

1-2013

ENST 594.03: The Greening of Religion

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

EVST 594_03
Spring, 2013, Room: LA338
MW3:10-4:30 pm
CRN: 35809

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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 world-wide 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.

Goals of the course include:

1. To explore in depth three religious traditions as resources for ecological beliefs and practices;
2. To understand the important role of religion and spiritual values in everyday ecological choices;
3. To gain exposure to new interpretations of religious traditions and ecospiritual alternatives;
4. To investigate specific eco-religious concepts and practices as they might apply to one's personal life.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Euripides, *The Bacchae*, Paul Woodruff, trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett; ISBN 0-87220-392-1)
John Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks* (University of Nebraska Press; ISBN: 0-8032-8385-7)
Stephen Mitchell, *The Book of Job* (New York: HarperPerennial; ISBN 0-06-096959-8)
Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (Boston: South End Press, 2005; ISBN: 978-0896087125)
Michael Northcott: *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007; ISBN: 978-1-57075-711-2)
Stephanie Kaza, ed., *Hooked! Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume* (Boston & London: Shambhala Press, 2005; ISBN: 1-59030-172-2)
ERES Readings (from: <http://eres.lib.umn.edu/>)
Recommended: Earth Prayers. E Roberts and E Amidon, eds. (HarperCollins; ISBN: 0-06-250746-X)

Useful Websites:

Forum on Religion and Ecology	http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/
National Religious Partnership for the Environment	www.nrpe.org
Evangelical Environmental Network	www.esa-online.org/een
Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature	http://www.religionandnature.com/ern/
National Council of Churches EcoJustice Programs	http://ncecojustice.org/
Earth Sangha/ Green Buddhism	http://www.earthsangha.org/depth/gb.html
Working Group on Environmental Justice	http://ecojustice.net/
Native Harvest / White Earth Land Recovery Project	http://nativeharvest.com/

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 [Recommended Reading in brackets]

Introduction: Laying the Groundwork

***Student-led Discussions**

1/28 M 1 **Introduction: Laying out themes and structure of the course**

Class member introductions

1/30 W 2 **Starting Question: Why Examine Religion and Ecology?**

Gary Gardner: Engaging Religion in the Quest for a Sustainable World (ERES #1)
Mary Evelyn Tucker: "Religion and Ecology: Survey of the Field" (ERES #2)
Roger Gottlieb: "Religion and Ecology – What is the Connection and Why Does It Matter?" (ERES #3)

Go over Self-Assessment Essay guidelines

2/4 M 3 **Setting the Context I: Environmentalism and Religion**

Mary Evelyn Tucker: Selections from *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase* (ERES #4)
Larry Rasmussen: "Earth and Its Distress" (ERES #5)

2/6 W 4 **Setting the Context II: Humans, Nature, and Modernity**

Carolyn Merchant: "Dominion over Nature" (ERES #6)
David Loy: "The Religion of the Market" (ERES #7)

Go over Religious Traditions Analysis assignment

2/11 M 5 **Myth & Religion: A Discussion of *The Bacchae* Part I**

Euripides: *The Bacchae* pp. 1-37 (Scenes 1-3)

Hand out directions for Class 2 on *The Bacchae*

Self-Assessment Essay due in class

2/13 W 6 **Myth & Religion: A Discussion of *The Bacchae* Part II**

Euripides: *The Bacchae* pp. 37-55 (Scenes 4-5 & Exodus)

The Trial of Pentheus

2/18 M **Presidents' Day: No Class**

Faiths Scan: Religious Traditions and Ecology

I. North American Native American Traditions and Ecology

2/20 W 7 **Lakota Perspectives: The Visions of Black Elk I**

Black Elk Speaks: Foreword; Chs. 1-4

Bruce E. Johansen: "Black Elk" (ERES #8)

[John James Collins: "The Plains Culture Area and Plains Religion" (ERES #9)]

2/25 M 8 **Lakota Perspectives: The Visions of Black Elk II**

Black Elk Speaks: [5-6], 7-8, [9], 10-12

Joseph Epes Brown: *The Sacred Pipe* (ERES #10)

2/27 W 9 **Lakota Perspectives: The Visions of Black Elk III**

Black Elk Speaks: Chs. 13-18, [19-22], 23-25; Author's Postscript

Video: "The Spirit of Crazy Horse"

