

THE GREENING OF RELIGION: RELIGION, NATURE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ENST 530_01
Spring, 2018, Room: DHC 117
TR 3:30-4:50 pm
CRN: 38440

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COURSE STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES

Ethicist Larry Rasmussen has written that the biggest story of the twentieth century was the fundamental change in the relationship of the human world to the rest of the earth: never before have human technology and human numbers been powerful enough to alter and destroy planetary life systems. Rasmussen then quotes Daniel Maguire to pose a challenge: "If current trends continue, we will not. And that is qualitatively and epochally true. If religion does not speak to [this], it is an obsolete distraction."

This course reflects a worldwide movement -- variously called the "greening of religion", ecotheology, ecospirituality, or simply religion and ecology -- whose practitioners seek to respond to Rasmussen's observation and Maguire's challenge. Together we will explore a diversity of sources and traditions, keeping in mind the powerful role religion can play in shaping everyday habits and in addressing moral issues regarding the earth and our environments. We will focus on three primary religious traditions: North American Native American religions and spirituality, Christianity, and Buddhism, though contributions from other religious traditions will also be considered.

REQUIRED TEXTS

John Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks* (University of Nebraska Press; ISBN: 0803283857)
Stephen Mitchell, *The Book of Job* (New York: HarperPerennial; ISBN 0060969598)
Thomas Berry, *Evening Thoughts* (San Francisco: Sierra Club & Counterpoint; 978-1-61902-531-8)
Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2015); ISBN: 9781612783864
Stephanie Kaza, ed., *Hooked! Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume* (Boston & London: Shambhala Press, 2005; ISBN: 1-59030-172-2)

REQUIREMENTS

- Regular class attendance and participation that demonstrates a grasp of the reading assignments
- Self-Assessment essay
- Four critical response papers to the readings
- Facilitation of a class discussion with 1-2 other students
- Religious tradition reflection/analysis final paper

ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASSES

Class Day Session Topic and Assigned Readings

Introduction: Laying the Groundwork

***Student-led Discussions**

1/23 TU 1 **Introduction: Laying out themes and structure of the course**

Class member introductions

1/25 TH 2 **Starting Question: Why Examine Religion and Ecology?**

Gary Gardner: “Engaging Religion in the Quest for a Sustainable World” (Moodle #1)

Mary Evelyn Tucker: “Religion and Ecology: Survey of the Field” (Moodle #2)

Roger Gottlieb: “Religion and Ecology – What is the Connection and Why Does It Matter?” (Moodle #3)

Watch first half of “Journey of the Universe”

Go over Self-Assessment Essay guidelines

1/30 TU 3 **A New Cosmology? Thomas Berry and The Universe Story**

Thomas Berry: Preface, Foreword, and Introduction to *The Dream of the Earth* (Moodle #4)

Thomas Berry: “Returning to Our Native Place” in *The Dream of the Earth* (Moodle #5)

Thomas Berry: “The Ecological Age” in *The Dream of the Earth* (Moodle 6)

Thomas Berry: “The New Story” in *The Dream of the Earth* (Moodle 7)

Daniel T. Spencer: “Thomas Berry: An Overview of His Work” (Moodle 8)

Watch second half of “Journey of the Universe”

2/1 TH 4 **Thomas Berry & the New Cosmology: Evening Thoughts I**

Thomas Berry: *Evening Thoughts* Chapters 1-4

Go over Religious Traditions Analysis assignment

2/6 TU 5 **Placing Ourselves in the Story: Discuss Self-Assessment Essays**

Self-Assessment Essay due in class

Recommended: Veronica Kyle and Laurel Kearns: “The Bitter and the Sweet of Nature: Weaving a Tapestry of Migration Stories” (Moodle 9A)

2/8 TH 6 **Thomas Berry & the New Cosmology: Evening Thoughts II**

Thomas Berry: *Evening Thoughts* Chapters 5-8

2/13 TU 7 **Thomas Berry & the New Cosmology: Evening Thoughts III**

Thomas Berry: *Evening Thoughts* Chapters 9-12

FAITHS SCAN: RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND ECOLOGY

I. INDIGENOUS VIEWS: NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONS & ECOLOGY

2/15 TH 8 Introduction to Native American Traditions and Ecology

Linda Robyn: *Indigenous Knowledge and Technology: Creating Environmental Justice in the Twenty-First Century* (Moodle 9)

