

# Cherry Hill Seminary

## *Teaching Manual*

July 2011

Prepared by Christine Hoff Kraemer, PhD  
ckraemer@cherryhillseminary.org  
Chair, Department of Theology and Religious History

## Table of Contents

<b>Part One: Teaching and Learning with Cherry Hill Seminary Students .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Culture, Values, and Mission .....	4
Expectations for Students and Instructors .....	5
Student Preparation .....	5
Collaborative Learning.....	6
Multiple Role Relationships.....	7
Setting Classroom Expectations .....	7
Technological Literacy .....	8
Recommended Readings .....	8
<b>Part Two: Cherry Hill Seminary Courses .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Master’s Courses .....	9
Master’s Syllabi Guidelines.....	10
Models for Master’s Courses.....	11
Discussion-based Classes.....	11
Lecture-based Classes .....	12
Directed Studies .....	12
Pagan Community Education Courses.....	13
Syllabi as Contracts.....	14
Grading .....	14
Calculating and Submitting Grades .....	16
Audits.....	16
<b>Part Three: Using Moodle.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Building the Classroom .....	17
Organizational Philosophies .....	17
Basic Nuts and Bolts .....	18
Tips for Organization .....	19
Posting Files to the Classroom.....	20
Changing the Course Start Date .....	24
Assignments.....	25
Check Your Skills: Exercises .....	26

General Classroom Management Strategies.....	27
Achieving a Sense of Instructor Presence .....	27
Strategies for Effective Forum Discussions .....	30
Graded Forums.....	32
Assignment Feedback.....	33
Monitoring Student Participation.....	34
Check Your Skills: Exercises .....	35
Electronic Resources .....	35
PDFs and Electronic Documents.....	36
Audio Lectures.....	36
Visuals and Video.....	37
Check Your Skills: Exercises .....	37
Designing Assignments.....	37
Qualitative Assignments.....	37
Quantitative Assignments .....	38
Check Your Skills: Exercises .....	41
<b>Part Four: Using Skype .....</b>	<b>42</b>
Skype Technical Requirements.....	42
Group Chats Using Skype.....	42
Setting Up a Group Text Chat.....	42
Setting Up a Group Voice Chat.....	45
Group Chat Facilitation Techniques .....	47
Supplementing Skype with Conference Calls .....	49
Check Your Skills: Exercises .....	49
<b>Part Five: Opportunities for Involvement at Cherry Hill Seminary .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix A: Sample Syllabus for Discussion-Based Master’s-level Course .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Appendix B: Sample Syllabus for a Pagan Community Education Course.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Appendix C: Sample PCE Foundations Syllabus.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Appendix D: Student Resource - Skimming and Working with Difficult Texts .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Appendix E: Student Resource - How to Be a Cherry Hill Seminary Graduate Student.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Appendix F: Student Resource - Free Online Resources for Academic Research.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Appendix G: Using Skype with Freeconferencing.com .....</b>	<b>77</b>

## Part One

### Teaching and Learning with Cherry Hill Seminary Students

The administration of Cherry Hill Seminary extends a warm welcome to both new and returning faculty. We are deeply grateful for the expertise and passion that you all bring to the process of building this unique institution, the first graduate-level seminary to offer ministry training in a contemporary Pagan context. Cherry Hill Seminary would not exist if faculty members past and present had not given so generously of their time and energy.

This manual is provided with the knowledge that most Cherry Hill Seminary instructors do not teach more than one or two classes a year. That fact, in addition to our status as a distance learning institution, creates challenges for faculty in learning the culture and standards of the seminary. It is hoped that this manual will effectively prepare instructors to teach CHS students and clarify questions of both formal policy and informal convention at the seminary.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Culture, Values, and Mission**

As outlined in the Catalog, Cherry Hill Seminary's mission is to provide higher education and practical training in Pagan ministry. This mission is accomplished through an extensive education in diverse aspects of Pagan scholarship, philosophy, practice, and skilled ministry; supplementing existing ritual and magical skills with training for professional ministry and pastoral counseling; serving as an ongoing resource for individual continuing education; and providing a forum for research and community. CHS holds the following six core values:

- Honors the sacredness of the Earth;
- Values scholarship;
- Respects diversity;
- Encourages individual and spiritual autonomy;
- Values community.

---

<sup>1</sup> All errors contained in this manual are my own. Please inform me of any discrepancies and I will correct them as soon as possible. –CHK

We ask all faculty to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the Catalog, which can be downloaded from the Student section of the CHS website.

The culture of Cherry Hill Seminary differs significantly from that of a university. Seminary training is inherently practical: all classes are situated in a context of community ministry and personal spiritual growth. Although the critical thinking skills so central to university culture are also essential in a seminary environment, seminary training requires deep reflection and the willingness to bring personal experience into dialogue with the material. Students must constantly ask themselves: How might my community benefit from this material? What new light does this class shine on my spiritual practice? What big questions about human nature, religious communities in general, or contemporary Paganism in particular are being raised or answered? As adult learners who are often already serving as clergy in their communities, CHS students require a pragmatic curriculum that does not shy away from theory or scholarly research, but harnesses these materials in the service of students' work in the world.

Cherry Hill Seminary is also a largely volunteer-run organization. We use free software almost exclusively, and students are expected to provide their own computer equipment and to use library services local to their area. This structure allows CHS to provide graduate-level education at a very low rate per credit hour. However, it also requires both students and faculty to embrace a very proactive, self-responsible, and collaborative attitude toward study at CHS.

We encourage students and faculty to supplement our standard Moodle and Skype-based classrooms with other electronic resources as needed, as well as to think creatively to get the most out of the resources provided. Many apparent problems with classroom software are actually due to unfamiliarity with it, so students and teachers are encouraged to thoroughly familiarize themselves with provided tutorials or to get help from CHS technical support or an experienced student or faculty member before the semester begins. Expectations for students around time management, finding local resources for research, and technology requirements are outlined more thoroughly in the appendix "How to Be a Cherry Hill Seminary Graduate Student." This document is provided to students in the Moodle for Matriculated Students tutorial classroom.

## **Expectations for Students and Instructors**

### *Student Preparation*

Cherry Hill Seminary students are often deeply involved in their local communities and have already been serving in leadership positions for several years before coming to Cherry Hill Seminary. Although some have aspirations to paid ministry positions, such as hospital, prison, or military chaplaincy, most are realistic about the limited availability of such jobs and have come to CHS for the development of practical leadership skills. Although some CHS students have a scholarly orientation, for most this is secondary to their community work.

Accordingly, most CHS classes are geared toward ministry, advocacy, and counseling, while basic classes in theology and history are designed to enable students to speak knowledgeably about contemporary Paganism with the clergy of other religions. CHS aspires, however, to also attract young Pagan Studies scholars who wish to study within an explicitly Pagan environment. Classes in scholarly research and sophisticated classes in specific areas of theology and history will be offered alongside more practical courses, with the understanding that such classes are likely to have smaller enrollments until CHS's student body grows.

CHS Master's students vary somewhat in their preparedness for graduate-level work. In the admissions process, we look for good communication skills, clarity of vision around their work in the Pagan community, emotional maturity, and evidence of undergraduate work relevant to the student's proposed major. Applicants to the Master's programs are expected to have a Bachelor's-level education at minimum. CHS admits a small number of students without Bachelor's degrees to the Master's program, but the number of such students in the student body will never be more than 5% of the total. Faculty can expect that CHS Master's students will hold Bachelor's degrees, but such degrees may have been earned decades earlier. Some students may hold graduate degrees in other fields, such as technology. Such students may require remediation in skills such as academic writing and discipline-specific methodologies. Faculty are encouraged to be as specific as possible about what basic skills are needed in their syllabi and to suggest supplemental resources for students who are doing graduate-level work in a field that is new to them.

CHS Pagan Community Education classes (both semester-long courses and 4-week Foundations courses) are entirely open to the public and do not require a formal admissions process. Some PCE students will be pursuing certificates with CHS, but most PCE students will be non-matriculating. Particularly with 4-week Foundations classes, a significant percentage of the students may be taking a CHS class for the first time. Faculty teaching these courses will encounter students with a wide variety of educational backgrounds and levels of maturity. Because every group is different, faculty may want to design flexible syllabi that can be adjusted based on the needs of an individual class. Some PCE courses may attract an entire group of students who are already on a graduate level; other groups may resemble community college freshmen, while some classes will be mixed. Faculty should be prepared for first-time students to take time mastering the format and may wish to save technically complex assignments for the end of the course. Other strategies for dealing with groups of students with very different levels of preparation will be discussed later in the manual.

### *Collaborative Learning*

Current research into teaching and learning clearly demonstrates that students learn material more thoroughly, retain it better, and experience greater shifts in their beliefs and practices as a result when they feel in charge of their education. Cherry Hill Seminary embraces a collaborative learning model as one that respects the considerable knowledge and experience of our students, as well as helping to improve student performance.

Moodle is explicitly designed to encourage collaborative learning. As William H. Rice explains in *Moodle Teaching Techniques*, it supports a philosophy of "social constructionist pedagogy." This pedagogy suggests that

students learn not just from course activities, but from other students and their environment; that they learn the most when constructing learning activities for others; that a sense of integration into a classroom culture accelerates learning; and that students' ability to move between objective, factual approaches and subjective ones is valuable and desirable.<sup>2</sup>

Faculty should encourage students to see each other as resources. Each student brings unique life experience to the classroom that will cause them to engage differently with the course. Instructors should use their judgment and creativity to formulate provocative questions about the material based on the particular interests and needs of the students. Student contributions should be treated seriously and with respect, with the understanding that students constantly teach each other and their instructors. As facilitators, instructors should set expectations for classroom discussion that is respectful, but does not shy away from difficult or controversial topics.

### *Multiple Role Relationships*

Like the pan-Pagan community in general, Cherry Hill Seminary is a small community, and participants tend to play many different roles. You may find administrators or board members in your classroom as students, or you may take advantage of your faculty tuition benefit to take a colleague's class for free. We encourage faculty to ask for clarification about which of the many CHS "hats" an individual is wearing at any given time. If there is any concern that the boundaries between roles are becoming blurred in a way that damages the classroom environment or relationships between CHS participants, faculty are encouraged to contact the department chair or Academic Dean.

### *Setting Classroom Expectations*

Regardless of whether the students are enrolled in a degree or certificate program, faculty will experience more success in their classes if expectations for both students and instructor are made clear at the beginning of the semester. CHS endorses the view of pedagogy researcher Ken Bain (*What the Best College Teachers Do*) that the process of introducing the syllabus should be handled more as an invitation to a feast than as a presentation of a list of demands. CHS students are adults, often with jobs and families, who are pursuing an education at CHS out of a sense of personal calling, not generally as training for a paid professional position. Their participation is an informed choice. The role of the instructor is to facilitate student learning by raising provocative questions and providing structures for student thought and performance. Students of all levels are held to high standards, and instructors support student learning by consistently expressing faith in students' ability to meet those standards.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> William H. Rice, IV, *Moodle Teaching Techniques* (Birmingham, AL: Packt Publishing, 2007) 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about how an atmosphere of trust and faith in students' abilities improves student performance and helps minority students to overcome stereotype vulnerability, see Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2004) 68-75.

Because CHS classes are offered in a variety of disciplines and assignments use many different methodologies, faculty should be as specific as possible about their expectations for individual assignments. Assignments at CHS can include academic writing in multiple disciplines, journalistic or popular expository writing, creative or reflective writing, visual art, sociological or anthropological fieldwork, curriculum development, oral presentations or speeches, and hybrids of these. When giving academic writing assignments, faculty should be particularly clear about to what degree the student may introduce personal experience and reflections. Faculty who wish to train students in traditional academic writing using the objective voice may ask students to produce personal reflections on the research process as a separate assignment. Whenever possible, assignments should be connected to real-world tasks in which clergy might engage. Specific guidelines for syllabi and grading are given later in the manual.

### *Technological Literacy*

Instructors and students are expected to be computer literate and to be able to use e-mail, Moodle, and Skype competently. New instructors are urged to master setting up group Skype calls and chats **before** the semester begins. CHS technical support and/or your department chair may be available for practice calls.

As of June 2011, Moodle instructor sandboxes (where instructors can experiment with classroom building) are provided by CHS on a separate site at <http://cherryhill.mohnkern.com/>. Because our administration and technical support are volunteer-staffed, instructors are requested to look for the answers to their questions using the CHS Moodle instructor tutorial (available on the CHS Moodle main page), an [online Moodle manual](#),<sup>4</sup> or a print manual such as *Using Moodle* by Jason Cole, before contacting CHS technical support about non-emergency technical issues. We particularly encourage new instructors to begin experimenting with their classroom design well before the beginning of the semester to allow plenty of time for tinkering and problem-solving. For technology issues that are interfering with the successful running of a course, however, please contact your department chair or the CHS tech ([chswebtech@cherryhillseminary.org](mailto:chswebtech@cherryhillseminary.org)) immediately.

### *Recommended Readings*

Ambrose, Susan A. et al, *How Learning Works: Seven Research-based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

Bain, Ken. *What the Best College Teachers Do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2004.

Cole, Jason. *Using Moodle: Teaching with the Popular Open Source Course Management System*. Second edition. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, 2008.

Rice, William H., IV. *Moodle Teaching Techniques*. Birmingham, AL: Packt Publishing, 2007.

---

<sup>4</sup> As of June 2011, CHS is using Moodle 1.9.7.

## **Part Two**

### **Cherry Hill Seminary Courses**

Cherry Hill Seminary seeks to provide academically rigorous and spiritually growthful graduate-level courses to Master's and certificate students, as well as challenging but accessible Pagan Community Education courses to certificate students and the general public. Examples of syllabi for a Master's course, a PCE semester-long course, and a PCE Foundations course can be found in the appendices to this manual.

Instructors may wish to build flexibility into their syllabi in order to deal with mixed levels of student preparation. CHS students are accustomed to introducing themselves in the Introductions Forums included by default in each classroom. It is recommended that instructors include questions in the Introductions Forum that prompt students for their academic background in relation to the course subject matter, or for any other information that will help the instructor shape the material for the students' needs. Instructors are also encouraged to use beginning-of-semester assessments of basic skills if relevant.

When a course is in session, instructors are expected to respond to student and administrator communications within 48 hours during the regular work week or 72 hours over the weekend, except when an absence has been planned and announced. Feedback on short assignments should be given within a week; long assignments should be responded to within two weeks.

#### **Master's Courses**

3-credit Master's courses should provide students with about 135 hours of work per semester (8-12 hours of work per week for 14 weeks). This time commitment includes all readings, assignments, chats, Moodle classroom participation, and other course activities. See the Faculty Handbook (in development) for current pay rates.

Although instructors are encouraged to assign the best textbooks available for their courses, students may be reluctant to take courses where the books are very expensive. For books where only a single chapter is being used, instructors should consider making a PDF of the relevant material to post in the online classroom, as this helps to keep students' costs low. (This practice is allowable under Fair Use policy.)

Non-matriculating students may register for Master's classes with the permission of the instructor.

## Master's Syllabi Guidelines

The syllabus is a contract, authorized by the educational institution, between the instructor and the student. All syllabi for Master's classes are expected to include the following elements, preferably in the following order:

- 1) Course name and number  
(check with your department chair if you do not know the number)
- 2) Instructor contact information
- 3) Class meeting time (if any)
- 4) Description of the class
- 5) Required textbooks
- 6) Other required readings and suggested optional readings (if any)  
(these can also be placed in the weekly topics)
- 7) Course Objectives  
(the specific point in taking this class rather than another)
- 8) Departmental Learning Objectives or Competencies that this class addresses  
(disregard for now; these will be developed by the departments at a later date)
- 9) Class expectations  
Reading – 40-60 pages a week  
Work load – 8-12 hours a week per class  
Writing – 6000-9000 words in the form of a term paper, shorter papers or weekly assignments, journaling, fieldwork reports, oral presentations, etc. There must be a substantial writing component.  
Class Behavior – General classroom guidelines, number of live discussions required, required Moodle check-ins including expected number of postings, etc.
- 10) Grading and assignments  
There must be a minimum of 4 assessments of student performance. The percentage of the final grade must be indicated for each assessment, and the final exam or assessment may not be worth more than 1/3 of the semester's grade. Expectations for each assignment should be given in detail.
- 11) Week by week schedule of topics, readings, and assignments

In addition, there must be a statement referring the student to the Catalog for issues of policy, such as plagiarism, make-ups, etc.

All syllabi need to be written for a pan-Pagan student body. Avoid making assumptions about the practices or beliefs of individual students' traditions when framing assignments.

Instructors will submit a draft syllabus to the department chair for feedback on the first of the month before the

month when classes begin (for example, if classes begin September 6, the syllabus draft is due August 1). See the CHS Calendar (found in the Student and Faculty sections of the website) for relevant dates. Consult with the department chair about any educationally necessary deviations from the standards outlined above.

Although guidelines for respectful classroom behavior are found in the Catalog, instructors may wish to reiterate this policy on the first day of class, as well as to address the need for appropriate confidentiality if personal sharing is to be part of classroom activity.

### **Models for Master's Courses**

Master's courses at Cherry Hill Seminary tend to enroll between 3 and 8 students per semester, with 5 being an average enrollment. Instructors will want to design their classes in a way that makes their time spent in the classroom most efficient while maximizing the benefit to students. Instructors should expect to spend 10-15 hours on classroom design and set-up (this only needs to be done once per class; once a class has been offered, the classroom is saved and can be imported for future use).

A sample syllabus is included in the appendices to this manual. Particularly long syllabi may be broken up into separate documents (for instance, the week-by-week schedule and assignment descriptions may be provided separately).

#### *Discussion-based Classes*

In discussion-based classes, instructors post readings and/or lectures to the Moodle classroom. Students are asked to post to the Moodle forums two or more times a week (usually one long post, and then responses to other students). The class also meets to discuss the materials via Skype, usually once a week. Most student assignments are shared with the class in the forums, and final projects are often presented to the group as a whole with a Powerpoint slideshow, video, recorded mp3, or other mechanism.

This style of classroom runs most effectively with 5-8 students, though it can be successful with 3-4 students who are extremely participatory. It is a naturally collaborative model that allows bonding between the students. Participants are given plenty of space to connect the material with their personal experience and to learn from the experiences of others. The instructor operates primarily as a facilitator and allows the class to choose what aspects of the readings are most salient to them. Intelligent and insightful engagement with the material is emphasized over learning a body of facts. Exams are not usually given. In this style of class, the heart of the classroom is the Moodle forum.

Instructors using this style should expect to spend 2-3 hours per week facilitating chat and Moodle Forum discussions. Instructors may spend 1-2 hours per week giving feedback on short assignments and or 4-8 hours

giving feedback on longer assignments. Many 5000-level introductory classes and some 6000-level classes are offered in this style.

### *Lecture-based Classes*

In lecture-based classes, interaction between individual students and the instructor is emphasized more than student-to-student interaction. Instructors post weekly lectures that may guide students through synthesizing the readings, or may provide the primary material for study. Students should still have opportunities for discussion in the Moodle forums or via Skype, but the Skype sessions may be student-led, with students submitting a text log of their discussions to the instructor. Moodle discussions may be optional rather than required in this model. Weekly assignments focus on demonstrating a grasp of the material, and student knowledge may be periodically assessed with exams. Personal engagement with the material may be invited via journaling or other assignments, but may be shared only with the instructor rather than with the entire class. The instructor may also schedule one or two one-on-one conference calls with each student during the course of the semester.

This style of classroom works well with smaller and quieter groups of students. Even more than in the discussion-based classroom, it is essential that the instructor give prompt and substantial feedback on assignments. Here, student responses to lectures and the instructor's feedback on those responses form the heart of the classroom. Instructors are encouraged to record lectures as podcasts or even Powerpoint-based videos to maximize the sense of instructor presence in the classroom, as well as to appeal to students with different learning styles. Technical information on recording lectures is included later in the teaching manual.

In addition to the time spent preparing lectures, instructors using this style should expect to spend 2-3 hours per week giving feedback on short assignments and answering questions, or 4-8 hours giving feedback on longer assignments. 5-10 hours per semester may also be spent speaking with students one-on-one. 5000- or 6000-level classes may be offered in this style.

### *Directed Studies*

Directed studies are designed for 1-3 highly self-motivated students. In a directed study, the instructor mentors the students in learning a body of knowledge, often culminating in a modest original research project. This model gives both instructors and students a great deal of flexibility in terms of time commitment. Although instructors are still encouraged to use formal deadlines, students may be given more freedom to set their own schedules: for example, by allowing them a month to complete a series of assignments related to a single reading.

Students should receive at least one communication from the instructor each week. This may come as an invitation to check in via Moodle; feedback on an assignment; a one-on-one conference call; or the announcement of new classroom material, such as a lecture. Particularly if the class involves a research project,

students may also work as partners or in a group to give peer feedback and become familiar with each other's work.

Instructors who are willing to offer a class for a very small number of students may wish to design both a directed study-style syllabus and a lecture- or discussion-based syllabus, then choose which to use based on enrollment. Additionally, an instructor may also work with a particular student to design a directed study in an area of that student's interest.

Instructors using this style of classroom may spend as little as 15 minutes per week during some weeks of the class, but may spend 2-8 hours per week giving feedback when long assignments are submitted. 5-10 hours per semester should be spent speaking with students in conference calls. Additionally, it is recommended that a meeting of the entire class be scheduled to begin and end the semester. Many 6000-level classes and the rare 7000-level classes can be offered in this style. See the Catalog for more information about the expectations for various levels of course.

#### **Time Management Tips for Instructors:**

- Check the Cherry Hill calendar (available on the CHS website in the Faculty and Student sections) and mark deadlines on your calendar.
- Give yourself buffer time on important deadlines. If a deadline is set for August 1, mark it on your calendar as July 25. This practice helps avoid panics caused by last-minute snafus.
- Teaching a course for the first time is much more time-consuming than teaching a class you are very familiar with. When evaluating your time commitments, consider a class you are developing as if it were a class and a half's worth of work.
- Block off time on your calendar for tasks such as grading, research, lecture preparation, or writing. Squeezing these in only when other pressing commitments allow results in poor quality work.