3/4 M 10 **Recovering the Sacred: Sacred Lands and Sacred Places**

Winona LaDuke: "What is Sacred?" RS: 11-18

Winona LaDuke: "God, Squirrels, and the Universe: The Mt. Graham International Observatory and the University of Arizona" RS: 19-32

Winona LaDuke: "Salt, Water, Blood and Coal" RS: 33-46

DVD: "Homeland: Four Portraits of Native Action"

3/6 W 11 **Recovering the Sacred: Ancestors, Images, and Our Lives**

Winona LaDuke: "Klamath Land and Life" RS: 47-63
Winona LaDuke: "Quilled Cradleboard Covers, Cultural Patrimony, and Wounded Knee" RS: 87-112
Recommended: "Imperial Anthropology: The Ethics of Collecting" RS: 67-86

*3/11 M 12 **Recovering the Sacred: Seeds and Medicine**

Winona LaDuke: "Three Sisters: Recovery of Traditional Agriculture at Cayuga, Mohawk, and Oneida Communities" RS: 153-166
Winona LaDuke: "Wild Rice: Maps, Genes, and Patents" RS: 167-190
Winona LaDuke: "Food as Medicine: The Recovery of Traditional Foods to Heal the People" RS: 191-210

*3/13 W 13 **Recovering the Sacred: Relatives**

Winona LaDuke: "Return of the Horse Nation" RS: 213-226
Winona LaDuke: "Namewag: Sturgeon and People in the Great Lakes Region" RS: 227-235
Winona LaDuke: "Recovering Power to Slow Climate Change" RS: 237-253

II. Western Religious Traditions & Ecology: The Biblical Tradition & Christianity

3/18 M 14 **Biblical Perspectives on Creation and Nature**

Excerpts from *Genesis*: (ERES #11)
Ellen Davis: "Seeing with God: Israel's Poem of Creation" (ERES #12)
Elizabeth Johnson: "Losing and Finding Creation in the Christian Tradition" (ERES #13)
Documentary: "Going Green" from *Renewal: Stories from America's Religious-Environmental Movement*

Critical Response Essay to LaDuke text due in class

3/20 W 15 **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 (ERES #14)

3/25 M 16 **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 (ERES #14)
Bill McKibben: Selections from "The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job, and the Scale of Creation" (ERES #15)
Religious Traditions paper project proposals due in class
Go over Black Elk / Bacchae / Job response essay assignment

3/27 W 17 **Christianity, Ethics and Climate Change: I**

Michael Northcott: *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming*
Introduction and Chs. 1-2 [pp. 1-80]

4/1 – 4/5 **Spring Break: No Classes**

4/8 M 18 **Christianity, Ethics and Climate Change: II**

Michael Northcott: *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming*
Chs. 3-4 [pp. 81-156]

Black Elk / Bacchae / Job response essay due in class

***4/10 W 19 Christianity, Ethics and Climate Change: III**

Michael Northcott: *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming*
Chs. 5-6 [pp. 157-212]

***4/15 M 20 Christianity, Ethics and Climate Change: IV**

Michael Northcott: *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming*
Chs. 7-9 [pp. 213-285]

III. Eastern Religious Traditions & Ecology: Buddhism

The Greening of Buddhism: An Introduction

4/17 W 21 Stephanie Kaza: “The Greening of Buddhism: Promise and Perils” (ERES #16)

Speaker: Brad Clough, Religious Studies and Liberal Studies

4/22 M 22 **Contemporary Interpretations of Buddhist Teachings: I**

Thich Nhat Hanh: “The Sun My Heart” (ERES #17)

Sulak Sivaraksa: “Buddhism with a Small b” (ERES #18)

David Loy: “Healing Ecology” (ERES #19)

David Loy: “Socially Engaged Buddhism” (ERES #20)

Critical Response Essay to Northcott text due in class

4/24 W 23 **Contemporary Interpretations of Buddhist Teachings: II**

Alan Sponberg: “Green Buddhism and the Hierarchy of Compassion” (ERES #21)

Documentary: “Compassion in Action” from *Renewal*

4/29 M 24 **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

***5/1 W 25 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.

***5/6 M 26 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

5/8 W27 Wrap-up and Class Review

Critical Response Essay to Kaza text due in class

Final Exam Period: *Religious Traditions essays due.* Tuesday, May 14: 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 11
2. Critical Response essay to LaDuke	75	15%	Mar 18
3. <i>Bacchae/Black Elk/Job</i> response essay	100	20%	Apr 8
4. Critical Response essay to Northcott	75	15%	Apr 22
5. Critical Response essay to Kaza	75	15%	May 8
6. Religious Traditions Analysis	100	20%	May 14
7. Class Facilitation on the Readings	25	5%	Variable

