

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
FALL 2010**

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES 417.05 L01
ROOTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN ECO-THEOLOGY**

INSTRUCTOR: Anne White, Ph.D.
COURSE TIME AND DAYS: M 2:00 – 4:50 p.m.
OFFICE: SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS: WF 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
TELEPHONE: 403-220-3285 or 403-220-5886 (main office)
E-MAIL ADDRESS: awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS: Blackboard

Required Texts:

Pojman, Louis P., Pojman, Paul, *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, Belmont (2008).

Suggested Reading (not mandatory):

Barlow, Maude, *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*, McClelland & Stewart (2007).

Becker, Ernest, *The Birth and Death of Meaning: An interdisciplinary perspective on the problem of man*, The Free Press (1971).

Bender, Frederic L., *The Culture of Extinction: Toward a Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, Humanity Books (2003).

Gottlieb, Roger S., ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, Oxford University Press (2006).

----- *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, Routledge (2004).

Kellert, Stephen, Edward O. Wilson, eds., *The Biophilia Hypothesis*, Island Press (1993).

Klare, Michael, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: How Scarce Energy is Creating a New World Order*, Oneworld (2008).

Stavins, Robert, ed., *Economics of the Environment*, W. W. Norton & Co., Harvard (2005).

Course Description:

This course is designed to expose students to practical environmental ethics that pertain to religions, cultural stresses, economies, politics, class, race, gender, animal rights, the protection of wilderness, and the realities of globalization. Utilizing text, lectures, documentaries and discussion as the basic for enquiry, students will be encouraged to address some of the complex issues regarding the conduct of our species as part of the biotic web. Through analysis of the

course text which will cover environmental theory and practice, together with some of the specific perspectives within religions taken from the course webnotes (Gottlieb and Bender's work will be particularly useful), we will challenge what it means to be a moral, reflective person in a commercial world that often clashes with our sensitivities and persuasions. The desired outcome of this scholarly process will be to sharpen intellectual perspectives and provide confidence, balance and realism for those challenged by the massive environmental issues facing the biotic web today.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will develop a number of the skills identified in the University of Calgary statement of learning outcomes. These include: communication, thinking, ethical reasoning, computer literacy, information retrieval, and group effectiveness.
- The assigned readings, lecture material and methodology within the course should develop a student's ability to think critically (i.e. judge, reflect, and analyze); web notes will further provide dissemination of information and enhance computer skills; preparation for examinations should foster the development of information retrieval and writing competency.
- It is important to remember that the attainment of any learning endeavour requires that students **regularly attend lectures** and participate in discussions, read the required material, and complete all course work.

Course Requirements:

Oct. 18	- In class exam worth	30%
Nov. 15	- In class exam worth	30%
TBA	- Registrar scheduled final exam	40%

NOTE: Missed examinations must be accompanied by a medical certificate, or in the case of domestic affliction, a note from a counsellor. The instructor must receive notification within 24 hours of the missed examination by telephone or e-mail.

Grading:

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

A+	100 - 96	A	95.9 - 90	A-	89.9 - 85
B+	84.9 - 80	B	79.9 - 75	B-	74.9 - 70
C+	69.9 - 65	C	64.9 - 60	C-	59.9 - 55
D+	54.9 - 53	D	52.9-50	F	Under 50

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

SEPTEMBER

13
Chapter 1
Web notes

Perspectives. Religion in an age of environmental crisis – the eight major crisis points.
Documentary: *Baraka*
Discussion.

20
Chapter 2
Web notes

Animal rights.
Animal theology and liberation versus the animal apocalypse.
Discussion.
Documentary: *Food Inc.*

27
Chapter 3
Web notes

Philosophical Theories of Nature
Mill, Schweitzer, Taylor, Goodpaster, Leopold, Callicott, Hettinger and Throop, Paden, Bookchin, Sterba.

OCTOBER

4
Chapters 4 and 5
Web notes

Discussion.
Preservation of Species, Nature and Natural Objects.
Meadows, Russow, Dwivedi, De Silva, Izzi Deen, Ogungbemi, Guha
The meaning of human religious expression through the environment.

11

THANKSGIVING DAY – NO CLASS

18
Chapter 6
Web notes

IN CLASS TEST – WORTH 30 POINTS– 75 MIN.
Obligations to Future Generations
Positives and negatives.
Turning the earth into resources.
Documentary: *Petropolis*. Group discussion.

25
Chapter 7
Web notes

Population and Consumption
McKibben, Gardner, Wolf.
Environment, Scarcity, and Violence (Thomas Homer-Dixon).

NOVEMBER

- 1**
Chapter 8
Web notes
- Food Ethics
Hardin, Rauch, Hoi, Coffin.
Material taken from Vandana Shiva's writings.
Documentary: *Our Daily Bread*. Discussion.
- 8**
Chapter 9
Web notes
- Pollution: General Considerations.
French, Bradford, Baxter.
The costs of environmental protection.
Discussion. Documentary: *Toxic Tresspass*
- 15**
Chapter 10
Web notes
- IN CLASS TEST – WORTH 30 POINTS - 75 MIN.**
Pesticides
Carson, Pimental, Platt-McGinn, Ray and Guzzo.
- 22**
Chapter 11
- Climate Change
Pew Centre, Gardiner,
The battle for water in a changing climate.
Maud Barlow's "Blue Covenant."
Documentary: *Flow*.
- 29**
Chapter 12
- Economics and the Environment
Mill, Rees, Daly, Sagoff, Schmidt..
Global destabilization, ethical and resources
depletion. The cost of doing business = war.
Documentary: *Blue Gold: World Water Wars..*

DECEMBER

- 6**
Chapter 13
Web notes
- Environmental Justice
Bullard, The Earth Charter, Wenz, Mies, Westra.
Material from "The Biophilia Hypothesis."
The issue of moral accountability and the birth and
death of meaning.
Documentary: *The 11th Hour*

Registrar scheduled final exam.