed either *Education One* or *Foundations of Educational Leadership*, and in doing so have developed an initial learning portfolio. Given the wide variety of ways in which those courses are taught at Luther, you may need to do some review. I have provided a section of this workbook to support you in that endeavor. If for some reason you have not yet built a portfolio, please make an appointment to see/call me early in the term. There are also additional resources available on my website: http://meh.religioused.org/web/Portfolio.html

Like all of my courses, this one is "in process." I deeply appreciate feedback along the way of what is working for you – and perhaps more importantly, what is not.

What this class is about

If you have read Luther's catalog, you will recognize the following statement:

> " A study of the educational issues raised by emerging environmental awareness, particularly in relation to questions of stewardship and justice. This course focuses on the rural context (as well as the student's own context at Luther), considering specific examples of ways in which Christian educators can support congregational learning and ministry that embraces ecological literacy."

This class is also designed to fulfill the Ed2 requirement in the MDiv curriculum, and to allow MA concentrators to pursue specific competencies. As such, the class assumes a basic set of core convictions that are common to the area of educational leadership at Luther Seminary. These are usually stated in this way:

> "Christian leaders and communities are called and shaped by a living God who initiates relationships with people of all ages in a world of many cultures. Christian education is not about 'giving faith to people, but rather about helping people to explore relationship with God.
>
> Educational leaders are transformers! We help communities move from passive information transfer, to the development of active Christian competence in a community."

Working from these convictions we have sought to design a curriculum that develops and nurtures educational leaders. In particular we have identified the following core competencies in educational leadership we believe students should be able to demonstrate in order to complete a master's level degree. Divided into three categories (knowledge, attitude and skills), they are as follows:

Knowledge competencies

    1a   able to articulate a clear statement of their vision for providing leadership in supporting faith nurture across the lifespan

    1b   familiar with basic faith nurture and learning theories: faith development over the life cycle, multiple intelligences, constructivist learning design, developmental learning principles, cross cultural learning, etc.

    1c   familiar with the integration of biblical narrative, theological inquiry and ritual practice within religious education

    1d   familiar with the history and trajectories of faith nurture, particularly in the student's primary denominational/faith community context, so as to be able to assess a specific context and develop learning strategies within it

    1e   familiar with a variety of ways of supporting, structuring, facilitating and trouble-shooting learning communities

    1f   familiar with multiple models of faith nurture

Attitude competencies

    2a   inquires easily into, and responds openly to others' ideas

    2b   easily and constructively surfaces and questions assumptions underlying ideas, feelings, and actions

    2c   comfortably uses their own experience to critique expert opinion AND uses expert opinion to critique their own experience

    2d   nourishes personal curiosity about God's activities in the world, and is able to wonder with awe at God's activities

    2e   comfortably engages diversity with personal integrity

    2f   is deeply engaged in lifelong learning

Skill competencies

> 3a   capable of adequately developing, critiquing, and tailoring curriculum materials for use in a specific context (this includes denominational issues)
>
> 3b   capable of supporting theological and biblical reflection in a variety of contexts, and with a variety of people involved
>
> 3c   capable of supporting cross cultural engagement in at least one specific cultural context
>
> 3d   capable of supporting intergenerational learning
>
> 3e   capable of engaging at least one pressing contemporary learning challenge from within a faith community framework (denominational pluralism, interfaith dialogue, media culture, environmental pressures, socio-political unrest, peace and justice issues, race and class issues, gender, disability, etc.)
>
> 3f capable of recruiting, training, supporting, supervising, evaluating and affirming volunteers in the shared ministry of Christian faith nurture

How I hope to help you get there

By the time you complete your degree you should be able to demonstrate almost all of these competencies, and have a clear idea of how you will continue your learning to meet the rest.

Many of these competencies you may already have been capable of demonstrating before you ever arrived at Luther. Students come from a variety of places and with a rich assortment of previous experience. It has always been our goal to help you identify the areas in which you need to grow, and to challenge you to stretch further in those places where you already have gifts. This list is our most comprehensive attempt to do so within the arena of educational leadership to date.

Accountability

This course is offered as part of specific degree programs at an accredited institution of higher education. As such, it carries with it certain expectations for achievement. I hope to help you meet those expectations by being as clear about them as I can be. The primary method I've chosen to use to support you in this endeavor is that of a learning portfolio. All of the reading, writing, and "habit" exercises assigned in this course provide materials for you to draw upon in developing your learning portfolio.

At the end of our time together you will turn in this portfolio, and I will assess it using the rubric you can find here: http://meh.religioused.org/portfoliorubric.pdf. The portfolio instructions are clear about the basic materials you should include, but a portfolio process can be useful across your various learning contexts and you should feel invited to include other materials that you find pertinent. It is my hope that by exploring such a process in this class you may find it useful in others. More information about the EL portfolio is available here: http://meh.religioused.org/web/Portfolio.html

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are four course requirements, in addition to the basic one of showing up and participating in the entire Shalom Hill Farm weekend. They include reading a selection of texts, attempting to establish a new environmental habit (hereafter referred to as a practice of creation care), a consistent practice of reflective integration through the writing of a journal, and preparing a learning portfolio.

Reading assignments:

1.   Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream* (2010)

2.   David Orr, *Earth in Mind* (2004 or later edition)

3.   Michael Schut, ed. *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective* (2009)

4.   Choose at least two statements on caring for creation: one from your specific denomination, and one from another denomination or faith. (If you do not come from a faith community which is within a denomination, then please email me and we'll work out an alternative focus.) One of the easiest ways to find such statements is to go to the website of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (http://www.nrpe.org), and look under your community and then under "statements."

Finally, please note that there are many additional resources available at my website for this course (http://meh.religioused.org/web/EL3530.html) and its accompanying resource page (http://meh.religioused.org/web/EL3530_Resources.html).

Additional required assignments

Integrative writing

Given that we will have such compressed face-to-face time in this class, the primary written assignment will be to keep a journal that engages the readings, your environmental practice and any other elements of the course.

