

**The College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 2811B Winter Term
Religions and the Environment**

Instructor: Prof. Noel Salmond

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Office hours: Wed. 3:30 -4:30 on Zoom
<https://carleton-ca.zoom.us/j/91441522438>
or by appointment

Lectures: Wed/Fri. 8:35 -9:55

Synchronous on Zoom in January

Paterson 303, live on campus, when and if this becomes possible

From the University Calendar: Attitudes in the major world religions to nature and the environment and recent responses by religious traditions to ecological degradation and crisis. Includes examination of religious sensibilities expressed in environmentalism.

This course looks at the influence of religious traditions on human interactions with nature (and, reciprocally, how natural environments may influence religions). How have religions shaped human understandings of our relationship with other species, and care (or disregard) for the natural environment? The course provides a brief survey of major religions' teachings on nature and examines late twentieth- and twenty-first century debate and scholarship on the role of religion in either contributing to environmental crisis or, conversely, pointing a way out of it.

The existential threats of climate change (and now the ongoing pandemic) have generated calls for a reset of our culture's values and priorities: a green shift, a green new deal, a just transition. If we cannot continue on the old path with "business as usual," where is our society to find alternative visions of how to conduct ourselves vis à vis the environment going forward? Do the religious traditions of the world offer resources for re-thinking our values and behaviors? Do they offer alternatives to a fixation on economic growth and consumption? Do, for instance, pre-modern worldviews offer a corrective to the disenchantment and quantification of the natural world seen simply as resources and commodities?

In our own country, a central contemporary concern is reconciliation with First Peoples and conflicts over land and the resource extraction economy. A segment of the course will thus look at Indigenous voices on nature and the sacred in Canada. Internationally, climate disruption increases in its intensity and captures global attention (if not real action). We examine religious leaders' recent responses to the climate crisis. Finally, we will also evaluate the charge made by opponents of the environmental movement that environmentalism has become itself a sort of quasi-religion.

Learning Objectives:

On completion of this course students should:

- Understand the vocabulary and the central issues of the subfield of religions and ecology
- Be able to engage with primary religious texts and see how these have been interpreted or re-interpreted in recent decades in response to environmental concerns
- Understand the difference between “a traditional interpretation” and “an interpretation of tradition”
- Be able to distinguish between descriptive or explanatory “history of religions” scholarship and prescriptive or normative “constructive theology”
- Be familiar with the central reference resources, online resources, and scholarly journals in this field
- Have improved their skills in academic writing including correct use of citations

Texts and readings:

Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology. Ed. Willis Jenkins, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim. London and New York: Routledge, 2017.

(This book is recommended for purchase but is also available as an e-book through the Carleton MacOdrum Library)

<https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/books/edit/10.4324/9781315764788/routledge-handbook-religion-ecology-willis-jenkins-mary-evelyn-tucker-john-grim>

The second fundamental resource for our course is the two volume:

Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature. Ed. Bron Taylor. London and New York: Continuum, 2006 (online version 2010).

<https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/view/10.1093/acref/9780199754670.001.0001/acref-9780199754670>

Further readings for each class are also posted as URLs or PDFs on the course Brightspace site or on ARES

Course Evaluation:

Participation/attendance: 20%

Lectures in January are delivered live on Zoom synchronously in the scheduled period. We are beginning online but may be an in-person class (as originally planned) in February. We are a small class creating a situation that allows for collective learning through engagement and debate (even on Zoom). This has been the model for traditional university education. Each student is expected to attend and will be called upon to respond to questions or to offer comments. Each class session will take attendance or will have a very short written exercise or reflection (or a quiz) on the day's reading. These will be assessed as a measure of engagement. Note: This is a synchronous class; to miss more than eight classes is effectively to miss a third of the course and will result in automatic failure.

Term research paper: 40%

Paper proposal **due Feb. 18** 5%
Annotated bibliography **due March 2** 10%
Detailed paper outline **due March 18** 10%
Completed paper **due April 1** 15%

All papers must comply with this stage process. No paper will be accepted without completing each of these components. More details on the paper, the above required stages for completion, and suggested topics will be provided on Brightspace. Late components are marked down one grade point per day.

