Ecological Wisdom:  
Righting our Relationships with Each Other and the Earth

February 26 to April 1, 2020

# Course Description

Humanity currently faces an **ecological crisis** of unprecedented magnitude. As Pope Francis notes, this crisis is a manifestation of a deeper crisis of modernity that includes “ethical, cultural, and spiritual” dimensions. We are all called to **heal relationships between ourselves and the wider Earth community**. We need not only transformed technologies, policies, and economics to do so, but also a practical and ethical know-how. Ecological wisdom capable of discerning a path **towards just and loving relationships** is paramount.

This course will explore the **nature and causes of the ecological crisis**. We will reflect on the values, attitudes, and spirituality needed to fruitfully address ecological challenges in the light of faith. Topics will draw on insights from economics, ethics, science, and theology alongside the lived experience of ecological wisdom. Particular reference will be made throughout the course to both the Papal encyclical [Laudato Si’](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html) (2015) and [The Tao of Liberation](http://www.taoofliberation.com/) (Hathaway & Boff, 2009).

# Themes by Week

1. Seeking wisdom in a time of crisis: What is happening to our common home and why is wisdom important?
2. Roots of the ecological crisis: History, economics, technology, values, and worldviews.
3. Rethinking relationships, transformation, and the role of the human: Insights from physics, systems perspectives, the Gaia theory, T. Berry’s evolutionary cosmology, and reconceptualizing science (Panikkar and Indigenous perspectives).
4. Reimagining our relationship to each other and the Earth: Ecological ethics, integral ecology, the Earth Charter, and the Gospel of Creation.
5. Ecological spirituality: Overcoming denial and despair (insights from the Beatitudes, Buddhism and the Work that Reconnects), ecological conversion, the experience of ecological wisdom, and spiritual practices.
6. Ecological wisdom in practice: Education, transformative action, regenerative perspectives, and the role of faith communities.

# About Mark Hathaway, PhD

Dr. Mark Hathaway is Associate Director of the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice. Together with Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff, he wrote *The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation* (Orbis, 2009). Mark’s doctoral research examines the lived experience of ecological wisdom and the transformative learning that may cultivate such wisdom. Mark has taught courses at the University of Toronto, the Earth Charter, and a variety of Latin American universities.