The minimum requirement for the journal is that you reflect (approximately 250 words) on each of the books and other written materials for the course (that would be five entries – Schut, Orr, Steingraber and the two faith community statements); AND that you reflect at least every other week between February 3rd and our weekend time together (again in 250 word increments) on your practice of creation care (that would be five additional entries). This is a total of ten entries, a requirement of roughly 2500 words in all. Of course, you are always welcome to reflect at more length, or more often!

Keep in mind that the genre of journal is more informal than other kinds of writing, and that you are free to muse on your questions and your concerns. Some of the reading we will do is likely to raise powerful feelings – the journal space is one place in which to explore them.

You are welcome to use whatever kind of journal space you find most conducive to reflection – this includes lovely blank page books, an electronic file on your computer, your personal facebook status page, a public blog space, pretty much anything you would like to try.

I highly recommend Dannelle Stevens and Joanne Cooper's book *Journal Keeping: How to Use Reflective Journals for Effective Teaching and Learning, Professional Insight and Positive Change* as a source of insight into how to set up a journal and how to use it effectively. They have several suggestions as to how to begin.

Practice of earth care

One of the primary elements that both environmental education and religious education have in common is their goal of inviting people into beliefs and practices that are not supported in the larger culture – indeed, in some instances they are actively counter cultural. During the

spring term I am asking that you choose a practice of creation care that is new to you and attempt to make it a habit. The list of possibilities is potentially endless, with several that have been identified by national organizations as helping to reduce your ecological footprint. The *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life* text is also full of ideas. Please email me by February 10th with your choice of practice. I'm happy to be in conversation with you if you'd like to brainstorm about what practice to choose.

My goal in this assignment is to provide an experience of embodied learning that is connected to the ideas of the course. Please be assured: I am not in this way implying that faith *requires* particular practices. Rather, I am suggesting that faith invites response, and that such response is always embodied, always aware of how *incarnational* Christian faith is. Religious educators need to know how to support such responses, and how to do so in sustainable ways. We can learn a lot from our environmental educator colleagues – and from each other -- about how to support and nurture responsive practice.

Final Project

Put together a statement of how your faith, your vision for educational leadership in communities of faith, and ecological literacy intersects. Make that statement public in some way – you could create an animoto (cf. animoto.com), an iMovie piece, a Tackk.com poster, create a paper flyer and post it around your church or at Luther, do a podcast – the possibilities are nearly endless, but the point is to make an integrated statement in a public way.

Portfolio

Finally, polish your learning portfolio in relation to this class and your progress through your degree program. The purpose of this portfolio is to showcase your accomplishments with the various elements of the learning competencies. Most students built an initial portfolio in EL1515 and did a beginning assessment at that time. Now we are looking for you to reassess where you are, and further document your accomplishments. You may draw upon all of your previous experience (including projects you've completed in contextual education or on internship, essays you've written in the candidacy process, reflections you did during CPE, etc.) as you work through the list of competencies.

We can talk about this more in our weekend meeting, but you should look at the list as soon as you can and begin to identify both those elements for which you can easily demonstrate achievement, and any elements you still need to work on. Use the required assignments of this class to develop those "growing edge" elements, and to create evidence of your achievement of them.

During February I would like to be in contact with each of you individually (either in person or through email) to discuss where you think you are with the learning competencies. We will map out what is reasonable for you to work on, and identify specific learning goals. There should be at least one learning competency from the list that you have not yet mastered (all of us can always keep learning and growing!), and for which you can integrate ideas and elements from this course.

Your final learning portfolio is due on or before May 2nd. I would prefer to receive this as an electronic file (either as an attachment, or through a link to a google site or an e-folio site, or something similar), but if you prefer hard copies than please provide me with an address to which you would like the portfolio returned once I have completed grading it. Please submit attached electronic files in pdf, rtf, doc or docx formats only.

COURSE CALENDAR

Prior to our weekend meeting

Required reading (and I recommend reading in this order):

This course workbook
Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*
David Orr, *Earth in Mind*
Michael Schut, *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life*
Two faith community statements on caring for creation

Goals to accomplish via email with me (mhess@luthersem.edu) by the end of February:

Get oriented to the course
Choose a practice of creation care to begin and let me know what it is
Decide how and where you'll journal
Tell me how you will get to Shalom Hill Farm (If you have a car and can drive a couple of your classmates to Shalom Hill Farm for our weekend in April, that would be great to know ASAP. I will set up a google document to make that happen more easily.)

Things to work on prior to our weekend:

Finish the reading!
Write in your journal
Establish a practice of creation care

Weekend Event / April 4-6

This is the weekend we will retreat to Shalom Hill Farm and explore care for creation and ministry in southwestern Minnesota. You will need to arrive at Shalom Hill by 5 pm, and it takes about 3 hours to drive from the Twin Cities. For those of us who are carpooling, we will meet at Luther at 1 pm that day.

All of our meals and snacks, beginning with dinner on Friday and concluding with lunch on Sunday, will be provided. We will conclude our retreat with lunch following worship with the local congregation. Plan on being able to leave around 1 pm. Make sure that you bring appropriate clothing along (boots/shoes for walking, comfortable

clothes that can withstand mud, etc.). Please also bring your journal with you. Bedding (sheets, towels, etc.) will be provided.

Goals for the weekend:

(1) Immerse yourself in a rural ministry context
(2) Explore differing approaches to caring for creation in southwestern Minnesota
(3) Meet with local environmental advocates working on environmental issues
(4) Experience worship in a small rural congregation
(5) Further integrate what you've been learning through your reading and practice of creation care

Directions to Shalom Hill Farm:

From Minneapolis/St. Paul--Take Hwy 169 from the Cities to Mankato. At Mankato, 169 runs together with Hwy 60 for a time. Stay on 60 through Lake Crystal. Just before Madelia, take the Hwy 15 exit toward New Ulm. Go @1 mile and turn left (west) onto Cty. Rd. 3 toward LaSalle. Approx. 1 mile past LaSalle turn right (west) toward Darfur. Stay on this road until you cross Hwy 71 and come to Jeffers (4 miles west of 71). At Jeffers turn left (south) on Cty road 52. Go 4 miles on this road (the last mile is gravel) and turn right (west) on Cty 3. There will be a Shalom Hill Farm sign marking this turn. Go approximately 1.5 miles and the Farm is on the right side of the road.

