

Religion 3492: Religion, Ethics and Nature

Spring 2013

T 4/R 4-5, FLG 260

Instructor: Anna Peterson
Contact: Tel. 352-273-2936, annap@ufl.edu
Office: 105 Anderson Hall
Mailbox: 107 Anderson Hall (Deliver all papers and assignments here)
Office hours: Tuesdays, 11:45-1:30; Thursdays 12:40-1:30; and by appointment.

TA: Keri Johnson
Contact: 352-392-1625, ext. 235, keriljohnson@ufl.edu
Office: 119 Anderson Hall,
Office hours: Tuesday 12-2pm, and Thursday 9-10am

Description and objectives

This course examines the ethical dimensions of humans' interactions with the environment. We will look at materials from a variety of religious traditions in order to explore the ways different religious traditions and philosophical approaches answer the following questions:

1. What is "nature"?
2. Why do people value it?
3. How should people treat nature?

The diverse perspectives offered in the readings will provide a framework for thinking both about social-political ethics and about contemporary environmental issues, both practical and theoretical. We will examine the ways different problems have been approached, the assumptions underlying those approaches, and their strengths and weaknesses. We will also use the readings to evaluate specific local and regional environmental issues.

Required Readings

Books

1. Dale Jamieson, *Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2008).
2. J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Environmental Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (University of California Press, 1994)
3. Max Oelschlaeger, *Caring for Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis* (Yale, 1994)

Articles and Chapters (Available on Sakai)

1. Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," from *A Sand County Almanac* (Ballantine, 1970), 237-244.

2. White, Lynn, Jr. "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-1207.
3. Rita Gross, "Buddhist Resources for Issues of Population, Consumption, and the Environment" in *Buddhism and Ecology*, 291-312.
4. Gary Snyder, "Nets of Beads, Webs of Cells," from *A Place in Space*, 85-93.
5. Joanna Macy, "The Greening of the Self," from *Dharma Gaia*, 53-91.
6. Wendell Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," from *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community* (Pantheon, 1993), 93-116
7. Bishops of the Pacific Northwest, "The Columbia River Watershed: Caring for Creation and the Common Good." (http://www.columbiariver.org/main_pages/Watershed/PDF/english.pdf)
8. Heather Ann Ackley Bean, "Toward an Anabaptist/Mennonite Environmental Ethic," from *Creation and the Environment: An Anabaptist Perspective on a Sustainable World*, 184-204.

Course Requirements

1. Active participation in class, including discussion sections, based on timely and close reading of all assigned texts (10% of final grade).
2. Three in-class exams, on Jan. 31, Feb. 28, and April 11 (20% of grade each; 60% total)
3. Final exam (30% of grade)

Policies, Rules, and Resources

1. *Handing in Assignments*: Place all papers in Peterson's mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of any office. Please keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.
2. *Late or Make-Up Assignments*: You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances *and* with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down ½ grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.
3. *Completion of All Assignments*: You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing any assignment or requirement.
4. *Attendance and Participation*: Class attendance is required. Poor attendance will harm your course grade, as will failure to participate in class discussions in an informed and constructive way. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day's readings.

5. *Common Courtesy*: Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave. You may take notes on a laptop computer, although the instructor and/or teaching assistant (TA) may ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor and TA reserve the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class.

6. *Honor Code*: On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “*On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.*” The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>. Any student demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will fail the entire course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.

7. *Accommodation for Disabilities*: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

8. *Counseling Resources*: Resources available on-campus for students include the following:
a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

9. *Software Use*: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Assignment</u>
Tues. 1/8	Introduction to the class
Thurs. 1/10	White, “The Historic Roots of our Ecologic Crisis” Leopold, “The Land Ethic”
Tues. 1/15	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 1

Thurs. 1/17	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 2-3
Tues. 1/22	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 4
Thurs. 1/24	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 5-6
Tues. 1/29	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 7
Thurs. 1/31	First Exam
Tues. 2/5	Callicott, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 1
Thurs. 2/7	Callicott, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 2-3
Tues. 2/12	Callicott, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 4
Thurs. 2/14	Callicott, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 5-6
Tues. 2/19	Callicott, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 7
Thurs. 2/21	Callicott, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 8-9
Tues. 2/26	Callicott, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 10
Thurs. 2/28	Second Exam
No class March 2-9 – Spring Break	
Tues. 3/12	Gross, “Buddhist Resources”
Thurs. 3/14	Macy, “The Greening of the Self” Snyder, “Nets of Beads, Webs of Cells”
Tues. 3/19	Oelschlaeger, <i>Caring for Creation</i> , Introduction
Thurs. 3/21	Oelschlaeger, <i>Caring for Creation</i> , Ch. 1
Tues. 3/26	Oelschlaeger, <i>Caring for Creation</i> , Ch. 2
Thurs. 3/28	Oelschlaeger, <i>Caring for Creation</i> , Ch. 3
Tues. 4/2	Oelschlaeger, <i>Caring for Creation</i> , Ch. 4
Thurs. 4/4	Oelschlaeger, <i>Caring for Creation</i> , Ch. 5

Tues. 4/9 Oelschlaeger, *Caring for Creation*, Ch. 6

Thurs. 4/11 **Third exam**

Tues. 4/16 Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation"

Thurs. 4/18 Bean, ""Toward an Anabaptist/Mennonite Environmental Ethic"
Bishops of the Pacific Northwest, "The Columbia River Watershed"

Tues. 4/23 Review for final exam

Final Exam TBA