**Earth meditation**

Due before midnight on March 1  
Email to kDwarner@gmail.com (note the D)  
Please make your file a .doc, .pdf, or .rtf  
Please name your file **12.84.o2.Yoursurname**  
Please place this in the subject line of your email: **12.84.o2.Yoursurname**

This assignment asks you to experiment with the spirituality practice of leading an earth meditation. For some of you, this may seem a bit daunting because you have not done it before. To really learn about spirituality, however, one must use the data of your own experience. This activity may challenge you to take one step outside of your comfort zone. Please keep in mind that meditation is certainly not the domain of one religion, and depending on one’s definition of religion, might not be religious. I have resources in my office that can help, and would be happy to help you plan this in my office hours. You can also find meditations on line.

The goal, like other outreach activities, is to design an event, lead and event, and write up a description and evaluation of the event; all these should be done in light of what we have read and discussed in class. If you do an excellent job with the event, but don’t reference anything we have done in class, that will not translate to an excellent grade.

Here is how I recommend you design this activity.

1. Plan and lead the meditation with a buddy from this class. The paper you write must be yours, but you can conduct the meditation activities with someone else in this class: you can plan it, execute it, and discuss it together. The writing must be yours alone, however.
2. It does not need to be long, complicated or religious. It can be, if you like, however.
3. Decide with your buddy to formulate an intention (see ESL 3). What do you want this to be about? What aspect of the relationship between humans and the earth do you want to meditate on?
4. You need to make it yours; don’t feel like you need to fulfill other people’s expectations, including mine. But do approach this as a way to carry forward a vision of the great transformation toward sustainability and interdependence, per Macy and Uhl.
5. For participants in this exercise, pick people who are interested in spirituality. Explain exactly what you are doing and why, and then ask them if they want to participate. This will make sure you have people who have willingness. Thus, a different audience from AIT might be appropriate.
6. Before you actually approach people to participate in this, do some planning with your buddy. Open Uhl, ESL and C4C. Brainstorm a menu of optional activities. For example, Body Scan, 50-50 listening, A Franciscan Ecological Examination of Conscience. Type up your plan as a guide, before you conduct the meditation.
7. Plan a sensory environment for this. Do it outside, at dusk. Do it at night, focusing on the stars. Do it at the beach or by a creek to meditate on water. Dawn? Consider including candles, music, incense, rocks to hold in your hands, picture images of suffering, inspiration.

8. Do not use video in any way with this event.

9. Be aware that you can incorporate the “movements” of via positive and negativa into your via transformativa. Don’t be afraid – but do be respectful of -- via negativa (but tell your participants first so they can be mentally prepared!).

10. Lead the meditation with a spirit of peace and compassion. Do not hurry. In past papers by students, this has been a recurring issue with students leading this. Many times, those leading the meditation feel nervous and rush through the meditation. Most of the time, they later report that those they led through the meditation wished the time had lasted longer. Over 90% of the papers have reported that those led through the experience found the activity nourishing.

11. After the meditation, don’t rush into analysis. Let there be a time of quiet, personal meditation. Don’t be the first to talk. And don’t let folks jump into analysis. See if you can create a space for reflection, mindful speech, and see what comes forth.

12. Write up and turn in everything you did, observed, and reflected on. You can plan, execute and discuss this with your buddy. You must write up your own observations and reflections, however. Be as specific and detailed as you possibly can, of your intention, planning and execution. Describe your assessment of the exercise. Connect ideas from the readings (especially ESL or C4C) to analyze the event. Even if something did not go well, write that down. It is only a failure if you fail to learn from that experience! Discuss your own feelings, observations, learnings from this process. Would you do it again? Differently? Why or why not?