### **Pagan Community Education Courses**

Pagan Community Education courses are open to students with a wide range of preparation and ability. Although instructors should expect Master's students to be capable of independent work, PCE students often desire more guidance from the instructor and may be overwhelmed by long reading assignments. Although there are no hard-and-fast guidelines for PCE classes at this time, instructors may want to think of these classes as lower-division undergraduate courses. Rather than formal academic papers, PCE classes often require reflective or creative writing. PCE courses may be graded on a pass-fail basis for non-matriculating students, but matriculating certificate students must receive a letter grade.

Some instructors offer Master's-level and PCE sections of the same course (usually under slightly different titles). In this model, PCE students often attend chats and participate in discussions, but may be exempted from some assignments and readings, or may be given alternative assignments.

The 4-week Foundations courses are a particular type of PCE course. Because they are short and require less of a time commitment, prospective students often enroll in Foundations courses in order to find out more about Cherry Hill Seminary. Foundations classes often have a large percentage of first-time students, and students often enroll only a few days or a week before the class begins. Instructors are advised to have online readings and other resources available in the classroom, as last-minute students may be delayed in receiving their textbooks (which they often order through the mail). More than Master's students, PCE students may also need coaching and reminding about what constitutes respectful classroom behavior.

In order to stimulate discussion in a PCE classroom, instructors are encouraged to frame discussion questions in an explicitly personal context. Rather than asking PCE students to summarize and respond to the argument in a text, the instructor might restate a key point from the reading and ask students open-ended but structured questions such as, "How does your community handle this issue? What experience have you had with this issue in the past?" The most productive questions cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" and will provide students more of a springboard for thought than overly loose questions such as, "What do you think about...?"

As with Master's courses, PCE courses can involve readings, Skype chats, lectures, forum discussions and more. Instructors are particularly encouraged to use videos, podcasts, and other multimedia resources, as these help to engage less academically-experienced students. PCE students can be expected to spend 3-5 hours a week on class activities. Instructors are expected to spend a minimum of 2-3 hours a week on PCE courses.

Sample PCE syllabi can be found in the appendices to this manual.

### **Syllabi as Contracts**

Syllabi at CHS are treated as contracts between instructors and students. Instructors may only make very minor changes in the syllabus mid-semester, such as changing the date of a video or having a guest lecture. Changes in the amount of work expected from the students are not permitted. When changes to the syllabus are necessary for the good of the class, instructors are encouraged to negotiate such changes with the students as early in the semester as possible. Students experiencing unusual life circumstances that interfere with their studies should be encouraged to ask for extensions in a timely way; instructors experiencing unusual life circumstances that interfere with their teaching should immediately contact the department chair.

### **Grading**

A grading rubric indicating the quality of work required to achieve various letter grades is given in the Catalog. Note that an A+ for a course can only be given in a 6000-level class or above, not in an introductory 5000-level class. A+ work requires original research, which is generally beyond the scope of introductory courses.

**Effective Feedback:**

- is specific and goal-oriented
- refers to criteria understood by the student
- acknowledges strengths and weaknesses in a student's work
- targets no more than 2-3 major areas for improvement in a given assignment
- is timely (returned 1-2 weeks after the assignment is submitted)
- may refer to models or examples of high-quality performance

Giving feedback on student work is one of the most important roles of the instructor, and faculty are asked to allot ample time for this task over the course of the semester. The book *How Learning Works* is recommended as a resource on giving effective feedback; the principles outlined below are taken from it.

Instructors are encouraged to be as explicit as possible about the goals for the class and for individual assignments. Grading rubrics or checklists that are shared with the class in advance are recommended. Narrative feedback that provides specific strategies for improvement should be given whenever possible. Since

student performance improves most noticeably when feedback is targeted, instructors may want to focus on how to improve a few aspects of an assignment instead of giving multi-page feedback that points out every flaw.

Although assignments may be used as evaluations of student ability, they should be approached primarily as learning tools; students should not be expected to perform perfectly on the first assignment of a given course. Faculty are encouraged to create assignments that build on each other so that students can practice their skills and apply what they have learned to later assignments. For example, if the final project for a class is a paper written using a particular academic methodology, students will produce better work if, earlier in the semester, they write and receive feedback on a short paper using the same methodology. Instructors may also wish to consider multi-part assignments that allow students to get feedback on their work before a final grade is assigned to the whole project. This strategy allows sensitive or anxious students to improve their work without the discouragement of a very low grade early in the semester.<sup>5</sup>

Although not every assignment needs a numerical or a letter grade—faculty may give narrative feedback only, especially on drafts or assignments that are parts of a larger assignment—students should receive graded feedback *at the latest* by the end of the first third of the semester. This allows ample time for a student who is performing poorly in the class to ask for help in improving her or his performance.

It is up to the individual instructor as to how he or she wishes to translate narrative or qualitative feedback into letter grades. The use of a rubric, such as the one provided in the Catalog, is recommended. Participation grades in particular are inherently subjective. Instructors may wish to set a qualitative baseline for participation, such as

---

<sup>5</sup> Susan A. Ambrose et al, *How Learning Works: Seven Research-based Principles for Smart Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 121-152.

“Students attending 8 or more of the 14 chats will receive an 85 or above on their participation grade.” The more stringently the instructor grades participation, the more specific she or he should be when explaining grading criteria in the course syllabus.

### *Calculating and Submitting Grades*

At the end of the semester, grades should be sent via e-mail to [chs@cherryhillseminary.org](mailto:chs@cherryhillseminary.org). Grades are confidential between the individual student, the instructor, and the seminary administration.

Moodle’s grading system can be somewhat difficult to use. It is recommended that instructors calculate students’ grades using their usual spreadsheet program. Grade information can be exported in standard formats from Moodle by choosing “Grades” from the Administration menu, then choosing “Export” and the preferred format from the drop-down menu.

Instructors are expected to keep copies of all assignments with feedback and grades for a full semester after the class has concluded in case there is a dispute over grades.

### **Audits**

As stated in the Catalog, registration fees are the same whether a student is auditing a course or receiving credit. Audits may be arranged with the written permission of the instructor. The terms of the audit are negotiated between the instructor and the auditing student.

## Part Three

### Using Moodle

Cherry Hill Seminary is grateful to have access to professional-grade, free classroom software in the form of Moodle. The fact that Moodle is specifically designed for a collaborative learning environment makes it an excellent technological support for the culture of a Pagan seminary.

As of June 2011, the Moodle classrooms can be accessed through a link in the Students section of the website, or directly at <http://classroom.cherryhillseminary.com>. Note the .com rather than .org suffix. Contact tech support at [chswebtech@cherryhillseminary.org](mailto:chswebtech@cherryhillseminary.org) if you do not already have your login and password.

A Moodle instructor tutorial is available on the CHS Moodle main page. As of June 2011, instructor classroom sandboxes and a more extensive tutorial may be accessed at <http://cherryhill.mohnkern.com>. Sandboxes are classrooms that instructors can use to play with and test the various Moodle features; only the instructor has access to the classroom. Contact tech support at [chswebtech@cherryhillseminary.org](mailto:chswebtech@cherryhillseminary.org) to request a login and sandbox on this site if you do not already have one. The full instructor tutorial will be moved to the main [classroom.cherryhillseminary.com](http://classroom.cherryhillseminary.com) within the next few months.

Additionally, instructors may consult [online Moodle manuals](#) or acquire a print manual such as *Using Moodle* by Jason Cole. The manual *Moodle Teaching Techniques* by William H. Rice, IV is particularly recommended for instructors who have mastered the basics and want to learn how to use Moodle more creatively and effectively.

### Building the Classroom

#### *Organizational Philosophies*

A well-organized classroom creates an effective learning environment. In an ideal online classroom, the way material is organized is itself part of what is being taught. As a specialist in her or his discipline, the instructor provides not just the material itself, but also structures for thinking about and remembering the material. An appropriate organizational structure leads students toward understanding a body of material in the way that an expert would, while an inappropriate organizational structure may hinder students' learning.

The book *How Learning Works* gives an example of an art history professor who teaches a survey class. The instructor is frustrated with her students' poor performance on exams when they are asked to identify individual pieces of art. She is unable to understand why her students do not pick up on the clusters of characteristics shared by art produced in particular periods. The class material, however, is not organized in terms of clusters of period-related characteristics; instead, it is organized chronologically. When students approach the pieces of art chronologically, as non-experts in art, the comparisons and relationships between pieces that seem obvious to

the instructor do not come naturally. Instead, they end up attempting to memorize titles, artist names, and dates as isolated facts, without any contextualizing informational structure that allows them to arrange facts into groups and make meaningful connections. Pedagogy research suggests that the art history professor would help her students considerably if she organized the material in terms of the way *she* understands it—as clusters of works related by artistic philosophy and technique.<sup>6</sup>

Instructors can use the Moodle classroom to demonstrate connections between concepts and to highlight broad questions in relation to the material. Instructors might use colors or graphics to label groups of topics; add topic titles and pair them with thought questions that link back to previous topics (either conceptually, or with literal HTML links); provide visual concept maps of the course’s main ideas; and more. A thoughtfully laid out classroom gives the students a sense of having a road map with which to approach the material. This technique lessens the possibility of students feeling overwhelmed or lost, as they may when a classroom is extremely sparse.

### Basic Nuts and Bolts

To begin editing, find the Administration menu on the right-hand side of your screen and click “Turn Editing On.”

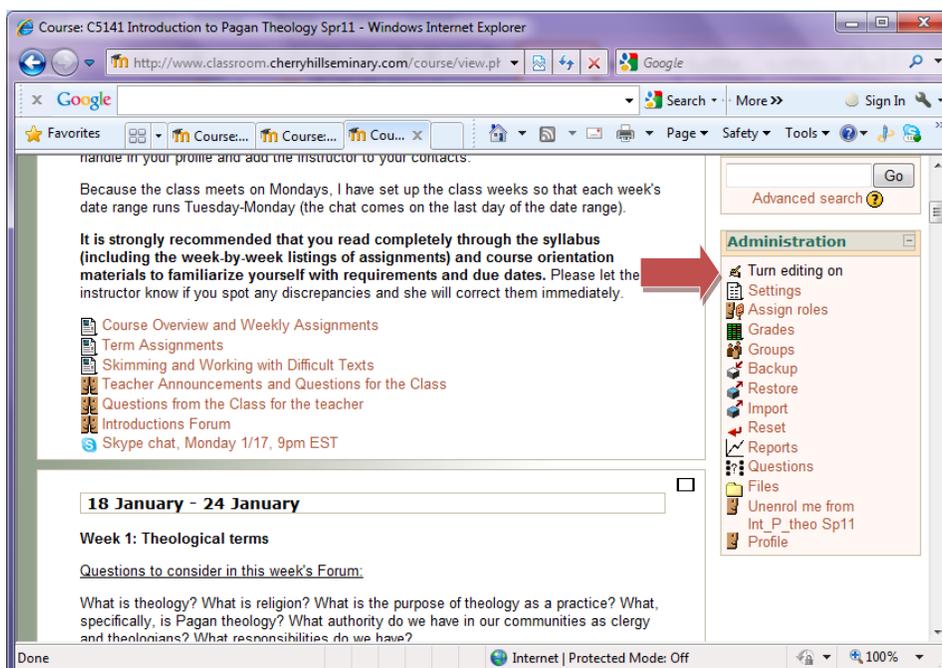


Figure 1 - Turn editing on to begin building the classroom.

<sup>6</sup> Susan A. Ambrose et al, *How Learning Works: Seven Research-based Principles for Smart Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 40-42.

Building a Moodle classroom for the first time can be tedious and time-consuming. Most changes must be made one at a time, with the instructor waiting for the page to reload after each submission. Here are some strategies to streamline the building of your classroom.

- Choose the right browser for your editing style. Not all browsers support all Moodle features. Although the Google Chrome browser generally runs faster on Windows machines than Internet Explorer or Firefox, some of Moodle’s built-in WYSIWIG (“what you see is what you get”) web page editors do not function in Chrome. Unless you are experienced with HTML, Internet Explorer or Firefox may be a better choice for editing Moodle classrooms. Macintosh users may wish to try both Firefox and Safari to see what works best. In particular, if a feature of Moodle described in the tutorial seems to be broken, try using a different browser to see if the problem is corrected.
- Edit with multiple open browser tabs. When building a classroom, I often have at least three tabs open. Instead of waiting for the page to reload before I make the next change to the classroom, I simply click on the next open tab and begin my next task. In one tab, I may be adding a Forum to every week of the class; in the next, I may be adding weekly assignment links, while in a third, I am editing the text boxes that introduce topics. This speeds the classroom building process up considerably.

### *Tips for Organization*

The various Moodle tutorials provide instructions on how to create web pages, upload files, and more, so I will not reproduce them in their entirety. Instead, here are a few key tips for organizing the classroom.

#### **A Well-Organized Classroom:**

- Makes it easy for students to find instructor contact information, the syllabus, and required electronic resources
- Has a weekly rhythm that students can depend on (assignment due dates and chats occur on a consistent schedule)
- Reminds students of key information, such as due dates, on a weekly basis
- Has been proofread for consistency

Students should not have to search for instructor contact information, required texts, or essential course documents such as syllabi—they should be immediately obvious upon logging into the classroom. These are best placed in “Week 0,” the box at the top of the classroom.

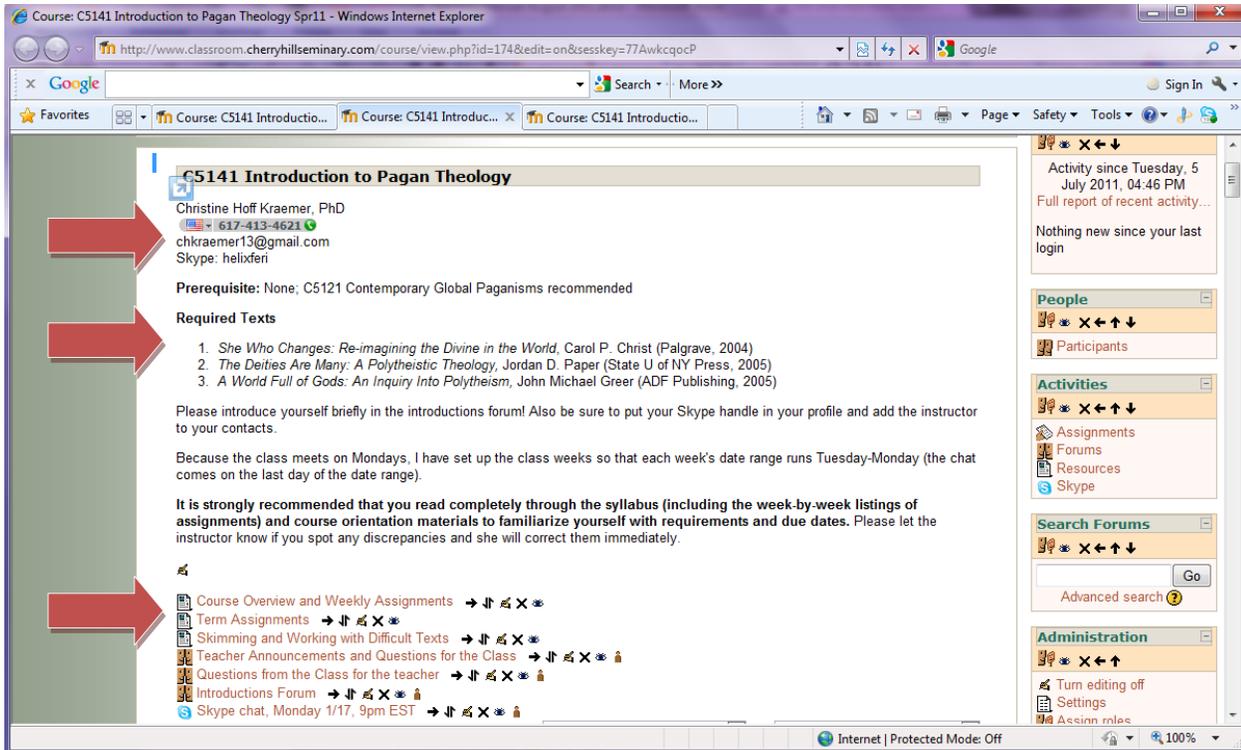


Figure 2 - Example of a Week 0 box for a Master's classroom

Some Forums, such as the “Introductions” and “Teacher Announcements” Forums, are included in the classroom by default. To add additional forums, choose “Forum” from the “Add an activity” drop-down box (see Figure 3 below). Information about setting up graded forums can be found later in this manual.

### Posting Files to the Classroom

Posting a file to the classroom requires two steps: uploading the file, then adding it to the classroom. To upload a file or link to a website, choose “Link to a file or web site” from the “Add a resource” drop-down box. The file must be 7M or smaller; larger files must be hosted off-site.

## C5141 Introduction to Pagan Theology

Christine Hoff Kraemer, PhD

617-413-4621  
chkraemer13@gmail.com  
Skype: helixferi

**Prerequisite:** None; C5121 Contemporary Global Paganisms recommended

### Required Texts

1. *She Who Changes: Re-imagining the Divine in the World*, Carol P. Christ (Palgrave, 2004)
2. *The Deities Are Many: A Polytheistic Theology*, Jordan D. Paper (State U of NY Press, 2005)
3. *A World Full of Gods: An Inquiry Into Polytheism*, John Michael Greer (ADF Publishing, 2005)

Please introduce yourself briefly in the introductions forum! Also be sure to put your Skype handle in your profile and add the instructor to your contacts.

Because the class meets on Mondays, I have set up the class weeks so that each week's date range runs Tuesday-Monday (the chat comes on the last day of the date range).

**It is strongly recommended that you read completely through the syllabus (including the week-by-week listings of assignments) and course orientation materials to familiarize yourself with requirements and due dates.** Please let the instructor know if you spot any discrepancies and she will correct them immediately.



- Course Overview and Weekly Assignments → ⌵ ⌶ ⌷ ⌸ ⌹
- Term Assignments → ⌵ ⌶ ⌷ ⌸ ⌹
- Skimming and Working with Difficult Texts → ⌵ ⌶ ⌷ ⌸ ⌹
- Teacher Announcements and Questions for the Class → ⌵ ⌶ ⌷ ⌸ ⌹
- Questions from the Class for the teacher → ⌵ ⌶ ⌷ ⌸ ⌹
- Introductions Forum → ⌵ ⌶ ⌷ ⌸ ⌹
- Skype chat, Monday 1/17, 9pm EST → ⌵ ⌶ ⌷ ⌸ ⌹



Add a resource...

Add an activity...

Figure 3 - Choose "Link to a file or website" to add a link or upload a file.

Next, enter a name for the link or file – this is the name that students will see in the classroom. Next, click the "Choose or upload a file" button.

**Adding a new Resource**

General

Name\* Pagan Theology

Summary

Trebuchet 1 (8 pt) Lang

Path:

Link to a file or web site

Location\* http://

Choose or upload a file ...

Search for web page...



Figure 4 - Name the link or file. To upload a file, click the "Choose or upload a file" button.

On the following screen, click the "Upload" button, then click "Browse" to find the file on your computer. When you have located the file, click "Upload this file."



Figure 5 - Uploading a file to the Moodle system from your computer.

Now the file has been uploaded to the system and is available for posting, but it is not yet visible to the students. To post to the classroom, click "Choose" next to the file you want to post.

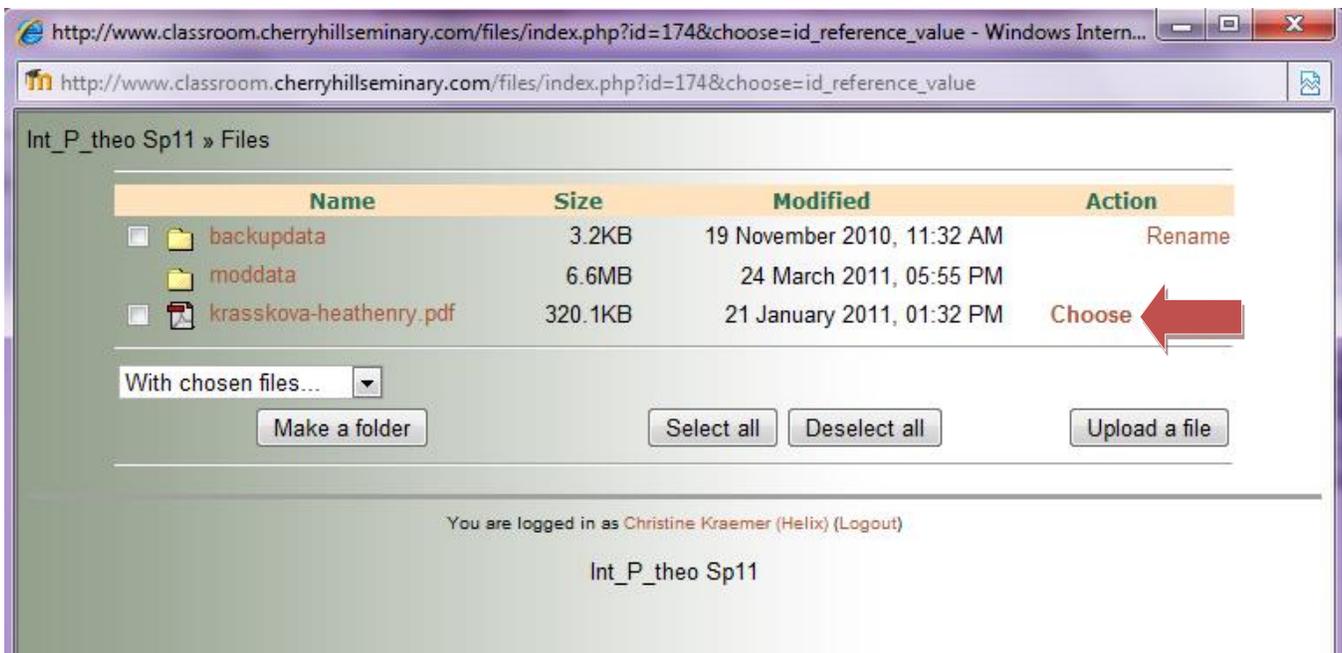


Figure 6 - To post to the classroom, "Choose" the file.