In-class Test: Friday, March 4 15%

Final take-home exam: 25%

In two parts: 1) short paragraph commentaries 2) two short essays
Due April 28

Note: Students must complete the paper (including its stages), the midterm test, and final take-home exam to obtain credit.

Key Resources in the Study of Religions and Environment:

FORE, the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale University:
<https://fore.yale.edu>

United Nations Environment Programme: *Faith for Earth: A Call for Action* (2020)

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/33991/FECA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Site of encyclopedia of religion and nature editor, Prof. Bron Taylor:

<http://www.brontaylor.com>

Scholarly journals:

Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology

<https://brill-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/view/journals/wo/wo-overview.xml>

Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

<https://web-s-ebSCOhost-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/ehost/command/detail?vid=0&sid=2b211c5b-6fb0-4e20-9805-cd52a00613a1%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWVhc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=rh&jid=ATLA0001587507>

Carleton Support Resources:

Centre for Student Academic Support

<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Writing Services

<https://carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>

SCHEDULE RELI 2811B Religions and the Environment Winter, 2022

Note: This schedule is deliberately tentative as I am prepared to adjust some of the course content on ascertaining student backgrounds and particular student interests as determined in our first class session.

RHRE = Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology

ERAN = Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature

WEEK 1 Prolegomena

Wed. Jan. 12 Introduction to the course. What is religion, what is Religious Studies?
What is the intersection of religion and environment?

Fri. Jan. 14 Nature, Ecology, Environment, Environmentalism
Religious environmentalism and environmental religion
Reading: Willis Jenkins. "Whose Religion? Which Ecology? Religious studies in the environmental humanities." Ch. 3 in *RHRE*
<https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315764788-11/whose-religion-ecology-willis-jenkins?context=ubx&refId=ed9bfc2a-aef0-437c-a81e-b248a171d804>

WEEK 2 Abrahamic Religions

Wed. Jan. 19 Overview of these numerically dominant traditions
Beginnings. Reading: Genesis 1-3
<https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-NRSV-Bible/#booklist>

Fri. Jan. 21 The Lynn White thesis
Reading: Lynn White Jr. "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155 (10 March 1967): 1203-1207.
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/stable/1720120>

Reading: Richard Elliott and Shawna Dolansky. Ch. 5, "The Earth" in *The Bible Now*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/lib/oculcarleton-ebooks/reader.action?docID=689282&ppg=168>

WEEK 3 Biblical texts

Wed. Jan. 26 Biblical sources cont. Reading: Psalms and the Book of Job

Fri. Jan. 28 Christianity: biblical texts
Reading: "Christianity (3) – New Testament in *ERAN I*, 319 - 324

WEEK 4 Christian statements and disputes

Wed. Feb. 2 Christianity. Reading: Encyclical letter of Pope Francis, May, 2015
Laudato si'
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Fri. Feb. 4 Christian religious anti-environmentalism: The Cornwall Alliance and *Slaying the Green Dragon* (video)

WEEK 5 Judaism and Islam

Wed. Feb. 9 Judaism
Reading: Arthur Waskow. "And the Earth is Filled with the Breath of Life." *Cross Currents*, 47, 3 (Fall 1997): 348-363.
<https://web-p-ebSCOhost-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=dc9147d1-d8ed-41f7-9f30-b20f4e8f8e49%40redis>

Fri. Feb. 11 Islam
Reading: *ERANI*, pp. 859-884

WEEK 6 Hinduism

Wed. Feb. 16 Hinduism overview
Reading: David Haberman, "Hinduism: Devotional love of the world." Ch. 4 in *RHRE*

Fri. Feb. 18 Hinduism: saving the Ganga River
Reading: Kelly D. Alley. "Idioms of Degeneracy: Assessing Ganga's Purity and Pollution." In *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India*, edited by Lance E. Nelson. SUNY, 1998
PDF on Brightspace

