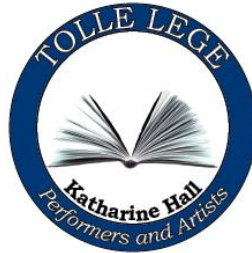


ACS Traditions in Conversation 1000, Fall 2011
Environmental Leadership Learning Community:
Who Am I in Relation to the Natural World?
Tuesdays and Thursdays, Tolentine 317
Section EN1, 10:00-11:15 (4th hour Wed. 4:30)
Section EN2, 11:30-12:45 (4th hour Thurs. 4:00)

Dr. Chara Armon
Mailbox in Saint Augustine Center 103
Office hours: Wednesdays 9:30-12 and by appointment
Office on ground floor of SAC, room 21
E-mail: chara.armon@villanova.edu
Telephone: 610-888-4322 (cell); 610-565-2248 (home)
Office phone 610-519-4768 (e-mail preferred)



"Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life." -- The Earth Charter

Course Objective:

St. Augustine recounts in his *Confessions* that, just before his conversion, he heard a child singing, "*Tolle lege, tolle lege,*" "Take up and read, take up and read." Augustine did so, and by reading was transformed: after much personal and spiritual struggle, he was at last able to change his life. The Augustine and Culture Seminar (ACS) introduces students to great works of literature and thought that teach us not only about the cultures and time periods in which they were written, but also about our own cultural heritage and ourselves, here and now. The basic idea is that by reading great works, perhaps we too can be transformed; perhaps we too can move more deeply into ourselves, and from there move more compassionately out into our communities.

ACS seeks to help students develop a richer inner life and an appreciation for community. The seminar is founded on the belief that seeking the truth (*veritas*) with respect and love (*caritas*) toward one another leads to deep and lasting community (*unitas*). ACS thus tries to help students live the values so important to Villanova that they are on its seal: *veritas, unitas, caritas*.

In Book VIII of *Confessions*, Augustine tells the story of his conversion, the miraculous change that, it might be thought, would end the intellectual wanderings of his

youth and bring peace to his restless heart. Yet Augustine goes on to pose some truly fundamental questions near the beginning Book IX: “Who am I, and what am I?” (IX.1.1). Even after his conversion, there is much that Augustine fails to understand about himself: his mind, his heart, his failings, and his place in the world. He still confesses to God, “In your eyes, I have become a question to myself” (X.33.50).

The question, “Who am I?” is the best way to summarize the Augustinian inquiry that is the goal of ACS. It is an inquiry that distinguishes us from other introductory courses, which, even when they treat a similar topic (God, for example) or even read the same author (Aristotle, for example), pursue different questions in doing so. Our focus in this particular class is on inquiring about ourselves in relationship to the natural world we inhabit—following the example of Augustine in the *Confessions*.

One way or the other, Augustine is our model. ACS learning community students take this course not only to learn about Augustine, but more important to learn to be like him in his passionate engagement with “the higher things”: literature, history, and politics; truth and moral values; the gods and God. In the *Confessions*, Augustine speaks of himself as committed to the truth “heart and voice and pen.” The ACS learning community faculty believe that thinking deeply about what we care about, learning to articulate our thoughts clearly and persuasively, and working to write with insight not only will serve as excellent preparation for future careers, but will help us come to terms with life emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, both in the university and beyond.

Course Theme: Environmental Learning

In Dr. Armon’s courses designed for the Environmental Learning Community, we will explore major texts in the western tradition: the Book of Genesis in the Bible’s Old Testament, along with parts of the New Testament; a Platonic dialogue; Augustine’s *Confessions*; and a wide variety of excerpts of ancient, medieval, and modern writings on nature and the environment. As we get to know these texts, we will focus on their portrayals of the human relationship to nature and the Earth. Over the course of two semesters we will endeavor to understand traditional western paradigms of human relationship to nature, and we will question whether, in the twenty-first century, human ways of living on Earth need to be re-thought and drastically altered. To state that another way, is environmental scholar David Orr correct when he says that contemporary humans are driving ourselves out of the Garden of Eden? Thinking about what “Eden” was or is, and what has been, should be, and could be our relationship to “Eden,” will be a major aspect of our work over both semesters.

