Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) 3470
Religion and Environmental Values in America
The Ohio State University, School of Environment and Natural Resources
Course Syllabus (ENR 3470 fulfills GE Cultures and Ideas requirements)

Instructors:
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No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions. The proof that conservation has not yet touched these foundations of conduct lies in the fact that philosophy and religion have not yet heard of it. – Aldo Leopold (1949)

Course Description: Environmental citizenship is influenced by a diverse mix of factors, and while sustainability and other “green” interests remain important in America, religion and spirituality have become a surprising source of environmental values. Surprising, because since the late 1960s, discussions in environmental ethics have often highlighted the negative influence of Western cultures and religions on environmental values, and many environmental thinkers have reinforced the popular academic argument that the anthropocentrism of Western, biblical traditions has been a key obstacle to environmental progress, if not the historic root of our ecological crises. More recently, however, social scientists have demonstrated that Western, biblical traditions are equally germane to positive environmental attitudes and behaviors as Eastern and other religious traditions, and point out that in America, the most significant source of environmental values is religion and spirituality.

Other developments have also increased the interest in this trend. Art historians have begun to investigate positive environmental themes in religious art. The scholarly field of Religion and Ecology has highlighted the wealth of sources for environmental values found across religious traditions, and particularly in the past decade, American environmental organizations have taken unprecedented steps to partner with faith communities as allies in environmental work. With increasing particularity, Americans are developing and deepening environmental values within religious frameworks, while retaining a broad appreciation for religious and philosophical views beyond their own. Aldo Leopold’s lament about environmental ethics (quoted above) no longer applies. What does this mean for environmental citizenship in America? What does this mean to each of us as individuals?

In “Religion and Environmental Values in America,” students will closely examine the development and influence of religious thinking about the environment in America, and explore religious and spiritual contributions to environmental values in American culture through lecture, films, special forums, discussion, and written assignments. In the early weeks of the course, we will explore some of the fundamental questions underlying our intellectual emphases, loyalties, affections, and convictions regarding religion and environmental citizenship. What is Nature? Science? Religion? Ethics? We will also examine the debate about the extent to which Western Judeo-Christian traditions are responsible for modern ecological crises and for generating negative environmental attitudes, and examine social science evidence and other scholarly arguments that address these questions.
The middle part of the course will highlight a range of religious environmental expressions in America, from secular environmentalism itself, to expressions in Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian traditions. Because Christianity is the predominant religion in the U.S., a larger share of course material will focus on mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Catholic, and other Christian traditions. We will give careful thought to the three main traditions that sociologists have identified as the primary modes of religious engagement with environmental concerns in America: stewardship, eco-justice, and creation spirituality. Students will examine many case studies: environmental policy statements generated by religious denominations; the embrace of “creation care” by conservative Christians; the Vatican’s bid to become the world’s first carbon-neutral state; environmental themes in religious art; the rise of faith-based environmental organizations; pronouncements of environmental pollution as sin; climate change as a topic of widespread faith-community engagement; and faith-based environmental advocacy. We will also examine social thought on character and virtue ethics, and ecologically relevant conceptions of Sabbath, cosmic reconciliation, sin, salvation, thanksgiving, and hope.

At the end of the course, we will reflect on how these diverse religious influences contribute to the variables affecting environmental citizenship behavior. No matter what spiritual tradition we identify with, if any, how do we reconcile our most deeply held values and beliefs with ecological facts, social realities, economic forces, and hopes for sustainability? In what ways do religion, spirituality, and faith provide cultural resources for environmental sustainability, and shape the landscape of environmental citizenship in America? These and other questions will guide our inquiry.

Note: Through its various assignments and readings, ENR 3470 fulfills the requirements of a GE Cultures and Ideas course, including the following goals and objectives:

**Goals:** Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:**
1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression.
2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms that guide human behavior.

**Prerequisites:** No background in environmental ethics, religion, or philosophy is presupposed, although students with such background will be able to work on assigned papers at a more advanced level.

