the ecological self

How do we develop a wider self?...The self is as comprehensive as the totality of our identifications. Or, more succinctly: Our Self is that with which we identify. The question then reads: How do we widen identification?

Ame Naess ‘Identification as a Source of Deep Ecological Attitudes’

Activism is engaging in healing work. It means putting our hands in the dough and not merely thinking or talking about making tortillas. It means creating spaces and times for healing to happen, espacios y tiempos to nourish the soul ... It's frustrating when healing doesn’t happen immediately. Some of us choose to slow down the healing work or choose not to heal because we’ve become familiar and comfortable with our wounds. We may be afraid that our entire life will change if we heal. And it will ... plunge your hands into the mess, plunge your hands en la masa, into embodied practical material spiritual political acts.


Introduction
Welcome to module four “The Ecological Self”. Various thinkers have suggested that the roots of our ecological crisis lie within Western conceptions of the self, and that we need therefore to cultivate an ecological self.

In this module we will engage in, and evaluate, a variety of practices to consider what is meant by the self, how differing notions of the self lead us to different modes of engagement with the more-than-human, to question the idea of an ecological self, and to ask whether it is indeed possible to achieve an ecological self. Through direct experience and critical reflection, we will be able to consider the consonances and dissonances between thought and practice in regards to the ecological self.

We will ask ourselves how we might act in service of a more just world. Our reflections will be situated within a consideration of theories activism, quietism and non-violent direct action. The module will examine ideas of an ecological self in the light of post-activist critiques, including delicate activism and sacred activism. We will reflect upon, consider and critique our own experiences of activism, and consider what form ecological selfhood might take after graduation from Schumacher College.

Our learning will consist in a mixture of practical workshops and textual readings, with sessions from several external tutors who are specialists in their area of expertise. There will be spaces for reflection and discussion, inspired by weekly readings.
Module leader: Dr Andy Letcher  andy.letcher@schumachercollege.org.uk
Office in High Cross House, Rear Servant Bedroom Right

Guest lecturer: Eve Annecke  eveannecke@gmail.com

Unless otherwise stated: classes will be held in the Ecological Design Thinking studio (EDT studio) in the Craft Ed building, at the Old Postern site.

Key dates:

• Term dates Monday July 5th – Friday September 10th 2021
• Academic essay due 11.00 Monday 13th September
• Student presentations due 11.00am Friday 17th September
• Bank holidays: no classes on Monday 30th August
• Andy will be away 18th – 30th August

Module aims:

o To critically investigate differing Western and non-Western notions of the self, especially in regard to their to
causing, maintaining or resolving the ecological crisis
o To experiment with and evaluate a range of practices that might engender an ecological self
o To reflect critically on ways to act as ecological selves in service of a more just world
o To reflect critically upon the ecological self in the light of theories of change (including activism, quietism and
non-violent direct action)
o To evaluate the ecological self in the light of thought regarding post-activism, delicate activism and sacred
activism

Module assessment

The module assessment is 100% coursework and consists in two components.

o 1 x 3000 word academic essay on a subject to be determined with the module leader, due 11.00 Monday 13th
September. Component weighting 50%.
o 1 x individual presentation, performed on video or audio (as diary, podcast, or radio programme) of no more
than ten minutes reflecting on own understanding of and intended actions around ecological selfhood. Due
11.00 Friday 17th September. Component weighting 50%.

Assessments should be uploaded via the Schumacher VLE. Marks and feedback will be available within 20 working days.

Assessed module learning outcomes:

In sum your coursework should meet the following learning outcomes

1. Evaluate, critique and locate historically different ideas of the self and how they situate the human in relation to
the more-than-human.
2. Critically assess the notion of an ecological self and the efficacy of different practices for engendering an
ecological self.
3. Evaluate the ecological self in the light of theories of change and post-activist thought.
4. Present reflectively on their intended actions and ambitions upon graduation with regard to ecological selfhood.

Teaching and learning strategy:

| SUMMARY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING [Use HESA KIS definitions] |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Scheduled Activities            | Hours | Comments/Additional Information (briefly explain activities, including formative assessment opportunities) |
| Lectures                        | 30    |                                                             |
| Demonstrations and practical workshops | 14    | Introductions to different practices of the self |
| Seminars                        | 12    |                                                             |
| Peer to peer                    | 8     | Reading and other learning                                 |
Tutorials | 1 | Face to face tutorials on assignments
---|---|---
Independent study | 235 |
Total | 300 | (NB: 1 credit = 10 hours of learning; 10 credits = 100 hours, etc.)

