Religion, Nature and Globalization

REL 5183
MA/MS
Tuesday/Thursday: 12:30-1:45
Thursday: 11:00-12:15
Spring 2014

Room: ECS 135
Instructor: Whitney Bauman
Office: DM 301A
Office Hours: Wednesday, 1-5 and by appointment.
Phone: 305-348-3348
Email: wbauman@fiu.edu

Course Description
This course draws from religious, philosophical, and scientific sources in order to examine planetary environmental problems. Environmental Philosophy and Ethics, as well as the emerging field of Religion and Ecology have developed over the past 50-60 years in an attempt to address problematic human-earth relations. However, underlying many of these approaches is a very western understanding of “nature” as pristine, pure and without human presence. The Modern, Western Scientific Worldview, for instance, has attempted to define globally what “nature” is. Historically, some religious worldviews have understood nature as either a pristine creation for which humans ought to be good stewards, or as evil material that must be controlled and eventually escaped. Finally, many Romantic thinkers have argued that culture and technology are the culprits of ecological and social ills, and human beings ought to return to a paradisiacal relationship with nature.

Might these very static notions of nature, as either pristine source of salvation or chaotic source of evil, exacerbate planetary ills? This is precisely what some political, post-modern, and post-colonial scholars have suggested. Nature, from this perspective should be thought of in the plural and not as something separate from “culture.” The very attempt to define nature and globalize that understanding of nature leads to social oppressions (think about what is coded as “natural” or “unnatural”) and ecological ills (through removing humans from their ecological and often urban contexts). This course will explore the effects of globalizing understandings of “nature” and “religion.” The hypothesis of the course is that both religion (culture) and science (nature) have served as apolitical foundations for forcing truth claims upon “others.” In response to this, this course will explore what a “planetary” understanding and ethic (Spivak) of the world as opposed to that of the global might look like. In other words, what might planetary environmental ethics look like?

\(^1\)Syllabus is subject to change. Required purchased texts, course requirements, and course time will not change, but some of the reading materials may depending on the context of the Spring 2013 semester.
AIM OF THE COURSE
To explore the philosophical and religious sources and forms for the processes known as “globalization” as they pertain to the human and non-human community, and to discern an appropriate, non-colonizing environmental ethic in a world that has multiple meanings of “nature” and what is “natural.”

LEARNING OUTCOMES
In this course: a) Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelationship between religious ideas and the ways we interact with other animals and the rest of the natural world; b) Students will be able to address specific, global environmental challenges from multiple perspectives; c) Based on their awareness of how their own life-choices affect global environmental issues, students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to problem solve for global health.

REQUIREMENTS
Recognizing that there are many different learning styles, these requirements are designed to provide you with a variety of ways in which you can demonstrate your engagement with the materials in the course.

1. Class Participation—40%
A note on the timing of the course: You will be expected to show up for lectures with the BA/BS students from 12:30-1:45 on Tuesday/Thursdays. We will also have a weekly “focus reading” discussion which will be Thursday, 11:00am-12:15. The schedule below will reflect “lecture readings” and “focus readings.” The focus readings will be the readings we discuss during the special graduate reading hour. The lecture readings will be discussed with other BA students on Thursdays. You will be responsible for leading a small group of undergraduate students in discussion. I will have weekly questions that must be addressed, however, you are responsible for how you want to get your students to discuss these questions.

The first step to doing well in this class is to show up! You can’t be a part of the learning community if you are not present. If you have to be absent from the course, please notify me ahead of time. Any more than two absences (unless there are extenuating circumstances) will result in a lowering of your participation grade. One absence is a free-bee. The second, just let me know. (10%)

The second step to doing well in this course is to read the materials. I trust that you will read the materials for each week’s class. Since you will aid in the weekly discussion of course readings for the undergraduate students, I expect that you will have read the weekly readings.

The third step to doing well in the class is to speak up during course discussions. I realize that we all exist on a spectrum between introversion and extroversion, but remember that the classroom is as good as all of the voices therein. We all lose if we don’t hear your voice at some point(s) throughout the semester. Further, as graduate students you will help the instructor lead small group discussions, focused on the weekly readings (10%)

The classroom is a community of learners. That is, we are all in the process of critically engaging the lectures and course materials together. Learning should be a collaborative process and it will take all of us to learn this semester. Having said that there are some ground rules that should be followed in course discussions and assignments.
1. Confidentiality: Sometimes we are exploring serious issues in the course that may be hard to speak about or give voice too. I expect that students will respect one another’s privacy in this course and allow room for this type of exploration.

