

**Religion, Nature and Globalization**  
**RLG 5183**  
**MA/MS**  
**MWF: 2:00-2:50 (PC 211)**  
**M: 3:00-3:50 (AHC 4 202)**  
**Fall 2014<sup>1</sup>**

**Room: GC 283A / GC 289**  
**Instructor: Whitney Bauman**  
**Office: DM 301A**  
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### **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?

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<sup>1</sup>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 Fall 2014.

## 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 2:00-2:50 on M/W. We will also have a weekly “focus reading” discussion which will be Monday, 3:00-3:50. This time will be just for graduate students. Fridays will be mostly optional for graduate students: unless there is a special speaker or one of you is giving his/her class presentation on that day).

The schedule below will reflect “lecture readings” and “focus readings.” The focus readings will be the readings we discuss during the special graduate discussion hour. The lecture readings will be discussed with other BA students, mostly on Fridays. You can attend these discussions and you are expected to read the BA readings as well as the special MA readings. But, you are only required to attend classes M/W and reading discussions for the special MA session (Mondays) (again, unless there is a special speaker and/or you need help with some of the BA reading materials).

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. In addition to leading the class, you must provide me with a written teaching statement for that day focused on three parts: A) What are the learning goals for the day? B) How will you facilitate that learning? And C) What are the measures for successful learning? This should be no more than 2 pages of typed text. **(20%) (Sign up for sessions during week 3)**

#### **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 **September 29<sup>th</sup>**. We will go over these in class together the next week during our "focus" hour. In addition, a 5-10 page version of this paper should be submitted by **October 27<sup>th</sup>**. We will workshop these 5-10 page papers in our hour long, focus hour the next 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 by the end of the scheduled finals time for the course.

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 24pages, 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**

A	96-100	C	72-77
A-	91-95	C-	71, 70
B+	89, 88	D+	69, 68
B	82-87	D	62-67
B-	80, 81	D-	60, 61
C+	79, 78	F	59 and below

## **Required TEXTS**

Whitney Bauman, Rick Bohannon, and Kevin O'Brien, eds., *Grounding Religion: A Fieldguide to the Study of Religion and Ecology* (Routledge 2010).

Richard Bohannon, *Religions and Environments: A Reader in Religion, Nature and Ecology* (Bloomsbury 2013).

Jefferey Jermoe Cohen, ed. *Prismatic Ecology: Ecotheory Beyond Green* (University of Minnesota Press 2013)

David R. Keller, *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions* (Blackwell 2010).

Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence And the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011).

Other selected PDF Readings on Moodle.

## Important Web Resources

Forum on Religion and Ecology: [www.environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion](http://www.environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion).

Environmental Ethics: <http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Environ/Enviroethics.htm>.

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>

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life: <http://www.coejl.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](http://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

Forum on Religion and Ecology: [www.environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion](http://www.environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion).

Environmental Ethics: <http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Environ/Enviroethics.htm>.

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>

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life: <http://www.coejl.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](http://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: August, 25, 27, 29 Introduction to Course: Sources for Environmental Ethics. Overview of Syllabus and Requirements

M: Discussion of Syllabus  
W: Lecture  
F: Writing Workshop

READINGS: *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 1, Lynn White (online); Introduction, *Grounding Religion*.

FOCUS READING: No extra reading during first week.

Week 2: September 1, 3, 5 What is Religion? What is Nature?

M: 9/1: Labor Day No class!  
W: Lecture  
F: Reading Discussions (BA)

READINGS: *Grounding Religion*, Part I; Keller, "Introduction" pp 1-24.

FOCUS READINGS: Nixon 1-44.

Week 3: September 8, 10, 12 What is Nature? What is Religion?

M: Lecture  
W: Lecture  
F: Reading Discussions (BA)

READINGS: *Grounding Religion*, Part II; *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 1, Darwin. Keller, 193-220; 230-251.

FOCUS READINGS: NIXON, 45-102.

### Historical Overviews: Religion, Nature, and Cosmologies

Week 4: September 15, 17, 19 "Religion and Nature: The Ancient Near East, Greece and Proto-Forms of Modern Science"

M: Lecture  
W: Reading Discussions  
F: Friday, Sept 19: Quiz; no class. (BA)

READINGS: *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 1, Genesis, Aristotle; Selections from the *Enuma Elish* (online); Keller, 57-88; 252-256.

FOCUS READINGS: NIXON, 103-149.

### **Online Quiz 1: Weeks 1-4**

Week 5: September 22, 24, 26 Religion and Nature: Islamic Thought and the Scientific “Revolution”: Shifting Paradigms.