Further information: http://www.shalomhillfarm.org/

Final assignments

Due May 2nd:

Complete the minimum number of journal entries
Create your public statement (cf. assignment)
Polish and submit your learning portfolio

COURSE HANDOUTS

Elements for review (from EL1515)   beginning on p. 16

        A few relevant biblical texts
        Trio of triads
        Developmental intentions chart
        Discernment
        The grace of great things
        Parker Palmer's paradoxes
        Parker Palmer's diagrams
        Boys grid questions
        Bloom's table of verbs
        Vella's principles
        Dykstra on evaluation
        Responsible imagination definition

Weekend event   beginning on p. 37

        Creation and Community handout
        Notes on Orr

Learning portfolio instructions   p. 44

RELEVANT BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Listed below, as a prompt for reflection and as a catalyst for finding your own, are biblical references I frequently turn to when thinking about teaching and learning. There are also some citations that figure prominently in the ideas of this course. I hope that they spark your imagination, and that you will use this page to add others that emerge for you throughout our time together.

Teaching and learning:

      Deuteronomy 6:4-10

      Jeremiah 31:33-34

      Luke 24:13-35

      Matthew 15:21-28/Mark 7:24-40

      I Corinthians 12:13/Romans 12:4

      Any and all of Jesus' parables

Care for Creation:

      Genesis

      The psalms, but particularly 8, 24:1, 104

      Leviticus 25:23

      Deuteronomy 20:19, 22:6

A trio of triads

Where I begin:

people
purpose
context

From the educational literature in general:

cognitive	ideas	beliefs	knowledge
affective	feelings	values	attitudes
psychomotor	actions	commitments	skills

From Elliott Eisner's work (*On the Educational Imagination*)

explicit curriculum	intentional curriculum
implicit curriculum	incidental curriculum
null curriculum	unacknowledged curriculum

And two more

From Robert Kegan (*The Evolving Self*):

Confirmation, contradiction, continuity

From my own work:

Authority, authenticity, agency

Exhibit 3. 1 Developmental Intentions Chart

(taken from *Developing Adult Learners*, Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000, pp. 32-33)

Development is marked by movement along five dimensions

I. Toward knowing as a dialogical process

1. Inquiring into and responding openly to others' ideas
2. Surfacing and questioning assumptions underlying beliefs, ideas, actions, and positions
3. Reframing ideas or values that seem contradictory, embracing their differences, and arriving at new meanings
4. Using one's experience to critique expert opinion and expert opinion to critique one's experience
5. Moving between separate and connected, independent and interdependent ways of knowing
6. Paying attention to wholes as well as the parts that comprise them
7. Associating truth not with static fact but with contexts and relationships
8. Pursuing the possibility of objective truth
9. Perceiving and constructing one's reality by observing and participating
10. Tapping into and drawing on tacit knowledge

II. Toward a dialogical relationship to oneself

1. Addressing fears of losing what is familiar and safe
2. Engaging the disequilibrium when one's ideas and beliefs are challenged
3. Exploring life's experiences through some framework(s) of analysis
4. Questioning critically the validity or worth of one's pursuits
5. Exploring and making meaning of one's life stories within contexts (for example, societal, familial, universal)

III. Toward being a continuous learner

1. Reflecting on one's own and others' experiences as a guide to future behavior
2. Challenging oneself to learn in new realms; taking risks

3. Recognizing and revealing one's strengths and weaknesses as a learner and a knower
4. Anticipating learning needed to prevent and solve problems
5. Posing and pursuing questions out of wonderment
6. Accepting internal dissonance as part of the learning process
7. Setting one's own learning goals, being goal-directed, and being habitual in learning
8. Seeking authentic feedback from others
9. Drawing on multiple capacities for effective learning

IV. Toward self-agency and self-authorship

1. Constructing a values system that informs one's behavior
2. Accepting responsibility for choices one has made and will make
3. Risking action on behalf of one's beliefs and commitments
4. Taking action toward one's potential while acknowledging one's limitations
5. Revising aspects of oneself while maintaining continuity of other aspects
6. Distinguishing what one has created for oneself from what is imposed by social, cultural, and other forces
7. "Naming and claiming" what one has experienced and knows

V. Toward connection with others

1. Mediating boundaries between one's connection to others and one's individuality
2. Experiencing oneself as part of something larger
3. Engaging the affective dimension when confronting differences
4. Contributing one's voice to a collective endeavor
5. Recognizing that collective awareness and thinking transform the sum of their parts

Discernment

Frank Rogers

From chapter eight "Discernment" in *Practicing Our Faith,* edited by Dorothy Bass, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

"the history of the church is littered with the stories of people who have claimed guidance from the Spirit when the prejudices of self-deception reigned instead. From the earliest days of Judaism and Christianity, awareness of this danger has prompted faithful people to articulate criteria by which to judge the authenticity of claims regarding the Spirit….

- fidelity to Scripture and the tradition
- fruit of the Spirit
- inner authority and peace
- communal harmony
- enhancement rather than extinction of life
- integrity in the process of discernment"

(pp. 114-116)

The grace of great things

We invite *diversity* into our community not because it is politically correct but because diverse viewpoints are demanded by the manifold mysteries of great things.

We embrace *ambiguity* not because we are confused or indecisive but because we understand the inadequacy of our concepts to embrace the vastness of great things.

We welcome *creative conflict* not because we are angry or hostile but because conflict is required to correct our biases and prejudices about the nature of great things.

We practice *honesty* not only because we owe it to one another but because to lie about what we have seen would be to betray the truth of great things.