Vine Deloria, Jr.: *Reflection and Revelation: Knowing Places, Land and Ourselves* (Moodle 10)

Vine Deloria, Jr.: *Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom* (Moodle 11)

2/20 TU 9 Lakota Perspectives: The Visions of Black Elk I

Black Elk Speaks: Foreword by Vine Deloria; Chs. 1-5

Bruce E. Johansen: "Black Elk" (Moodle 12)

Recommended: John James Collins: "The Plains Culture Area and Plains Religion" (Moodle 13)

Thomas Berry Response Essay due in class

2/22 TH 10 Lakota Perspectives: The Visions of Black Elk II

Black Elk Speaks: 6-18

Joseph Epes Brown: *The Sacred Pipe* (Moodle 14)

2/27 TU 11 Lakota Perspectives: The Visions of Black Elk III

Black Elk Speaks: Chs. 19-25; Author's Postscript

Documentary: "The Spirit of Crazy Horse"

3/1 TH 12 Invisible Reality: The World & Cosmology of the Blackfeet

Rosalyn LaPier, chapters 2 & 3 from *Invisible Reality: Storytellers, Storytakers, and the Supernatural World of the Blackfeet* (Moodle 15)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Rosalyn LaPier, Environmental Studies

***3/6 TU 13 Recovering the Sacred: Sacred Lands and Sacred Places**

Winona LaDuke: "What is Sacred?" (Moodle 16)

Winona LaDuke: "Klamath Land and Life" (Moodle 17)

Winona LaDuke: "Quilled Cradleboard Covers, Cultural Patrimony, and Wounded Knee" (Moodle 18)

Religious Traditions paper project proposals due in class

***3/8 TH 14 Recovering the Sacred: Seeds, Medicine, Relatives**

Winona LaDuke: “Three Sisters: Recovery of Traditional Agriculture at Cayuga, Mohawk, and Oneida Communities” (Moodle 19)

Winona LaDuke: “Wild Rice: Maps, Genes, and Patents” (Moodle 20)

Winona LaDuke: “Recovering Power to Slow Climate Change” (Moodle 21)

II. WESTERN VIEWS: THE BIBLICAL TRADITION & ECOLOGY

3/13 TU 15 Biblical Perspectives on Creation and Nature I: *Genesis* and Creation

Excerpts from *Genesis*: (Moodle 22)

Dan Spencer: “Care for Creation” (Moodle 23)

Jean Larson: “3 Sermons on Creation” (Moodle 24, 25, 26)

Daniel Hillel: “Perceptions of Humanity’s Role on God’s Earth” from *The Natural History of the Bible* (Moodle 27)

3/15 TH 16 Biblical Perspectives on Creation and Nature II: Reading the Bible Through Agrarian Eyes

Ellen Davis: Introduction and Chapters 2 & 3 from *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Moodle 28)

3/20 TU 17 Perspectives on Creation in the *Book of Job* Part I

Stephen Mitchell: *The Book of Job* pp. 5-75

Diane Jacobson: “Creation, Birth, and the Radical Ecology of the *Book of Job* pp. 1-5 (Moodle 29)

3/22 TH 18 Perspectives on Creation in the *Book of Job* Part II

Stephen Mitchell: *The Book of Job* pp. 77-91

[Recommended: Introduction: vii-xxx]

Diane Jacobson: “Creation, Birth, and the Radical Ecology of the *Book of Job* pp. 6-11 (Moodle 30)

Bill McKibben: Selections from “The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job, and the Scale of Creation” (Moodle 31)

Go over Black Elk / Job response essay assignment

SPRING BREAK MARCH 26-30, 2018

4/3 TU 19 *Laudato Sí: On Care for Our Common Home: I*

Ch. 1: What is Happening to Our Common Home

Ch. 2: The Gospel of Creation

Ch. 3: The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis

4/5 TH 20 *Laudato Sí: On Care for Our Common Home: II

Ch. 4: Integral Ecology
Ch. 5: Lines of Approach and Action
Ch. 6: Ecological Education and Spirituality

Black Elk / Job response essay due in class

***4/10 TU 21 Ecofeminism, Religion and Animals**

Carol Adams: “Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals” (Moodle 32)