Our specific Augustinian themes for this course are the following: examination and re-examination of one’s self in relation to the Created world; and exploration of how distinct modes of inquiry influence our perceptions of the natural environment, i.e., Augustine’s “faith seeking understanding” as compared to Descartes’ “I think therefore I am.” We will explore various models of thought about the human relationship to the natural world. Are we stewards who are, at some level, in charge of the world? Should we see the natural world as a sacrament that reveals its Creator? Should humans now and in the future be pursuing a democracy of humans, or some type of democracy of all living creatures and their ecosystems?

David Orr also has stated that “ecological disorder represents a prior disorder in the way we think.” In order to evaluate this statement, we need to know how it is that we think, or have thought, in human and western history. Another way to describe this course is to say that it is a study of major aspects of western thought, including beliefs about how the world came to be, humans’ place in the world, and human relationship to one another in community.

Course Goals

Goal		Method of assessment
Read and think critically:	Analyze difficult and important classical texts and develop an appreciation of how these texts can teach us	Participation in class discussion, papers
Write well:	Write clearly and persuasively, supporting positions with evidence	Papers, informal writing assignments
Communicate effectively orally:	Articulate your own views based on your reading and responses to other students	Participation in class discussion
Master co-operative learning skills:	Work with and learn from other members of the learning community with mutual respect and support	Participation in class discussion, group-project and presentation
Apply new perspectives to your ideas and values:	Test, refine, and make connections between your own ideas and values and the challenges raised by major classical texts	Papers, final exam, informal writing assignments

Required Texts:

1. *The Catholic Study Bible*

2. *Timaeus*, Plato

3. *Confessions*, St. Augustine

4. *The Great Work*, Berry

5. Materials on Blackboard to be printed and read when assigned

6. *Easy Writer*, Lunsford

Publisher/ISBN:

Not ordered for this course but likely available in the bookstore; also at: <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible>

Focus Philosophical Library, ed. Kalkavage, 1-58510-007-2. Can be downloaded for free from Project Gutenberg

New City Press, ed. Boulding, 1-56548-084-8

Bell Tower, 0-609-80499-5

Recommended. Alternatively: <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

Course website

Our course Blackboard site and the “All About Katharine” site, which you should be able to access through your Villanova homepage, will present our syllabus, a calendar, grading rubrics, and reading materials. Please check it periodically, and *check your e-mail daily* as I will communicate with the class via e-mail when I need to alter an assignment or send an announcement.

Course Requirements

***Reading assignments** that must be completed *before* each course meeting begins.

***Writing Portfolio** composed of assignments that you will carry through multiple drafts. Due dates are firm; late papers will be penalized by half a grade (i.e. A to A-) for each day of lateness. If you have a true emergency, contact me at least a day in advance of the deadline to make arrangements. The Portfolio counts for 55% of your semester grade: Essays—15% for each of three essays; writing reflections and quality and completeness of the Portfolio as a whole count for 10% of your semester grade.

To assemble your Portfolio, use a *slender* 3-ring binder or a spacious paper or plastic pocket folder. By the end of the semester it must be a well-organized gathering of the following:

- a. *a rough draft and the final version* (with my comments) of each of your 3 essays
- b. the essay you chose to revise and re-submit
- c. the short essays you wrote as homework
- d. 1 writing reflection and a Reflective Introduction, to be completed when assigned
- e. cultural events online postings in hardcopy form (see below)

***Mandatory visit to the Writing Center for at least 1 appointment.** Call the Writing Center a week in advance to make an appointment: 9-4604. When you go to your appointment, take a copy of your assignment, the text(s) you are writing about, and any notes or drafts you have already composed. Failing to make one visit to the Writing Center will lead to a lowered grade on one essay. The Writing Center sends me documentation of your visits, so I will know when you have completed this requirement.

***Final group presentation:** 5% of grade

***Exam:** written midterm in the classroom, 15% of grade. You may consult your 1-page homework essays and Concept Maps as you take the exam.