We experience *humility* not because we have fought and lost but because humility is the only lens through which great things can be seen – and once we have seen them, humility is the only posture possible.

We become *free men and women* through education not because we have privileged information but because tyranny in any form can only be overcome by invoking the grace of great things.

Taken from Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998) 107-108.

Six paradoxical tensions of pedagogical design

1.   The space should be bounded and open.

2.   The space should be hospitable and charged.

3.   The space should invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group.

4.   The space should honor the "little" stories of the students and the "big" stories of the disciplines and the tradition.

5.   The space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community.

6.   The space should welcome both silence and speech.

Taken from Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998) 74.
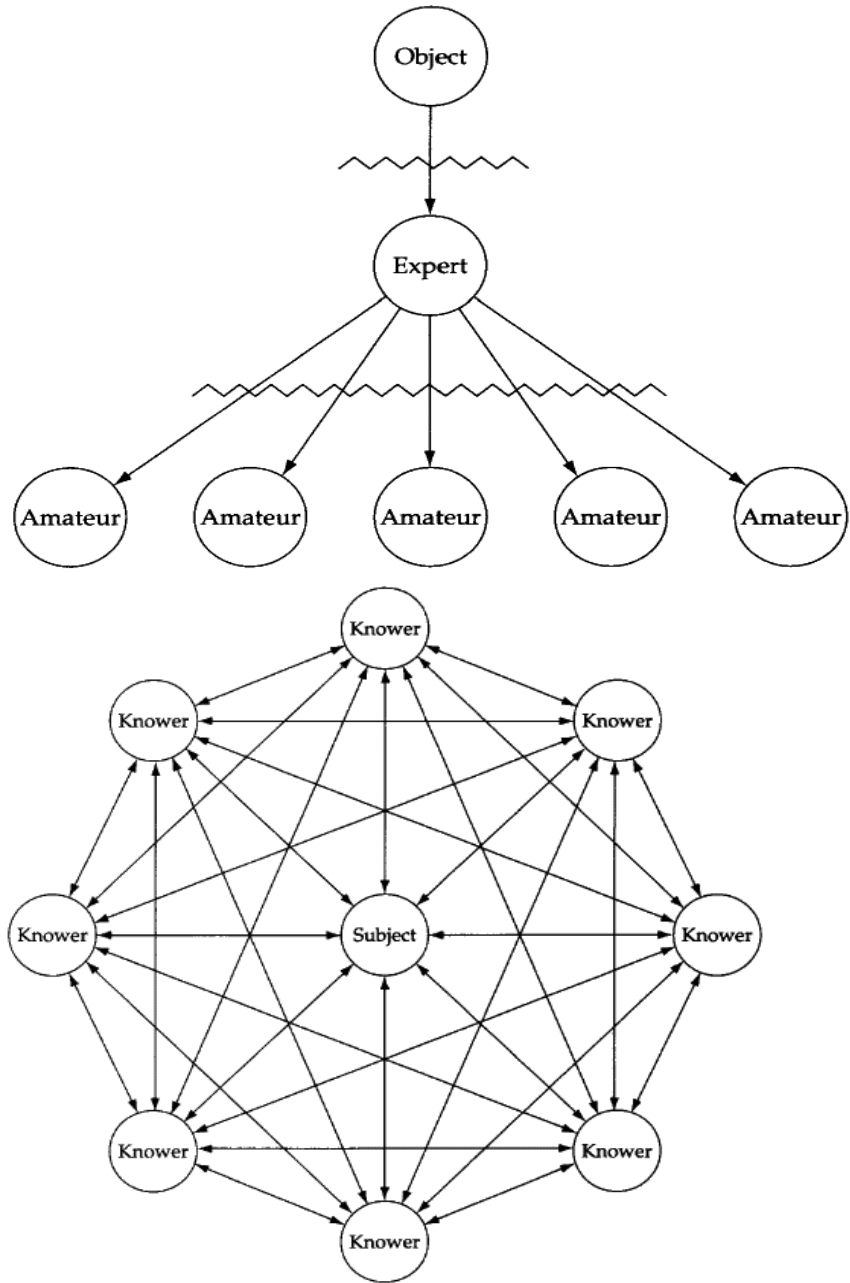
Taken from Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998) 107-108.

Mary Boys Grid for Mapping Religious Education Over Time

What does it mean to be religious?

Revelation
How is God revealed? What is the significance of worship? How does this curriculum help teachers to reveal Jesus Christ to the learners engaged with it?

Conversion
What constitutes the experience of conversion in this curriculum? Does it intend directly to foster conversion, or does it attend to experiences of conversion through deepening spiritual practices?

Faith and belief
What is faith? How important is assent to a creed?What kinds of doctrinal issues are presented, if any? How is religious experience understood?

Theology
What is theology's significance in this curriculum? To what extent can you identify a particular theological commitment or perspective in the materials to be shared?

What does it mean to educate in faith?

Goal of education
Why educate in faith? What constitutes an educated person? What goals does this curriculum have? What kinds of action steps does it use in pursuit of those goals?

Knowledge
What does it mean to know? What is the relation between knowing and doing? Does this curriculum take seriously multiple intelligences, or diverse learning styles?

Social sciences
How formative a role should the social sciences play? Which ones are most influential in these materials (eg. psychology, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, ritual studies)?

Curriculum and teaching
What does the curriculum look like? How is teaching understood?What materials are provided to support teaching with this curriculum?

Education as a political term
Toward what view of society is this curriculum educating? Does it promote intentional action of any kind?

The preceding questions are taken from Mary Boys, *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions* (Sheed & Ward, 1989). These questions can be a helpful lens through which to consider curricular materials, and are meant to be a spur for your imagination in that direction.

Benjamin Bloom's table of verbs

(cited in Vella, *Taking Learning to Task,* Jossey-Bass, 2000)

Cognitive	Affective	Psychomotor
select	revise	design
define	edit	operate
identify	share	set up
list	respond to	practice
name	approve	organize
state	put in priority order	exhibit
compare	acclaim	review
distinguish	brag	recite
contrast	applaud	play
read	assist	diagram
demonstrate	protest	draw
relate	agree	compose
group	change	realign
estimate	debate	affix
reflect	support	put
solve	deny	take
employ	comply with	write
complete	control	prepare
classify	listen to	dramatize
apply	accept	build
illustrate	celebrate	choose
synthesize	reframe	manipulate
analyze	choose	redesign
design	value	rearrange
edit	prefer	employ
add	enjoy	
delete	rank	
examine	resist	
organize	evaluate	
change	notice	
develop	relate to	
review		
diagnose		

Vella's twelve principles

1. "Needs assessment": "Learners need to participate in naming what it is to be learned," (Vella, 1994, p. 3 and following).

How do you diagnose what your participants need to learn? To what extent do they participate in that process consciously and self-reflexively? How flexible is your community of faith's curriculum? What kinds of support are in place for people's whose needs are different from, or more extensive than, your expectations?

2. "Safety": People need safe environments in which to trust themselves to dialogue, particularly if that dialogue has transformation as any part of its intentionality.

What is your own definition of a "safe" environment? How might you figure out what that means for your participants? Consider some of the ways in which safety might not be possible for all of your participants (people who are marginalized, issues that are tension creating, physical environments that are hazardous, institutional/denominational pressures, etc.) What can you do when safety is not possible?

3. "Sound relationship": "Friendship, but not dependency, fun without trivialization of learning, dialogue between men and women who consider themselves peers" (1994, p. 65) is Vella's definition of "sound relationship."

What is your own definition of "sound relationship"? How do your theological commitments enter into that definition? How does that definition influence the teaching/learning environment in your context? What does "fun" look like in your teaching setting?

4. "Sequence and reinforcement": Vella writes that it's important to begin at the beginning, to "move from small to big, slow to fast, easy to hard" (1994, p. 80).

Where does a specific learning event fit into your community's curriculum? What elements of your topic do you need to explore first as preparation for later topics (eg. learning how to find passages in the Bible before working on specific texts)? Remember that sequence and reinforcement has implications for feelings and actions, too, not simply ideas. Learning tasks that are difficult on the feeling level may appropriately be designed more simply on the level of ideas, and so on. How do you communicate the scope and sequence of your learning design to your community?

5. "Action with reflection, or *praxis*": Within religious reflection this process has been described by Henriot and Holland (1983) as a "pastoral circle" of "insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning." Vella uses the terms "description, analysis, application, implementation" (1994, p. 12), and says "this is what we mean by praxis. We begin with experience, analyze that experience, search for new information that can inform the experience, and then change our knowledge set or behavior to incorporate the new data" (1994, p. 101).

What kinds of action are possible in the setting of your community? Think beyond simply "doing, " to feeling, being, ways of interacting with multiple senses, and so on. What does "action" consist of in your denomination as well as your specific community of faith, what kinds of action are you interested in nurturing in your participants, or are they interested in nurturing in their homes or other contexts?

6. "Learners as subjects of their own learning": learners as decision makers in their own learning processes.

In what ways do your learning events allow people to make decisions about their own learning? Can you remember times when you felt "in control" of your own learning? How can you make similar experiences possible for your participants?

7. "Learning with ideas, feelings, and actions": This principle is particularly well facilitated by engagement with visual and aural arts.

What possibilities exist in your setting for exploring feelings? What kinds of action might be prompted by the topics you engage? What are the crucial concepts embedded in the content you are exploring with your participants?

8. "Immediacy": This principle has to do with learning and teaching what is "really useful" in a particular context.

How do you assess what is "really useful" from you the topic you're working with? How do you convey that to your participants? Is there room for them to contribute their own insights to that assessment? How easily can you make the connection between the learning tasks you're offering your students, and the tasks they will encounter after they leave your learning space?

9. "Clear roles"

What roles do you carry as you teach (pastor, fellow member, mentor, spiritual director, pastoral counselor, friend, etc.)? Which of these roles are clearly defined for you by the setting in which you teach and learn, and which come to you without asking through participant expectation? How can you signal the roles you carry appropriately and/or authentically, and those you refuse to accept?

10. "Teamwork"

What kinds of teamwork are appropriate in community of faith, in your denominational setting, in the various cultural spaces you and your participants inhabit? What are the concepts, attitudes and skills necessary for successful teamwork? What are the contextual factors that inhibit it?

11. "Engagement": This principle has to do with helping learners express their interest and investment in a learning event… "a principle that enables learners not only to take part in learning but also to practice learning as subjects of their own lives" (1994, p. 159).

In what ways can you identify your participants as being engaged with the learning experience? What clues do you have to your own engagement? How do you handle situations where you do not feel engaged with the teaching/learning experience? To what extent does high participant engagement impact your overall teaching/learning goals, or the *telos* of your community? To what extent might it be problematic? How do factors over which you have little control affect issues of engagement (eg. participant exhaustion from working full-time, parenting and also being involved in a community of faith)?

12. "Accountability": Vella's final principle in particular seeks to specify the goals of a process. As she writes: "what was proposed to be taught must be taught, what was meant to be learned must be learned, the skills intended to be gained must be manifest in all the learners" and so on (1994, p. 21).

What kinds of accountability do you seek in your design of learning experiences? To whom are you accountable? How are your participants accountable to you? What structures of accountability are in place at your church, in your denominational context, in your theological understanding?

(expanded from *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, Jane Vella, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994; by Mary E. Hess, Luther Seminary, 2001)

Evaluation as Collaborative Inquiry
(http://www.christianleaders.org/articles_index.htm)

Craig Dykstra, Vice President for Religion

(This article comes from *Initiatives in Religion,* a publication of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Each year the Endowment makes millions of dollars of grants to religion. In this article, the head of the Religion Division, Craig Dykstra, explains a more productive understanding of the notion of evaluation. He introduces the article with an explanation of his immediate interests and then proceeds to explain the idea that evaluation can be collaborative inquiry.)