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Wed. Feb. 23 BREAK WEEK

Fri. Feb. 25 BREAK WEEK
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WEEK 7 Buddhism and Chinese religions

Wed. Mar. 2 Buddhism overview
Reading: Christopher Ives. "Buddhism: A mixed bag: Debates about Buddhism and ecology." Ch. 5 in *RHRE*

Chinese religions
Reading: James Miller. "China: Landscapes, cultures, ecologies,

religions.” Ch. 19 in *RHRE*

Fri. Mar. 4 **In-class mid-term test**

WEEK 8 Indigenous I

Wed. Mar. 9 Reading: Melissa Nelson. “Native ecologies and cosmovisions renew treaties with the earth and fuel indigenous movements.” Ch. 15 in *RHRE*

Fri. Mar. 11 Reading: Blair Stonechild. *Loss of Indigenous Eden and the Fall of Spirituality*. Regina: University of Regina Press, 2020.
PDF selections on Brightspace

WEEK 9 Indigenous II

Wed. Mar. 16 Reading: Robin Wall Kimmerer. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2013.
PDF selections on Brightspace

Fri. Mar. 18 Indigenous direct actions: Standing Rock, North and South Dakota, Wet’suwet’en territory, B.C. and Ottawa, Ontario

WEEK 10 Indigenous III: Appropriation and inspiration

Wed. Mar. 23 Grey Owl
Reading: Letter of Chief Seattle
<https://www.washington.edu/uwired/outreach/cspn/Website/Classroom%20Materials/Reading%20the%20Region/Texts%20by%20and%20about%20Natives/Texts/8.html>

Reading: Rudolph Kaiser. “A Fifth Gospel, Almost: Chief Seattle’s Speech(es): American Origins and European Reception.” In *Indians and Europe*, edited by Christian F. Feest. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.
PDF on Brightspace

Fri. Mar. 25 Environmentalism and asceticism

Reading: “Asceticism” in *ERAN I*, pp. 121, 122

Noel Salmond. "Julia Butterfly: Environmentalist as Stylite and Ascetic." *Ecotheology: The Journal of Religion, Nature and the Environment*. 11, no. 4 (2006): 465-480.
PDF Brightspace

WEEK 11 Sacralizing science

- Wed. Mar. 30 Reading: Thomas Berry. "The New Story." In *The Dream of the Universe*. Sierra Club Books, 1988.
PDF Brightspace
- Fri. Apr. 1 film, *Journey of the Universe*

WEEK 12 Secular anti-environmentalism and religious critiques of the reigning economic paradigm

- Wed. Apr. 6 Reading: Michael Crichton. "Environmentalism as Religion." remarks to the Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, Sept. 15, 2003.
<https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~kw/crichton.html>
- Kevin Williamson. "Tales from the Carbon Cult in Glasgow." *National Review*, Dec. 2, 2021.
<https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2021/12/20/tales-from-the-carbon-cult-in-glasgow/#slide-1>
- Fri. Apr. 8 Reading: "Economics" in *ERAN* I, pp. 555, 556
- David Loy. "The Religion of the Market." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 275-290.
https://www-jstor-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/stable/1465766?refreqid=excelsior%3A73d101504255c471243adf7555feeb3f&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents



Humanities

University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

Academic Dates and Deadlines

[This schedule](#) contains the dates prescribed by the University Senate for academic activities. Dates relating to fee payment, cancellation of course selections, late charges, and other fees or charges will be published in the [Important Dates and Deadlines section](#) of the Registration Website.

Online Learning Resources

While online courses offer flexibility and convenience, they also present unique challenges that traditional face-to-face courses do not. [On this page](#), you will find resources collected by Carleton Online to help you succeed in your online courses; Learning Strategies and Best Practices, Study Skills, Technology and Online Interaction and Engagement.

Copies of Written Work Submitted

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Academic Integrity Policy (updated June 2021)

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own.

Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms,

formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;

- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Process](#)

Academic Accommodation Policy

Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience in order to promote academic accessibility for all individuals.

Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems and support mechanisms designed to accommodate diversity and difference. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to perform the essential requirements of their academic programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University.

Addressing Human Rights Concerns

The University and all members of the University community share responsibility for ensuring that the University's educational, work and living environments are free from discrimination and harassment. Should you have concerns about harassment or discrimination relating to your age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (religion), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, sex (including pregnancy), or sexual orientation, please contact the [Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities](#).

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your [academic obligations](#) during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Religious Accommodation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation](#).

Pregnancy Accommodation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of

class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. . For more details, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation](#).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit the [Equity and Inclusive Communities website](#).

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, see the [Senate Policy on Accommodation for Student Activities](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion can be found [here](#). Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or

distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).
[More information](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities at Carleton

Carleton University strives to provide a safe environment conducive to personal and intellectual growth, free of injustice and characterized by understanding respect, peace, trust, and fairness.

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) governs the non-academic behaviour of students. Carleton University is committed to building a campus that promotes personal growth through the establishment and promotion of transparent and fair academic and non-academic responsibilities.

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

1. Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the **instructor** concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and in all cases this must occur **no later than three (3) working days after the term work was due**. The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. In all cases, formative evaluations providing feedback to the student should be replaced with formative evaluations. In the event the altered due date must extend beyond the last day of classes in the term, the instructor will assign a grade of zero for the work not submitted and submit the student's earned grade accordingly; the instructor may submit a change of grade at a later date. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.
2. In cases where a student is not able to complete term work due to illness or injury for a significant period of time/or long term, the instructor and/or student may elect to consult with the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses) or Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) to determine appropriate action.
3. If a student is concerned the instructor did not respond to the request for academic accommodation or did not provide reasonable accommodation, the student should consult with the department/school/institute chair/director. If a mutually agreeable accommodation to complete course requirements prior to the course grade submission deadline cannot be achieved, the Associate Dean will become involved. If academic accommodation is not granted, and the student receives word **after** the academic withdrawal deadline, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) for a final grade of WDN (Withdrawn) in the course(s). If academic

accommodation is not granted, and the student receives word **prior** to the academic withdrawal deadline, the student may elect to withdraw from the course(s).

4. Furthermore, if academic accommodation is granted, but the student is unable to complete the accommodation according to the terms set out by the instructor as a result of further illness, injury or extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses). Please note, however, that the course instructor will be required to submit an earned final grade and further consideration will only be reviewed according to established precedents and deadlines. [More information of deferred Term Work](#)

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made.

The application for a deferral must:

1. be made in writing to the Registrar's Office **no later than three working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination**; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [here](#).

[More information on Final Exam Deferrals Registrar's Office "Defer an Exam" page](#)

Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for Financial and Academic withdrawal!

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend, you must withdraw in [Carleton Central](#) within the published deadlines to cancel your registration. A fee adjustment is dependent on registration being canceled within the published [fee deadlines](#) and dependent on your course load. A course dropped after the deadline for financial withdrawal will receive a grade of Withdrawn (WDN), which appears on your official transcript.

Even if you miss the deadline for financial withdrawal, you might decide to drop a course to avoid a failure or a poor grade showing up on your student record and bringing down your CGPA. It is your responsibility to drop the course via Carleton Central within the published [deadlines](#) (see Academic Withdrawal).

If you are considering withdrawing from a course, you may want to talk to an advisor first. Course withdrawal may affect your student status, as well as your eligibility for student funding, immigration status, residence accommodation and participation in varsity sports, etc. Additionally, remember that once you choose your courses, you must use the “Calculate amount to pay” button to determine the correct amount of fees to pay.

Carleton Central is your one-stop shop for registration activities. If you are interested in taking a course, make sure to complete your registration. Simply attending a course does not mean you are registered in it, nor is it grounds for petition or appeal.

Department Contact Information

Bachelor of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall
CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall
GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall
Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Graduate) 2A39 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca

MEMS (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca