

**Yale University**  
**New Online Classes Open to the Public**

**“Journey of the Universe: A Story for Our Times”**

In the fall of 2016 Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, Senior Lecturers and Research Scholars at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies will offer four six-week online courses. These will be featured as a specialization under the theme of "Journey of the Universe: A Story for our Times." This will include two courses on *Journey of the Universe* and a course on the *Worldview of Thomas Berry*. Each of these courses can be taken independently followed by an *Integrating Capstone* course.

These are MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) available on Coursera to anyone, anywhere on the planet. These will be the first MOOC specialization for Yale and the first MOOCs for the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

**These courses will be launched on September 21, 2016. A sign up will be available in early September with a JOIN button on a landing page for these courses on the Coursera website. <https://www.coursera.org/yale>**

### **Course Descriptions**

#### **Journey of the Universe**

*Journey of the Universe* weaves together the discoveries of the evolutionary sciences with the humanities such as history, philosophy, art, and religion. The courses draw on the Emmy-award winning film, *Journey of the Universe*, the book from Yale University Press, and a series of 20 interviews with scientists and environmentalists, titled *Journey Conversations*.

*Journey* explores cosmic evolution as a creative process based on connection, interdependence, and emergence. It examines a range of dynamic interactions in the unfolding of galaxies, Earth, life, and human communities. It investigates ways in which we understand evolutionary processes and the implications for humans and our ecological future.

The *Journey* courses are based on a new integration that is emerging from the dialogue of the sciences and humanities. *Journey* tells the story of evolution as an epic narrative, rather than as a series of facts separated by scientific disciplines. This changes our perception so that we begin to see ourselves as an integral part of this narrative. By situating ourselves within this story we can better appreciate the complexity and beauty

of processes such as self-organizing dynamics, natural selection, emergence, symbiosis, and co-evolution. As we discover these intricate processes of evolution, we awaken to the beauty and complexity of our natural environment at this critical juncture in our planetary history.

**Journey of the Universe: The Unfolding of Life** draws on the *Journey* film and book written by Brian Thomas Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker.

**Journey Conversations: Weaving Knowledge and Action** explores 20 engaging interviews with renowned scientists, historians, and environmentalists.

See: [www.journeyoftheuniverse.org](http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org)

### **The Worldview of Thomas Berry: The Flourishing of the Earth Community**

Thomas Berry (1914-2009) was a historian of world religions and an early voice awakening moral sensibilities to the environmental crisis. He is known for articulating a “new story” of the universe that explores the implications of the evolutionary sciences and cultural traditions for creating a flourishing future. This course investigates Berry’s life and thought in relation to the *Journey of the Universe* project. It draws on his books, articles, and recorded lectures to examine such ideas as: the New Story, the Great Work, and the emerging Ecozoic era. The course explores Berry’s insights into cosmology as a context for locating the human in a dynamic unfolding universe and thus participating in the creative work of our times. In particular, we will examine Berry’s reflections on renewal and reform in the areas of ecology, economics, education, spirituality, and the arts.

See: [www.thomasberry.org](http://www.thomasberry.org)

### **Integrating Capstone: Living Cosmology**

The ecological and social challenges we are facing as a human species are multiple, complex, and vexing. The difficulty in finding viable solutions can lead to a sense of disempowerment. In this capstone we offer a venue to respond by exploring ways in which human creativity may be more deeply aligned with the creativity of universe and Earth processes. This is what is intended by “living cosmology”.

The capstone course will give participants an opportunity to integrate their learning from the other courses with an individual or group project. Both original thought and practical applications are encouraged. Interdisciplinary thinking and fresh solutions will be fostered. Community mentors will assist the process.

Participants choose one of three concentrations: education, arts, or transformative change.

**Education** concentration – students will create projects or develop curriculum designed to reach diverse learners, in schools or colleges and beyond.

**Arts** concentration – participants may synthesize their learning through literature, poetry, painting, or music.

**Transformative change** concentration – learners will analyze or create models of efficacious ecological, social, political, economic, or spiritual change.

**Specialization Certificate:** While participants do not earn Yale credit for MOOCs, learners are offered an opportunity to pay for a Specialization Certificate for completing and passing the courses with a qualifying score. Students who choose that option can share these certificates with prospective employers and others.