Before any grant proposal is sent by Religion Division staff to the Officers and Board with a request for approval, potential grantees are asked the following question: "What are your plans for evaluation in this project?"

Usually, little advance thought has been given to this matter. Frequently, our question prompts only a cursory answer, such as: "The results of this research will be published as a book and be evaluated by the scholarly community through reviews," or "We will hand out questionnaires at the conclusion of the conference to solicit the reactions of participants." To be honest about the matter, we program officers too often let such answers slip by and do little more to encourage further thought about the evaluation issue. That's a mistake on our part, because we miss important opportunities. The more attention we can all pay to evaluation, and to planning for it at the outset, the more likely it is both that the various protects we fund will bear their potential good fruits, and that the various projects will be related to one another in mutually supportive and stimulating ways.

Grades and scores

The word "evaluation" has bad connotations. It is an anxiety-producing term that often lands us back in a geometry classroom or conjures up memories of the day we received our SAT results. "Evaluation" unavoidably connotes, at some primordial level, grades and scores. We are put on a scale and compared to others. And whether we received good grades or poor ones or somewhere in between, we all want to avoid as much of that kind of thing as we can. It is not just anxiety about how we measure up that makes us reluctant to pursue

evaluation, however. Also involved is something to do with the reduction of our sense of ourselves and the meaning of our efforts and productions that is intrinsic to measurement according to some scale. "C", or "B+" or even "A" simply cannot capture the significance of a paper I have invested myself in crafting. We all at least implicitly demand a fuller, more human response, even if we never ask for it out loud or cannot seem to get one when we do.

Why don't we ask? Perhaps because we know that the very idea of evaluation on a measured scale is done for other purposes than our own development. The purpose of that kind of evaluation is not deepening self-knowledge in the midst of one's activities.

Its purpose is classification, sorting. The agent of such evaluation is not the self, but others who will use the results for their own purposes. We don't ask for a full response, then, because we know that the kind of response we need and want is not available in such circumstances. We recognize that we are not (and are not supposed to be) active agents in this kind of evaluation, but rather only objects of it.

If this is what "evaluation" means to us (if this is the only kind of experience the word "evaluation" connotes for us), our resistance to it is no surprise. Nor is it any wonder that we would have difficulty answering the question, "What are your plans for evaluation in this project?" If we do not see ourselves as the responsible agents in the evaluation of our own work, but only objects of it, then planning such evaluation must be someone else's responsibility to do. (The foundation's, perhaps?)

Coaches and editors

I enjoy playing golf from time to time. A golfer-friend suggested I read *Harvey Penick's Little Red Book.* Subtitled "Lessons and Teachings from a Lifetime in Golf," the book is a published version of the little red notebook that one of the finest teachers of the game kept over the span of about 60 years. Its contents are time-tested hints about how to do things right on a golf course, how to practice the game so you can improve, and some observations on the joys and satisfactions of playing. It's a fine and enjoyable book. You can tell from reading it that Harvey Penick is a great teacher of golf. In fact, you can tell from reading it what great teaching consists of. And you can see why some of this era's best golfers (Tom Kite, Kathy Whitworth, Betsy Rawls, and Ben Crenshaw) would return to Austin, Texas to consult with Penick

over and over again whenever they wanted some really good evaluation of their games.

Superior athletes constantly evaluate their own performance and search for ways to improve it. That is why they easily recognize their need for good coaches/teachers/evaluators: other people who can help them see and feel what they are doing, people who can help them understand what's going on and figure out how to do it better. The interesting thing about the really good athletes is that they *regularly* seek such help. They go get it. They ask for it. They even pay for it. (No wonder! They can afford it, right? But the stakes are high for them, so they also know they cannot afford not to.)

Artists (musicians, writers, filmmakers, dancers) also seek such evaluation. Whether the evaluators are called teachers, editors, or coaches, they make it possible for artistic creators to pull out of themselves the highest craft and skill they can muster. Somehow, it seems, the art of evaluation is an essential ingredient in the human activity of creation.

Religion Division evaluation program

Maybe we at the Endowment would generate a better response if we would change our question about evaluation plans to something like, "What plans have you made for building in self-reflection on what you have learned and for getting good coaching as you conduct your project?"

Getting good coaching/evaluation has been important to the Endowment itself for a long time. D. Susan Wisely has ably directed the Endowment's evaluation efforts for 20 years. All that time, she has been helping the staff and many of our grantees to be active agents in garnering the best possible help they can find to reflect on their work, so as to improve its quality and impact. Three years ago, the Religion Division launched a still more systematic evaluation program through a grant to Christian Theological Seminary. The program's project director, Carol Johnston, an ordained Presbyterian minister and a theologian who did her doctoral work at Claremont is providing additional much-needed help to Religion Division staff and a wide variety of grantees as they plan and implement several kinds of evaluation.

Some evaluations currently underway are programmatic evaluations. In these, the Endowment supports the efforts of coordinated teams of thoughtful people who explore a cluster of grants within a program area; work with project directors of those grants to identify key learnings; relate them to one another; assess the cumulative whole in terms of its significance and impact; and ask what clues may be found in these projects (and in what's missing) that can prompt future work. Such evaluation teams are coaches primarily to the Religion Division. Their help is directed to assessing the Division's past and current grantmaking aims, policies and activities. Through such evaluations, we try to learn from what we and our grantees together have accomplished and to see better how to build on that through future funding

Other evaluations now going on have a more limited focus. Concerned with specific projects, many of these provide grantees with mid-course guidance. In most cases, such evaluations are planned from the beginning of a project. (It is usually too late to plan and implement concurrent—or formative—evaluations after a grant is made and a two- or three-year project is underway.) Grantees in most such cases request funds for evaluation as part of their proposals, identify evaluator/coaches early on, and build mutually agreed upon evaluation designs. From the beginning, they engage in systematic collection of data that evaluators need, so that at the appropriate times they are ready to engage in the evaluation activities they desire (observations, meetings, consultations, reports, etc.).