**Course Format:** There will be two types of meetings as noted on the course schedule below: classroom and lecture sessions (M, W) and recitations (F). Classroom sessions will combine lectures and instruction with discussions of assigned readings and other topical issues. Some topics will be engaged as a Socratic dialogue, others in traditional lecture presentation; occasional guest speakers will add variety to the schedule as well. Recitations will involve discussion of course readings, including weekly written synopses of assigned texts. In addition to these regular meetings, ENR 3470 students must attend one of several local religion-environment events to observe and examine current religious approaches to environmental stewardship. More information about these events will be handed out in class. Attendance at one such event will be counted as part of the course in SP 2013.
Requirements and Grading: Grades will be determined on the basis of the following assignments, in accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-7-21 (100% = 400 points):

1) Community Profile: 10% (40 points)
2) Mid-term Exam: 15% (60 points)
3) Final Exam: 25% (100 points)
4) Term Paper: 25% (100 points)
5) Recitation discussion participation and weekly writing assignments: 25% (100 points)

1) Community Profile (10%)
Each student will research and write a one-page profile of the environmental policy or advocacy work of a faith community, congregation, or faith-based organization. Profiles will be submitted for publication on the website of Ohio Interfaith Power and Light: http://www.ohipl.org
Further details about this assignment will be handed out and discussed in class. Profile topic due Fri. Jan. 25; Rough draft due Fri., Feb. 1 (10 points); Final profile due Mon. Feb. 11 (30 points); Revised profiles due as needed, tba.

2) Mid-term exam (15%)
A one-hour in-class exam will be held in week eight (Fri. March 1), including six mini-essays (~10 minutes each), complemented by a two-page take-home essay. The exam will cover the material from the first half of the course. We will schedule optional review sessions before the exam.

3) Final Exam (25%)
The final exam will consist of two parts: two short essays (~30 minutes each) and six mini-essays (~10 minutes each). One of the short essays and all of the mini-essays will cover the material from the second half of the course. The second short essay will integrate material from the entire course.

4) Term Paper (25%)
You will be responsible for choosing a topic unique to your interests and preparing a 10-12 page paper due during week 15. Your paper must relate in some significant way to the subject matter of the course as reflected in the course title and syllabus, but this leaves you with a good deal of latitude. We hope that you will find a topic that will be enjoyable and that will permit you to grow in your understanding of your own beliefs, values and moral commitments—as you interact with the worldviews, ideas, and moral views of others. Your topic must be approved by an instructor before you write the paper. You will also be required to hand in an outline of your paper three weeks before the paper is due, to permit the instructor to give you additional feedback on your topic. Additional details of the term paper assignment will be posted in Carmen News.

5) Recitation discussion participation and weekly writing assignments (25%)
Each week you will be responsible for a one-page, single-spaced written synopsis of an assigned reading, due in Friday section; in week one, you will write a two-page, single-spaced environmental autobiography in place of a synopsis (see Carmen News for further assignment details). The readings will complement the lecture material each week, and
recitation sessions will consist of discussion and questions related to the reading and to the week’s lectures. Your recitation grade will be determined by the quality of your weekly synopses, your attendance, and your participation in discussion, in equal parts.

**Attendance in weekly recitations is required because of their importance to the course: recitation grades will be significantly affected by absences, and you will not be given a passing grade for the course if you do not attend the majority of the recitations.**

**Carmen:** This class will be administrated using Carmen; on the class website you will find the course syllabus, reading list, links to weekly homework assignments, announcements, and Points. To gain access to the Carmen website, go to http://class.osu.edu, sign in with your OSU ID (e.g., hitzhusen.3) and your password, and navigate to the ENR 3470 website. You can find help for navigating Carmen at http://elearning.osu.edu/carmen-help/students/.

**Make-up Work:** Make-ups for assignments will not be scheduled in the case of an unexcused absence (and in some cases, may not be rescheduled for logistical reasons). There are three situations that constitute an "excused absence" from class. They are: 1) students who participate in a documented University sanctioned event, 2) students who have a documented death in the family, and 3) students who have received documented medical attention for an illness. Students who will be participating in University sanctioned events must provide the instructor with a copy of the scheduled events and those classes that will be missed. This documentation must be on University letterhead, signed by the coach/supervisor, and given to the instructor within the first two weeks of the quarter.

