

RELI 4850A Seminar in the Study of Religion Fall 2011
“Religion & the Environment: Nature, Nature Religion, & Religious Environmentalism”

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Office hours: 2PM-4PM Mondays

Concern over the environment has been one of the dominant issues in public life in recent decades. How are the religions implicated in this arena? Do religious attitudes and the pronouncements of religious organizations effect public policy? Should they? This seminar examines attitudes to nature in the religions of the world and it also examines nature as an object of religious veneration outside of the “official” world religions. We analyze what religious communities have been saying in recent decades with regard to environmental conditions and we trace the development of religious environmental ethics. Teachings on the environment are often contested within religious traditions (and by the scholars who examine them) and subject to dissent and debate; this reality is reflected in our readings. The seminar is also concerned with debates over environmentalism itself construed as a form of religion. In short we are concerned with three distinct but overlapping phenomena: 1) nature religion; 2) religious environmentalism; 3) environmentalism attacked (by its detractors) as a form of implicit (or bogus) religion.

Required texts:

Bron Taylor, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010

Roger Gottlieb, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006

[available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Ave (at Bank)]

Additional readings will be provided as links and PDFs through the ARES system of the Carleton library

REQUIREMENTS

Reading Responses 20%

A one to two page (double-spaced) response due at class each week on the assigned readings. These responses should include a question you would like to see addressed by the group. Eleven are required, the best ten will be counted, at 2 points each. These are to be handed in at the beginning of class, late responses are graded down 50%, i.e., they are graded out of 1 instead of 2. These responses are also a measure of attendance and participation designed to promote informed engagement at the weekly meeting which is the *sine qua non* of success in this course. Note: *to miss more than three of the weekly meetings (which would mean, in effect, you had missed a third of the class) is to forfeit credit for the course.*

Seminar Presentation and Participation 20%

Each student will be responsible for presenting on the readings for the week once in the semester. Each student will also be asked towards the end of the semester to speak for 5 minutes on the abstract of their final paper. This will be worth approximately 5% and will be added to the assessment of your overall engagement with the course material as reflected in your participation in the seminar.

Essay Proposal 10%

Suggested topics will be provided. The proposal indicates your choice from among the topics. It is to consist of a working title, a working bibliography, and a preliminary abstract that details a preliminary thesis statement. The tentative thesis statement should indicate how you intend to focus the chosen topic and the argument to be developed. Due Oct. 24. Note: This proposal is an absolutely essential feature of the course. Decisions have to be made early on your topic as your research essay will probably necessitate using inter-library loan and other research avenues that necessitate being well underway by mid semester.

Research Essay 50%

A research essay of (15 - 20 typed, double-spaced pages). Topics must be approved by the instructor. The original copy of your proposal must be resubmitted with the paper, essays will not be marked without it. Essays must have a clearly articulated thesis. Essays must also include an abstract. **Due Dec. 12.** Note: late papers (except with medical documentation) are docked 4 percentage points per day.

Note: All course requirements listed above must be fulfilled to gain credit for this course

RESOURCES

Serials:

Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion Floor 5 BL65.N35 W675 (also online)

Environmental Ethics Floor 4 GF80 A. 1E6

Environmental Values (online)

Environmental History (online)

Ethics and the Environment (online)

Reference:

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature (2 vols.) BL31.E467 2005 (available also as an electronic resource)

The Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions. Keith Crim (ed.). Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981.

BL31.A24

The Encyclopedia of Religion. 2nd ed. Lindsay Jones (ed.). Detroit: MacMillan, 2005. (15 vols.)

BL31.E46 2005 (available also as an electronic resource)

note: it is instructive to compare this with the first edition of 1987 to see the great increase in material related to religion and ecology

On Reserve for RELI 4850A:

Daedalus, Fall 2001, "Religion and Ecology: Can the Climate Change?" Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Volume 130, Number 4. AS36.A485 Serial

David Kinsley, *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1995. GF80.K54 1995

Roger S. Gottlieb, ed. *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*. New York: Routledge, 1996. GF80.T49

Richard Foltz, ed. *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003. BL65. E36 W67 2003

Harold Coward and Daniel Maguire, eds. *Visions of a New Earth: Religious Perspectives on Population, Consumption, and Ecology*. Albany: SUNY P, 2000. GF80.V57

Harold Coward, ed. *Population, Consumption, and the Environment: Religious and Secular Views*. Albany: SUNY P, 1995. HB849.42.P67 (also available online as a Netbook)

Lance Nelson, ed. *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India*. Albany: SUNY, 1998. (also available online as a Netbook)

Roger S. Gottlieb, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*. New York: Oxford, 2006. BL65.E36 094 2006

Harvard World Religions and Ecology Series:

Buddhism and Ecology : The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds / edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams. BQ4570.E23 B83 1997

Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of Earth and Humans / edited by Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether. BT695.5 C49 2000

Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans / edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong. B127. C65 1998

Daoism and Ecology: Ways Within a Cosmic Landscape / edited by N.J. Girardot, James Miller, and Liu Xiaogan. BL 1923. D36 2001

Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water / edited by Christopher Key Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker. BL 1215. N34 H56 2000

Indigenous Traditions and Ecology: The Interbeing of Cosmology and Community / edited by John Grim. GN 470.2 I53 2001

Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust / edited by Richard Foltz, Frederick Denny, and Azizan Baharuddin. BP 190.5 N38 186 2003

Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life / edited by Christopher Key Chapple. BL 1375. H85 J35 2002

Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word / edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuelson. BM 538. H85 J85 2002

[For the Forum on Religion and Ecology see <http://fore.research.yale.edu> . Hyperlinks to other internet resources will be provided on the course website]

RELI 4850A/5850F Religion and the Environment Schedule [DRAFT]

Mondays 8:35 -11:25

Paterson Hall 2A46

Sept. 12 Intro to course: syllabus, requirements etc.

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Background to the development of the field of religion and ecology

Sept. 19 Lynn White Jr. "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis"
Taylor, "Introducing Religion and Dark Green Religion"
Dissent: Michael Crichton, "Environmentalism as Religion"

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Thomas Berry, "The Universe Story: Its Religious Significance."
Film clip: "Journey of the Universe"

Sept. 26 Taylor, appendix "Excerpts with Commentary on the Writings of Henry David Thoreau"

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Taylor, ch. 2, "Dark Green Religion"
ch. 3 "Dark Green Religion in North America"
See also: Noel Salmond, "Julia Butterfly: Environmentalist as Stylite and Ascetic," *Ecotheology* 11/4 (2006), pp. 465-480.

Oct. 3 Taylor, ch. 4 "Radical Environmentalism"
Ch. 8, "Terrapolitan Earth Religion"

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Taylor, ch.9, "Conclusion: Dark Green Religion and the Planetary Future"
Document: "The Earth Charter" <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/>

Oct. 10 THANKSGIVING

Oct. 17 Gottlieb, "Introduction: Religion and Ecology – What is the Connection and Why Does It Matter?"

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Tirosh-Samuelson, "Judaism" (Gottlieb, ch. 1)
Dissent: Schwarzschild, Steven S., "The Unnatural Jew," *Environmental Ethics* 6/4 (1984), pp. 347-362.

Oct. 24 John Hart, "Catholicism" (Gottlieb, ch. 2)
Document: A Pastoral Letter on the Christian Ecological Imperative from the Social Affairs Commission, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, October 4, 2003 <http://www.cccb.ca/Files/pastoralenvironment.html>
Dissent: The Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Conservation Center (formerly the Catholic Conservation Center) <http://conservation.catholic.org/index.htm>

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John Chryssavagis “The Earth as Sacrament: Insights from Orthodox Theology and Spirituality”

Oct. 31 Santmire and Cobb, “The World of Nature According to the Protestant Tradition” (Gottlieb, ch. 4)

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DeWitt, “The Scientist and the Shepherd: The Emergence of Evangelical Environmentalism” (Gottlieb, ch. 24)
Dissent: <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/>
Document: The Cornwall Declaration

Nov. 7 Dwivedi, “Hindu Religion and Environmental Well-being” (Gottlieb, ch. 6)

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Dissent: Emma Tomlinson, “Bio-Divinity and Biodiversity: Perspectives on Religion and Environmental Conservation in India” *Numen*, 51/ 3 (2004): 265-295

Nov. 14 Kaza, “The Greening of Buddhism: Promise and Peril” (Gottlieb, ch. 7)

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Dissent: Ian Harris, “Ecological Buddhism?” in Jean Holm and John Bowker, eds. *Attitudes to Nature*.

Nov. 21 James Miller, “Daoism and Nature” (Gottlieb, ch. 9)
John Berthrong, “Motifs for a New Confucian Ecological Vision” (Gottlieb, ch. 10)

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Dissent: Yi-Fu Tuan, “Discrepancies between Environmental Attitude and Behaviour: Examples from Europe and China” *Canadian Geographer*, 13/3, 1968.

Nov. 28 John Grim, “Indigenous Traditions: Religion and Ecology” (Gottlieb, ch. 12)
Document: Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth.
<http://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/02/07/draft-universal-declaration-of-the-rights-of-mother-earth-2/>

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Dissent: Frances Widdowson and Albert Howard “ Environmental Management: The Spiritual Sell-Out of ‘Mother Earth’” in *Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry*

Dec. 5 Paper Presentations by M.A. students

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Concluding discussion

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

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.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- 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;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct 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

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 5, 2011**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 5, 2012**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me 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. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by Nov.11, 2011 for the Fall term and March 7, 2012 for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please **contact** the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library