Still other evaluations are done at the conclusion of a specific project. In these cases, the grantee and/or the Endowment are eager to synthesize carefully what has been learned in a particular effort, so that the insights generated can be of benefit to work already going on elsewhere or that is being considered for the future. While such evaluation work is usually harder to do (because everything has to be done at once and some information that would have been helpful is by then irretrievable), it is sometimes worthwhile. Important questions emerge at the end of some projects that could not have been anticipated; evaluations designed to assess impact are in some cases best planned and carried out when a project is near completion or even later.

Evaluation as purposeful inquiry

As you can see from these examples, evaluation (to our way of thinking, in any case) has little to do with grading, scoring, and classifying and everything to do with gaining better insight into what one is doing and with finding ways to improve it or extend it in worthwhile directions. Each of us can (and should) do a lot of this sort of evaluation ourselves as a regular part of everyday self-critical reflection in our own work. Reflective practitioners of all kinds constantly build self-evaluation into the very warp and woof of their endeavors. But there are limits to what we by ourselves can see and figure out. Like the best athletes and artists, we all need coaches and teachers who give us honest assessments (including those that make us uncomfortable) and helpful suggestions.

The best way to get help of this kind is to take initiative in garnering it. To be active agents in (rather than passive objects of) evaluation involves

(1) building into your work regularly-scheduled time for reflection on what you are learning;

(2) discerning when you want and need the skillful help of others;

(3) thinking through as best you can what kind of help you need;

(4) finding people you trust to give you what you need in a way that you can use it; and

(5) making yourself available and open to receive the help you've asked for.

Evaluation understood this way is a form of collaborative inquiry. It is purposeful inquiry into the structure, processes, and substance of one's own work. Real pleasures can be had in such inquiry. There is the pleasure that comes from more fully finding one's way. There is the pleasure that comes from discovering how to do things better. And there is the pleasure that comes from broadening the company of people who know and care about what you are doing. (Indeed, such inquiry often surfaces and generates new partners in the work you are doing.)

A responsible imagination...

Laurent Daloz, Cheryl Keen, James Keen, and Sharon Parks completed a study several years ago that sought to identify what if anything people who had lived long lives of commitment to the public good might share in common. Among other things, these scholars identified what they termed a "responsible imagination."

> The people we studied appear to compose reality in a manner that can take into account calls to help, catalyze, dream, work hard, think hard, and love well. They practice an imagination that resists prejudice and its distancing tendencies on the one hand, and avoids messianic aspirations and their engulfing tendencies on the other. Their imaginations are active and open, continually seeking more adequate understandings of the whole self and the whole commons and the language with which to express them.
>
> Their practice of imagination is responsible in two particular ways. First, they try to respect the *process* of imagination in themselves and others. They pay attention to dissonance and contradiction, particularly those that reveal injustice and unrealized potential. They learn to pause, reflect, wonder, ask why, consider, wait.... They also learn to work over their insights and those of others so that they "connect up" in truthful and useful ways. They seek out trustworthy communities of confirmation and contradiction.
>
> Second, they seek out sources of worthy images. Most have discovered that finding and being found by fitting images is not only a matter of having access to them but requires discretion and responsible hospitality — not only to what is attractive but also to what may be unfamiliar and initially unsettling.....
>
> Living with these images, the people in our study appear to know that two truths must be held together — that we have the power to destroy the Earth and the power to see it whole. But unlike many who seek escape from the potent tension this act of holding requires, these people live in a manner that conveys a third and essential power: the courage to turn and make promises, the power of a responsible imagination. (Daloz, et. al., 1996, 151-152).

The authors also had something to say about daily practice:

> It is said that faith is "meant to be religious." Faith seeks language, a *shared* system of symbols with which to interpret the whole of life. If imagination is the process of "shaping into one," religion may be understood, in part, as the distillation of shared images, powerful enough to shape into one the chaos of our experience. In other words, stories, habits, and the rituals of everyday are the content of the imagination by which people know who they are and what they are to do in the world. It is the work of religion, in concert with the whole life of the commons, to do that well (Daloz, et. al., 1996, 142).

Taken from: *Common fire: Lives of commitment in a complex world.* By Laurent A. Parks Daloz, Cheryl H. Keen, James P. Keen, and Sharon Daloz Parks. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

Weekend Learning

The following materials were originally developed by:

Rev. Dr. Alvin Luedke
Prof. of Rural Ministry, Luther Seminary

Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen
Executive Director, Shalom Hill Farm

Issues of Creation and Community

- The availability and safety of food
- Environmental Concerns--the sustainability of soil and water, flora and fauna
- The consolidation and monopolistic control in the food system and the economic injustices that follow
- Genetics--cloning--genetic manipulation
- Land ownership and control--the displacement of farmers and communities

"In this time of ecological urgency, the considerable collection of biblical texts dealing with earth care ought not to be confined to consideration in academies or learned journals. These texts need to be studied, given a fresh hearing, and then set loose in the world. Rightly understood, they can light some fires, ignite some concern and indicate a direction for our communities, our churches, and our synagogues. "

James Limburg, "Down-To-Earth Theology: Psalm 104 and the Environment," in Currents in Theology and Mission, Volume 21, No. 5, (October 1994), 346.

"All human wealth depends ultimately on what God has entrusted to us in the immeasurable riches of the earth's crust....This is true, inasmuch as all that we can count as material goods originates from what grows on, feeds on, or is dug out of the soil of our planet. Even in our modern industrial and highly technological world, we depend on the efficient use of well-maintained farmland to keep us fed and clothed while we go about our creation and consumption of wealth in other ways many steps removed from direct contact with the land."

Christopher J.H. Wright, God's People in God's Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 3.

"The people in rural communities you serve are on the front line of perhaps the most crucial global issues now that the Cold War is not an imminent danger--environmental sustainability and food production."