Carol Adams: “The Feminist Traffic in Animals” (Moodle 33)

Recommended: Carol Adams: “Feeding on Grace” (Moodle 34)

4/12 TH 22 Ecowomanism, Liberation and Reparations

Delores Williams: “Sin, Nature, and Black Women’s Bodies” (Moodle 35)

Melanie Harris: Excerpts from *Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth-Honoring Faiths* (Moodle 36)

III. EASTERN VIEWS: BUDDHISM & ECOLOGY

4/17 TU 23 The Greening of Buddhism: An Introduction

Stephanie Kaza: “The Greening of Buddhism: Promise and Perils” (Moodle 32)

Speaker: Brad Clough, Religious Studies and Liberal Studies

4/19 TH 24 Contemporary Interpretations of Buddhist Teachings: I

Thich Nhat Hanh: “The Sun My Heart” Moodle 33)

Sulak Sivaraksa: “Buddhism with a Small b” (Moodle 34)

David Loy: “Healing Ecology” (Moodle 35)

David Loy: “Socially Engaged Buddhism” (Moodle 36)

4/24 TU 25 Buddhist Responses to Consumerism: I

Part One: Getting Hooked: Desire and Attachment

Stephanie Kaza: “Introduction to *Hooked!*” pp. 1-13

Joseph Goldstein: “Desire, Delusion, and DVDs” pp. 17-26

Pema Chödrön: “How We Get Hooked, How We Get Unhooked” pp. 27-33

Ruben Habito: “The Inner Pursuit of Happiness” pp. 34-48

Thubten Chödrön: “Marketing the Dharma” pp. 63-75

***4/26 TH 26 Buddhist Responses to Consumerism: II**

Part Two: Practicing with Desire: Using Buddhist Tools

Judith Simmer-Brown: “Cultivating the Wisdom Gaze” pp. 89-103

Pracha Hutuanuwatr: "No River Bigger than *Tanha*" pp. 104-121
Stephanie Kaza: "Penetrating the Tangle" pp. 139-151
David Loy & Linda Goodhew: "Consuming Time" pp. 166-179.

***5/1 TU 27 Buddhist Responses to Consumerism: III**

Part Three: Buddhist Ethics of Compassion

Ajahn Amaro: "Three Robes is Enough" pp. 183-197

Santikaro: "Practicing Generosity in a Consumer World" pp. 198-213

David Chappell: "Mutual Correction" pp. 237-249

5/3 TH 28 Wrap-up and Class Review

Final Exam Period: *Religious Traditions essays due*; **Thursday, May 10 3:20-5:20 pm.**

GRADING POLICY

Note Re Papers: Papers are due in class **on or before** the date listed in the syllabus. Unless you have made a prior agreement with me, I will take off one grade level (A becomes A-) for each class day an assignment is late. Papers with an undue number of errors of punctuation, spelling, or grammar will be marked down and may be returned ungraded for correction. Written work will be evaluated in terms of your depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, clarity of writing, and ability to address issues raised in the text and in class on the topic at hand. Grades given reflect the following criteria of judgment:

- F: Failure to meet minimum requirements
- D: Unsatisfactory, but some effort to meet minimum requirements
- C: Satisfactory; meets minimum requirements of assignment but not much more
- B: Good to Very Good: thoughtful reflection, good analysis, clear writing style
- A: Excellent depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, and writing style; demonstrate creativity and mature analytical skills in going beyond the primary requirements of the assignment

Attendance: Regular attendance and participation in the class is expected. More than **three** (3) absences will result in losing any benefit of the doubt on your final grade. More than **five** (5) absences will result in one grade reduction. More than **seven** (7) absences will result in a failing course grade. Late arrivals in class will count as an absence. (**Note:** If you have a valid reason for missing several classes, such as illness or other conflicting commitments, you still **must** speak with the instructor).

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism: All work submitted is expected to be the student's own. Any acts of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course, and may result in further academic punishment. If you have any doubts about definitions of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please review the relevant sections of the University Catalog.

WEIGHT AND TIMELINE OF ASSIGNMENTS

The total number of points available for class assignments is 500 points.

