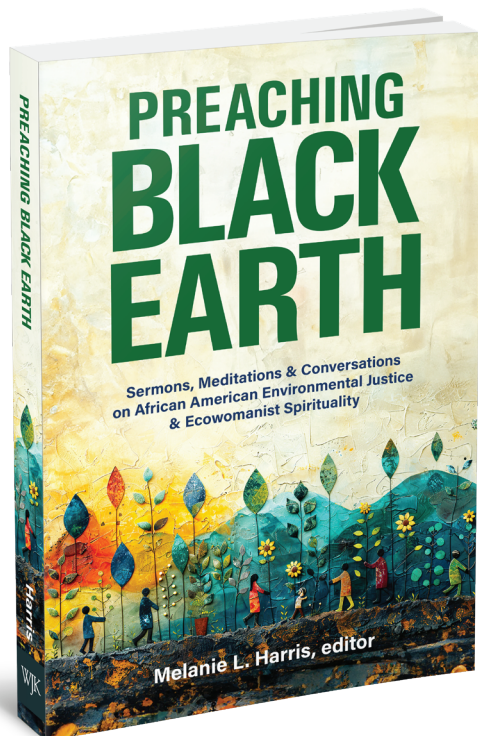


# Using *Preaching Black Earth* in the Classroom

*Ecowomanist wisdom for justice, faith, and the flourishing of humanity and the earth.*

On the following pages, please find the table of contents for *Preaching Black Earth* as well as suggestions from the editor on the types of courses that the book is best used in and pedagogical strategies for using it in each course.



## PREACHING BLACK EARTH

*Sermons, Meditations, and Conversations on African American Environmental Justice and Ecowomanist Spirituality*

Melanie L. Harris, editor

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*Preaching Black Earth* is a groundbreaking collection of sermons, meditations, poems, and interviews that illuminates the powerful intersections of environmental justice, racial justice, and faith. With contributions from Bible scholars, pastors, ecowomanist thinkers, and political activists, this volume offers a profound exploration of how Black and ally communities can craft new theologies to confront the urgent challenges of climate change.

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

**Melanie L. Harris** is Professor of Black Feminist Thought and Womanist Theology and Professor of African American Studies at Wake Forest University, and Director of the Food, Health, and Ecological Well-Being Program at Wake Forest School of Divinity. Harris is the author of many scholarly articles and books, and a leading scholar in ecowomanism, a poet, a professor, and a mother. Ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, she weaves her academic work with her artistry as a singer, researcher, and writer. She is the founding director of The Ecowomanist Circle, a nonprofit organization dedicated to climate justice education and empowering ecowomanists and environmental writers.



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| • Christopher Carter | • John W. Kinney               | • Gina M. Stewart |
| • Elonda Clay        | • Otis Moss III                |                   |

# INSPIRING THE STUDENT, ACTIVIST, & TEACHER

*Preaching Black Earth* is an excellent addition to any classroom and can be easily adapted to courses engaging environmental studies, black and womanist theologies, theology, ethics, homiletics, ecowomanism and more. Teachers will find the sermons helpful for describing the theological underpinnings and conceptual frames of ecowomanist thought. Themes including interconnectedness, interdependence, earth community and the connection between theory and praxis are some that can be gleaned from an initial reading of each sermon. These themes could be discussed in class as a way of deepening student learning and comprehension of ecowomanist perspectives.

## THEOLOGY AND ETHICS COURSES

### Pedagogical Strategies

For courses in theology and ethics, one pedagogical exercise that may assist students in more deeply understanding the major themes in ecowomanist thought is to invite students to select one of the sermons and glean three or four major themes (or points) from the sermon to write about. By describing those themes in their own words, students might reflect on their own theology and how and whether the themes in the sermon align, expand, change, constrain, or transform their own theology and why.

## PREACHING, RHETORIC, AND HOMILETICS COURSES

### Pedagogical Strategies

A particularly helpful exercise would be to invite students to write a short, 3-5 page paper, responding to the following questions: How do the themes gleaned from this sermon expand my own theological understanding of earth stewardship and earth community? How might my faith, and the faith communities I am a part of be served by hearing this sermon, or one like this one? What critique might I bring to this sermon? What are the sermon's blindspots? What's missing from the sermon? What do I wish the sermon would say more about?

Considering the dynamic and diverse use of rhetorical styles applied in each of the sermons, a pedagogical exercise particularly for classes in preaching and rhetoric would be to bring a specific rhetorical criticism or womanist lens to the sermon and study the sermon for uses of narrative, story, and language. Students might reflect on this question: what narratives, stories, and language used in this sermon best communicate the principles (e.g., community) embedded in ecowomanism? How does an examination of the sermon reveal how preachers can speak prophetically about environmental justice, engage the biblical texts, and meaningfully connect with the audience by empowering them to act for earth justice?

## ECOWOMANIST COURSES

### Pedagogical Strategies

*Preaching Black Earth* is especially helpful for students in courses in ecowomanism and environmental studies as it models several different kinds of writings used to expand the discourse. For example, one teaching strategy helpful for students in ecowomanist and environmental justice courses is to consider the eco-poems as models to inspire their own poetry writing about earth justice and connections that they witness as educators and activists. Students can be invited to write a short poem, prayer, or reflection inspired by the eco-poetry to spark their own thinking about writing forms that are helpful for various audiences committed to earth justice.

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