Dr. Richard Austin, environmentalist, theologian, author, 1991

The Creation is Made and Claimed by God the Creator

Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it."

 Leviticus 25: 23, "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants."

 This is a foundational concept to understanding the relationship of God, creation, and people. It permeates all the major categories of Old Testament literature: the Penteteuch, the wisdom literature, and the prophets. Fundamentally, the Old Testament assertion, with various nuances, is that God has created both Land and people and still holds claim to them. Yet God shares responsibility in some way with people for the Land.

Trust: A Biblical Concept of Sharing Responsibility for Creation
A Definition

"…a charge or duty imposed in faith or confidence or as a condition of some relationship…something committed or entrusted to one to be used or cared for in the interest of another."

"Trust," Webster's Third New International Dictionary, (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1993), 2456.

"Israel's theory of land, as it is portrayed in the conquest traditions and in the torah provisions, is that the land is assigned to the entire community as a trust from Yahweh."

Walter Brueggemann, "Land: Fertility and Justice" in Theology of the Land, Bernard F. Evans and Gregory D. Cusack ed., (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 46.

" ...the ultimate meaning of creation is to be found in the heart and purpose of the creator and that the world has been positively valued by God for itself. It must be valued by the creatures to whom it has been <u>provisionally entrusted</u>."

Walter Brueggemann, <u>Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching</u>, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 12-13.

God's Claim as Creator

"In the beginning, when God created..."

The whole cluster of words--creator/ creation/ create/creature--are confessional words freighted with peculiar meaning. Terms such as "cosmos" and "nature" should never be carelessly used as equivalents, for these words do not touch the theocentric, covenantal relational affirmation being made. The word "creation" belongs inevitably with its counter word "creator."...The single sentence, "Creator creates creation," is decisive for everything....This governing sentence affirms that <u>the creator is not disinterested and the creation is not autonomous.</u>

Walter Brueggemann, <u>Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching</u>, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 16-17.

DOMINION

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." Genesis 1:26
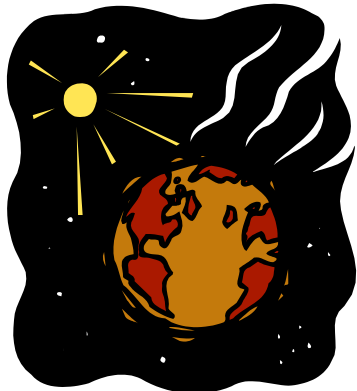
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also

the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. Ps. 8:3-8

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ROYALTY

The ideal model for the relationship between humankind (man and woman) and the earth and its creatures is the king/people relationship. In passages where the same "have dominion" verb occurs, the emphasis is on gentleness and on an active program of caring that results in shalom.

James Limburg, "The Responsibility of Royalty: Genesis 1-11 and the Care of the Earth," in Word and World, *Vol. XI, No. 2, (Spring 1991), 126.*

"to till and to keep" Gen. 2:15

 These two words describe the dual task of the farmer and of the entire society....From the beginning, alongside the work of tilling has been the responsibility of "keeping" the land. This "keeping" is the same word used to describe the Lord's caring relationship to a city (Ps 127:1) or to a people and an individual (Ps 121). The farmer and the community are called to till the land and to care for it as well.

Limburg, "The Responsibility of Royalty," 127.

People as a Part of Creation

adam (human) and `adama (ground)

 Gen. 3:19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

 Deut. 20:19 If you besiege a town for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding

an ax against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down. Are trees in the field human beings that they should come under siege from you?

Deut. 22:6 If you come on a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs, with the mother sitting on the fledglings or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young.

Pedagogical Strategies for Creation Caring in a Rural Context

- Understand the relational nature of the context
    - Be present, listen, learn, build trust first
    - Communicate love of people and place
- Respect that for many people these are first order issues—a matter of life (culture) and living
    - Most are well-intentioned and faithful and have good reasons for what they do even if you do not necessarily agree
- Use narrative well and connect with the story of the people
- Use questions (not declarations) as a form of critique

What is Orr's argument?

Myths of our culture:

- Ignorance is a solvable problem

- With enough knowledge and technology we can manage planet Earth

- Knowledge is increasing and by implication human goodness

- We can adequately restore that which we have dismantled

- The purpose of education is that of giving you the means for upward mobility and success

- Our culture represents the pinnacle of human achievement

What education should be for:

- All education is environmental education (null, implicit, explicit)

- The goal of education is not mastery of subject material but of one's person

- Knowledge carries with it the responsibility to see that it is well used in the world

- We cannot say that we know something until we understand the effects of this knowledge on real people and their communities

- The importance of "minute particulars" and the power of examples over words

- The way learning occurs is as important as the content of particular courses

Learning Portfolio Instructions

Developing and learning from a portfolio

Much of the following information in this section is based on the work of Stephen Brookfield, and his book *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995). Chapter Five of that book might prove very helpful to you.

In this class we will be using a learning portfolio process to help you document your learning about educational leadership, and to give you an opportunity to prepare for future learning.

Your final portfolio should include five sections.

The first section should include your public integration statement (see final project assignment), and your journal from this class. If you are using a public portfolio space (like the MN e-folio site), and would like to keep your journal private, then you can send it to me separately. If you are blogging, just give me the url to your blog. If you have used facebook statuses, you'll need to copy and paste them into one document and send it to me (please include any comments you received).

The second, third and fourth sections will be structured around the three areas of competency (knowledge, attitudes and skills) outlined for educational leadership at Luther Seminary. Here your objective will be to assess where you are in terms of achieving these competencies, and propose ways to meet those that you are still working on.

The fifth and final section will be devoted to evaluation of this class as a learning experience. The questions for that evaluation can be found here: http://meh.religioused.org/web/Portfolio_Five.html. If you would prefer to submit this section of the portfolio AFTER receiving a grade for the course, simply write a note in that section that makes clear why it is otherwise empty, and I will expect this section from you upon receipt of your grade from me.

The final version of the portfolio is due on May 2nd.