In order of due dates, the assignments are:

	<u>points</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>due date</u>
1. Self-Assessment essay	50	10%	Feb 6
2. Thomas Berry Response Essay	100	20%	Feb 20
3. <i>Black Elk/Job</i> response essay	100	20%	Apr 5
3. Class Facilitation on the Readings	25	5%	Variable
4. Critical Response essay to the Readings	100	20%	Variable
5. Religious Traditions Analysis	125	25%	May 10

Note: final grades will use pluses and minuses.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Self-Assessment essay. Instructions will be handed out in class. Due Feb 6.
2. Thomas Berry response essay: In *The Dream of the Earth*, Thomas Berry writes, “It’s all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story.” (p. 123) Berry goes on to propose that the “new scientific story” of the origins of our evolving universe can provide the basis of a new cosmology to provide orientation and meaning to the human story as we move into the Ecozoic era. In this 6-8 page essay, engage and assess Berry’s arguments, as he develops them in our readings from *The Dream of the Earth* and *Evening Thoughts*. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of Berry’s proposal, and the arguments he gives to support it? What parts of his writings do you find most interesting, provocative, problematic or promising, and why? What is our overall assessment of his project and proposal that the new cosmology of the universe story now becomes the universal cosmology for the human race? Due in class February 20.
3. Black Elk/Job response essay: Examine *Black Elk Speaks* and *The Book of Job* from the Hebrew Bible – and write a 6-8 page critical comparison and response. Start by giving a clear exposition of the main views of nature and the sacred found in each text. Then compare and contrast them, noting where they are similar, where different, and why. What is the underlying religious cosmology of each text, and how does it shape the text’s view of the world and humanity’s relationship to nature? Consider such questions as: How would you compare their respective views of nature, and nature’s relationship to both the sacred (God/gods) and to humanity? What are the central insights you gain from each text about humanity’s relationship to nature / the earth? What insights, if any, do you think these texts have for understanding our human relationship to nature / the environment today? Do they have any relevance for contemporary environmental ethics? Why or why not? (Note: Your essay must contain specific references to and relevant quotes from the texts to support your exposition and argument). Due in Class April 5.

4. Facilitation of Class Discussion: Each student will have the opportunity to work in a small group to facilitate class discussion of one set of readings from the sections of the class focusing on Native Americans and Environmental Justice (March 6 & 8), Christianity and Climate Change (April 5), Ecofeminism and Animals (April 10), or Buddhist perspectives on Consumption (April 26 & May 1). The class should be organized as a discussion of the texts, not a presentation. Creativity of format is encouraged!
5. Short Response Papers to the Readings: Following the class facilitation, each student facilitator will write a short, 4-5 page response paper to the readings discussed in that class. The first part of the paper should summarize the main points or arguments in the readings, and the second part should be the student's thoughtful response to the issues raised. Due in class one week after the class facilitation.
6. Religious Traditions Analysis: Instructions will be handed out in class on Feb 1. Preliminary proposals and project outlines are due in class on Mar 6. The project itself is due during the final exam period **Thursday, May 10 3:20-5:20 pm** where each student will have the opportunity to give a brief synopsis of the project.
7. Opening Prayer, Reading or Meditation: We will begin each class period with a couple minutes of silent meditation, followed by a short opening prayer, reading, or meditation (2-5 min.) that is related to the topic or religious tradition that day. Each student will have the opportunity to sign up and facilitate this opening exercise for one class. This is a non-graded assignment that I hope each of us will engage in and enjoy!

**Important University Policies, Dates and Deadlines: Please check Cyberbear at:
<http://www.umt.edu/registrar/calendar.php>**

Credit/No Credit Grade option: A minimum grade average of C- (70) is required for a CR grade in the CR/NC Grade option.

Incomplete Grade: Please see the criteria that must be met for an Incomplete in the University Catalog. No exceptions will be made for these criteria.