The file name will appear in the box labeled "Location." To post the file to the classroom, choose either "Save and return to course" or "Save and display," depending on your preference. "Save and return to course" will return you to the classroom, while "Save and display" will show you the newly uploaded file as your students will see it.

The screenshot shows a web form with the following sections and elements:

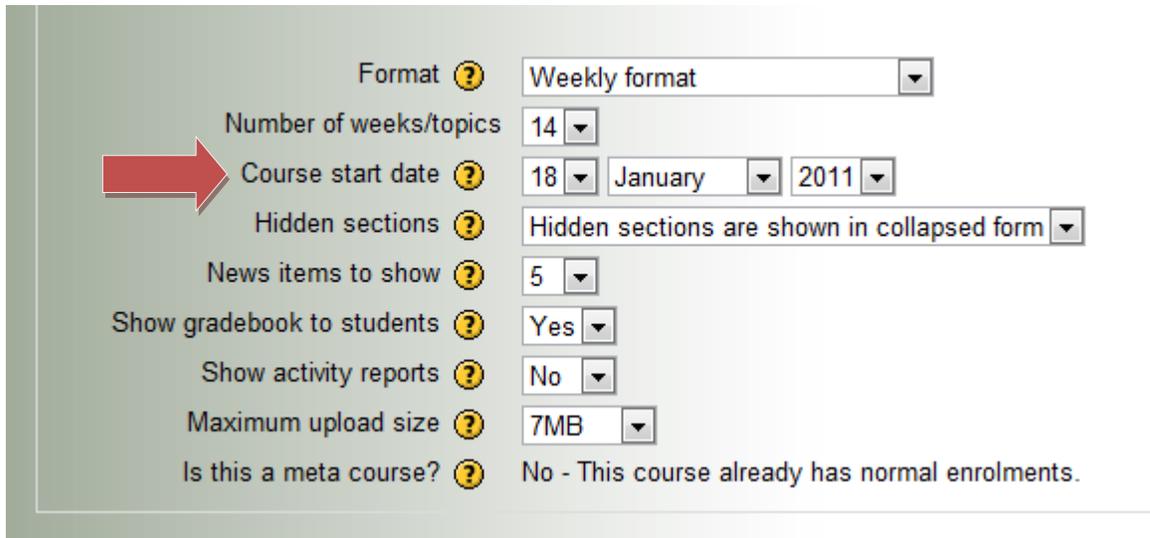
- Link to a file or web site:** A text input field labeled "Location\*" containing "krasskova-heathenry.pdf". To its right are two buttons: "Choose or upload a file ..." and "Search for web page...".
- Window:** A checkbox labeled "Force download" with a help icon. Below it is a dropdown menu labeled "Window" set to "Same window". A note below reads "Note: some media files may ignore this setting". A "Show Advanced" button is on the right.
- Parameters:** A "Show Advanced" button is on the right.
- Common module settings:** A dropdown menu labeled "Visible" set to "Show" and a text input field labeled "ID number" with a help icon. A "Show Advanced" button is on the right.

At the bottom of the form, there are three buttons: "Save and return to course", "Save and display", and "Cancel". A red arrow points to the "Save and return to course" button. To the right of these buttons, the text "There are required fields in this form marked\*" is displayed.

Figure 7 - "Save" to complete the posting process.

## Changing the Course Start Date

I have found it helpful to adjust the course start date so that the day of the class chat falls at the *end* of the class week. I have often held chats on Monday evenings, so I prefer to think of each week of class as running Tuesday-Monday. Each Tuesday, the students are directed to begin that week's reading and writing, which we then discuss at the following Monday's chat. The course start date can be changed by clicking on the "Settings" option under the Administration menu in your classroom (see illustration below).



The screenshot shows a settings panel with the following options:

- Format: Weekly format
- Number of weeks/topics: 14
- Course start date: 18, January, 2011 (highlighted with a red arrow)
- Hidden sections: Hidden sections are shown in collapsed form
- News items to show: 5
- Show gradebook to students: Yes
- Show activity reports: No
- Maximum upload size: 7MB
- Is this a meta course?: No - This course already has normal enrolments.

Figure 8 - Option to change the day on which the course begins

Simply change the course start date to the appropriate day of the week. Here, I have begun class on Tuesday, January 18. This causes the date range that appears on each weekly topic in the classroom to run Tuesday-Monday. For example, here's Week 7 of Introduction to Pagan Theology, which runs Tuesday, March 1 through Monday, March 8:

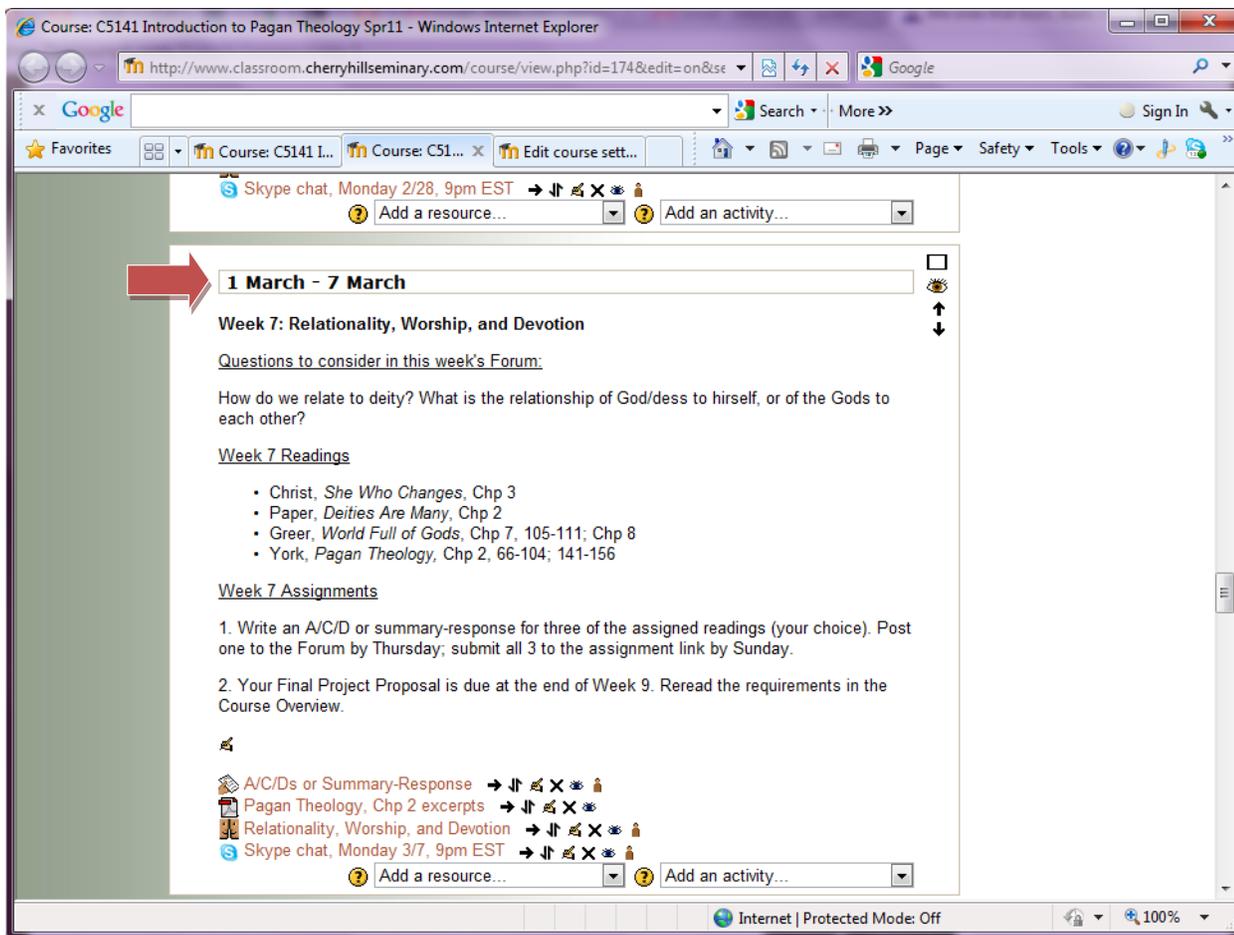


Figure 9 - Example of a class week that runs Tuesday-Monday.

Within each week box, I reproduce and expand on the material in the syllabus. Students will see the relevant week's box as slightly indented from the others. (For both students and instructors, clicking on the small black rectangle in the upper right hand of the week box will hide all but the current week.) Here, I reiterate the week's topic, offer some broad questions that contextualize the week's readings, list the readings for the week, and recap the assignments and their due dates.

I prefer to avoid stating due dates fully in the week boxes (as "Sunday, July 3"), since these must be revised one by one when the class is presented in subsequent semesters; instead, I make all weekly assignments due on a particular day of the week (in this case, Thursday for Forum posts, Sunday for additional weekly responses).

### Assignments

To add an assignment, choose "Assignment" from the "Add an activity" drop-down box while in classroom editing mode. Formal assignments (either typed into a text box or turned in as an RTF or DOC file) are submitted using an assignment link (the link with a picture of a hand holding a piece of paper). When an assignment link is

added to the classroom, Moodle will require the instructor to select a due date. Assignment links will be updated automatically with the proper date and day of the week when the classroom is imported in subsequent semesters.

In order to check that you have set up assignment due dates correctly, click 'Assignments' under the Activities menu on the right-hand side of the classroom. This link lists all assignments associated with assignment links in one place and allows you to double-check the due dates against your syllabus.

CHS ► Int\_P\_theo Sp11 ► Assignments

Week	Name	Assignment type	Due date	Submitted	Grade
1	Terms Assignment	Upload a single file	Sunday, 23 January 2011, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
	Week 1 Brief Summary	Offline activity	Wednesday, 20 January 2010, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
2	A/C/D or Summary/Response	Online text	Sunday, 30 January 2011, 11:55 PM	View 3 submitted assignments	-
	Week 2 Reading Reflection	Offline activity	Wednesday, 27 January 2010, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
3	A/C/Ds or Summary-Response	Online text	Sunday, 6 February 2011, 11:55 PM	View 4 submitted assignments	-
4	A/C/Ds or Summary-Response	Online text	Sunday, 13 February 2011, 11:55 PM	View 4 submitted assignments	-
5	Short Essay	Upload a single file	Sunday, 20 February 2011, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
	A/C/Ds or Summary-Response	Online text	Sunday, 20 February 2011, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
6	A/C/D or Summary-Response	Online text	Sunday, 27 February 2011, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
7	A/C/Ds or Summary-Response	Online text	Sunday, 6 March 2011, 11:55 PM	View 4 submitted assignments	-
8	A/C/Ds or Summary-Response	Online text	Sunday, 13 March 2011, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
9	Interviews	Upload a single file	Sunday, 20 March 2011, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
	Final Project Proposal	Upload a single file	Sunday, 20 March 2011, 11:55 PM	View 5 submitted assignments	-
	A/C/D or Summary-Response	Online text	Sunday, 20 March 2011, 11:55 PM	View 3 submitted assignments	-

Figure 10 - List of all Assignments to be submitted via Assignment links.

### Check Your Skills: Exercises

1. Perform the following basic classroom-building tasks:
  - a. Add your contact information to the text box in Week 0.
  - b. Upload a document and post it to Week 0.
  - c. Add a Forum to the classroom.
  - d. Add an Assignment link to the classroom and set the due date.
2. Change your course start date so that classroom chats, if applicable, fall at the end of the class week.
3. Under the Activities menu, click on 'Assignments' to see a list of all assignments that have been added to the classroom. Check the due dates for accuracy.

## General Classroom Management Strategies

Some in-person teaching strategies translate well to online education, while others are unique to the online environment. Students are most likely to thrive, however, when they understand the value of the material; when they feel supported by the instructor, their fellow students, and the classroom structure; and when they feel able to learn and then perform well at the required tasks. The instructor's ability to convey a sense of her or his engagement with the students is one important component of a supportive classroom.

### *Achieving a Sense of Instructor Presence*

Students benefit both emotionally and intellectually from an instructor who seems engaged, present with the class, and supportive of students' work. Because the online teaching format does not allow instructors and students to be physically present with each other, instructors may need to think deliberately about how to convey a sense of their presence in the classroom.

Instructors may find it helpful to think of the various online environments (the Moodle classroom, the Skype chat room, etc.) not as media through which participants exchange messages and other information, but rather as *virtual spaces* that they visit. Particularly during real-time interaction, although students may be sitting at computers thousands of miles apart, their attention and awareness is focused on their classmates and instructor. The classroom participants are projecting their consciousnesses into a non-physical space that can take on greater reality with the use of physical metaphors.

#### **An online instructor feels more present to students when s/he:**

- Participates in discussions or gives feedback frequently
- Responds promptly to questions and e-mails
- Is available for live conferences (chat, phone, or Skype)
- Supplements written materials with voice and/or video recordings
- Uses emotive language in informal discussions or during text chats

In *Life on the Screen* and other works, sociology of science researcher Sherry Turkle describes how people in virtual communities address the shortcomings of a long-distance, text-only format by introducing descriptions of body language and emoticons into their communications.<sup>7</sup> Because it is often easy to misread the tone of written messages, emoticons or emotive phrases can help instructors and students to communicate clearly, especially where humor is involved (for example, one could label an ironic comment with the faux-HTML tag "<irony>," the emotive phrase "*\*tongue firmly in cheek\**," or a smirking wink: ;> ). For many students, the use of emoticons conveys friendliness, openness, and a touch of informality, all of which are often desirable in a

---

<sup>7</sup> Emoticons are ASCII representations of faces and other objects that serve to convey emotion nonverbally. For instance, tilt your head to the left to see this happy face: :-)

collaborative learning environment.<sup>8</sup> Written body language – such as “\*nod\*” – can also be used to quickly acknowledge and reward student contributions during live text chats. Specific strategies for chats will be covered later in the manual.

Nothing is more important for a sense of instructor presence, however, than the instructor’s frequent interactions with the classroom. Appropriate frequency will depend partially on the style of classroom – for directed studies, students may need no more than weekly feedback from the instructor at times; for discussion-based classes, the instructor may participate in Forum discussions a few times a week. All instructors should be prepared to respond to direct student e-mails within 48 hours.

Instructors may want to “subscribe” to the classroom Forums in order to monitor classroom activity via e-mail. This option can be found under the Activities menu by clicking “Forums.” At minimum, however, it is recommended that instructors subscribe via e-mail to the “Questions from the Class” Forum. This Forum is added to all new classrooms by default and is the place where students will often ask procedural questions or raise time-sensitive concerns. Be sure that the e-mail address listed in your Moodle profile is updated, as this is the address to which messages will be sent.

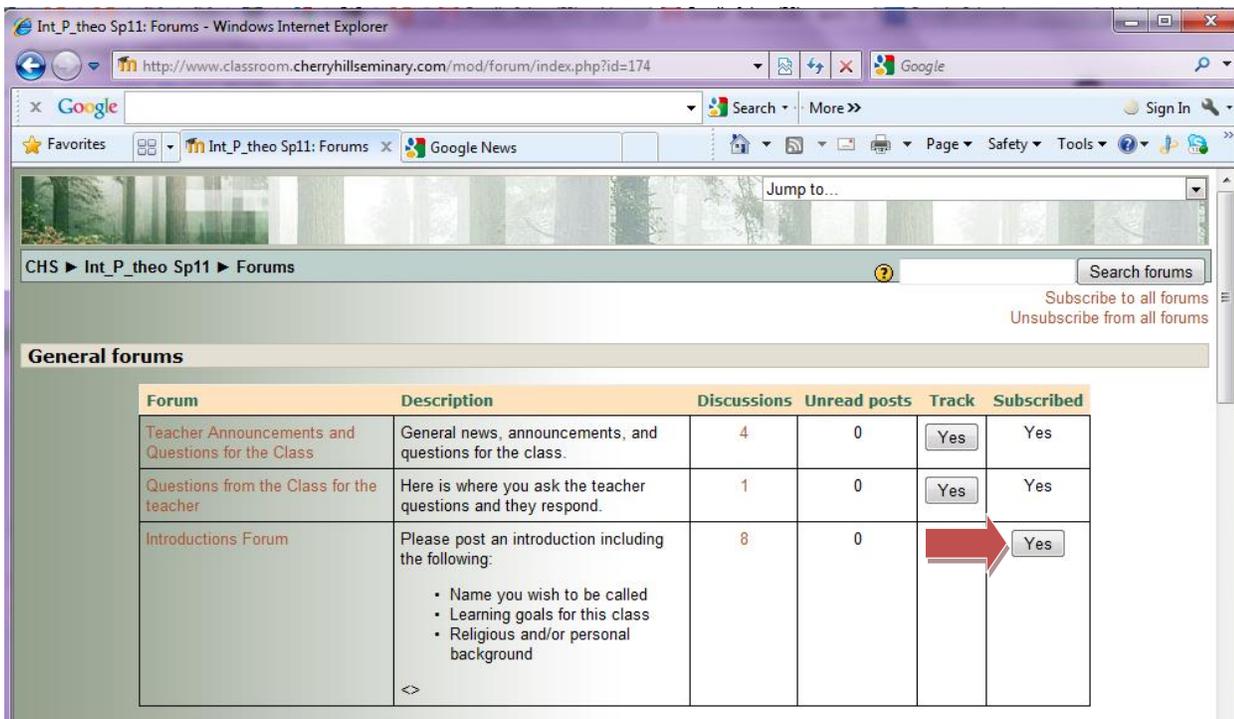


Figure 11 - Option to subscribe to Forums via e-mail.

<sup>8</sup> Wikipedia’s article on emoticons may be helpful here if you are unfamiliar with them: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticon>

Forum options can be set for the entire class – for instance, students can be forced to subscribe to a Forum, be subscribed by default but able to unsubscribe if they wish, unsubscribed by default but able to subscribe if they wish, or not permitted to subscribe at all. This option (labeled “Force everyone to be subscribed?”) can be set by clicking on the edit option (a picture of a hand holding a pen) next to the Forum in question, or can be set when a Forum is added to the classroom.

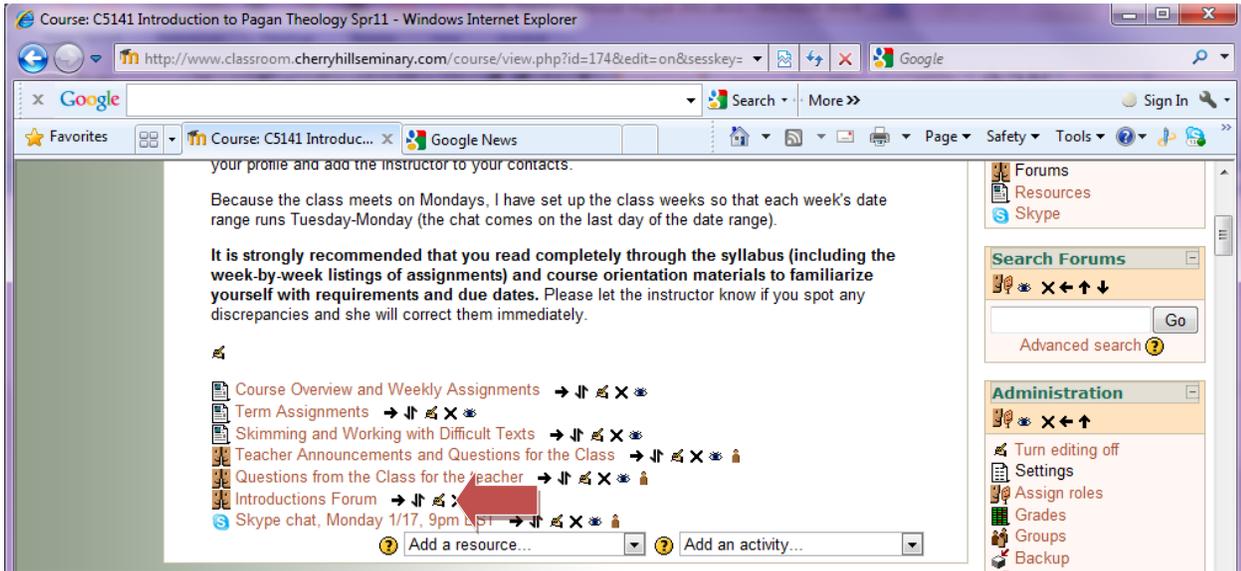


Figure 12 - From the main classroom page, click the Edit button to edit Forum settings.