***Cultural events posts,** 5% of grade.

***Attendance (with course materials in hand) and Participation:** 20% of final grade. More than 3 absences will lead to a reduced grade; 5 or more absences are cause for a failing grade. Plan to contribute thoughts and questions during *every* class meeting--I mean that literally. In an effort to be objective and fair, I will evaluate participation using

the Villanova Center for Liberal Education Class Participation Rubric, which you should read at: <http://www.villanova.edu/artsci/vcle/resources/rubric.htm>

Scheduled Conferences (individual meetings with Dr. Armon) at least twice per student during the semester count as part of the 20% participation grade. You are responsible for coming to my office hours or scheduling appointments for your 2 conferences; I will keep track of who meets with me.

Discussion leadership on assigned dates counts as part of the participation grade. When you lead discussion, start class by talking for 3-5 minutes about the reading material for that day. Offer at least two questions for the class to discuss; point out passages or ideas in the reading that seem especially significant, problematic, or confusing to you; and comment on how the reading relates to something else you have read or experienced.

***Cultural events:** attend 3 cultural events during the semester. Include a one-page discussion of them in your final Portfolio. Each student must attend at least 3 from the listed events on the fall ACS poster that is posted around campus and on All About Katharine.

You are required to make two postings on All About Katharine on each of 3 events you attend. The first posting must be a substantive reaction of normally at least two paragraphs; the second must be a reply—relevant, respectful, and normally two paragraphs again—to the posting of another student. Your first posting, the substantive reaction, must be made within three days of the event; your second posting, the reply, must be posted within a week of the event. (After that time the discussion for that particular event will close electronically.) I will evaluate the posts on depth of thought and clarity of expression. They count as part of your semester grade. In your final portfolio, your posts should be printed as they were posted.

Grading

In evaluating assignments and determining semester grades, I will follow the Villanova Grading System, available in the handbooks provided by the University. I also will utilize the Rubrics from the Villanova Center for Liberal Education:

<http://www.villanova.edu/artsci/vcle/resources/papers.htm> and
http://www.villanova.edu/artsci/includes/vcle/analytical_scoring_rubric.htm

Papers receiving A's will demonstrate strength in nearly all categories; B's will demonstrate strength in some categories but need development in others; C's will be those that require significant further development; D papers will be those that are unsatisfactory in most categories.

While numerous types of writing style are valid, in this course you will be writing analytical, expository essays that discuss the ideas within texts. In evaluating your essays, I will expect to find a thesis that presents an interesting and significant claim, ample supporting evidence and examples from the text(s) at hand, smooth and comprehensible organization of ideas, insightful introductory paragraphs, and powerful concluding paragraphs that do more than summarize the essay.

Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities should register with the Learning Support Office and discuss their needs with me at the beginning of the semester.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism consists of using someone else's words or ideas as your own without crediting the previous writer. Plagiarism is unacceptable both at Villanova University and in the academic community and the working world at large. In college courses including this course, plagiarism leads to lowered grades and often to failure of an assignment or the course. To avoid plagiarism, you must use quotation marks and a footnote or internal note when you quote another author's work. When you paraphrase or otherwise report another author's ideas, even without quoting them, you must acknowledge the prior author with a footnote or internal note. These guidelines pertain to your use of course books, other books, websites, and other sources. When you are confused, ask me, a librarian in Falvey, or tutors in the Writing Center, and consult Easy Writer or Hacker's guidelines at the website listed above. Also see the University guidelines at:

<https://library.villanova.edu/Help/AcademicIntegrity>

Format

- *Assignments should be word-processed and printed on a good-quality printer.
- *Please use one-and-a-half or double spacing and a 12-point font size.
- *Always number your pages.
- *Identify each essay with your name and the date and give it a title.
- *Please staple the pages of the essay and do not use covers sheets or folders.

Proofreading

Numerous spelling errors or typos will count against your grade. Use a spell-checking program, then proof-read twice. Read your essay aloud at least once in this process, since doing so enables a writer to find mistakes that can slip by during silent reading. Finally, ask a friend to proofread for you and/or go to the Writing Center. Every piece of writing deserves and requires numerous revisions and careful editing!