ELECTRONIC READINGS ON MOODLE, EVST 530_01, SPRING 2018

00. List of Moodle Readings: The Greening of Religion: Religion, Nature, and the Environment, Spring, 2018.
1. Gardner, Gary. "Engaging Religion in the Quest for a Sustainable World." In *State of the World 2003: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003, pp. 152-175.
2. Tucker, Mary Evelyn. "Religion and Ecology: Survey of the Field." In Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 398-418.
3. Gottlieb, Roger S. "Introduction: Religion and Ecology – What is the Connection and Why Does It Matter?" In Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 3-21.
4. Berry, Thomas. "Preface, Foreword, and Introduction." In *The Dream of the Earth*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2015, pp. i-xv.
5. Berry, Thomas. "Returning to Our Native Place." In *The Dream of the Earth*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2015, pp. 1-5.
6. Berry, Thomas. "The Ecological Age." In *The Dream of the Earth*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2015, pp. 36-49.
7. Berry, Thomas. "The New Story." In *The Dream of the Earth*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2015, pp. 123-137.
8. Spencer, Daniel T. "Thomas Berry: An Overview of His Work." *Worldviews* 21 (2017), pp. 195-207.
9. Robyn, Linda. "Indigenous Knowledge and Technology: Creating Environmental Justice in the Twenty-First Century." In Louis Pojman and Paul Pojman, Eds. *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application, 6th edition*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2012, pp. 569-584.
10. Deloria, Jr., Vine. "Reflection and Revelation: Knowing Places, Land and Ourselves." In *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America*. New York and London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 203-213.
11. Deloria, Jr., Vine. "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom." In *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America*. New York and London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 250-260.
12. Johansen, Bruce E. "Black Elk." In *Shapers of the Great Debate on Native Americas – Land, Spirit and Power: A Biographical Dictionary*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000, pp. 158-167.

13. Collin, John James. "The Plains Culture Area and Plains Religion." In *Native American Religions: A Geographical Survey*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991, pp. 195-239.
14. Brown, Joseph Epes. Excerpts from *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953, pp. xi-xx, 3-9, 31-43.
15. LaPier, Rosalyn R. *Invisible Reality: Storytellers, Storytakers, and the Supernatural World of the Blackfeet*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2017, pp. 23-63.
16. LaDuke, Winona. "Introduction: What is Sacred?." In *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005, pp. 11-18.
17. LaDuke, Winona. "Klamath Land and Life." In *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005, pp. 47-63.
18. LaDuke, Winona. "Quilled Cradleboard Covers, Cultural Patrimony, & Wounded Knee." In *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005, pp. 87-112.
19. LaDuke, Winona. "Three Sisters: Recovery of Traditional Agriculture at Cayuga, Mohawk, and Oneida Communities." In *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005, pp. 153-166.
20. LaDuke, Winona. "Wild Rice: Maps, Genes, and Patents." In *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005, pp. 167-190.
21. LaDuke, Winona. "Power to Slow Climate Change." In *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005, pp. 237-253.
22. Excerpts on creation from *The Hebrew Bible*. In Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Third Edition*. Oxford University Press, 2001.
23. Spencer, Daniel T. "Care for Creation." In Dorothy C. Bass and Susan R. Briehl, eds. *On Our Way: Christian Practices for Living a Whole Life*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 2010, pp. 101-116.
- 24-26. Larson, Jean. Sermons on Creation by the Rev. Jean Larson, Emeritus Pastor, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Bonner, MT.
27. Hillel, Daniel. "Perceptions of Humanity's Role on God's Earth" from *The Natural History of the Bible* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 241-246
28. Davis, Ellen: Introduction and Chapters 2 & 3 from *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- 29, 30. Jacobson, Diane. Creation, Birth, and the Radical Ecology of the *Book of Job*. Unpublished convocation lecture, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN, February 9, 1992.

31. McKibben, Bill. Excerpts from *The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job, and the Scale of Creation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994, pp. 33-68.
32. Adams, Carol J. "Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals." *Hypatia*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Ecological Feminism (Spring, 1991), pp. 125-145.
33. Adams, Carol J. "The Feminist Traffic in Animals." In *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Greta Faard, Ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 195-218.
34. Adams, Carol J. "Feeding on Grace: Institutional Violence, Christianity, and Vegetarianism." In *Good News for Animals? Christian Approaches to Animal Well-being*, Charles Pinches and Jay B. McDaniel, Eds. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1993, pp. 142-159.
35. Williams, Delores. "Sin, Nature, and Black Women's Bodies." In Carol J. Adams, Ed. *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* (New York: Continuum, 1993), pp. 24-29.
36. Harris, Melanie. Excerpts from *Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth-Honoring Faiths* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2017).