

**SUSTAINABILITY IN THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS
RELIGION 219I
SPRING 2012**

Instructor: Ellen Posman
Office: Marting 319
Office Hours: TBA
Phone: 440-826-2176 (o); 440-891-1432 (h)
E-mail: Eposman@bw.edu

Course Description:

What is the relationship between religion and the natural world? How do religious worldviews affect our planet, and how does concern for our planet in turn affect religious worldviews? Are there parallels among world religions regarding the issue of the environment, or are their differences? What have they said about nature, and how have they acted? This course will begin by examining the five main world religions with respect to what their scriptures have said about nature, with respect to their historical record regarding the environment, and with respect to contemporary cases surrounding the issue of sustainability. In addition, this course will examine the environmental movement itself in terms of the ways in which it acts as a religion. Finally, the course will consider more generally the ways in which religion and sustainability can go hand in hand as students research local groups and national trends. Throughout the course, we will consider how this knowledge affects our own views about sustainability, ethics, and religious traditions.

Course Goals and Objectives:

As a core course in the humanities that counts for international credit, this course supports the mission of Baldwin-Wallace College as well as the overall goals of the college core. Baldwin-Wallace College is committed to a “rigorous academic program that is characterized by excellence in teaching and learning within a challenging, supportive environment that enhances students’ intellectual and spiritual growth.” To this end, this course has the following objectives:

- 1) Increase the breadth of student knowledge by providing basic familiarity with the major religions of the world and attitudes toward nature within those religions.
- 2) Challenge students to read difficult theoretical sources and think deeply about the traditional relationship between religion and nature as well as modern adaptations in that relationship.
- 3) Support students as they develop their own intellectual and spiritual positions on issues regarding sustainability and religion.
- 4) Develop oral presentation skills, teamwork skills, and research skills by putting together a group presentation on sustainability within a local religious group.
- 5) Establish critical thinking and writing skills by composing essays that analyze the relationships between sustainability and religion.
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

Baldwin-Wallace College also “assists students in their preparation to become contributing, compassionate members of an increasingly global society.” To that end, the course has the following objectives:

- 1) Help students learn to appreciate the international aspects of cultural diversity.

- 2) Make students aware of current international issues.
- 3) _____

How You Can Help Achieve These Goals:

- 1) Come to class
- 2) Come to class prepared (do **all** the reading!)
- 3) Come to class ready to participate, preferably with questions
- 4) Participate thoughtfully
- 5) Come to office hours
- 6) Write rough drafts
- 7) Ask questions (about the material, about the assignments, about anything!)
- 8) Turn in assignments on time
- 9) Read the newspaper

How I Will Help You Achieve These Goals:

- 1) I will come to class prepared.
- 2) I will assign manageable but challenging readings.
- 3) I will explain the material using diverse methods.
- 4) I will be available to answer questions or help you find answers.
- 5) I will look over drafts.
- 6) I will return graded assignments promptly with thorough explanations of grades.
- 7) I will stimulate your curiosity by displaying my own passion for the material.
- 8) I will stay current on the issues by reading the newspaper.

Required Texts:

Foltz, Richard C. *Worldviews, Religion, and The Environment: A Global Anthology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.

Gardner, Gary T. *Inspiring Progress: Religions' Contributions to Sustainable Development*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Tucker, Mary Evelyn and John A. Grim, eds. *Worldviews and Ecology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994.

Recommended Text for Documentation:

Lunsford, Andrea A. and Marcia Muth, *The St. Martin's Pocket Guide to Research and Documentation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003)

Course Requirements:

10%: "Sustainable Lent" Reflection Paper: Each student will give up or take on one lifestyle change related to sustainability for one month, keep a journal, and turn in a final reflection.

10%: Analytic Essay: Each student will analyze the relationship between belief and practice in one religious tradition.

10%: "Expert Testimony": Each student will be assigned one reading not assigned to the rest of the class and will report on it to the class as an individual presentation.

30%: Final Project: Each student will take part in a group presentation on a local case study on sustainability and religion and will individually write a 6-8 page paper about the case study. The oral presentation counts for 10% and the final paper for 20%

10% Midterm Exam: This will be an in-class exam on ???

20% Final Exam: This will be an in-class exam on ???

10% Class Participation and Preparation: Students are expected to attend regularly, complete the readings as assigned, contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions, participate eagerly in review sessions, and attend one teacher-student individual conference.

Course Policies:

Late Policy: Papers go down one-third of a grade (e.g. B to B-) per day late and are late as of the beginning of class on that day. Thus, a paper 24 hours late receives the same deduction as a paper five minutes late, so there is no reason to skip class to work on a paper.

Participation Policy: Participation grades are based on a combination of attendance, active, thoughtful participation, and reading quizzes at the beginning of class.

Paper Grading Policy: A is Excellent; B is Good; C is Fair; D is barely satisfactory; F is unsatisfactory. Further guidelines will be handed out at a later date.

Disabled Student Policy: Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange accommodations must contact both the instructor and Disability Services **at the beginning** of the term.