2. Trust and Respect: The classroom is a learning community and it is only as good as the relationships of the people that make up the classroom. Give your classmates the benefit of the doubt before jumping to conclusions about what is said. Also, be sure to state your opinions, questions, ideas and beliefs in a way that is not intentionally disrespectful to others in the class.

3. Academic Honesty. In all written materials, students will be expected to cite sources. Plagiarizing and “Copying” from other students may result in a failing grade. Grading for written assignments will follow the Rubric that is handed out on the first day.

4. Students should be aware of everyone in the classroom and enable each person to contribute to the conversation. Likewise, each participant should refrain from dominating class discussion.

5. In order to facilitate dialogue, on discussion days we may break out into small groups.

The fourth part of doing well in terms of participation is leading class discussion of a topic. Part of being a graduate student is beginning to develop skills as a scholar and teacher. Given the topic of the course, you will each choose a day toward the end of the semester to present to the course a specific topic of your given choice. Note, this will be a time to both reflect on the topic at hand, but also on how you teach that topic to a groups of students. We will discuss this more in our weekly sessions, but the three parts of this exercise include: developing the topic, identifying learning goals, and organizing class time in terms of how you want to achieve those goals. (20%) (Sign up for sessions on January 23rd)

4. Final Paper—40%
Each student is expected to write a final research paper, which will be do on the date of the final in the course. Please turn in an abstract, with a few resources for your proposed project by class time on FEB 13. We will go over these in class together that week during our “focus” hour. In addition, a 5-10 page version of this paper should be submitted by March 20. We will workshop these 5-10 page papers in our hour long, focus hour that week. The topic of the paper must be something we have addressed in the course, and must include a topic at the intersection of “religion, nature, and globalization.” We will discuss possible paper topics throughout the course. As a MA/MS student, it might be helpful for you to think about how this paper project could help you develop your thesis. I will pass out a rubric to let you know how I grade the papers. The papers will be due on APRIL 24th.

They must follow a format (preferably Chicago or MLA) and must include research outside of the course reading materials. Note, please do not cite Wikipedia. It is a good starting point, but not an authoritative source as it tends to gloss over the controversies on a given topic/field. The paper must include (but in no way should be limited to): Two academic journal sources, two academic books, and two academic web sources. It should be no longer than 24 pages, double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12pt font.

I will not give any extensions on final papers, nor incompletes without SERIOUS EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES. This is not because I am a big meanie, but because in my experience students tend not to complete incompletes.
PLAGIARISM POLICY

This course adheres strictly to FIU’s plagiarism policy:

This Policy views plagiarism as one form of academic misconduct, and adopts the definition of the university’s Code of Academic Integrity, according to which plagiarism is:

the deliberate use and appropriation of another’s works without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for the ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is guilty of plagiarism.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

1. Term papers acquired online or from other sources;
2. Copying of original material without attribution;
3. Use of other students’ work;
4. Copying and pasting, verbatim, information from Internet sources, without quotation marks and correct citation.

Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and a referral to the College of Arts and Sciences Dean of Students for academic misconduct.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89, 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80, 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79, 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>71, 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69, 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>62-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60, 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required TEXTS


Other selected PDF Readings on Moodle.

Important Web Resources
Center for Environmental Philosophy: http://www.cep.unt.edu/.
Ecofeminism: http://eve.enviroweb.org/.
Environmental Justice: http://www.ejnet.org/ej/.
Evangelical Environmental Network: http://prayerforcreationcare.creationcare.org/index.php
Indigenous Environmental Network: http://www.ienearth.org/
Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences: http://www.ifees.org.uk/
United Nations Environmental Program: www.unep.org

*NB: Please help me add to this list. I hope and actually expect to learn a lot from you this semester!

Important Web Resources
Center for Environmental Philosophy: http://www.cep.unt.edu/.
Ecofeminism: http://eve.enviroweb.org/.
Environmental Justice: http://www.ejnet.org/ej/.
Evangelical Environmental Network: http://prayerforcreationcare.creationcare.org/index.php
Indigenous Environmental Network: http://www.ienearth.org/
Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences: http://www.ifees.org.uk/
United Nations Environmental Program: www.unep.org