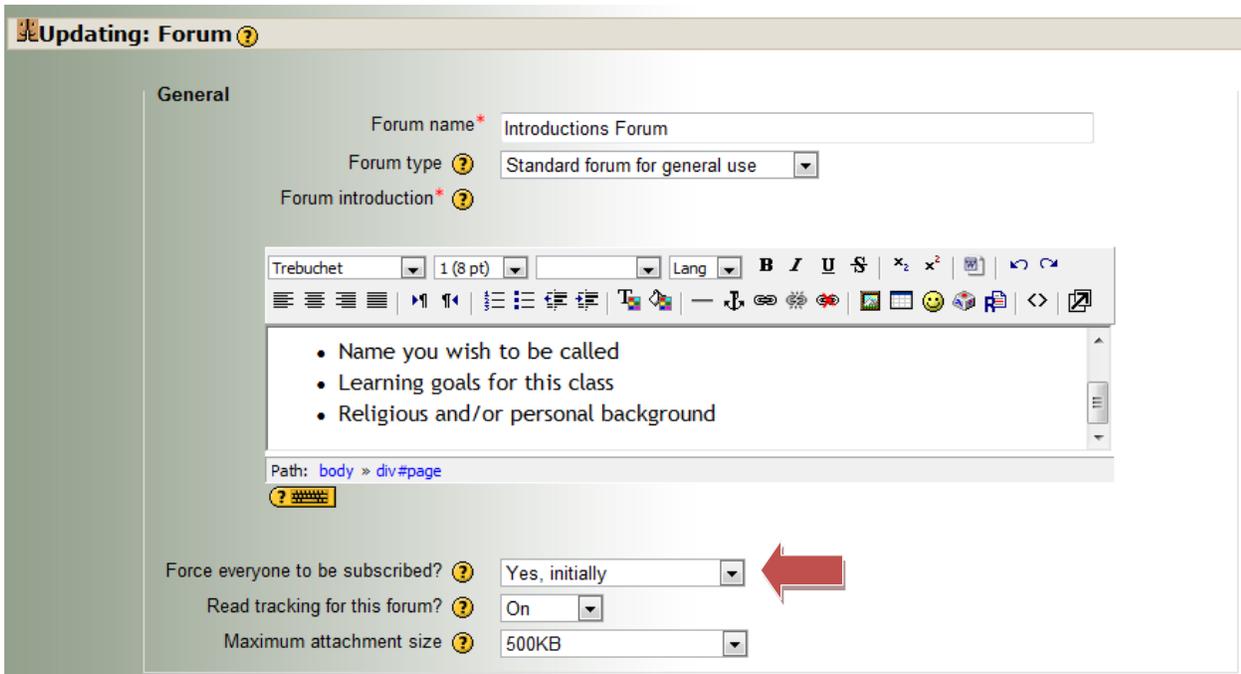


Figure 13 - Setting e-mail subscription options for the class.

Voice chats (or video chats, if you are using Skype Premium [not required]) do a great deal to let students and instructors get to know one another. Even hearing a recording of the instructor’s voice, however, can increase the sense of the instructor’s presence in the classroom. Particularly for classes that are not discussion-based or do not include live chats, recorded audio or video lectures can convey a stronger sense of the instructor’s personality and encourage a deeper level of student engagement. If you have access to software that can record slideshow-based lectures with audio, we strongly encourage you to use it. If you do not, however, there are lower-tech solutions that will allow anyone with a microphone to record lectures. Technological details on recording lectures are included later in the manual.

### Strategies for Effective Forum Discussions

Forum discussions often flow better with structured prompting. When you add a Forum to the classroom, Moodle allows you to enter a description for the Forum in the box labeled “Forum Introduction.” This box is an excellent place to put broad discussion questions for the week. Alternatively, you may want to hold back your discussion questions until the relevant week, then post them to the Forum so that subscribed students will receive them in their e-mail.

It is much easier to understand the flow of Forum conversations if you are reading them from the classroom with threading set to “nested.” Nested conversations use indentations to show the order of posts and replies. To set your conversation threading to nested in Moodle, enter any Forum and click on a discussion thread. The “Display replies” option is at the top of your screen in the center. Choose “Display replies in nested form.”

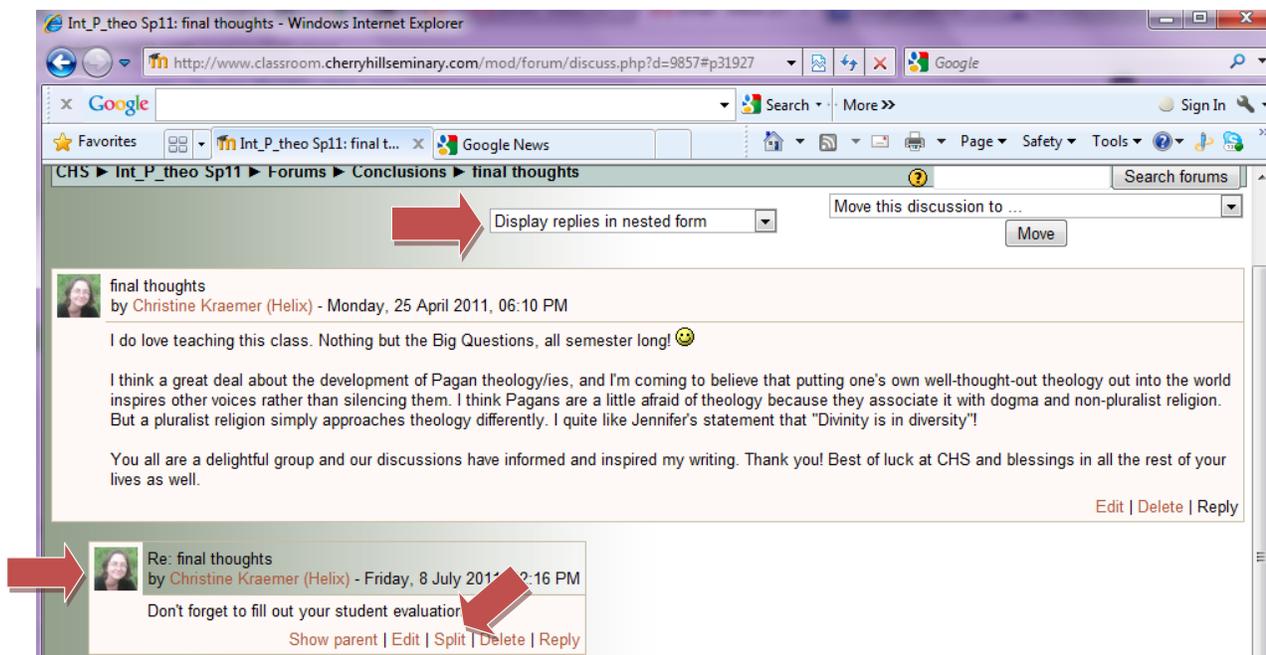


Figure 14 - Option to display replies as nested and an example of nesting. Option to split off a post as a new thread.

Some e-mail readers also use nesting and message threading (meaning they group together all messages that have the same subject line). Message threading makes it much easier to follow complex conversation, especially if posts relating to several different threads are coming in at once. If you plan to read the Forums primarily via e-mail, a reader that uses threading is essential. Gmail's free web reader uses threading, as does Zoho, another free webmail provider. Thunderbird (or Mozilla Thunderbird) is a similar free e-mail client that you can download and use with your existing e-mail address.

Instructors can also reorganize message threads on the fly. In the screenshot above, note the "Split" option at the bottom of the second post. This option allows you to split off a post and all replies made directly to it and make them into a new thread. Splitting can be helpful if a discussion thread involves several different topics and the instructor wants to make sure none of them are lost in the mix.

Splitting off a thread allows the instructor to retitle a thread with a relevant subject line. In order to keep discussions organized (particularly for those who are primarily participating through e-mail), instructors should encourage students to title their posts succinctly and appropriately. In Forums where students are posting their homework for general discussion, instructors may wish students to include their names and the week's topic in the subject lines to allow the instructor to easily identify the posts as assignment responses.

Instructors may also sometimes wish to manually start a new thread on a topic. For instance, suppose the instructor wants to respond to a particular student's post with a question for the whole class. If s/he replies directly to the post, the particular student may answer, but the rest of the class may not. In order to make it clear that the question is for the entire class, the instructor can start a new thread with a post something like this:

"In her post on the 'terms' thread, Christine said that she thought that soteriology (salvation theology) didn't have a place in contemporary Pagan theology. Ann gave a counterexample from feminist Wicca and suggested that the hope of returning to a matriarchal utopia was a kind of salvation theology. Is 'salvation' a Christian idea, or is it more widely applicable?"

The instructor's role in a discussion can be largely as a facilitator – drawing out important points from students' posts, diffusing potentially heated but unproductive lines of conversation, and making connections with the readings or other materials. Keeping the conversation visually organized with appropriate subject headers helps students make distinctions between topics and provides them with knowledge structures that support information retention.

Students benefit in many ways from seeing each others' work. Instructors may want to ask students to post all or part of their weekly homework to the Forum to serve as a basis for discussion. In discussion-based classes, students are often asked for an initial post of 200-500 words a week and to make one or two thoughtful replies to other students' posts. This practice gives the classroom a feeling of being active and occupied.

Both Master’s and PCE students sometimes struggle to connect their reactions to the readings or lectures in meaningful ways. The syllabi found in the appendices contain summary/response exercises that can be used to help students demonstrate good reading comprehension before they react personally or analytically.

### Graded Forums

Forum posts can be graded numerically or using a pre-set scale. Moodle comes with a default non-numerical scale called “Separate and connected ways of knowing” that allows the instructor to rate the degree of integration that a student’s post demonstrates. CHS’s Moodle installation additionally provides a “CHS scale” that gives options for Pass, Fail, and Incomplete, as well as a “Satisfactory” scale which has options for Outstanding, Satisfactory, and Not Satisfactory. The scale can be chosen when the Forum is set up, or by clicking the edit button on a particular Forum. When editing a Forum, click on the yellow question marks for more information.

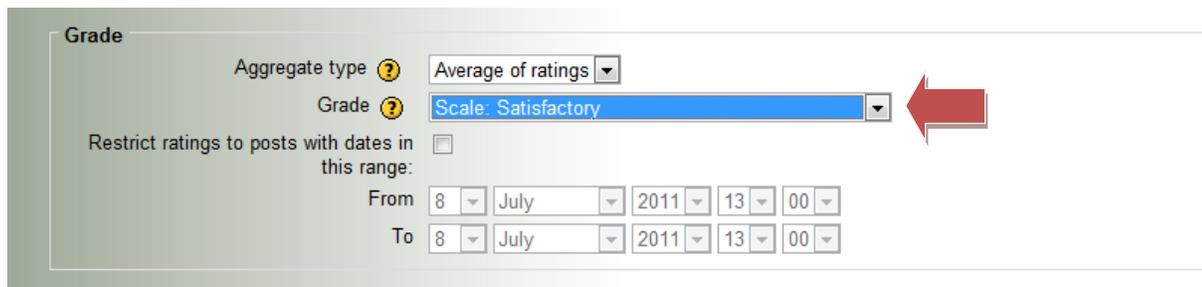


Figure 15 - Scales for non-numerical grading of Forums from the Editing Forum screen.

Moodle can automatically aggregate the instructor’s ratings for each Forum. Instructors can also set up scales of their own devising by choosing “Grades” from the Administration menu and then “Scales / View” from the drop-down menu (see Figure 16).

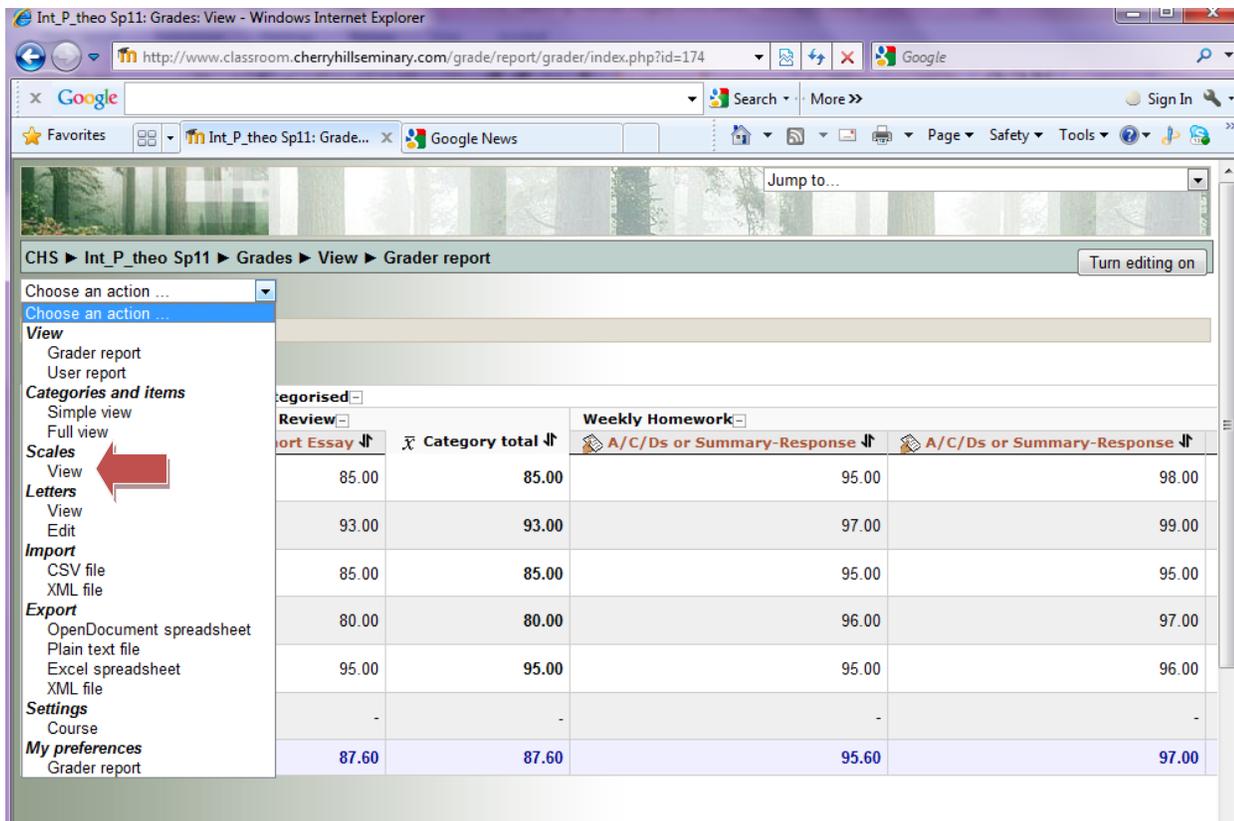


Figure 16 - Instructors can create custom grade scales from the Scales option under Grades.

Graded Forums give students concrete feedback on their participation, while non-numerical scales help to avoid the arbitrariness of giving numerical ratings to what are often relatively informal or semi-formal pieces of writing.

### Assignment Feedback

Generally speaking, students won't see feedback that you give on Assignments unless they click on the "Assignments" link on the Activities menu, and then on the specific assignment. Moodle will send them notifications about your feedback, however, if you click the "Send notification e-mail" box when recording the feedback:

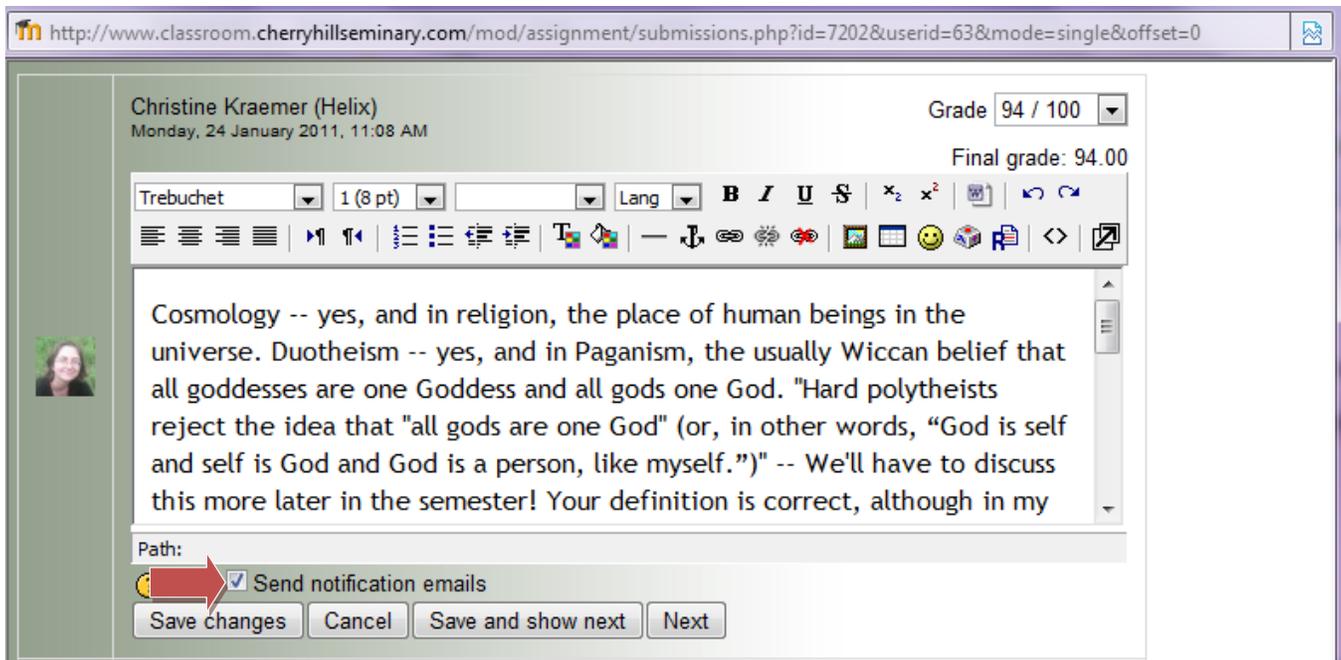


Figure 17 - Send notification e-mails to student when you leave them assignment feedback.

### *Monitoring Student Participation*

Moodle provides some easy methods to monitor student participation. From the classroom, choose "Participants" from the People menu on the right-hand side of the classroom. Next, choose the student you would like to monitor. Click the tab labeled "Activity Reports." These reports track the number of times a student has viewed various documents, the number of posts they have made in the Forums, their grades on assignments, and more.

Christine Kraemer (Helix)

Profile Edit profile Forum posts Blog Notes Activity reports Roles

Outline report Complete report Today's logs All logs Statistics Grade

**Week 0**

Course Overview and Weekly Assignments	9 views	Sunday, 19 June 2011, 12:28 PM (19 days 21 hours)
Term Assignments	23 views	Thursday, 5 May 2011, 02:02 PM (64 days 20 hours)
Skimming and Working with Difficult Texts	-	-
Teacher Announcements and Questions for the Class	4 posts	Monday, 16 May 2011, 05:22 PM (53 days 16 hours)
Questions from the Class for the teacher	1 posts	Sunday, 27 March 2011, 07:03 AM (104 days 3 hours)
Introductions Forum	2 posts	Monday, 17 January 2011, 06:40 PM (172 days 14 hours)

**Week 1**

Terms Assignment	Grade: -	-
Pagan Theology, vii-14; Chp 3	3 views	Saturday, 5 February 2011, 09:19 AM (154 days)
Jones, "Pagan Theologies"	-	-
Pagan Theology Wiki	-	-
Terms, Definitions, and Broad Questions	9 posts	Monday, 24 January 2011, 05:47 PM (165 days 15 hours)
Fake Quiz	Grade: -	-

Figure 18 - Activity reports, available via the students' profiles.

Instructors can also view all of the posts that a particular student has made to the classroom Forums by clicking on the "Forum posts" tab (see Figure 18, above). If the participation grade is based on Forum participation, this feature provides an easy way to review a student's performance over the course of the semester.

### Check Your Skills: Exercises

1. Verify that you are subscribed to essential classroom Forums. Post in a Forum to send yourself a test e-mail.
2. Create a Forum and set it so students are initially subscribed, but can unsubscribe if they wish.
3. Set your Forums to display replies in nested form.
4. Post to a Forum and reply to the post. Split the reply post off into a new thread.
5. Create a graded Forum and choose the "Satisfactory" scale.
6. Create your own unique non-numerical scale for Forum grading.
7. Design a rubric for evaluating a recurring assignment and post it to the classroom.
8. Look at your own Activity Reports and the compiled record of your Forum posts.

### Electronic Resources

The Internet abounds with resources for the study of religion. A short and partial list of resources for online research is given in the appendices to this manual.

### *PDFs and Electronic Documents*

Instructors are encouraged to keep textbook prices down by using PDF excerpts of book chapters and articles when appropriate. Files of up to 7M in size can be uploaded to the classroom site; if you want to link to larger files, you will need to host them on a personal site. Note that students sometimes crash their browsers by attempting to download large files. If students report that they cannot download a file that works for you, advise them to right-click on the file and save it to their desktops instead of trying to download the file with a web browser.

Although DOC has become a near-universal format, avoid giving students documents in DOCX format (Word 2007 and later). Students are not required to use Word 2007, and Microsoft's plug-in converter for earlier editions of Word is not entirely reliable. PDFs are recommended, as they can be read with many different free readers. If you want to ensure that every student will be able to open a word processing document, RTF (rich text format) is a non-proprietary standard format that can be read and edited by every word processor on the market.

Blogs and websites have become central distribution centers for information about contemporary Paganism, and portals like Patheos.com are now hosting blogs for key journalists and writers in the Pagan movement. Instructors are encouraged to include blogs and websites as resources in their classrooms and/or to assign the creation of blogs and other collaborative media as class assignments. When assigning blogs as course reading, care should be taken to explain the difference between primary and secondary sources; most blogs should be taken as objects of study, not as authorities on their subject matter.

Moodle provides for the structured, student-paced presentation of material through the Lessons activity, an interactive alternative to lectures and readings. Instructors are directed to the various Moodle tutorials or to *Moodle Teaching Techniques* by William H. Rice IV for details on designing Lessons.

### *Audio Lectures*

Audio lectures can be easily recorded using free MP3 recording software. Recordings in this non-proprietary format can be listened to on the computer or downloaded to an MP3 player for listening on. Students who are primarily auditory learners benefit greatly from material presented in this format, and even those who learn best while reading may find recorded lectures to be a refreshing change of pace. In lieu of formal lectures, instructors may also use recorded MP3s to conversationally comment on student homework or to synthesize ideas brought up in discussions.

For Windows: [MP3 MY MP3](#)

For Macintosh: [Audacity](#)

For a low-tech way to add visuals to an MP3 lecture, create a slideshow in Powerpoint and upload it to the classroom (Powerpoint presentation readers are available free on the internet). Simply indicate verbally to the students when they should click to the next slide. If you do not have access to Microsoft Powerpoint, [OpenOffice Impress](#) is a free alternative.

Powerpoint can record audio to accompany a slideshow, and the combination can be converted to a video that students can access online. There are companies online that advertise this service for free up to a certain size limit, but I have not tested any of these and cannot comment on their reliability or privacy policies. Software is also available that will convert Powerpoint presentations with audio to uploadable video. Please let CHS know about any free or low-cost programs that you find helpful for creating video lectures.

