CH419: Creation Themes in the Hebrew Bible
Chicago Theological Seminary, spring Quarter, 1998
Tuesdays, 9:00-12:00, Room 450
Ken Stone, Professor

**Course Description:** This course examines a number of biblical texts that shed light on Israel’s understanding of creation. Attention will be given to the ancient socio-cultural background of the biblical creation texts; the relations among God, humanity, and nature that are presupposed by the creation texts; the role of gender in the biblical views on creation; and the impact of ecojustice hermeneutics on biblical interpretation.

**Textbooks:**
Ronald A. Simkins, Creator and Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel (Hendrickson Publishers, 1994)

**Requirements and Evaluation:** All M.A./M.Div. students have the option of taking this course on a Pass/Fail basis. A grade of Pass will be given to those students who attend class regularly, participate in class discussions, and turn in two reflection papers. Each reflection paper should be 5-7 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced, with margins no larger than 1 and inches.

Reflection Paper #1 is due on Tuesday, May 26, and should answer the following question: What do you find most interesting and helpful in each of the three required textbooks as you reflect upon the contemporary theological significance of biblical creation themes?
Reflection Paper #2 is due on Tuesday, June 2, and should answer the following question: What aspects of the biblical creation themes do you find most helpful for the construction of a contemporary ecojustice theology, and why? What aspects do you find least helpful, and why?

Please note that all students should come to class prepared to discuss these questions on the dates on which the reflection papers are due. S.T.M. students and those M.A./M.Div. students who wish to receive a letter grade should turn in both of the reflection papers as well as an additional research paper. The research paper should be 10-12 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, with margins no larger than 1 and inches. The paper may explore a topic of interest to the individual student but the topic should be approved by the instructor no later than Tuesday, May 12. The paper is due on the last day of the quarter, Friday, June 5.
Ph.D. students are also required to turn in both of the reflection papers and a research paper. The
research paper for Ph.D. students should be 20-30 pages in length and reflect a level of research appropriate to doctoral work.

**Tenative Course Outline**  
(with assigned readings from the Hebrew Bible and Batto)  
March 31 Introduction to the Course  
April 7 Creation in the ancient Near East  
READ: Batto, pp. 1-40  
April 14 The Yahwist Creation Account  
READ: Genesis 2:4b-3:24  
Batto, pp. 41-72  
April 21 The Priestly Creation Account  
READ: Genesis 1:1-2:4a  
Batto, pp. 73-101  
April 28 Flood and Exodus as Creation Accounts  
READ: Genesis 6:1-9:17  
Exodus 13:17-15:21  
Batto, pp. 102-52  
May 5 Creation Themes in the Psalms  
READ: Psalms 8, 19, 74, 89, 104, 146, 147  
May 12 Creation Themes in the wisdom Literature  
READ: Job 36:24-42:6  
Proverbs 1-9; 30:1-33  
May 19 Creation and New Creation: Prophecy and the Apocalyptic Tradition  
READ: Isaiah 40:1-41:20; 45:1-19  
Daniel 7; Ezekiel 29  
Batto, pp. 153-85  
May 26 Discussion of Batto, Levenson, Simkins  
(reflection paper #1 Due for all students)  
June 2 Concluding Discussion: The Contemporary Significance of Biblical Creation Themes  
(Reflection Paper #2 Due for all students)

**Select Bibliography**  
Bird, Phyllis. Section III (Genesis 1-3). In Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and