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS 2011

*Dates may change depending on our progress. **Check your e-mail daily!***

Thurs. 8/25 Introductions to one another and our course

8/30 Before class on the 30th, read David Orr's essay: "Biological diversity, Agriculture, and the Liberal Arts." Due in class, 1- page response essay answering the following question: "What would be the advantages of incorporating Orr's argument into U.S. undergraduate education?"

In the Bible (your own copy or online at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible>), read the Book of Genesis, chapters 1-3. Bring a copy of Genesis 1-3 to class for discussion (your own Bible or a printed version of Genesis 1-3 from the website)

9/1 Before class on the 1st, read Genesis 9 and Leviticus 19. On Blackboard, read the Native American readings edited by Suzuki from his volume Wisdom of the Elders. Write a 1-page essay on the following question: "In the Hebrew and Native American texts, what kind of world is being described? What is the relationship among humans, God or gods, and the earth?"

Also read Berry, chapter 1. Due in class: Concept Map of Berry.

9/6 In the Bible, read Deuteronomy 20 and Psalm 104. Read the Islamic Qu'ran/Koran excerpts on Blackboard. Be sure to bring copies of all Biblical and Koran chapters to class. Write a 1-page essay on the following question: "How do the Hebrew and Islamic descriptions of the relationship between humans and the natural environment compare?"

9/8 Timaeus, p. 47-64. Bring to class 5 written questions you have about the Timaeus. Don't worry if you are confused—read slowly, underline concepts that seem important, review after you've read the assignment, and gain as much clarity as you can at this stage. Due in class: Preliminary Concept Map of Timaeus. Also read Berry chapter 2.

9/13 Timaeus, p. 65-76, 80-84. Also read Paul Hawken speech at <http://www.up.edu/commencement/default.aspx?cid=9456> Due in class: additions or corrections to your Timaeus Concept Map. Essay 1 assignment to be distributed in class.

9/15 Timaeus, p. 104-125. Guest speaker: Jay Carlis of Community Energy, Inc.

9/20 Timaeus, p. 126-132. Essay plan due in class. Read Wendell Berry's "Satisfactions of the Mad Farmer" on Blackboard. We'll discuss a sample essay in class.

9/22 Rough draft due in class, minimum 2 pages. Peer editing in class.

9/22 7:00 PM, Wangari Maathai lecture: MANDATORY! NOT TO BE MISSED! (How many Nobel Laureates have you already met in your lifetime, anyway?! ☺)

9/24 Villanova Day of Service

9/26 4:00-5:15, talk by Kelly Doyle, water resources engineer (VU 2006, BS Civil Engineering 2006/Massachusetts Institute of Technology – MS Environmental Engineering 2008). Presentation of the Annual Alumna/us Environmental Award to Ms Doyle. DeLeon Room in SAC.

9/27 Essay 1 due in class. Print this article and bring it to class:

<http://news.stanford.edu/news/2011/january/jacobson-world-energy-012611.html>

Also print Bullard article from Blackboard: “Environmental Justice for All,” *The Crisis*, Jan/Feb 2003, p. 24-26.

9/29 New Testament: read the entire Gospel of Mark in your personal Bible or at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible>; then go to

http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl_thomas.htm and read the brief introduction to the Gospel of Thomas. Click on “Lambdin Translation, print and read passages 1-20, and bring them to class.

10/2 To the Philadelphia Museum of Art to see the Rembrandt exhibition: departure time around noon, return time around 3:00 unless you stay in the city for dinner

10/4 Read the 5th *Homily on the Six Days* by Basil ([The Syriac Version of the Hexaemeron by Basil of Caesarea](#), trans. R.W. Thompson) and Augustine’s *Against the Manichees*, Book 1, chapters 13, 14, 16, 17-20 on Blackboard. Bring to class a 1-page essay discussing ONE of the following two questions: 1) What do Basil and Augustine identify as most important in their writings on Genesis and the natural world? How do their views compare to what you read in the Book of Genesis and Plato’s *Timaeus*? *OR* 2) Find a tree you like on campus. Spend some time observing and touching it. Describe it in 1-2 paragraphs, then discuss how Basil and Augustine would see it. Print from Blackboard and bring to class Leopold’s “What is a Weed?”