### *Visuals and Video*

YouTube is a surprisingly rich resource for video footage on a wide variety of topics. Instructors are encouraged to search the Internet for images and video that will enhance students' experience of course material.

### *Check Your Skills: Exercises*

1. Add a link to a blog or website to the classroom.
2. Create a Powerpoint presentation introducing your course and post it to the classroom.
3. Record an MP3 of yourself presenting the Powerpoint introduction. Upload it to the Moodle classroom and post it. If it is larger than 7M, record it with lower sound quality, or research your options for off-site file hosting.

## **Designing Assignments**

Seminary study is meant not just to help students develop practical skills and absorb relevant knowledge, but also to foster spiritual development. Cherry Hill Seminary expects that the majority of assignments given in seminary courses will be qualitative rather than quantitative. The seminary does acknowledge, however, that quantitative assignments are appropriate for assessing whether students have learned specific facts or techniques. Faculty are encouraged to use exams, quizzes, and other quantitative methods when their use fulfills specific learning objectives.

### *Qualitative Assignments*

In addition to academic essays using a variety of disciplinary methodologies, Cherry Hill Seminary students are often given the opportunity to produce creative projects that demonstrate their engagement with the material and are appropriate to the focus of their ministry. For example, a student interested in the religious education of children might create educational curricula, write a children's book, or design games as a final project; a student

with a background in the visual arts might create an art project and accompanying presentation for her community or for the public; a counseling or ministry student might create marketing and educational materials or protocols for a community center or private counseling practice; a student interested in public communication and advocacy might produce a blog or a website. Although academic research and writing are important skills for CHS students to have, instructors are encouraged when possible to assign projects that clearly connect to the work that students do as clergy in their communities. Fieldwork in which students gather data to identify community needs and then design effective ministry programs based on the results tend to be particularly valuable for student learning.

Online technologies also offer unique structures for qualitative assignments. For example:

- Moodle provides built-in blogs that students can use to record and share reflective writing (note that student blogs are visible to all CHS Moodle users and are not appropriate for confidential material).
- Moodle supports classroom [Wikis](#), which can be added to the classroom from the “Add an Activity” drop-down menu while in edit mode. Wikis are collections of interlinked web pages, and they are often created collaboratively. Asking students to collaboratively build a wiki that explores and explains a particular topic is an excellent way to get students teaching the material to each other, a technique that greatly enhances retention. For detailed information on setting up and using Wikis in Moodle, see William H. Rice IV, *Moodle Teaching Techniques*, Chapter 6.
- Powerpoint slideshows, websites, and collaborative blogs independent of the Moodle classroom all provide exciting opportunities for students to create materials that will be usable in their community ministries.

### *Quantitative Assignments*

Moodle provides a Quiz activity that can be added directly to the classroom. The Quiz function provides instructors with many options for quiz questions, which can make for a somewhat overwhelming quiz creation experience when using the software for the first time.

To add a new question to a quiz once it is created, click the “Edit” tab, then choose an option from the “Create new question” drop-down menu on the right.

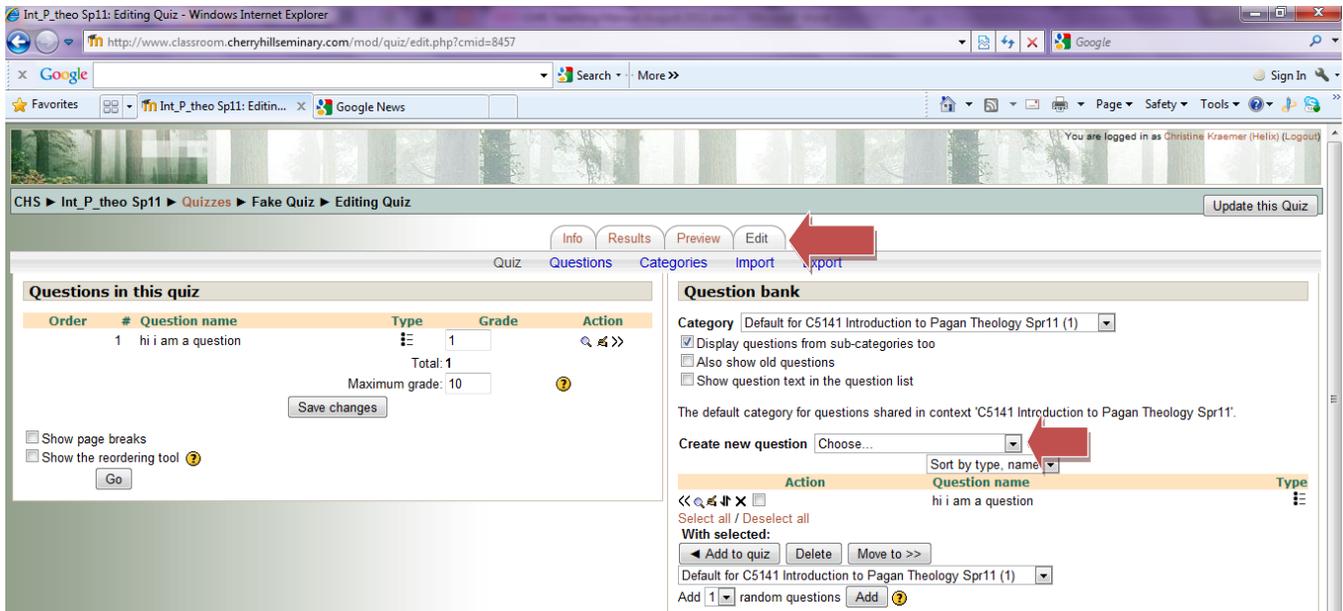


Figure 19 - Creating a new Quiz question.

Here, I'm creating a multiple choice question. Enter a name for the question, which can be as simple as "Question 1." The Question Name will not be visible to the students. Next, enter the text of the question into the box labeled "Question text."

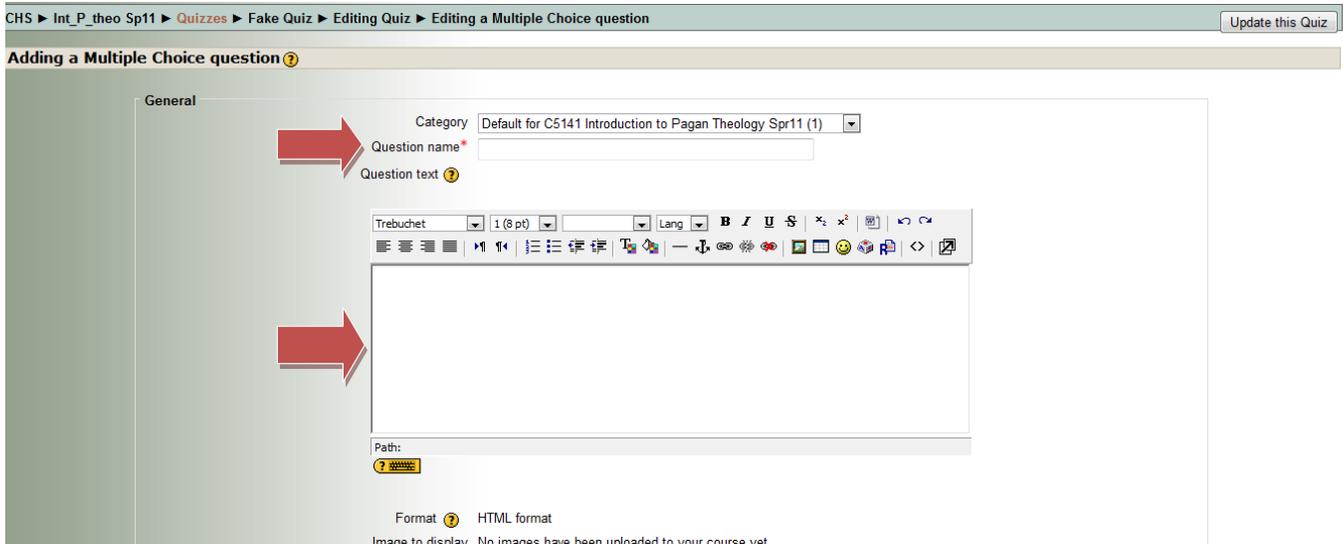


Figure 20 - Entering the question name and the text of the question.

Next, scroll down. The General Feedback box is for text that you would like students to see after they attempt the question, whether or not they get the question right. For multiple choice questions, you are also able to

choose whether students can choose more than one answer. More information on the various options is available by clicking the yellow question marks.

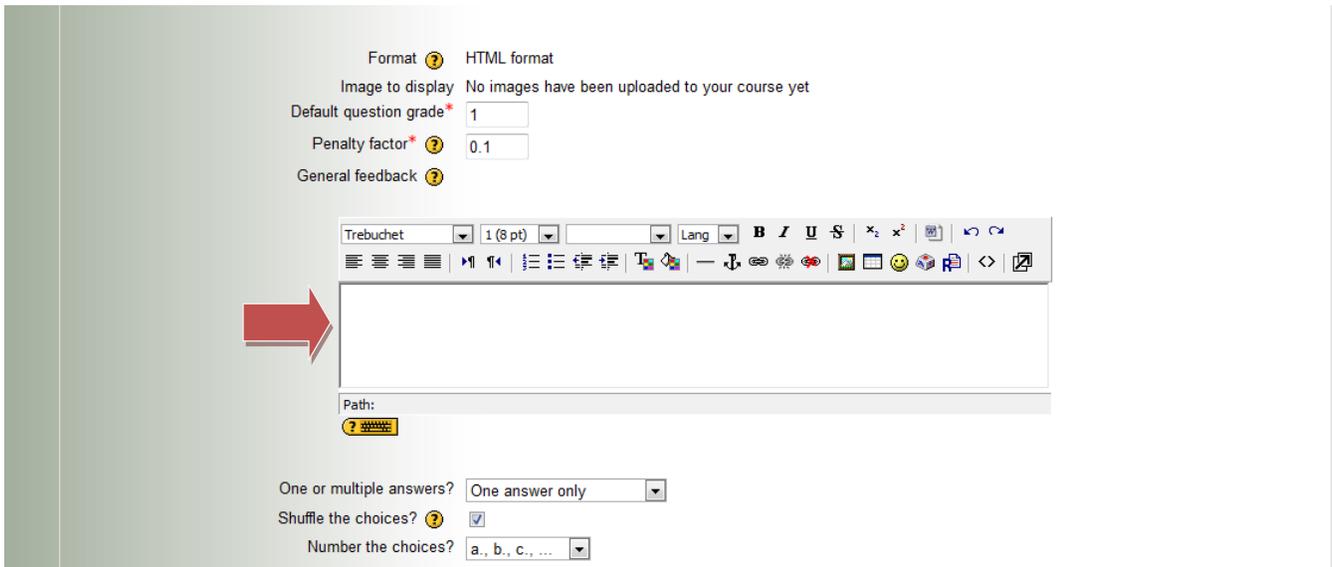


Figure 21 - General Feedback will be shown to the students after they attempt the question, regardless of their answer.

Next, in the boxes labeled “Choice 1,” “Choice 2,” etc., enter the text of the available answers. The text entered in the boxes labeled “Answer” will be the student’s answer choices. The Grade box allows you to choose how much credit (or how much of a penalty) a student receives for an answer. 100% will give the student full credit; 50% will give the student half credit for an answer that is partially correct, 0% will give no credit, and negative percentages will subtract credit from the student’s final quiz grade.

Below the Answer and Grade boxes is the Feedback box. The text you enter here will be shown to the student if they choose this answer.

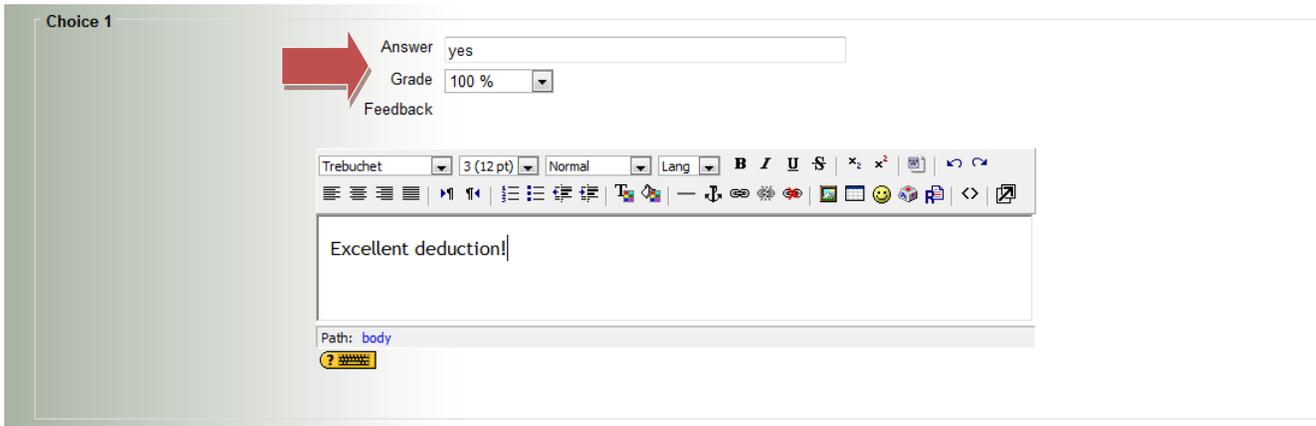


Figure 22 - Place the text of the answer in the Answer box and choose the amount of credit given. The Feedback box is optional.

Fill out the various Choices until the question is complete. At the bottom of the page, you can enter feedback that will be shown to the student based on whether her or her response is correct or incorrect. Click the “Save Changes” button to save the question.

Once you have created a question, you must add it to the quiz before students will be able to see it. Check the box next to the question you created, then press the button labeled “Add to quiz.”

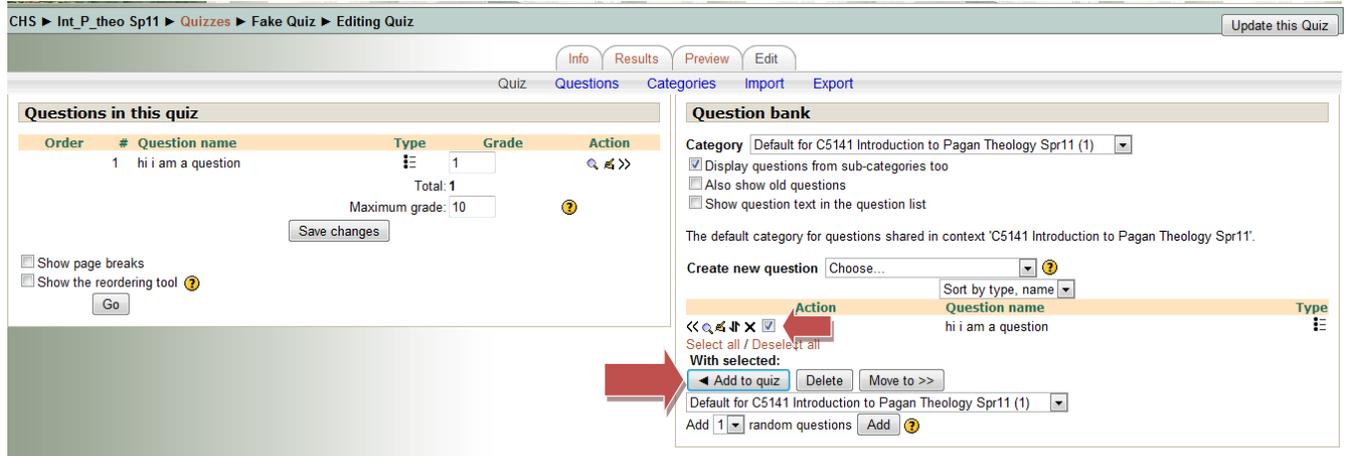


Figure 23 - Check the box next to the completed question, then click the "Add to Quiz" button to add it to the quiz.

The Quiz feature in Moodle has a wide variety of options, but following these directions should allow you to set up a basic quiz for a class.

As always, if you run into problems with classroom-building, consult the Moodle tutorial and online or print manuals before contacting the CHS web tech or your department chair. For technology issues that are interfering with the successful running of a course, however, please contact your department chair or the CHS tech ([chswebtech@cherryhillseminary.org](mailto:chswebtech@cherryhillseminary.org)) immediately.

### Check Your Skills: Exercises

1. Make a post in your Moodle blog.
2. Add a Wiki to the classroom and experiment with adding information and links to it.
3. Create a Quiz and add one multiple choice and one essay question. Preview the Quiz.

## **Part Four**

### **Using Skype**

All students and instructors at Cherry Hill Seminary are required to have chat capability using the free text, voice, and video service Skype. Video capability is not currently required, but instructors are encouraged to use video when possible. Skype allows group video chats when one member of the group has a Skype Premium subscription.

With the consent of the students, instructors may also use other free voice and video chat services, such as Google+ Hangout. Since CHS does not require access to these services, however, instructors may not require them of students.

#### **Skype Technical Requirements**

To use Skype for text chats, the only requirement is that all participants have the latest version of the free Skype client installed on their computers or mobile devices and have registered a username.

For voice chats, a microphone (available for as little as \$15) and speakers are required, as well as a broadband Internet connection. Video chats require a reliable broadband internet connection and a webcam.

Instructors and students are advised to update their Skype software whenever a new version is released, as newer versions of the software do not always interface perfectly with past versions. If a student has difficulty using the Skype software, instructors should recommend that they update their software before proceeding with further troubleshooting.

#### **Group Chats Using Skype**

##### *Setting Up a Group Text Chat*

In order to chat with students via Skype, you and your students must have each others' usernames in your list of contacts. Students should include their Skype usernames in their Moodle profiles. Several days before the first chat, make sure that you have added all of your students to your Skype contacts. Adding their usernames will automatically send them a request to add your username to their Contacts list. Add contacts by choosing "Add a contact" from the Contacts menu at the top of your screen.

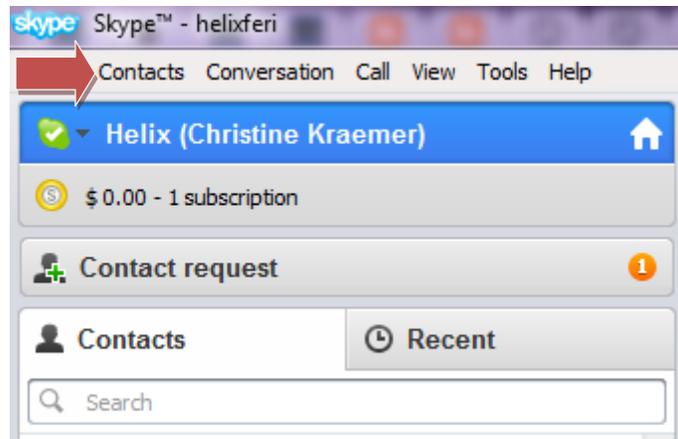


Figure 24 - Add Contacts via the Contacts menu before attempting a chat.

Once the students have accepted your request to add them to your Contacts, you can create a group. This option is found at the bottom of your Contacts list.

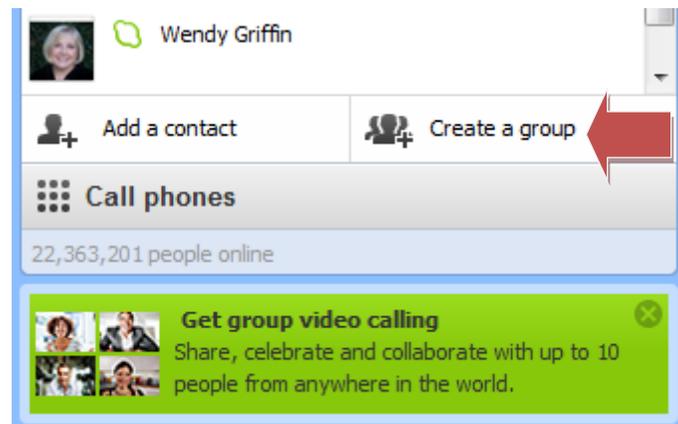


Figure 25 - Select the Create a group option.

To form the group, simply drag the contacts that you want to add to the group into the box indicated, then click "Save Group in Contacts" at the upper right-hand corner of your screen. Next, in the "Save group" pop-up box, type the name you wish to give the group and click "OK." The group is now saved and can be found at the bottom of your Contacts list.