Plagiarism Policy: A Plagiarized paper will receive an automatic zero, and if the plagiarism is flagrant, it will be reported to student affairs, which may result in automatically failing the class. See the BW academic honesty policy at

<http://www.bw.edu/stulife/judicial/policies/index.html>

Course Schedule:

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION

Tues. : Introduction to course, materials, syllabus, themes of the course

Thurs. : The Environmental Crisis

*Readings: Worldviews and Ecology, 11-38; Global Anthology, 1-6

WEEK TWO: INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS

Tues. : Native American Worldviews

*Readings: Worldviews and Ecology, 41-53

Thurs. : Restoring Sacred Lands

*Readings: A Global Anthology, 79-88

Expert Reading #1: Australian Aboriginal Views: Global Anthology 89-97

Expert Reading #2: East African Issues: Global Anthology, 97-103

Expert Reading #3: North American Issues: Global Anthology, 103-110

WEEK THREE: HINDUISM

Tues. : Hindu Worldviews

*Readings: Worldviews and Ecology, 113-123

Thurs.: The Ganges River

*Readings: Global Anthology, 143-158

Expert Reading #4: India's Ecological Crisis: Global Anthology, 119-128

Expert Reading #5: Scriptural Sources: Global Anthology, 130-141

WEEK FOUR: JAINISM

Tues. : Jain Worldviews

*Readings: Worldviews and Ecology, 138-147; Global Anthology, 112-119

Thurs.: Catch-Up Day! No Reading!

WEEK FIVE: BUDDHISM

Tues. : Buddhist Worldviews

*Readings: Worldviews and Ecology, 124-136

Thurs. : Thailand's Activists

*Readings: Global Anthology, 161-162, 181-191

Expert Reading #6: Modern Buddhist Issues: Global Anthology, 163-171

Expert Reading #7: Buddhist Ecology?: Global Anthology, 172-181

Expert Reading #8: North American Buddhists: Global Anthology, 193-205

WEEK SIX: CHINESE RELIGIONS

Tues. : Confucian and Taoist Worldviews

*Readings: Worldviews and Ecology, 150-162

Thurs.: Fengshui

*Readings: Global Anthology, 208-209, 236-245

Expert Reading #9: Interconnection: 209-216

Expert Reading #10: Tao and Ch'i: 224-235

WEEK SEVEN: JAPANESE RELIGIONS

Tues. : Japanese Worldviews

*Readings: Global Anthology, 246-251

Thurs.: Japanese Gardening

*Readings: Global Anthology, 268-278

Expert Reading #11: Nature in Japan: Global, 252-259

Expert Reading #12: Culture in Japan: Global, 260-267

WEEK EIGHT: REVIEW AND MIDTERM

Tues. : Catch-Up Day! No Reading!

Thurs. : **MIDTERM EXAM!!!!**

WEEK TEN: JUDAISM

Tues. : Jewish Worldviews

*Readings: Worldviews, 55-70

Thurs. : The Eco-Kosher Movement

*Readings: Global Anthology: 306-317

Expert Reading #13: Genesis: Global, 280-289

Expert Reading #14: Ancient Israel: Global, 290-295

Expert Reading #15: Culture over Nature: Global, 296-305

WEEK ELEVEN: CHRISTIANITY

Tues. : Christian Worldviews

*Readings: Worldviews, 71-82

Thurs. : Western Stewards and African Earthkeepers

*Readings: Global Anthology 349-356, 503-514

Expert Reading #16: Christian Anthropology: Global, 319-333

Expert Reading #17: Christology: Global, 334-340

Expert Reading #18: Orthodox Icons: Global, 342-348

WEEK TWELVE: ISLAM

Tues. : Islamic Worldviews

*Readings: Worldviews, 83-95

Thurs. : Social Justice and Ecological Victims

*Readings: Global, 376-391

Expert Reading #19: Islam in Practice: Global, 358-365

Expert Reading #20: Anthropocentrism: Global, 366-375

WEEK THIRTEEN: THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Tues. : Deep Ecology

*Readings: Worldviews, 190-227

Expert Reading #21: Principles of Deep Ecology: Global, 434-440

Expert Reading #22: Earth First Activism: Global, 447-455

Thurs. : Ecofeminism

*Readings: Worldviews, 181-189; Global, 456-463

Expert Reading #23: Ecowomanism: Global, 472-480

Expert Reading #24: Paganism: Global, 420-428

Expert Reading #25: Ecofeminist Theology: Global, 464-471

WEEK FOURTEEN: REVIEW, INSPIRATION, CASES

Tues. : Progress Unraveling

*Readings: Inspiring Progress, 1-56

Thurs. : Progress Re-Rooted

*Readings: Inspiring Progress, 57-104

WEEK FIFTEEN: REVIEW, INSPIRATION, CASES

Tues. Progress Re-imagined

*Readings: Inspiring Progress, 105-144

Thurs. New Progress

*Readings: Inspiring Progress, 145-166

WEEK SIXTEEN: GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Tues. : GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Thurs. : GROUP PRESENTATIONS

THE FINAL PAPER IS DUE ??? BY 5:00 PM EITHER IN THE DIGITAL DROP BOX OR THE INSTRUCTOR'S MAILBOX!!!**FINAL EXAM: ??? from 1:30-3:30 PM**