Note: final grades will use pluses and minuses.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Self-Assessment essay. Instructions will be handed out in class. Due Feb 11.
2. Black Elk/Bacchae/Job response essay: **Pick two of the three texts** -- *Black Elk Speaks*, Euripides' *The Bacchae* or *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. 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 8.
3. Facilitation of Class Discussion: Each student will have the opportunity to facilitate class discussion of one set of readings from one of the sections of the class focusing on Native American (March 11 & 13), Christian (April 10 & 15), or Buddhist perspectives (May 1 &

- 6). The class should be organized as a discussion of the texts, not a presentation. Creativity of format is encouraged!
4. Critical Response Essay to the LaDuke, Northcott, and Kaza texts: 6-8 page critical response essays to the three primary course texts: Winona LaDuke's *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*; Michael Northcott's, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming*; and Stephanie Kaza's *Hooked! Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume*. The first part of each essay should be a thoughtful exposition (i.e. summary and explanation) of the main themes from the book. The second section should be your response to the issues the authors raise and argue: where do you agree, disagree, and why? Do the authors provide a helpful framework for assessing each religious tradition's response to contemporary environmental issues? What do you see as the central contributions or limitations of each text to the intersection of religion and ecology? Due in Class Mar 18 (LaDuke), Apr 22 (Northcott), May 8 (Kaza).
7. Religious Traditions Analysis: Instructions will be handed out in class on Feb 6. Preliminary proposals and project outlines are due in class on Mar 25. The project itself is due during the final exam period **Tuesday, May 14, 3:20-5:20 pm** where each student will have the opportunity to give a brief synopsis of the project.
8. 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.aspx>

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.

ERES: To access the ERES readings:

- a. Go into <http://eres.lib.umt.edu/>
- b. Click on Electronic Reserves and Course Materials
- c. Under Instructor, find and select SPENCER, Daniel
- d. Click on the course name (EVST 594).
- e. Enter the password, "green"
- f. The first entry, "Reading List," is a Table of Contents. The rest of the readings are entered in the order of the Table of Contents and are numbered on the first page of the reading. The readings are in PDF format.

ERES READINGS, EVST 594_03, SPRING 2013
The Greening of Religion: Religion, Nature, and the Environment
Dan Spencer, Environmental Studies

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. Tucker, Mary Evelyn. Excerpts from *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase*. Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2003.
5. Rasmussen, Larry L. "Earth and Its Distress." In *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996, pp. 1-19
6. Merchant, Carolyn. "Dominion over Nature." In Richard Foltz, ed., *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2003, pp. 39-49.
7. Loy, David R. "The Religion of the Market." In Richard Foltz, ed., *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2003, pp. 66-75.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Excerpts on creation from *The Hebrew Bible*. In Michael D., Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Third Edition*. Oxford University Press, 2001.
12. Baker, John Austin. "Biblical Views of Nature." In Charles Birch, William Eakin, and Jay B. McDaniel, eds. *Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches to Ecological Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990, 9-26.
13. Johnson, Elizabeth. "Losing and Finding Creation in the Christian Tradition" in Dieter Hessel and Rosemary R. Ruether, eds. *Christianity and Ecology*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. 3-21.

14. 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.
15. McKibben, Bill. Excerpts from *The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job, and the Scale of Creation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994.
16. Kaza, Stephanie. "The Greening of Buddhism: Promise and Perils." In Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 184-206.
17. Thich Nhat Hanh. "The Sun My Heart" in Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, eds. *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*. Boston & Ondon: Shambhala, 2000, pp. 83-91.
18. Sivaraksa, Sulak. "Buddhism with a Small b" in Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, eds. *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*. Boston & Ondon: Shambhala, 2000, pp. 117-124.
19. Loy David. "Healing Ecology." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, Vol. 17, 2010, pp. 253-267.
20. Lay, David. "Socially Engaged Buddhism." www.zen-occidental.net/articles1/loy12-english.html.
21. Sponberg, Alan. "Green Buddhism and the Hierarchy of Compassion." In Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, eds. *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997, pp. 351-375.