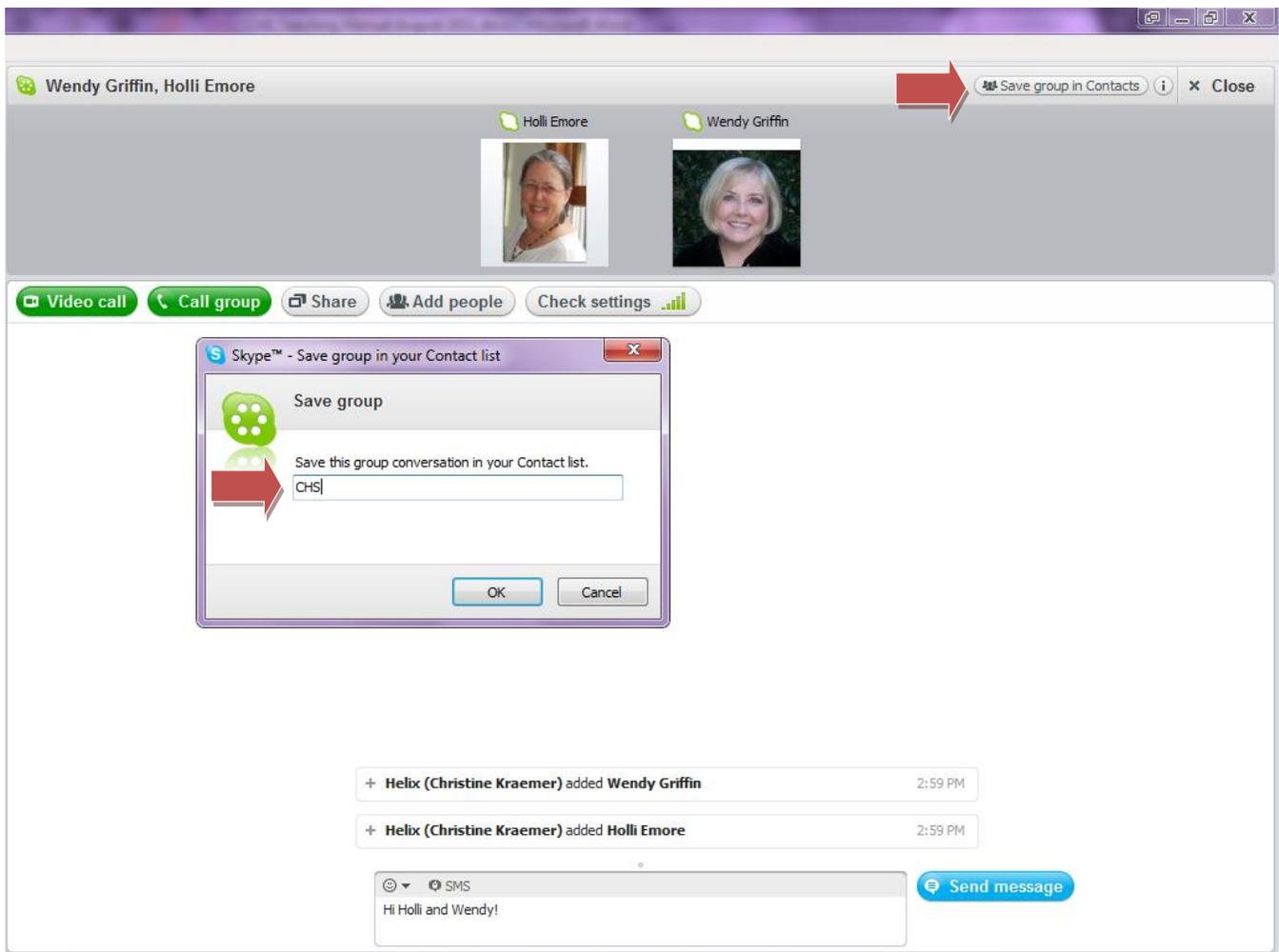


Figure 26 - Saving a Skype group.

Once a group is set up, you can chat with all its members by typing into the text box at the bottom of the screen and clicking the blue “Send message” button (or pressing return). All members will be able to see messages that participants type into the text box.

To help a student locate the proper chat group, add them to the group, type something into the group’s text box, and then ask them to click the “Recent” tab.

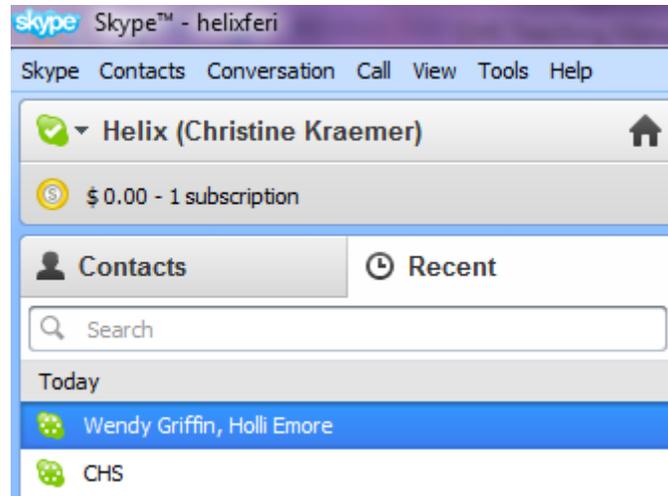


Figure 27 - The Recent tab quickly locates recent conversations. Conversation logs can be found [here](#).

All recent conversations – including the group conversation you have started – will be listed here. Click on a group name to open the group and its associated text box. You can also click on a student’s individual username to chat with them one-on-one. Logs of group and individual chats can be accessed from this menu.

#### *Setting Up a Group Voice Chat*

To begin a group voice chat, save a group as described above, then click the green “Call group” button (see Figure 26). Skype will initiate the call.

It is possible—and often desirable—to use both voice and text chat at the same time, particularly if one participant is having technical difficulties. To use text chat during a voice call, click the button shaped like a word balloon to open the text chat box (see Figure 28).

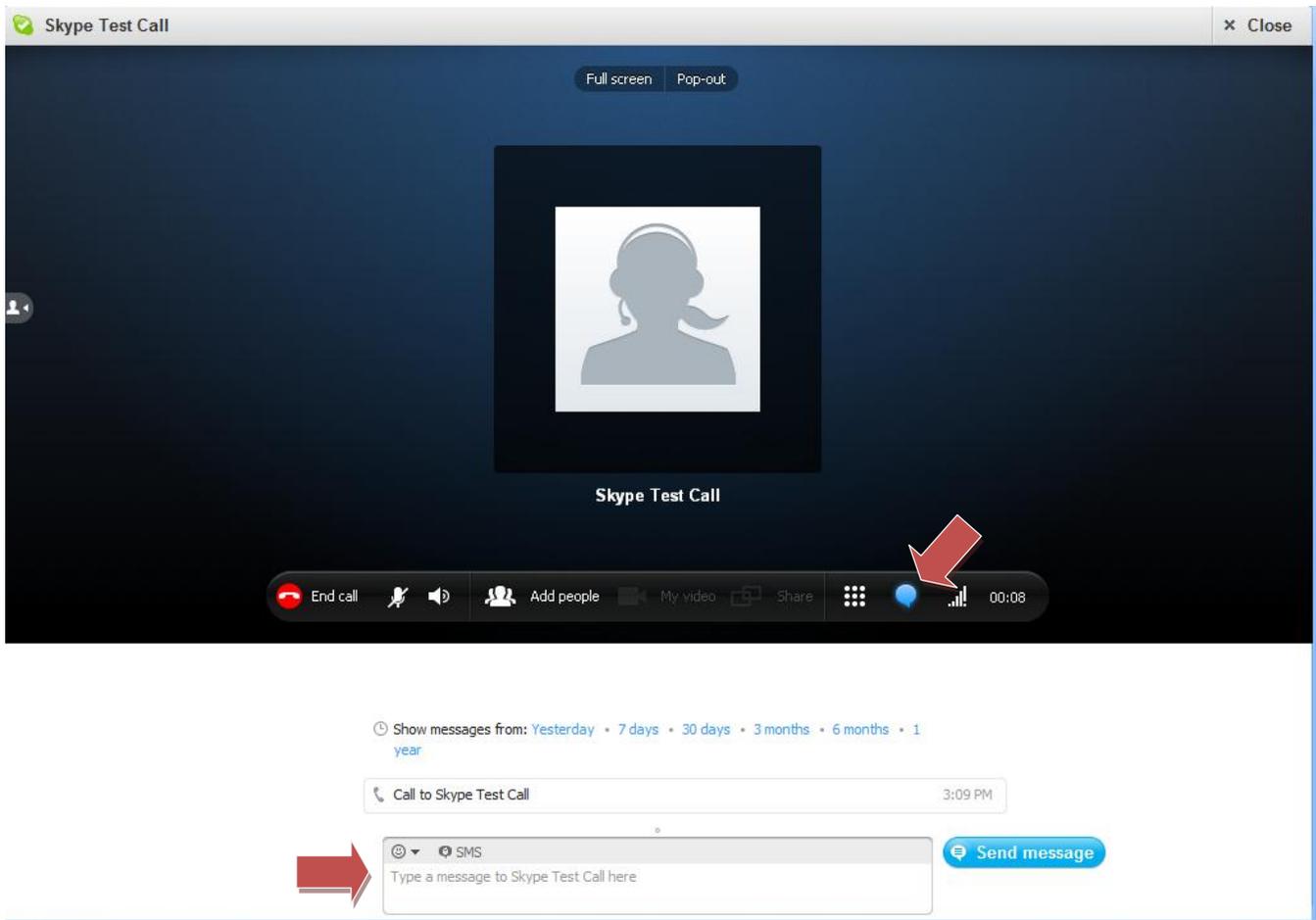


Figure 28 - Clicking the word balloon opens and closes the text box shown at the bottom of the screen.

If a participant falls off a group voice call, hover your cursor over the participant's name. A small green button with a picture of a telephone receiver will appear next to the name. Click it to call the student and add them back to the call. You can also add additional members to the group with the "Add people" button (see Figure 28, above).

To minimize background noise, you may recommend that students mute their microphones when they are not speaking. To mute your microphone, click the microphone-shaped button located below the pictures of the group.

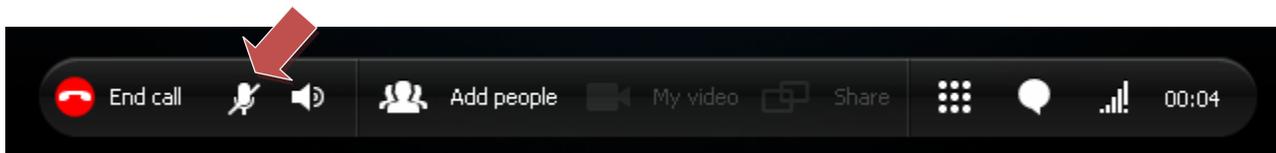


Figure 29 - Click to mute your microphone or turn it back on.

### *Group Chat Facilitation Techniques*

Text and voice chats have different advantages and disadvantages. Instructors will find that some students participate more when they can carefully type out their replies; others dislike typing and speak most when voice is enabled. In a large class, some students may become overwhelmed by the rapid-fire pace of text chats, where several conversation threads may be in process at once; others may find the slow, unnatural pacing of a voice conference call difficult to deal with. Instructors may wish to use a mix of text chat and voice chat throughout the semester to best meet the students' needs.

#### **Text Chats:**

- Are reliable and will function even when a student is using a satellite internet connection in a storm
- Allow participants to prepare statements while others are talking and then cut and paste their comments into the chat box
- Produce chat logs that can be posted to the Forums for additional discussion or for the use of absent students
- May help shy students to participate more actively
- Can confuse students who struggle with the nonlinear nature of some chats, where participants may take up two or three conversational threads at once

#### **Voice Chats:**

- Can facilitate student bonding as students hear each other's voices
- Allow for more fluid student presentations, especially when visuals are included
- May help students who are slow typists or have physical disabilities to participate more actively
- Are easily disrupted by temporary conditions such as storms, loud background noise, or an inexplicably poor Internet connection

In both text and voice chats, the technique of "raising a hand" can be used to make sure talkative students don't completely dominate the conversation. In a text conversation, students can be instructed to end their statements with an ellipsis if they are in the middle of a thought, or append the word "done" when the thought is complete. If students are very enthusiastic during a chat, the facilitator may wish to slow a fast-paced, complex conversation down by asking students to speak one at a time (they may prepare what they want to say while others are "speaking"). Instructors may also want to prepare discussion questions or other material prior to the class meeting (perhaps in a Word document) so they can quickly cut and paste text into the chat box. For example:

<Christine> Here's our first discussion question for today...

<Christine> In his opening chapter, Greer critiques another scholar who argues for a "primordial" religious tradition, pieces of which are found in the mystical systems around the world. Greer objects to this idea, saying that the scholar is picking and choosing minor similarities from the world's religions, putting them together into a religion that appeals to him, then claiming it is the "first" and "only" religion. ...

<Christine> When York argues for a "root religion," is he making the same logical error? Is it, in fact, a logical error? Why or why not? --Done.

<Ann> hand

<Steven> hand

<Clara> hand

<Christine> Okay, Ann first, then Steven, then Clara.

<Ann> I've got my book open to page 6 of Greer and I want to call everyone's attention to the second paragraph... hold on, somebody else can go while I type in the part I want.

<Christine> Okay, Steven, go ahead, then Ann, then Clara.

<Steven> Greer doesn't have much of a leg to stand on here. I found his reasoning to be completely circular too...

The same technique can be used during voice chats. While one participant is speaking, students can type "hand" into the text box to indicate that they would like to speak after the current speaker is finished. For participants who are very comfortable with multiple channels of communication, students can respond to what the speaker is saying by typing comments into the text box as he or she speaks, especially when the comments do not represent major digressions (for example, a student might type, "That's been my experience in my home community too" or "\*LOL!\*"). These comments allow students to add to the conversation without interrupting the speaker.

The text box can be used by the facilitator during voice chats to note key ideas raised in the course of the discussion. This notetaking can help students mentally organize the discussion. Making a note in the text box can also allow a facilitator to "table" an important tangent until the class is finished with the topic at hand.

The facilitator can also use text to quickly reward and acknowledge the contributions of students to the discussion without interrupting their train of thought. For instance:

<Ann> Greer seems to be assuming the point he says he's arguing for – that human beings always start out as polytheists...

<Christine> \*nod\*

<Ann> Like Steven was saying, circular reasoning

During voice chats, instructors might encourage students by typing "\*nod\*" or "great point" into the text chat as they are talking, or they might highlight a connection with a point made by another student. In some classes, shy students may be reluctant to volunteer to speak, but will feel comfortable with adding their comments via text.

An insightful text comment can provide an opportunity for the instructor to make space for shy students to join the conversation: “Clara made a great point in the text chat about how both our writers this week seem to be speaking from a similar cultural background. Clara, do you think their similar racial and class backgrounds are more important than their different nationalities?”

Instructors may also wish to include quiet students by asking each student in the class to answer a discussion question one at a time, perhaps based on their personal experience of the topic or the way it is handled in their community. Since every person is an expert when it comes to their experience, this low-pressure method for jump-starting discussions can help involve students who feel ignorant about the course topic and reluctant to speak.

### *Supplementing Skype with Conference Calls*

There are a number of free conference call services available on the web. If students and instructor all have access to free long distance telephone service, conference calls can be a useful substitute for Skype. As of 2011, it is also possible to call in to [freeconferencing.com](http://freeconferencing.com) using Skype for free. If a student or instructor has a temporary technological issue, but still has telephone access, some participants can call into [freeconferencing.com](http://freeconferencing.com) using Skype while other participants use telephones.

Calling [freeconferencing.com](http://freeconferencing.com) using Skype is a slightly tricky process – students must make sure they have the correct Skype ID for the call service (there are several similar Skype IDs that differ by a single letter or number—only one will work!). The instructor must also register an account and acquire a passcode from [freeconferencing.com](http://freeconferencing.com) in advance. Instructions for using this service are included as an appendix to this manual.<sup>9</sup> Contact Christine Kraemer for a separate copy of this document that can be posted to the classroom.

### *Check Your Skills: Exercises*

1. Create a Skype group and save it to your Contacts.
2. Initiate a group text chat.
3. Initiate a group voice chat.
4. Practice muting your microphone and turning it back on.

---

<sup>9</sup> Helpfully provided by a CHS student.

## Part Five

### Opportunities for Involvement at Cherry Hill Seminary

Cherry Hill Seminary has a variety of opportunities for instructors to become more involved.

1. Instructors receive a tuition waiver for one class per semester. All instructors are also invited to attend the Winter Conference and Summer Intensive tuition-free. These two annual in-person events are wonderful opportunities for CHS faculty to get to know one another and their students. Instructors at the Summer Intensive may be asked to cover the cost of their food.
2. Instructors are encouraged to advertise their CHS classes and other CHS events on their local mailing lists, blogs, Facebook, and other social media. The majority of CHS students and instructors are recruited through personal connections.
3. CHS is sometimes invited to submit articles to Pagan websites and magazines. Contact [chs@cherryhillseminary.org](mailto:chs@cherryhillseminary.org) if you would like to contribute an article on a topic of interest to Pagans.
4. Volunteers are often needed for administrative committees such as student admissions. Contact [chs@cherryhillseminary.org](mailto:chs@cherryhillseminary.org), your department chair, or the Academic Dean for current opportunities.

Cherry Hill celebrates the faculty who are making the first contemporary Pagan seminary a reality. As always, we invite your feedback and welcome your ideas for growing and deepening our programs.

Blessings!

## Appendix A: Sample Syllabus for Discussion-Based Master's-level Course

**Course Number and Title:** C5141 Introduction to Pagan Theology

**Start and End Dates:** Spring 2011

**Class meeting time:** Mondays, 9pm EST

**Instructor(s):** Christine Hoff Kraemer, PhD

### Contact information

Christine Kraemer

617-413-4621

[chkraemer13@gmail.com](mailto:chkraemer13@gmail.com)

Skype: helixferi

### Description of the Course

Theology—the study of Deity—calls us to make connections between reason and experience, between history and contemporary life, between our own traditions and practices and those of others. It is something we *do*—a practice by which we grow in deep understanding of our relationships with the divine and others, not a matter of mere theory. In this class, we will explore and refine our personal theologies through encounters with significant voices in Paganism, the Western occult tradition, and earth-centered and feminist Christianity/post-Christianity, as well as develop expertise with theological terminology. Students will leave prepared to engage in informed and intelligent theological discussions with clergy from other religious traditions.

Required for all Master's students.

**Prerequisite:** None

### Required Texts

- Carol P. Christ, *She Who Changes: Re-imagining the Divine in the World* (Palgrave, 2004)
- John Michael Greer, *A World Full of Gods: An Inquiry Into Polytheism* (ADF Publishing, 2005)
- Jordan D. Paper, *The Deities Are Many: A Polytheistic Theology* (State U of NY Press, 2005)

Other readings will be posted as PDFs or links to web pages in the Moodle classroom.

## Course Objectives

Students will

- explore their personal spirituality, beliefs, and practices;
- become comfortable with theological terminology and familiarize themselves with important voices in Pagan theology and related movements;
- compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of other theologians, articulate clearly what they understand, and raise questions based on those explorations;
- produce a project or paper that explores their beliefs and practices using a method appropriate to their ministry.

## General Expectations

Introduction to Pagan Theology is a graduate-level course. Students will be expected to digest difficult written material and attend discussions prepared with their own observations and questions. The instructor's role in the course is primarily as a facilitator and knowledge resource; it is the students who will decide what elements of the assigned readings we will explore most deeply.

Students can expect to spend 8-12 hours per week on work for this course, including a Skype chat, Moodle Forum postings, and a minimum of 40-60 pages of reading. See the classroom for guidelines on skimming and working with difficult texts.

Forum posts may be written conversationally. Each week, students will be expected to post to the Forum and to respond to at least one other student's post (guidelines below).

Students will also complete a series of short formal papers. For these formal written assignments, students are expected to adhere to academic writing conventions, including the use of proper citation format (Chicago, MLA, APA, or another academic style). *The Office of Assertion* by Scott F. Crider is recommended as a good basic text on academic writing.

Because clear and mechanically correct writing is essential for effective communication, grammar and organization will be considered in the evaluation process. If successful academic writing has been a challenge for you in the past, it is recommended that you submit a rough draft to one of the instructors at least a week before the assignment is due so that they may assist you in revisions. You may also wish to identify resources in your community that may be able to assist you in revising your work, such as private writing tutors.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of ethics, and its consequences may include failing this class. Check with your instructor if you are unclear on how to quote work that is not your own.

See the Catalog for details about additional issues of policy.

### **Participation**

If you attend and participate in at least eight class chats, you will receive an 85 or above for participation. In order to receive a participation grade in the A range, students should participate in additional chats and engage in discussion in the forums. Participation grades will be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

During each class chat, we will discuss the readings assigned during the previous week.

### **Weekly Homework**

For Week 1, you will briefly define a list of key terms for the study of theology. One- or two-sentence answers are sufficient. Although Wikipedia is not an appropriate resource to cite for a research paper and should not be counted as an academic reference, it is a sufficiently reliable resource for this assignment and may be superior to standard encyclopedias and dictionaries, although these are also acceptable as sources.

Other weekly homeworks will include reflective responses, summaries, or summary/responses in a specific format (see below). Each week, you will be asked to post one of your written assignments to the Forum by Thursday for group discussion; the rest are due by the end of Sunday. Respond to at least one other student post before the next chat.

Students are encouraged to use the Forums for any additional questions, reflections, or reactions that come up in the course of the class.

### **A/C/D OR Summary/Response**

Your weekly homework is due by the end of the day on Sunday. This assignment may be completed in one of two different formats, described below. Each assignment should be at least 200 words. Your A/C/D or summary/response may be longer than 200 words, but it is possible to receive a high grade for a dense, insightful assignment that is also quite short. Generally, try to avoid exceeding 500 words. The number of readings to be summarized in this way will vary from week to week, depending on what other assignments are due.

In addition to submitting your assignment through the assignment link, *choose one A/C/D or reading summary to post in the Forum* by the end of Thursday. Turn in the remainder of your homework by the end of Sunday. Respond to at least one other student Forum post before the following week's chat.

**A/C/D format**

- (Author) affirms \_\_\_\_\_
- (Author) is curious about \_\_\_\_\_
- (Author) denies \_\_\_\_\_
- I affirm \_\_\_\_\_
- I am curious about \_\_\_\_\_
- I deny \_\_\_\_\_

This summary exercise is intended to give you a structure in which to record key ideas from readings, as well as your initial responses. If your thoughts do not fit into a single sentence, you may write more than one sentence, or utilize a bullet point list for each item.

Below is a sample of a student A/C/D, submitted as a summary and response to a chapter of Jordan Paper's *The Deities Are Many*:

Jordan Paper affirms that each polytheistic religion will reflect the cultural context of a historical time, and that though there are several common traits, there can be no overarching polytheistic theology that can accommodate them all.

Paper is curious about whether creating a more sympathetic explanation of polytheism may lead to more tolerance in a monotheistic world that has painted it as inferior or even dangerous.

Paper denies that monotheists will be able to fully understand polytheism if they do not recognize the barriers inherent in Western ethnocentricity and the assumption that the numinous cannot be multiple.

I affirm that American ethnocentrism is definitely threatened by polytheism, and that psychological barriers to exploring polytheism here include justification for issues such as war and class discrepancies.

I am curious about what influence American language might have had on the rise of American polytheism that doesn't value faith or even belief.