Students are expected to take full responsibility for their learning, attend all scheduled sessions, read appropriate indicated readings, and work on set exercises (formative and summative assessment).

Based on previous experience; students who failed to attend sessions are likely to be unsuccessful or show poor performance. Please ensure that you are engaging with the content and learning activities relating to this module.

**Late work/extenuating circumstances:**
If your participation in an examination or assessment has been affected by an extenuating circumstance, then you can ask the University to take this into consideration. You can submit a claim for extenuating circumstances to cover late submission of work, non-submission of work or non-attendance at a time specific assessment, such as an examination, test presentation or performance, or field class.

Information regarding the Extenuating Circumstances policy and how and where to submit Extenuating Circumstance Claims are available here: [https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/exams/exam-rules-and-regulations/extenuating-circumstances](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/exams/exam-rules-and-regulations/extenuating-circumstances)

Where there are no valid extenuating circumstances, the following regulations will automatically apply:

- Work submitted after the deadline date/time but within 24 hours of it, will be capped at the pass mark 50%
- Work submitted 24 hours after the deadline will receive a mark of zero.

Please notify Dr Andy Letcher of any extenuating circumstances as soon as possible.

**Referencing protocols and academic offences:**
When writing a report or an essay you are expected to fully reference the materials you have used. The report or essay should be your own work, in your own words. For details on referencing please read the University of Plymouth referencing library guide: [https://plymouth.libguides.com/referencing](https://plymouth.libguides.com/referencing)

Please use the **Harvard** system of references.

**Plagiarism** is an offence under the University regulations on examination and assessment offences. It is important that you familiarise yourself with what constitutes plagiarism, and academic offences. Further information can be found:

[https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-informtion/regulations/plagiarism](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-informtion/regulations/plagiarism)


**Module feedback**
At the end of the module we ask that you complete and submit a module feedback form, available on the VLE. This enables us to monitor quality, listen to your feedback and to make improvements.

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**Provisional timetable TERM TWO**
* some sessions may begin earlier/later in day e.g. workshops

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reading list

Week 1
Monday 5th July Introduction: What is the Self?

Suggested reading


Additional reading


Tuesday 6th July The Atomistic Self

Required reading

Gilbert Scott, F., Jan Sapp, and Alfred I Tauber 2021. ‘A symbiotic view of life: we have never been individuals.’ The Quarterly Review of Biology 87(4): 325-341.

Week 2
Monday 12th July The Ecological Self

Required reading


Additional reading


Tuesday 13th July Christianity and Anthropocentricism: the Lynn White Hypothesis
Required reading

Additional reading


Week 3
Monday 19th July *Platonism and Geometry*

Suggested reading


Tuesday 20th July *Reflections on Plato*

Required reading

Week 4
Monday 26th July *Ecological self in the Southern African Tradition*

Suggested reading

Tuesday 27th July *Ubuntu and the ecological self*

Required reading

Week 5
Monday 2nd August *Onto-poetics*

Required reading


Tuesday 3rd August *Psychedelics and the Self*

Required reading
Additional reading
R. L. Carhart-Harris and K. J. Friston. 2019. 'REBUS and the Anarchic Brain.' *Pharmacological Reviews* 71 (3) 316-344; DOI: https://doi.org/10.1124/pr.118.017160

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhrWodW4O9Q

Week 6

**Monday 9th August: Towards a Sacred Activism**

**Required reading**


**Additional reading**


Week 7

**Tuesday 17th August: A Delicate Activism**

**Required reading**


**Additional reading**


Week 8

**Monday 23rd August: Conversations with Sacred Activists/Activisms, Addictions and the Shadow**

**Required reading**

McIntosh Alastair and Matt Carmichael. Ch. 5 ‘Movements and their Movers’. In *Spiritual Activism: Leadership as Service*. Dartington: Green Books.


**Additional reading**


**Tuesday 24th August: Reimagining our Stories**

**Required reading**


Additional reading


Week 9

**Monday 30th Bank Holiday No reading**

**Tuesday 31st August**

**Death, agency, activism**

**Required reading**


**Additional reading**


Week 10

**Suggested reading**


Other suggested reading