10/6 Confessions, Books 1 and 2 plus print and read this poem and bring it to class for discussion: <http://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php?date=2010/09/24> (poem is also on Blackboard under “Whitehead poem on Augustine”)

10/18 Confessions Book 3. **Exam** in class.

To be distributed in class: Time to decide handout, Portfolio criteria, and assignment for Essay 2.

10/20 Confessions Books 4-5; Berry chapter 4.

10/22 Fieldtrip to Willow Creek Farm

10/25 Confessions Book 8-9. Essay plan due.

10/27 Confessions 10, Berry chapter 5-6.

11/1 Confessions 13. Rough draft due in class. Peer editing in class.

11/3 Essay 2 due in class. Print Francis of Assisi reading and Life of Cuthbert, chapter 9, from The Age of Bede, ed. Farmer (both on Blackboard), skim, and bring to class

11/8 Little Flowers of St. Francis reading (Blackboard), DeLio, Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth, 2007, chapter 4, and Scott Russell Sanders, "Mind in the Forest," at <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/5099/>

11/10 Albert the Great, excerpts.

11/15 The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus, ed. Best and Brightman, Oxford 1973, excerpts. Read this introduction to medieval bestiaries: <http://bestiary.ca/intro.htm>. Then explore <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/bestiary.hti>.

11/17 Conferences with Dr. Armon

11/22 Essay 3 due in class. Print and bring Schweitzer, "Reverence for Life," to class.

11/29 R. Louv, selections from Last Child in the Woods, plus Berry 10.

12/1 R. Louv, selections from The Nature Principle, plus Berry 14-15.

12/6 No class: work on group presentations and/or meet with Dr. Armon

12/8 Presentations in class

**** Nota bene: please keep ALL of our reading material from the Fall semester as you may wish to refer to it as our course continues in the Spring semester.**

Portfolio Contents: (gather during semester, hand in during final exam)

___ Essay 1 (rough and final)

___ Writing Reflection 1

___ Essay 2 (rough and final)

___ Reflective Introduction

___ Essay 3 (rough and final)

___ Revision/Essay 4 (rough and final)

___ Cultural events reflections

Overview of Assignments Due and Grades Earned

Title	Date Due	Date Submitted	Points Possible	Points Earned
Essay 1	September 27		15	
Essay 2	November 3		15	
Essay 3	November 22		15	
Revised Essay/Essay 4	Within 3 weeks of return of 1st graded version		Replaces a prior grade	
Writing Center visit	1 visit is mandatory at a time of your choice		Contributes to essay grade	
Midterm	October 8		15	
2 Conferences with Dr. Armon	TBD by each student		Part of 20 pt. participation grade	
Cultural event 1 attendance and 2 posts	“		All 3 cultural events plus posts and final discussion	

			page count for 5 pts. of grade	
Cultural event 2: attendance and 2 posts	“		“	
Cultural event 3: attendance and 2 posts	“		“	
Writing Reflection	TBD		Part of 10 pt. Portfolio grade	
Reflective Introduction	In final Portfolio		“	
Group presentation	December 8		5 pts.	
Final exam: Portfolio presentation	December 11, 13, 14		Part of 10 pt. Portfolio grade	
Class Participation	Every class meeting		20	

Participation:

Please read <http://www.villanova.edu/artsci/vcle/resources/rubric.htm>

As a condensed version of this Rubric, I offer you the following:

Quantity of participation: you join class discussion

- daily, in almost every class
- regularly, more than once/week
- sometimes
- rarely, only when asked a question

Quality of participation: you

- ask questions, respond to classmates, take risks, use details, make connections
- respond to questions, speak mostly to teacher, use some details, can make connections
- respond only to questions, speak only to teacher, use little detail, rarely make connections