

**Religion, Nature and Globalization**  
**REL 5183**  
**MA/MS**  
**Tuesday/Thursday: 9:30-10:45am**  
**Spring 2013<sup>1</sup>**

**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](mailto: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?

---

<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 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—30%

**A note on the timing of the course:** You will be expected to show up for lectures with the BA/BS students from 9:30-10:45 on Tuesday/Thursdays. We will also have a weekly “focus reading” discussion which will be determined by graduate students on the first day of class (NB: It is currently listed as Tuesday from 8:00-9:15am, but we do not have to keep this hour; we will decide on the first day of class). 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. **(Just attending all sessions gets you 10 points.)**

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. **(This will count for 10 points)**

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.

### **3. Ecological Footprint Journal: 30%**

Each student is expected to keep an "ecological footprint" journal. This journal will have three components; these components will be distinct, but will build upon one another.

1. Go online and complete the Ecological Footprint.

([http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/personal\\_footprint](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/personal_footprint)). Write a reflection about your results in your journal including addressing the complex question, "what is sustainability?" Offer your own reflections about whether or not humans are responsible for living within the ecosystems of planet earth. Finally, offer your reflections on what you might be able to "do" given the results of your ecological footprint. **Due January 31<sup>st</sup> on the course blackboard site. We will work in peer-review teams to critique and analyze the writing style of this assignment on February 7<sup>th</sup>.**

2. Monitor your food consumption for a day. Write down everything you eat, including their ingredients, and try to find out: a) where the food came from and how much it had to travel to get to you, b) how the people in farms/factories were treated in the making of the food product (this one may not be possible in all cases, but do your best), c) how the crops and animals that made your food were grown /raised (organically? With pesticides? In factory farms? Small farms? Etc.) After completing these three steps, reflect on ways that these issues tie into your own ecological footprint from the first assignment. **Due February 21<sup>st</sup> on the course blackboard site. We will work in peer-review teams to critique and analyze the writing style of this assignment on February 28<sup>th</sup>.**

3. Choose a topic that we have covered or will cover in the course and relate it to your first two journal entries describing: a) why is it important in the context of what you learned from your ecological footprint and your food journal; b) some perspective from the course lectures and readings that might help you to address ecological problems you identified in the first two entries and c) from that perspective articulate a constructive solution to the ecological problem you have focused on. **Due April 4<sup>th</sup> on the course blackboard site. We will work in peer-review teams to critique and analyze the writing style of this assignment on April 11<sup>th</sup>.**

Each journal entry should be 3-5 pages, typed, and double-spaced. For each section, you should cite information that you use. Any type of plagiarism will not be tolerated. Each section will count for 10% of the grade.

#### **4. Final Paper—40%**

Each student is expected to write a final research paper, which will be due on the date of the final in the course. Please turn in an abstract on moodle, with a few resources for your proposed project by class time on **FEB 12**. 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 19**. 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 26**.

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).

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

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

Bron Taylor, *Dark Green Religions: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (University of California Press, 2009).

## 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 <i>Silent Spring</i>
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 Jan 8/10: Introduction to Course: Sources for Environmental Ethics. Overview of Syllabus and Requirements

Jan 8: Intro lecture; Please Read: Blackboard: Lynn White, The Historical Roots of the Ecological Crisis (PDF online)

Jan 10: Writing Workshop

Week 2, Jan 15/17: What is Religion? What is Nature?

Jan 15: Lecture

Jan 17: Reading Discussions

READINGS: Keller, "Introduction" pp 1-24.

*Grounding Religion*, 1-46.

FOCUS READINGS: Taylor, 1-41.

Week 3, Jan 22/24: What is Nature? What is Religion?

Jan 22: Lecture

Jan 24: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 193-220; 230-251.

*Grounding Religion*, 47-78.

Moodle: Val Plumwood, "Decolonizing Nature," 51-75

FOCUS READINGS: Taylor, 42-102.

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

Week 4, Jan 29/31: "Religion and Nature: The Ancient Near East, Greece and Proto-Forms of Modern Science"

Jan 29: Lecture

Jan 31: 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 READINGS: Taylor, 103-179.

### **Journal 1 Due, Jan 31<sup>st</sup>**

Week 5, Feb 5/7: Religion and Nature: Islamic Thought and the Scientific "Revolution": Shifting Paradigms.

February 5: Lecture

February 7: Writing Workshop on Journal 1

READINGS: Keller, 352-367

Moodle: Ferngren, "Islam" pp 73-92. Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, chapters 5 and 7.

FOCUS READINGS: Taylor, 180-222.

Week 6, Feb 12/14: Colonization of land, animals and "others"

February 12: Lecture

February 14: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 257-280.

*Grounding Religion*, 147-162.

Moodle: Bauman, Chapter 3, "Ex Nihilo, Erasure and Discovery," 57-78.

## **ABSTRACTS DUE NO EXTRA READINGS**

Week 7 Feb 19/21: The Romantic “Return”

February 19: Lecture  
February 21: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 89-146. 311-327.  
Moodle: Taylor, *Dark Green Religion*, 42-70.

FOCUS READING: NIXON, 1-44.

**Journal 2 Due, February 21<sup>st</sup>**

### **Topics in Religion and Ecology / Nature**

Week 8, Feb 26/28: Globalization and its Discontents

February 26: Lecture  
February 28: Writing Workshop on Journal 2; review take-home mid-term

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

FOCUS READING: NIXON, 45-102.

Week 9, March 5/7: Religion, Gender and Nature

March 5: Lecture  
March 7: Reading Discussion

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

FOCUS READING: NIXON, 103-149.

### **SPRING BREAK MARCH 11-15!!!!!!!**

Week 10, March 19/21: Technology, Religion and Nature

March 19: Lecture  
March 21: Reading Discussion

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

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

Week 11, March 26/28: Agriculture and Food

March 26: Lecture

March 28: Reading Discussion

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

FOCUS READING: NIXON, 150-174.

Week 12, April 2/4: Environmental Justice

April 2: Lecture

April 4: Reading Discussion

READINGS: Keller, 509-550.  
*Grounding Religion*, 163-180  
Moodle: *Inherited Land*, 148-170.

FOCUS READING: NIXON, 175-198.

**Journal 3 Due on April 4!**

Week 13, April 9/11: Global Climate Change.

April 9: Lecture

April 11: Writing workshop on Journal 3

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

FOCUS READING: NIXON, 233-280.

Week 14, April 16/18: The Planetary Future

April 16: Lecture

April 18: Reading Discussion; Hand out Final; Evaluations

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

**April 26: Final PAPER DUE NO EXTRA READING.**