**Late Assignment Policy:** To receive full credit for writing assignments, work must be turned-in on time and in condition to be evaluated. Papers with excessive errors (15 or more) will be returned for resubmission and will be treated as if they are late. Late assignments will incur a deduction of one full letter grade for each 24-hour period (or portion) that they are late (including weekends). In-class assignments missed because of an unexcused absence cannot be made-up or repeated.

**Academic Integrity:** The university states that: “It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://oaa.osu.edu/assets/files/documents/csc_12-31-07.pdf).”

It is our intent to treat each of you as if you are honest. We assume that whatever you say or do is done in good faith. If we suspect that you have breached that trust, our intention is to report any suspected academic misconduct through appropriate channels to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. The Ohio State University Student Handbook covers the subject should you not understand what academic misconduct is. Of course, we will be happy to discuss the topic with you on a no fault basis if we are consulted before the fact. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (link above).
**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TD 292-0901; [http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/](http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/).

**Course Readings:**

**Required Texts:** Required readings for the course will be made available on Carmen, and you are expected to bring the required readings to class and recitation (either electronically or in hard copy) for discussion purposes. **In addition, the following text is required:**


**Suggested Text:** A copy of the following text will be placed on closed-reserve; you are encouraged to purchase your own copy to supplement the course materials if your budget allows:


*A bibliography of additional suggested readings will be provided on the Carmen course web site, and suggestions for further reading are included in the course schedule outline below.*

**Schedule of Lectures and Reading Assignments:**

**Required readings**
* Suggested further readings
(no asterisk) Additional bibliography

**Week One (January 7-11): Introduction**

**M:** Introduction; Environmental Attitudes, Values, Behaviors, and Citizenship: Assessing the Role of Religious Variables

**W:** Introduction to religion and ecology; Documentary Film: Renewal

**F Rec:** Intro recitation/discussion section

**Tucker:** “Ecology, Religion, and Policymaking: Survey of the Field”

**Start reading Pollan:** Chs: 1-4, 6, 9, 10, 12

**Hungerford & Volk:** “Changing Learner Behavior Through Environmental Education”

**Gottlieb:** “Religious Environmentalism: What it is, Where it’s Heading…”

**Hawthorne & Alabaster:** “Citizen 2000: Development of a Model of Environmental Citizenship”

**Hitzhusen:** “Religion and Environmental Education: Building on Common Ground”

**Gottlieb:** A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet’s Future

**Stern & Dietz:** “The Value Basis of Environmental Concern”

**Week Two (January 14-18): Lynn White and the Genesis of Ecotheology**

**M:** Lynn White Jr.: Is biblical religion to blame?
W: Genesis and environmental stewardship
F Rec: Community Profile Assignment Discussion, guest speaker, Sara Ward, Director of Ohio Interfaith Power and Light and retired Energy Office Chief, Ohio Department of Development;
Environmental Autobiography due

**White: “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis”
**Kinsley: Ch. 8: “Christianity as Ecologically Harmful”
**Kinsley: Ch. 9: “Christianity as Ecologically Responsible”
*Hitzhusen: “Judeo-Christian Theology and the Environment…”
*Pollan: Chs: 1-4, 6, 9, 10, 12
McGrath: The Re-enchantment of Nature
Kempton et al: Environmental Values in American Culture
Orr: “Armageddon Versus Extinction”

Week Three (January 21-25): Gardener Ethic

M: No class: MLK Day
W: Traditions of Religious Environmental Response in the U.S.; Eco-theology in the U.S.: Stewardship, Eco-Justice, and Creation Spirituality; What are people for? The Garden: What does it tell us about the meaning of nature?
F Rec: Pollan/gardener’s ethic discussion; Community Profile topic due

**Pollan: Chs: 1-4, 6, 9, 10, 12
*Kearns: Saving the Creation
*Jenkins: reading tba (synopsis article of his book linking Steward-EJ-CS with theologies)
Nash: Greening of Religion chapter in Rights of Nature