I deny that contemporary paganism as a whole would qualify as polytheist under Paper's definition; it seems to be an umbrella title that can contain several varieties of theist beliefs.

## Summary/Response

In paragraphs or in outline form, summarize the reading and then respond to it both analytically and personally.

Below is an example of a student reading summary in this format, also from a chapter of the Jordan Paper book.

Jordan Paper states:

- that when we depend on wild plants and animals, we see them as numinous/deities
- that when we domesticate the plants and animals on which we still depend, we see them as gifts of the numinous/deities rather than as the numinous/deities themselves
- that plant and animal deities have powers humans need in our lives
- that humans are weak in relation to wild animals
- that we know about deities because they communicate with us

I affirm:

- that my life is dependent on the deaths – the sacrifices – of plants and animals, as well as the gifts of plants and animals (mammals do not have to die to give milk, or fowl to give eggs, for example)
- my respect for and gratitude to the plants and animals whose deaths sustain my life
- that I recognize the plant and animal beings I encounter each day as Sacred, and strive to do so more consciously
- my bird feeding as a sacrifice of appreciation to some of the bird deities in my new location, as a freely-chosen religious/spiritual obligation during certain seasons
- that the conscious cultivation of relationship with plants and animals may restore a numinous quality that supermarket culture has removed

The student assignments above received grades in the A range. A assignments will begin to articulate views that go beyond mere description and begin to ask/answer “why?”, “how?”, and “so what?” They will also pick up on nuances in the readings that require more than skimming to grasp. Students are encouraged to write the response section of these assignments in a way that presents their most controversial, radical, or challenging personal theologies -- statements from their experience that are likely to be unique.

The instructor may choose a few particularly insightful or provocative excerpts from these assignments to share anonymously with the class as springboards for further discussion.

## Term Assignments

**Short Paper:** Choose two readings from Weeks 2-4. In at least 750 words, examine an issue that both of your chosen readings address, preferably one on which they disagree. Your essay will be evaluated on the following bases:

- Introduces the topic and indicates the question or controversy to be considered
- Accurately summarizes the relevant parts of both texts
- Compares and contrasts the readings
- Gives the student's unique theological position or response
- Draws the main points of the essay together in a succinct conclusion

Your own thoughts should make up 1/3 to 1/2 of the paper—your summaries should only set up the terms of the discussion. Questions you may wish to consider include:

- Where do these authors agree most strongly? Where do they disagree?
- What backgrounds do these authors come from? To whom are they writing?
- What are the authors' underlying assumptions?
- What is my experience with this issue?
- Do these theologies fit my experience? Why or why not?
- What evidence am I using to evaluate these theologies?
- What do I believe about this issue at this point in my life?
- How do I deal with this issue in my spiritual practice, my ministry, or my daily life?

Clarity, grammar, proper citations, and mechanics will be considered.

**Interviews:** You will complete 5 hours of discussion, dialogue and/or experience with **at least 3 other Pagans from 2 or more differing traditions** before you begin your final project. The write-up of this assignment is due at the beginning of Week 8.

Before performing the interviews, write out a series of at least five questions on a variety of theological topics. You do not need to ask all of the questions formally in the interview process; this part of the assignment is intended to help you focus. The content of these questions may be based on any of the class topics (minimum 3 topics). Students are encouraged to include specific and potentially challenging questions, as well as more general ones, as these often result in more interesting interviews.

The format of these interviews can be anything that works for you, including but not limited to conversation, e-mail or chat, creative expression circles, conferences, small groups, etc. In-person activities are preferred.

Write at least two substantial paragraphs per person summarizing each person's theological beliefs, then respond to those views with your own reflections and reactions. You can keep your interviewees' identities confidential by using terms like "person one" or "person from Gardnerian tradition."

Turn in the following:

- your initial questions
- a brief description of how you pursued your interviews or interactions
- your summaries and responses
- a *substantial* conclusion (300+ words) reflecting on what you learned

In your conclusion, you may want to consider recurring themes, areas of strong disagreement, or issues that surprised, excited, shocked, or offended you. Your personal responses and analysis should make up at least 1/3 of the paper. If you are a confident writer, you may organize the paper narratively or journalistically rather than sticking to the outline above.

Treat this as a formal written assignment and proofread appropriately; grammar, clarity, and organization will be considered.

### **Final Project:**

In Week 9, you will submit a proposal for a project drawn from one of the following two options:

1. Choose at least 8 of the weekly topics covered in class. Create a document, visual art project, or other structure expressing your personal beliefs and practices around each of the chosen topics. Your medium may be expository writing, poetry, storytelling, memoir, ritual, visual art, music, or any other medium that the instructor approves. Written materials should be 12-15 pages long. Other types of projects should involve about as much work as a 15-page paper.
2. Choose a single topic covered in class. Using class readings and any other sources you deem appropriate, write an approximately 15-page theological essay. Include summaries of the thoughts of existing theologians, comparisons and contrasts of their views, discussions of other relevant texts or evidence, and your personal theology of the issue based on reason and experience. Although the mood of the piece may be primarily reflective or primarily analytical, you must use academic citation methods and provide evidence for your position.

Your Week 9 proposal should specify which option you are choosing, which topic or topics you intend to cover, the medium you intend to use, and your presentation method. Students choosing option #2 should include a specific question about the topic they intend to explore or a thesis sentence for which they intend to argue.

You will present your project or excerpts from it to the class at the end of the semester. One week before your presentation, post an approximately 200-word summary (an abstract such as you might provide for a conference presentation) of your project to the Final Projects forum. Presentations may be made verbally, with Powerpoint, via recorded MP3, or by another instructor-approved method.

Your presentation of the project to the class should be no more than 10 minutes long. Each student will take questions and comments after their presentation. Presentations may occur through chat, be recorded as an mp3 or video, or created as a slideshow. Consult with the instructor about other methods.

Your project will be graded on the following criteria:

- Who is this project’s audience (Your community? Your small group or coven? This class? The Pagan community as a whole)? Is it successful in addressing that audience?
- Does the abstract of the project summarize the project’s main points or provide sufficient information to interest that audience? Does it effectively set the audience’s expectations, as a conference abstract should?
- Is the oral presentation of the project coherent, engaging, and relevant?
- Does the project fulfill the requirements of the assignment as outlined above?
- Is the project well-organized, insightful, and creative? Does it demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the concepts discussed in class?
- Does the project draw on the student’s personal experience or experience as Pagan clergy? Does it address debates that are current in the Pagan community or spiritual challenges that the student has grappled with? Does it take risks to offer a unique or provocative perspective?
- Does the project cite its sources using appropriate academic citation methods? Is the writing grammatical and clear?

## Grading

Grades will be given according to the rubric described in the Catalog. Please note that in a graduate-level class, a B is given for solid, above-average work. Grades in the A range require substantial analytical thinking and creativity. Contact the instructor if you need clarification on what “analysis” means in the study of theology.

Short Essay	15%
Weekly Homework	15%
Participation	20%
Interviews	20%
Final Project Proposal	5%
Final Project	25%

One letter grade per week may be deducted from late assignments, at the discretion of the instructor. If you find you need an extension, write to the instructor before the assignment is due with your request for a revised deadline (include a specific date).

## **Summary of Assignments**

All assignments are due before chat on Monday.

### Weekly

Definitions, 200-word reflective responses, or summary/responses

Assigned readings

### Week 5

Short essay

### Week 8

Interview report

### Week 9

Final Project Proposal

### Week 13-14

Final Projects

## **Schedule**

### **Week 1: Theological terms**

What is theology? What is religion? What is the purpose of theology as a practice? What, specifically, is Pagan theology? What authority do we have in our communities as clergy and theologians? What responsibilities do we have?

- Greer, *World Full of Gods*, Chp 1
- York, *Pagan Theology*, vii-14; Chp 3
- Jones, "Pagan Theologies"
- Optional: Pagan Theology Wiki

## **Week 2: Tradition, Myth, and Poetry**

What are valid sources of authority for our belief and practice? How do we relate to existing traditions and myths? How do we create new ones?

- *Aradia*, Chp 1 and 2
- *Book of the Law*, Chp 1
- "Charge of the Goddess"
- Rees, "The Tangled Skein"

## **Week 3: Deity**

What are some ways we understand God/dess? (key terms: monotheism, duotheism, soft polytheism)

- Stone, "When God Was a Woman"
- McFague, "God as Mother"
- Christ, *She Who Changes*, Chp 2
- Starhawk, *Spiral Dance*, Chp 5 and 6

## **Week 4: Deities**

What are some ways we understand the Gods? (key terms: monism, hard polytheism)

- Paper, *Deities Are Many*, Chp 1
- Greer, *World Full of Gods*, Chp 6
- Lupus, "Polytheology"
- Optional: Mavrodes, "Polytheism"

## **Week 5: Phenomenology and Epistemology**

What constitutes a religious experience? How do we know what we know about the divine?

- Wise, *Hidden Circles in the Web*, Chp 3, 73-92
- Greer, *World Full of Gods*, Chp 5; Chp 7, 94-102
- Teish, *Jambalaya* excerpts
- Krasskova, "Race, Gender, and the Problem of 'Ergi' in Modern American Heathenry," 34-68

## **Week 6: Immanence, Transcendence, and Embodiment**

What is the relationship of Deity (or Deities) to the things we can see and touch? How does the divine manifest in the world?

- Paper, *Deities Are Many*, Chp 3
- Greer, *World Full of Gods*, Chp 7, 102-105
- Shaw, "At the Water's Edge"
- Primavesi, *Sacred Gaia*, Chp 1

## **Week 7: Relationality, Worship, and Devotion**

How do we relate to deity? What is the relationship of God/dess to himself, or of the Gods to each other?

- Christ, *She Who Changes*, Chp 3
- Paper, *Deities Are Many*, Chp 2
- Greer, *World Full of Gods*, Chp 7, 105-111; Chp 8
- York, *Pagan Theology*, Chp 2, 66-104; 141-156

## **Week 8: Cosmologies**

How did the world come into being? What is our place in it?

- Crowley, "The 0=2 Equation"
- Farrar and Farrar, "The Rationale of Witchcraft"
- Starhawk, "Faery Creation Myth"
- Greer, *Paths of Wisdom*, Chp 1-3
- Fox, *Creation Spirituality*, Chp 1

## **Week 9: Death and the Dead**

What happens after death? How do we appropriately relate to those who have died?

- Paper, *Deities Are Many*, Chp 4 and 5
- Farrar and Farrar, "Reincarnation"
- Pantheon blog, posts on Ancestors: Read 3 posts that interest you.

## **Week 10: Theodicy**

Why is there evil and/or suffering?

- Christ, *She Who Changes*, Chp 4
- Greer, *World Full of Gods*, Chp 4
- Starhawk, *Truth or Dare*, Chp 1

### **Week 11: Ethics and Justice**

On what basis do we distinguish between right and wrong? How can we live our ethics personally and socially?

- Farrar and Farrar, "The Ethics of Witchcraft"
- Christ, *She Who Changes*, Chp 7
- Wise, *Hidden Circles in the Web*, Chp 3, 92-101
- Greer, *World Full of Gods*, Chp 10

### **Week 12: Celebration**

What is the role of joy and pleasure in Pagan religious life?

- Christ, *She Who Changes*, Chp 5
- Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark*, Chp 8

### **Weeks 13 & 14: Final Projects**

## Appendix B: Sample Syllabus for a Pagan Community Education Course

**Course Title:** N627B The Sacred Earth: Human/Animal Relationships

**Instructors:**

Grant Potts, PhD

Skype: ghpotts

[grant.potts@religiousthought.com](mailto:grant.potts@religiousthought.com)

512-487-2084

Christine Hoff Kraemer, PhD

Skype: helixferi

[chkraemer13@gmail.com](mailto:chkraemer13@gmail.com)

617-413-4621

**Prerequisite(s):** None; background in theology recommended

**Class Meeting Time:** Mondays, 8pm EST

**Description**

This course provides students with an opportunity to examine recent writing on human relationships with nature. Students will read both earth-centered spiritual perspectives and scholarship on human/nature relationships. In addition to a broad selection of readings on ecotheology, we will focus in on relationships between humans and animals, as well as understandings of human beings as animals. Topics may include the commercialization of nature spirituality; sacred sites; differences between pantheistic and animistic theologies; hunting and animal sacrifice; and the role of animal spirits for Native peoples. In conversation with other writers, we will reflect on the role of nature in Pagan spirituality and also contextualize current Pagan writings about nature religion, paying particular attention to the topics of animal spirits and religious practices involving animals.

Students will be required to assess the role of nature in their own ministry and that of their particular communities, and to produce critical and constructive writing on nature religion and nature spirituality. This course meets with N6270B Nature & Pagan Spirituality.

## Goals for the Class

This course is intended to provide you with an introduction to contemporary thought examining the sacred relationships between humans and the natural world. It does not provide a full survey of that thought, but rather emphasizes a depth of engagement with key voices that align with Pagan sensibilities.

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Write in an articulate voice about nature spirituality and ecotheology
- Reflect critically and constructively on the conceptual resources available for understanding, describing, and analyzing sacred human relationships with nature
- Have the foundation to critically engage other thought on sacred relationships with nature

## Required Texts

Abram, David. *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*. Pantheon, 2010. ISBN: 9780375421716

Berry, Thomas and Mary Evelyn Tucker. *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-first Century*. Columbia University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780231149525

Ivakhiv, Adrian J. *Claiming Sacred Ground: Pilgrims and Politics at Glastonbury and Sedona*. Indiana University Press, 2001 ISBN: 9780253338990

Nelson, Richard. *Heart and Blood: Living with Deer in America*. Vintage, 1998. ISBN: 9780679736868

Other texts will be provided electronically in the Moodle classroom.

## General Expectations

The Sacred Earth is not a graduate-level course, but students will be expected to challenge themselves to read and digest academic material and attend discussions prepared with their own observations and questions. The instructors' role in the course is primarily as facilitators and knowledge resources; it is the students who will decide what elements of the assigned readings we will explore most deeply.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of ethics, and its consequences may include failing this class. Check with your instructor if you are unclear on how to quote work that is not your own.

See the Catalog for details about additional issues of policy.

## **Weekly Homework**

Each week, you will be asked to post a summary/response assignment to the Forum by Thursday for group discussion. Respond to at least one other student post before the next chat.

Students are encouraged to use the Forums for any additional questions, reflections, or reactions that come up in the course of the class.

## **Summary/Response Assignments**

In paragraphs or in outline form, summarize the reading and then respond to it both analytically and personally. The assignment should be at least 200 words. Your summaries and responses may be longer than 200 words, but it is possible to receive a high grade for a dense, insightful summary/response that is also quite short – try to avoid going over 500 words per summary/response. Students are encouraged to include the most provocative elements of their personal theologies and to present points of view that may be unique in the classroom. The number of readings to be summarized in this way will vary from week to week, depending on what other assignments are due.

Below is an example of a student reading summary in this format from a chapter of *The Deities Are Many* by Jordan Paper.

Paper states:

- that when we depend on wild plants and animals, we see them as numinous/deities
- that when we domesticate the plants and animals on which we still depend, we see them as gifts of the numinous/deities rather than as the numinous/deities themselves
- that plant and animal deities have powers humans need in our lives
- that humans are weak in relation to wild animals
- that we know about deities because they communicate with us

I affirm:

- that my life is dependent on the deaths – the sacrifices – of plants and animals, as well as the gifts of plants and animals (mammals do not have to die to give milk, or fowl to give eggs, for example)
- my respect for and gratitude to the plants and animals whose deaths sustain my life
- that I recognize the plant and animal beings I encounter each day as Sacred, and strive to do so more consciously

- my bird feeding as a sacrifice of appreciation to some of the bird deities in my new location, as a freely-chosen religious/spiritual obligation during certain seasons
- that the conscious cultivation of relationship with plants and animals may restore a numinous quality that supermarket culture has removed

Assignments that receive a grade in the “A” range will begin to articulate views that go beyond mere description and ask/answer “why?”, “how?”, and “so what?” They will also pick up on nuances in the readings that require more than skimming to grasp.

### **Proposal and Final Essay**

Proposal due on Sunday at the end of Week 9; Essay due on Sunday at the end of Week 14

In 6-8 double-spaced pages, draw together what you have learned over the course of the semester and produce a focused essay on a topic in nature and Pagan spirituality. This essay should take a position on a question or controversy examined in this course. The essay may be primarily analytical or primarily reflective in tone.

Your Week 9 essay proposal should include the question your paper will examine and a preliminary thesis statement (which may change in the course of your writing).

### **Grading**

This course will be graded on a pass-fail basis unless a grade is requested by the student.

**Schedule by Topic** [note: specific readings for each week should be included]

Week 1: Orientating on the Issue

Week 2: The History of Nature

Week 3: Models of Relationship

Week 4: Cosmology, History, and Location

Week 5: Sacred Cosmology/Sacred Earth

Week 6: Cosmology, Relationship, and Rite

Week 7: Cosmology, Relationship, and Place

Week 8: Nature and Wildlife

Week 9: Animals, Rights, and Relationship

Week 10: Liturgical Relationships With Animals -- Sacrifice

Week 11: Liturgical Relationships With Animals -- Embodiment

Week 12: Animals and Animal Spirits

Week 13: Animality and Embodiment

Week 14: Becoming Animal/Becoming Environment

***Final Essay Due***

## Appendix C: Sample PCE Foundations Syllabus

**Course Title:** Pagan Ancestors and Elders: Doreen Valiente

**Instructor:**

Christine Hoff Kraemer, PhD

Skype: helixferi

[chkraemer13@gmail.com](mailto:chkraemer13@gmail.com)

617-413-4621

**Description**

Doreen Valiente is the writer behind the widely known Craft liturgy "The Charge of the Goddess." As Gerald Gardner's most influential High Priestess and an important writer in her own right, Valiente has had a deep and lasting impact on Wicca. In this four-week class, we will study Valiente's life and historical context. Readings will include Valiente's autobiographical account of British witchcraft in the 1950s and 1960s, archives of her letters and speeches, and excerpts from her out-of-print book of poetry, *The Charge of the Goddess*. We will also take an in-depth look at the Charge itself and study some of its literary precursors.

"Pagan Elders and Ancestors" is part of a planned series of Foundations courses covering important figures in the history of magick and contemporary Paganism.

**Goals for the Class**

By the end of this class, students will:

- understand Valiente's life and times in historical context
- be familiar with key texts by Valiente
- be able to discuss questions around historical lineage, public/private debates, and other controversial issues in the modern Craft

**Required Texts**

Doreen Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft* (any edition, originally published 1989)

Other texts will be provided electronically in the Moodle classroom.

## **General Expectations**

Students will be expected to challenge themselves to read and digest sophisticated academic and liturgical material and post to the Forums with their own thoughts. The instructor's role in the course is primarily as a facilitator and knowledge resource; it is the students who will decide what elements of the assigned readings we will explore most deeply.

This course is graded on a **pass-fail** basis unless a grade is requested. A pass is granted for all students who post weekly, engage in discussion with other students, and turn in (or report on) a small final project.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of ethics, and its consequences may include failing this class. Check with your instructor if you are unclear on how to quote work that is not your own.

See the Catalog for details about additional issues of policy.

## **Weekly Homework**

Each week, make 1-2 posts to the Forum by Thursday, depending on that week's assignments. Respond to at least one other student post before the end of each week.

## **Final Project**

At the beginning of Week 3, choose a small final project to complete by the end of Week 4. Suggestions for projects include:

1. Memorize the Charge or another piece of Valiente's liturgy and use it in ritual, then reflect on the experience in writing.
2. Write a new ritual, exercise, or meditation based on Valiente's poetry or ideas.
3. Write poetry inspired by or in response to Valiente's poetry.
4. Produce visual or other art inspired by Valiente's work.
5. Design a short lesson for a coven, grove, or circle about Doreen Valiente.

Your project, or your reflection on your project, is due in the Week 4 Forum by March 12.

## **Schedule of Readings and Topics**

### Week 1: Valiente's Life and Times

1. Watch the introductory lecture.

2. Read Chapters 1 and 3-5 in *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*. If you have not studied the history of contemporary Paganism before, you may also read Chapter 2 to learn more about the sources for contemporary witchcraft. Be aware, however, that many of the sources that Valiente refers to as authoritative (such as the work of archeologist Margaret Murray) have been questioned or partially debunked by more recent scholarship.
3. Post in the discussion forum, using the optional questions there as a guide. Respond to at least one other student's post.

#### Week 2: An Unbroken Tradition?

1. Read Chapters 6-8 in *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*.
2. Read Ronald Hutton's foreword to Doreen's recently reprinted first book, *Where Witchcraft Lives* (1962, 2010).
3. Post in the discussion forum, using the optional questions there as a guide. Respond to at least one other student's post.
4. Visit the Museum of Witchcraft archive. Type 'Valiente' into the keyword box; make sure to check the box acknowledging the terms and conditions. Find a letter that is addressed from Valiente, read it, and post your thoughts on it to the Forum.

#### Week 3: The Charge

1. Read Valiente's 1986 version of The Charge as given in her book of poetry, *The Charge of the Goddess*.
2. Read the version of the Charge that Valiente received at her initiation, "Lift Up the Veil," apparently put together by Gardner using material from Leland's *Aradia* and Crowley's *Book of the Law*.
3. Read Chapter 1 of The Book of the Law and Chapters 1 and 2 of *Aradia*. If you are not familiar with these texts, you may want to read about them in Wikipedia first.
4. Read the essay on the Charge by Ceisiwr Serith.
5. Read Star Foster's essay on "Plagiarism, Copyright Infringement and Piracy," including the comments.
6. Post to the Forum, using the discussion questions there as a guide. Respond to another student's post.
7. Choose a poem from *The Charge of the Goddess* and read it aloud, preferably more than once. Post your poem choice and your reaction to the Forum.
8. Choose a small final project for this class. Read the suggestions and pick a project that fits your needs; it will be due by March 12.