M: Lecture

W: Turn in Journal; Reading Discussions (BA)

F: September 26: Peer Review of Journals (in class) (BA)

READINGS: *Religions and Environments*, Part II, chapters 4-5; Merchant, *Death of Nature* chapters 5 and 7 (online); Keller, 352-367.

FOCUS READINGS: Nixon, 150-174.

Week 6: Sept 29, Oct 1, Oct 3 Colonization of land, animals and “others”

M: Lecture

W: Reading Discussions

F: October 3<sup>rd</sup>: Gary Yourofsky; Revised Journal Due! (BA); MA STUDENTS COME TO CLASS THIS DAY

READINGS: *Grounding Religion*, Chapter 9; *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 4. Plumwood, “Decolonizing Nature” (online); Keller, 257-280.

FOCUS READINGS: **Turn in Abstract**; NIXON, 175-198.

Week 7: October 6, 8, 10 The Romantic “Return”

M: Lecture

W: Reading Discussions

F: Film: “The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts”; **Online Quiz 2: Weeks 5-7(BA)** (MA STUDENTS COME TO CLASS THIS DAY FOR FILM)

READINGS: *Religions and Environments*, Part I, chapters 1-4, 7-12. *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 1, Naess, Section 5, Cronon, Guha; Keller, 89-146. 311-327.

FOCUS READINGS: Read and discuss abstracts; no extra reading.

## Topics in Religion and Ecology / Nature

Week 8: October 13, 15, 17 Globalization and its Discontents

M: Lecture

W: Reading Discussions; **Journal 2 Due, Wednesday October 15th (Turn it in) BA**

F: Peer Review of Journals In Class. (BA)

READINGS: *Grounding Religion*, Chapter 13; *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 3. Ruether, 1-44 (online); Keller, 409-413; 551-558.

FOCUS READINGS: NIXON, 233-280.

Week 9: October 20, 22, 24 Religion, Gender and Nature

M: Lecture

W: Lecture

F: Reading Discussions **Revised Journal 2 Due (in class); Friday October 24 (BA)**

READINGS: *Grounding Religion*, chapter 10; *Religions and Environments*, Part II, chapters 9-10; Merchant, *Reinventing Eden* (online); Keller, 281-310.

FOCUS READINGS: *Prismatic Ecology*, Intro – 42.

Week 10: October 27, 29, 31 Technology, Religion and Nature

M: Lecture

W: Lecture

F: Reading Discussions

READINGS: *Religions and Environments*, Part III, chapters 5-8; Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto” (online); Keller, 368-376.

FOCUS READINGS: **Turn in 5-10 page draft October 27**; *Prismatic Ecology*, 42-106.

Week 11: November 3, 5, 7: Food and Agriculture

M: Lecture

W: Reading Discussions

F: **Online Reading Quiz 3: Week 8-11; no class. (BA)**

READINGS: *Religions and Environments*, Part II, chapters 1-3, 6-8; *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 5, “Food”; Keller, 161-174; 443-468, 476-490.

FOCUS READINGS: Paper Workshop. No extra readings.



Week 12: November 10, 12, 14: Environmental Justice

M: Lecture

W: Lecture

F: Reading Discussions

READINGS: *Grounding Religion*, chapter 12; *Religions and Environments*, Part III, chapters 9-12; *Inherited Land* (online); Keller, 509-550.

FOCUS READINGS: *Prismatic Ecology*, 106-170.

Week 13: November 17, 19, 21 Global Climate Change.

M: Lecture

W: Reading Discussions; Journal 3 Due (Turn it in) (BA)

F: Peer Review of Journal 3 in class. (BA)

READINGS: *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 5, "Climate Change"; Climate Literacy (online); Keller, 561-574.

FOCUS READINGS: *Prismatic Ecology*, 170-233.

**November 24, 26, 28: No classes; American Academy of Religion Meeting and Thanksgiving week. Work on Catching up / Final PAPERS**

Week 14: December 1, 3, 5: The Planetary Future

M: Lecture Revised Journal 3 due (in class); Monday December 1. (BA)

W: Course Wrap up and reading discussions

F: Final Online Quiz 4: Weeks 12-14 (BA)

READINGS: *Reflecting on Nature*, Section 2, Routley, Taylor, and Callicott; Bauman, *Religion and Ecology: Developing a Planetary Ethic* (selections) (online).

FOCUS READINGS: *Prismatic Ecology*, 233-end. (NB, read some of this over the break the week before and not all at once).

Week 15: Finals Week

**TURN IN FINAL PAPERS BY EXAM PERIOD FOR THIS CLASS!**