Week Four (January 28-February 1): Epistemology – Knowledge and Science

M: Defining Science, Nature; Methods of science
W: Knowledge Across the Spectrum; Ratio and Intellectus; integrative knowing
F Rec: Baer: ratio-intellectus discussion; First Draft Community Profile due

** Baer: “Our Need to Control: Implications for Environmental Education”
*MG: Vucetich, p. 337-342
*Barbour: Religion in an Age of Science
*Snow: Fear of Death and the Need to Accumulate

Week Five (February 4-8): Epistemology – Knowledge and Values

M: Defining Religion, Ethics; Methods of religion;
W: Meta-ethics, Normative Ethics, Applied Ethics; integrating ethical approaches
F Rec: Wood: relativism/epistemology discussion

**Wood: “Relativism”
*Barbour: Religion in an Age of Science
Lossky: Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church
Kagan: Normative Ethics

Week Six (February 11-15): Spiritual Anthropologies

M: Spiritual Anthropologies: What’s going on?; Community Profile final version due
W: Niebuhr and Loy anthropologies
F Rec: Niebuhr-Loy discussion;
**Niebuhr: “Man as Sinner,” and “Wisdom, Grace, and Power”**
**Loy: “Healing Ecology”**
*MG: Bartholomew, p. 133-136; Ebtekar, p. 178-182
*MG: Allendorf, p. 202-206; Bateson, p. 211-216
* Berry: “What are People For?”
*Hauerwas: “The Significance of Vision: Toward an Aesthetic Ethic”
Snow: “Fear of Death and the Need to Accumulate”
Nasr: Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man
Murdoch: The Sovereignty of Good; Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals
Kellert: The Value of Life

**Week Seven (February 18-22): Spiritual Anthropologies**

M: Salvation, Grace, Unselfing; Iris Murdoch; biophilia; aesthetics
W: Greek Orthodox reconciliation of divisions; transfiguration
F Rec: Murdoch/Plumwood discussion

**Hauerwas: Vision and Virtue: Iris Murdoch**
**Plumwood uncentering reading (tba)**
**Ware: Safeguarding the Creation for Future Generations**
*Niebuhr: “Man as Sinner,” and “Wisdom, Grace, and Power”
Santmire: Nature Reborn: “Reenacting the Story Ritually”

**Week Eight (February 25-March 1): Creation Spirituality**

M: Creation Spirituality; Wilderness Spirituality; The Book of Nature; Religious Environmentalism;
Religious Naturalism; Renewal: Judaism
W: Susan Bratton video-link: Spirituality on the Appalachian Trail
F Rec: Midterm Exam in section

**An additional reading by Susan Bratton (tba)**
* Hitzhusen: “Biblical Wilderness Theology: Spiritual Roots for Environmental Education”
Crosby: “A Case for Religion of Nature”
Peterson: “Wilderness: David at En-Gedi”
Upton: Who is the Earth?
Fox: Creation Spirituality

**Week Nine (March 4-8): Sabbath, Eden, National Parks**

M: Sabbath and Edenic Paradise: resonance of religion in American conservation themes
W: Environmental values in Christian and American art;
F Rec: creation spirituality and Sabbath discussion; solo reflections; Term paper topic paragraphs due

**Goodenough: The Sacred Depths of Nature, pps. 152-174.**
**Pura: “The Divine Game of Pinzatski”**
**MG: hooks: p.363-368; Ethical Action, p. 394; Honor Earth Systems, p. 395**
**Wirzba: Living the Sabbath: excerpts from Chs 1-6, 9, 11**
*Stoll: “Religion ‘Irradiates’ the Wilderness”
*Stoll: “Milton in Yosemite: Paradise Lost and the National Parks Idea”
Ware: Safeguarding the Creation for Future Generations
Santmire: Nature Reborn: “Reenacting the Story Ritually”
Bratton: Environmental Values in Christian Art
Week Ten (March 11-15): Spring Break

M: No Class: Spring Break
W: No Class: Spring Break
F Rec: No Class: Spring Break