Important Dates
September (1962): Publication of Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring
September 26: St. Francis Birthday
December 19: Anniversary of the Brundtland Report
December 24: Anniversary of Apollo Earth Rise Image
February 16 (2005): Kyoto Protocol Comes into Effect
March 24, (1989): Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
March 26 (1974): First Large Action of the Chipko Movement
April 1 (1940): Birthday of Wangari Maathai
April 20-24, 2009: Indigenous People’s Global Summit on Climate Change
April 22 (1970): First Earth Day
April 26 (1986): Chernobyl Disaster
June 4 (1892): Sierra Club formed with John Muir as President
July 4 (1845): Thoreau moves to Walden Pond
August 2 (1978): Lois Gibbs begins movement at Love Canal

SCHEDULE
Conceptual Introductions

Week 1: Introduction to Course: Sources for Environmental Ethics. Overview of Syllabus and Requirements

Jan 7: Intro lecture; Please Read: Blackboard: Lynn White, The Historical Roots of the Ecological Crisis (PDF online)
Jan 9: Writing Workshop (MA students do not have to attend this session)

FOCUS SESSION: Going over the syllabus for MA students, etc.

Week 2: What is Religion? What is Nature?

Jan 14: Lecture
Jan 16: Reading Discussions

Grounding Religion, 1-46.

FOCUS SESSION: Taylor, 1-41.

Week 3: What is Nature? What is Religion?

Jan 21: Lecture
Jan 23: Reading Discussion

Grounding Religion, 47-78.
Moodle: Val Plumwood, “Decolonizing Nature,” 51-75

FOCUS SESSION: Taylor, 42-102.
Sign-up for leading course discussion.

Historical Overviews: Religion, Nature, and Cosmologies


Jan 28: Lecture
Jan 30: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 57-88; 252-256.
Moodle: Selections from the Enuma Elish; Genesis 1 Creation Story; Ferngren, Chapter 5, “Aristotle”, 33-46.
FOCUS SESSION: Taylor, 103-179.

**Week 5:** Religion and Nature: Islamic Thought and the Scientific “Revolution”: Shifting Paradigms.

February 4: Lecture/ Writing Workshop on Journal 1; reading discussions.
February 6: Special Guest: David Trujillo: Spirituality and Organic Agriculture

READINGS: Keller, 352-367

FOCUS SESSION: Taylor, 180-222.

**Week 6:** Colonization of land, animals and “others”

February 11: Lecture
February 13: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 257-280.
*Grounding Religion*, 147-162.
Moodle: Bauman, Chapter 3, “Ex Nihilo, Erasure and Discovery,” 57-78.

FOCUS SESSION: **ABSTRACTS DUE NO EXTRA READINGS**

**Week 7:** The Romantic “Return”

February 18: Lecture
February 20: Reading Discussion

**Film: “The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts”**

READINGS: Keller, 89-146. 311-327.

FOCUS SESSION: NIXON, 1-44.

**Topics in Religion and Ecology / Nature**

**Week 8:** Globalization and its Discontents

February 25: Lecture
February 27: Writing Workshop on Journal 2; reading discussions

READINGS: Keller, 409-413; 551-558.
*Grounding Religion*, 181-202
Moodle: Ruether, 1-44.

FOCUS SESSION: NIXON, 45-102.

**Week 9: Religion, Gender and Nature**

March 4: Lecture  
March 6: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 281-310.  
*Grounding Religion*, 130-146.  
Moodle: Merchant, *Reinventing Eden*, XXX-XXX.

FOCUS SESSION: NIXON, 103-149.

**March 10-14 SPRING BREAK**

**Week 10: Technology, Religion and Nature**

March 18: Lecture; **Midterm Due**  
March 20: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 368-376  
Moodle: Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto.”

FOCUS SESSION: **5-10 PAGE DRAFT RESEARCH PAPER DUE NO EXTRA READING!**

**Week 11: Agriculture and Food**

March 25: Special Lecture: James Wildmann  
March 27: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 161-174; 443-468, 476-490.  
*Grounding Religion*, 113-129, 203-221.

FOCUS SESSION: NIXON, 150-174.

**Week 12: Environmental Justice**

April 1: Lecture  
April 3: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 509-550.  
*Grounding Religion*, 163-180  
FOCUS SESSION: NIXON, 175-198.

**Week 13:** Global Climate Change.

April 8: Lecture
April 10: Writing workshop on Journal 3; reading discussions.

READINGS: Keller, 561-574.
Moodle: IPCC Report.

FOCUS SESSION: NIXON, 233-280.

**Week 14:** The Planetary Future

April 15: Lecture
April 17: Reading Discussion; Hand out Final; Evaluations

READINGS: *Grounding*, 81-95, 222-227.
Moodle: Bauman, “From Global to Planetary Identities.”

**April 24:** Final PAPER DUE NO EXTRA READING.