#### Week 4: Public Witches, Private Witches

1. Read Chapters 10 and 13 of *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*.
2. Read the interviews conducted by Michael Thorn (1991) and Michael Jordan (1996).
3. Read Valiente's 1997 speech to the Pagan Federation.
4. Post to the Forum, using the discussion questions there as a guide. Respond to another student's post.

## Appendix D: Student Resource

### Succeeding in Graduate School: Working with Difficult Texts

Graduate school classes are likely to present you with challenging readings. If your comprehension of assigned texts is poor, it is difficult to do well in your classes.

Here are some tips for dealing with challenging texts.

- **Read the first few and last few paragraphs first.** Authors often summarize their main points at the beginning and end of a text.
- **Scan the section for main ideas.** Look for repeated words, titles, headings, italicized words, charts, and diagrams. Pay particular attention to the first sentence of each paragraph; this is often the topic sentence.
- **Use the “look-away” method.** Periodically look away from the text and pose a question to yourself about it. This can help keep you engaged and help make sure you’re reading, not just running your eyes over the page.
- **Take notes.** Write down main ideas, key terms, and questions that occur to you as you read. Notes don’t have to be just words! You can use diagrams or pictures to remind yourself of the relationships between ideas. Make note of important page numbers. You can also take notes on a computer so that you will be able to easily search your notes later.
- **Look up words you don’t recognize in a dictionary.** This is particularly important for words that occur repeatedly or words that appear in titles or headings.
- **Paraphrase key passages as if translating them from another language.** When you find a difficult passage that seems central to the text, put it into your own words, trying to retain all of its meaning. With an extremely complex or archaic text, this can feel a lot like translating from another language! If you can’t put a sentence into your own words, you don’t yet completely understand it.
- **Read difficult passages aloud.** Especially if you find yourself falling asleep, reading the text aloud can help you pay more careful attention to each word, and may help the meaning come clear.
- **Mark passages you still don’t understand.** Bring them to class, your teacher, another student, or a study group. Others likely share your questions!

## **Succeeding in Graduate School: Skimming**

Skimming is an important study skill. Almost inevitably during your graduate school career, you will find yourself with more to read in a week than you can possibly handle. Learning to extract information from texts without reading every word will help keep you from becoming overwhelmed.

Mastery of the techniques of reading difficult texts is necessary before you can effectively skim! If you can't understand a text while reading slowly, skimming will waste your time. The techniques used in approaching a difficult text and skimming a text are actually quite similar. The difference is that in skimming, you learn to recognize the key points of a text quickly and then concentrate your attention only on those, rather than on every paragraph.

- **Read the first few and last few paragraphs first.** Authors often summarize their main points at the beginning and end of a text.
- **Scan the section for main ideas.** Look for repeated words, titles, headings, italicized words, charts, and diagrams.
- **Read the first sentence of each paragraph.** This is often the topic sentence.
- **Identify key passages.** Choose single paragraphs or pages where key ideas are introduced or explained. Read these passages using all your strategies for reading difficult texts.
- **Take notes.** Write down main ideas and key terms, with their definitions. Use diagrams to show the relationships between ideas. Make note of important page numbers. You can also take notes on a computer so that you will be able to easily search your notes later.

## **Appendix E: Student Resource**

### **How to Be a Cherry Hill Seminary Graduate Student**

Being a graduate student requires good time management and a proactive attitude. Much more than in a traditional undergraduate environment, students will be expected to locate resources and learn new skills in a flexibly structured environment. In graduate school, instructors are facilitators for students' learning, not the sole (or necessarily even the primary) source of knowledge. Students will be expected to grapple with difficult texts and come to class prepared with questions and commentary. Rather than focusing on learning material by rote, emphasis is placed on analyzing and synthesizing material, as well as making connections between classroom material and life experiences. Although help is available when needed, a strong sense of self-responsibility and internal motivation is required for a successful graduate career.

#### **Organizational Skills**

- **Read the course syllabus** and look over the entire Moodle classroom for each course at the beginning of the semester. You are responsible for keeping up with the course schedule and turning in assignments on time. If any due dates or deadlines are unclear, let the instructor know immediately so that the error can be remedied early in the semester.
- **Keep your own calendar.** Particularly if you are taking more than one class, use a paper or electronic scheduler to lay out all your deadlines in one place. You are responsible for managing your time, so if you see that there are important deadlines in Week 9 of both of your classes, plan ahead to turn in both assignments on time. There are also many scheduling applications available that will send you advance reminders about your deadlines via e-mail or by other electronic means.
- **Be honest about your limitations.** If you find you've bitten off more than you can chew, or an emergency arises, ask your instructors for extensions on assignments immediately, not when you've already fallen badly behind. Familiarize yourself with Cherry Hill Seminary's policies about withdrawals and incompletes and remember to contact both your instructor and the Cherry Hill Seminary administration when making requests related to your enrollment. It is strongly advised that unless you are a full-time student, you limit yourself to one Master's-level class during your first semester until you are fully familiar with Moodle, Skype, your local libraries, and other essential resources. Each Master's-level class will demand 8-12 hours of your time a week.
- **Develop a relationship with your department chair.** Your department chair is your primary advisor when it comes to choosing classes to meet your degree requirements. Keeping your department chair informed about your progress can keep you on track and also helps Cherry Hill Seminary plan its course schedule for future semesters. Your chair can also help you choose an optional track for your major and discuss the timing of your Junior Project and Senior Thesis (if relevant).

## Study and Research Skills

- **Learn to skim and take good notes on your course readings.** Your instructors do not always expect you to read every word of lengthy reading assignments; they expect you to understand the main ideas of every reading, and to examine readings that particularly interest you in depth. Read the tips for Skimming and Dealing with Difficult Texts elsewhere in the orientation classroom for details.
- **Refine your academic writing skills.** Although many Cherry Hill students enter the program with strong creative or professional writing skills, academic writing has different conventions and requirements. If you have not done much academic writing before, you will save yourself time and effort by reading some good books on the subject. *The Office of Assertion* by Scott F. Crider provides good background for writing in the humanities, as does *The Craft of Research* by Booth, Colomb, and Williams. *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White is recommended to help you brush up on grammar and mechanics. Finally, you will need a copy of your discipline's style guide to help you format academic papers. Counseling students should choose the *Publishing Manual of the American Psychological Association* or *Concise Rules of APA Style*. Ministry and theology students should choose *The Chicago Manual of Style*, although if you are primarily a literary or language scholar, the *Modern Language Association for Writers of Research Papers* may be more appropriate. Finally, although your instructors are available to give some feedback on rough drafts, if you need significant coaching to improve your writing, you may wish to employ a private writing tutor.
- **Familiarize yourself with your local public and university libraries.** You will need access to a research library in order to complete some Master's-level assignments. A university library is ideal, and many university libraries provide borrowing access to the public for a small fee; almost all will allow you to read, photocopy, and use article databases without having borrowing access. To download articles electronically and read them at home, bring a thumb drive with you to the library when you visit. Public libraries often have interlibrary loan services and may be able to request academic journal articles as well as books (although this process may take a few weeks). Google Books also has excerpts of many academic books, which you can examine before requesting them at the library. Meet your local research librarian and ask questions about what resources are available. If your public library does not have journal databases, Google Scholar can help you find article citations, as can the websites for journals themselves. You may also wish to ask your instructors for the titles of key journals in your field. See Online Resources for Academic Research elsewhere in the Orientation classroom.
- **Keep all the assignments you have turned in, along with any grades or comments you may have received on them.** You may find them helpful, for example, when doing the Junior Project, designing field research, or preparing to write a thesis.

## Technology Requirements

- **Choose the best e-mail configuration for you.** Forum discussions are the heart of many Cherry Hill Seminary classes. To stay on top of these discussions, consider subscribing yourself to the Forums via e-mail (available on the Forums page of the Moodle classroom). It is also recommended that you acquire an e-mail reader that uses threading, as such programs make it much easier to follow complex e-mail conversations. Gmail's free web reader uses threading, as does Zoho, another free webmail provider. Thunderbird (or Mozilla Thunderbird) is a similar free e-mail client that you can download and use with your existing e-mail address. We recommend experimenting to see what works best for you and/or enlisting the help of a tech-savvy friend.
- **Consider your personal technological needs.** In addition to a computer, a microphone and speakers, Skype and other internet software, and other materials listed in the catalog, you may need some of the following: current word processing software; software to create slideshows or sound recordings; a printer, scanner, or copier; or other equipment (depending on your circumstances and academic focus). Since every student's situation is different, Cherry Hill Seminary is not able to provide a systematic list of what each individual student will need to succeed in a Master's program. As with all distance learning programs, it is your responsibility to secure access to the equipment and resources you need to be successful with your academic work.

The faculty and staff at Cherry Hill Seminary wish you success in your ministry training!

## Appendix F: Student Resource

### Free Online Resources for Academic Research

Although a few of these services provide full-text articles, most will provide partial text, abstracts, or citations that you can take to your local library in order to request the material. Remember, not every source is equally reliable! Ask your instructor if you have questions about whether a particular source is appropriate to use in academic research.

The list provided here is far from exhaustive, but should give you some places to begin.

[Google Scholar](#) - Provides a search of scholarly literature across many disciplines and sources, including theses, books, abstracts and articles.

[Google Books](#) - Search and preview millions of books from libraries and publishers worldwide. The number of preview pages is often limited and will cut off your access after 20 or so pages, so use the Table of Contents or search for what you want. Amazon.com's preview function can also be used similarly.

#### Directories and Databases

[Directory of Open Access Journals](#) - Free, full text, quality controlled scientific and scholarly journals, covering all subjects and many languages.

[Academia.edu](#) – Search research papers uploaded to the site by their authors and follow favorite researchers' work.

[PubMed](#) - PubMed comprises more than 20 million citations for biomedical literature from MEDLINE, life science journals, and online books.

[Anthropological Index Online](#) - 1965-Present, indexes approximately 750 scholarly journals and other serial publications in the field of anthropology held by the British Museum Department of Ethnology.

[Wikipedia List of Academic Databases and Search Engines](#)

#### Academic Journals

[The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies](#) – Articles can be bought individually or by subscription; book reviews are free.

[IONA: Journal of Pastoral Counseling](#) – Includes full text issues.

#### Online Resources of Particular Interest for Pagan Research

[Museum of Witchcraft Document Collection](#) – Please note, this website functions on an honor system and has strict rules against reproducing the materials hosted there without permission.

[The Pluralism Project at Harvard University](#) – Interfaith resources; includes a number of resources on Paganism.

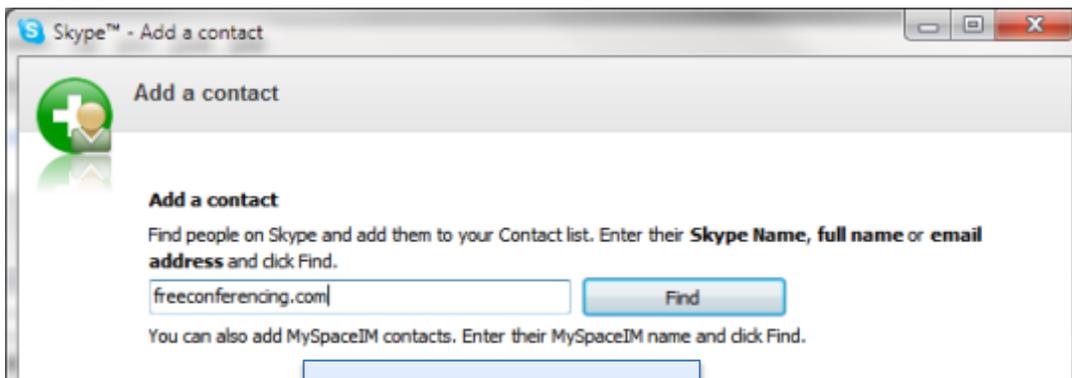
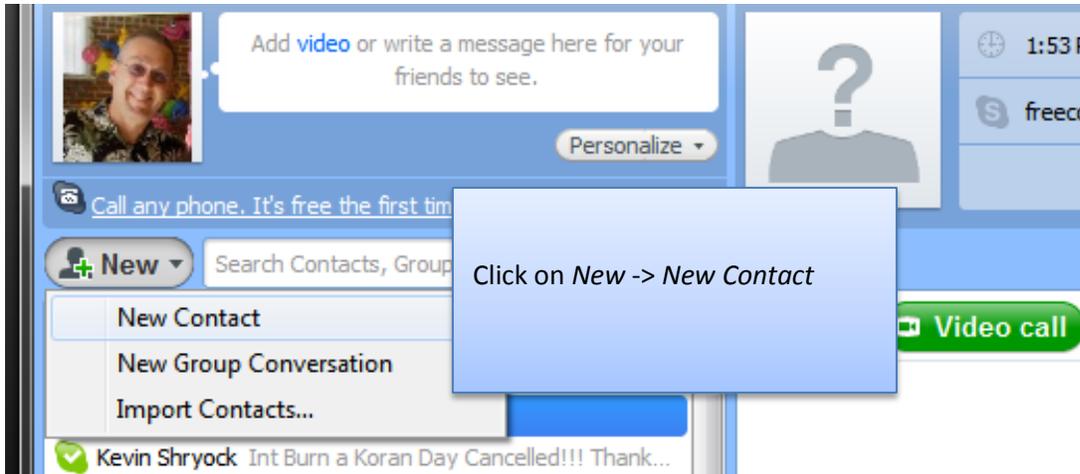
[Internet Sacred Texts Archive](#) – Full texts in the public domain.

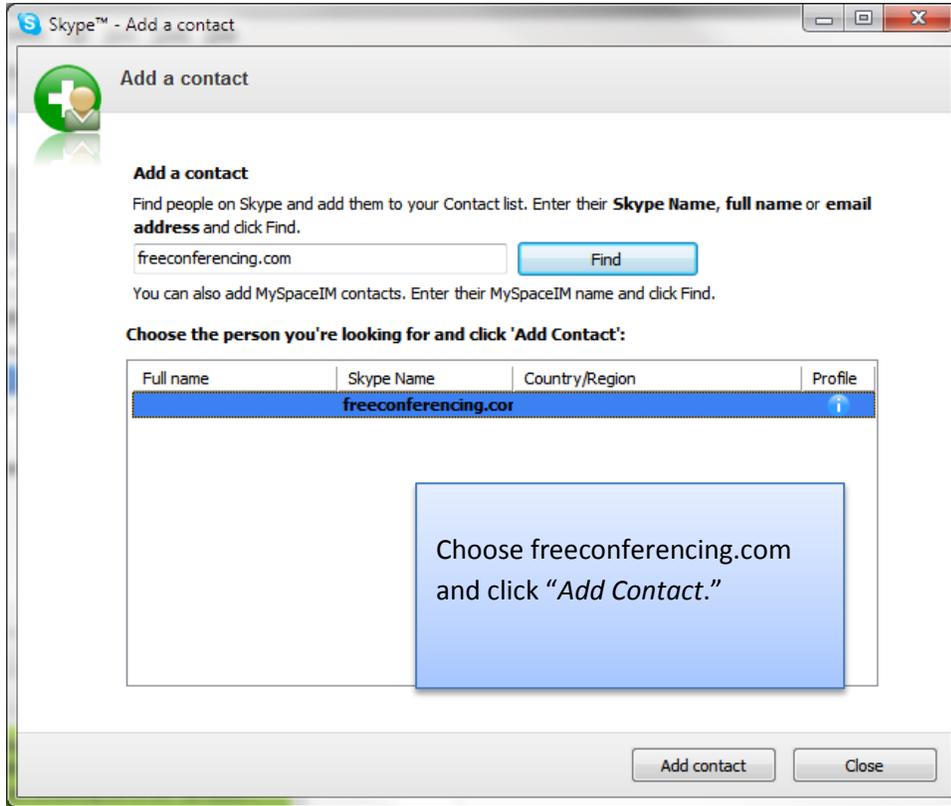
Updated 5/19/11

The following method can be used to allow you to connect to conference calls using Skype and freeconferencing.com. Freeconferencing.com allows up to 1,000 callers to connect for up to 6 hours. Skype 4.2 has a limit of 25 participants but the quality is generally much lower.

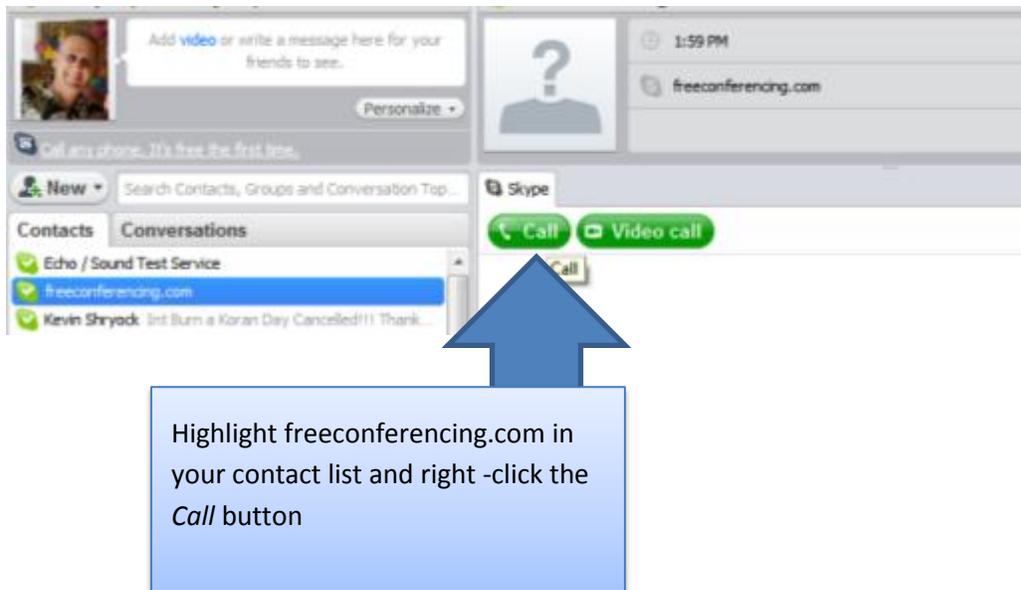
Add freeconferencing.com to your contact list.

Open Skype and complete the following steps:



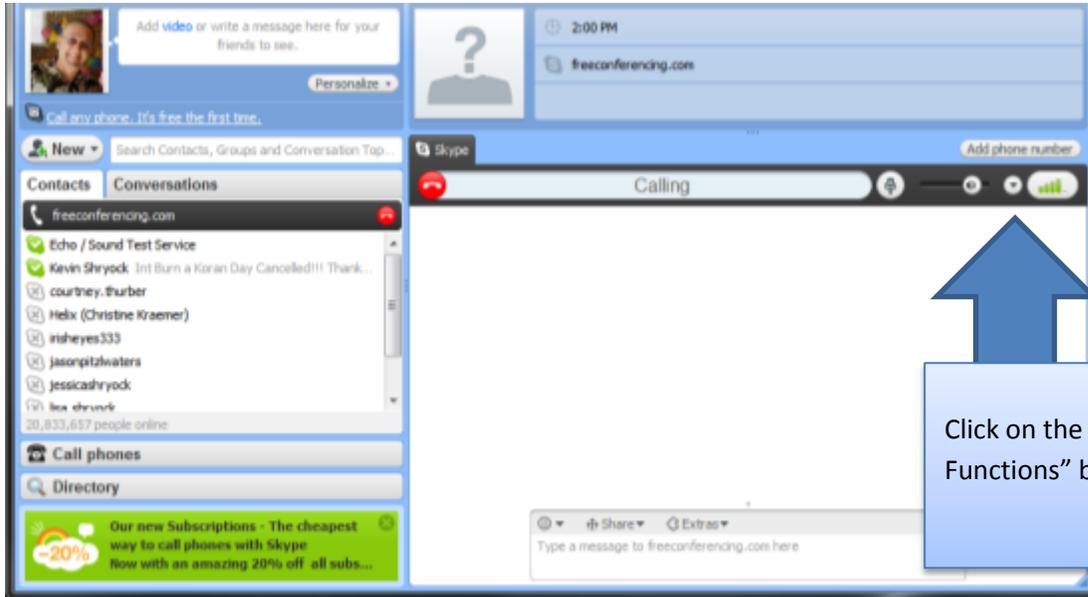


**Call freeconferencing.com hub**

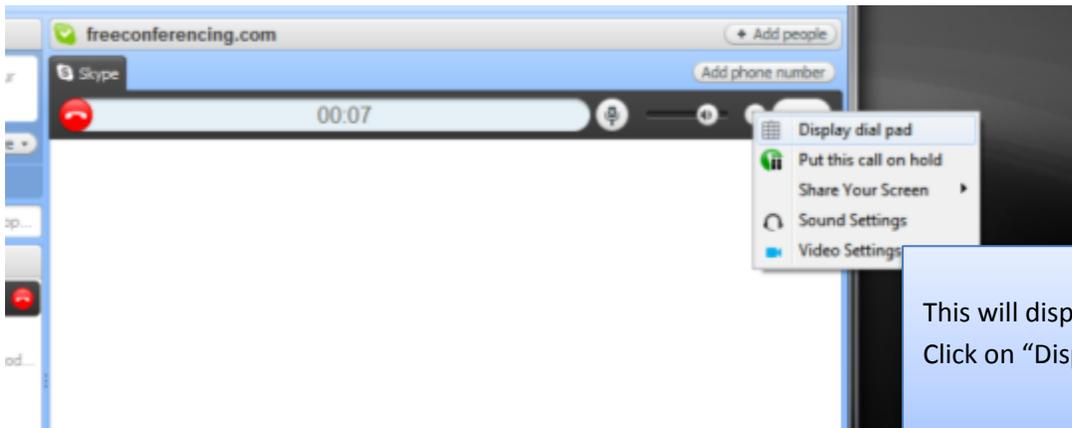


## Using freeconferencing.com with Skype

Once you have connected, you will be asked to enter a participant code. To do this, you will need to do the following:



Click on the "Other Call Functions" button.



This will display a menu. Click on "Display dial pad."

Enter the