Week Eleven (March 18-22): Judaism; Islam; Food and Faith: Animal Welfare

M: Judaism and Islam: Eco-Kashrut and Halal; Judaism guest speaker, Rabbi Fred Dobb, Congregation Adat-Shalom, Bethesda, MD, via web-link
W: Food and Faith; Guest speaker, Dr. Yosef Khan, Islam and the Environment
F Rec: Food, Faith, and the Environment; Animal Welfare; Reducing suffering: Green Buddhism

**Pollan: “Unhappy Meals”
**A series of brief articles on food ethics will also be assigned and posted on Carmen
*Tirosh-Samuelson: “Judaism and the Natural World”
*Ozdemir: “Toward an Understanding of Environmental Ethics from a Qur’anic Perspective”
*Kinsley: “Buddhism: Ecological Themes”
Hobgood-Oster: The Friends We Keep: Unleashing Christianity’s Compassion for Animals

Schut: Food & Faith: Justice, Joy and Daily Bread
Film: Renewal: Faith in Place (Muslim Halal in Chicago segment)

Week Twelve (March 25-29): Virtue

M: Virtue and the Environment: Film Screening: Groundhog Day
W: Aesthetics and Virtue; Character and Narrative; Environmental Virtue: How then shall we live? 
F Rec: Kupfer/Hauerwas; vision, virtue, and happiness discussion;

**Hauerwas: “Character, Narrative, and Growth in the Christian Life”
**Kupfer: “Virtue and Happiness in Groundhog Day”
*MG: Ethical Action, p. 192-193, 239-240; Moral Integrity, p. 419-420; Duncan, p. 434-439
*Berry: “The Ecological Crisis as a Crisis of Character”
*Bouma-Prediger: What Kind of People Ought We Be?
*Hauerwas: “Toward an Ethics of Character”
Vernon: “The Return of Virtue Ethics”

Week Thirteen (April 1-5): Creation Spirituality v Consumerism Spirituality

M: Creation Spirituality; Wilderness Spirituality; The Book of Nature; The Story of Stuff
W: Culture, Media, and Politics; Religion and Environmental Policy
F Rec: creation v consumer spirituality; solo reflections #2

**Pura: “The Divine Game of Pinzatski”
*MG: hooks: p.363-368; Ethical Action, p. 394; Honor Earth Systems, p. 395

Week Fourteen (April 8-12): Climate Change

M: Climate Change Statements of Different Faiths; Climate Change as a Moral Issue; Renewal (IPL)
W: The Ethics of Climate Denial and Controversy; Climate Justice;
F Rec: Religious responses to climate change

**MG: Kaplan, p. 263-266
**Additional readings for this week will be posted on Carmen

Rauckhorst: “Energy Ethics”

**Week Fifteen (April 15-19): Eco-Justice and Integrative themes**

**M:** Eco-Justice; Faith in Action and Advocacy; Guest speaker: Job Ebenezer, Executive Director, Technology for the Poor  
**W:** cosmic reconciliation, peace, grace, tikkun olam, thanksgiving, hope  
**F Rec:** Final perspectives; Hope for all things; **Term papers due**

**MG:** Justice, p. 292-293; Singer, p. 321-323; Safina, p. 324-326; Ethical Action, p. 327-328  
**Hitzhusen:** Religion and Environmental Education: Building on Common Ground  
*MG:* Crow, p. 301-305; Vanderheiden, p. 306-311  
Pope, C. “Reaching Beyond Ourselves: It’s time to recognize our allies in the faith community”

**Week Sixteen (April 22): Thanksgiving and Hope for Environmental Citizenship**

**M:** Last Day of Class – Earth Day

**MG:** Callicot, p. 356-362; Meine, p. 403-406; Williams, p. 429-433; Kingsolver, p. 452-457; Hawken, p. 463-468  
*Baer: “Praise for All Things”*  
Beavan: No Impact Man

**Tuesday, April 23: Reading Day**  
Exams: Wednesday, April 24-Tuesday, April 30

Final Exam: tba

**Packet and Further/Additional Readings Bibliography:**


Kempton, W., Boster, J.S. and Hartley, J.A. Environmental Values in American Culture.


