

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
FALL 2013

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 417.05 L01
ECO-THEOLOGY

INSTRUCTOR: Anne White, Ph.D.
COURSE TIME AND DAYS: MW 15:30-16:45
OFFICE: SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS: MWF 10:00-10:50
TELEPHONE: 403- 220-3285 or 403-220-5886 (main office)
E-MAIL ADDRESS: awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS: Blackboard

Required Texts:

Richard C. Foltz, *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, Thompson Learning, 2003.

Suggested readings for research paper:

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).

Perlo, Katherine Wills, *Kinship and Killing: the animal in world religions*, Columbia University Press, (2009).

Shiva, Vandana, *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*, South End Press, (2000).

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, scientific perspectives, and the realities of globalization. Utilizing text, lectures, documentaries and discussion as the basis 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 webnotes (Gottlieb, Bender's and Perlo's work will be particularly useful), we will challenge what it means to be a spiritual, reflective person in a commercial, consumer world that often clashes with our sensitivities and persuasions. The desired outcome of this scholarly process will be to sharpen intellectual perspectives and provide authority, spirituality, 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.
- Through in-class presentations students will develop analytical, research and public speaking skills. This will provide an academic forum amongst peers,
- The presentation material will then be incorporated into the body of the final research paper.
- 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. 16	- In class exam	30%
Nov	- Research presentations	30%
Dec. 6	- Research essay based on presentation 2,500 words (10 pages), double spaced, Chicago style footnotes. One inch margins, left, right, top, bottom. Separate title page including name and ID#	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

9, 11

**Chapter 1
Web notes**

Perspectives. Religion in an age of environmental crisis – the eight major crisis points.
Green theology
Documentary: *The Eleventh Hour*
Discussion.

16, 18

**Chapter 2
Web notes**

Animal rights.
Animal theology and liberation versus the animal apocalypse.’
Concepts re kinship and killing.
Discussion.
Documentary: *Food Inc.*

23, 25

**Chaps 3-10
Web notes**

Overview of religious perspectives
Philosophical Theories of Nature
Discussion

30

Conclusion of perspectives

OCTOBER

2

Web notes

The prospective contribution and influence of religions. Scope and range assessed through five points of analysis.

7, 9

Chapter 12

Ecocentricism and radical Environmentalism
Deep green environmental perspectives

14

THANKSGIVING DAY – NO CLASS

- 16** **IN CLASS TEST – WORTH 30 POINTS
– 75 MINUTES**
- 21** **Discussion re presentations, Signup sheet –
presentations to commence on Nov. 13.**
- 21, 23**
Web notes Obligations to Future Generations
Positives and negatives.
Turning the earth into resources.
Documentary: *Petropolis*
.Group discussion.
- 28, 30**
Chapter 14
Web notes Population and Consumption
The religion of the market versus spiritual ethics.
Plus: Environment, Scarcity, and Violence (Thomas Homer-Dixon).
- NOVEMBER**
4, 6
Web notes Food Ethics
Material taken from Vandana Shiva’s writings.
Documentary: *Our Daily Bread*.
Discussion.
- 11** **REMEMBRANCE DAY – NO CLASS**
- 13** **Two presentations 30 – 45 minutes each in duration.**
- 18, 20** **Four presentations**
- 25, 27** **Four presentations**
- DECEMBER**
2, 4
Chapter 16
Webnotes Does community have value?
Economics and the Environment
Ecojustice.
Global destabilization, ethical and resource depletion.
The cost of doing business = war.
Documentary: *Blue Gold: World Water Wars*.
- 6** Research papers to be submitted to the Department drop
box at the front door of SS 1301.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than **fourteen (14) days** after the start of the course.

Blackboard Help

Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/computersupport/online-services/blackboard> for Student Help and FAQs about Blackboard. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are available at <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/blackboard/students>. Instructions for using the Digital Drop Box are available here: http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6_1/student/bbbs_r6_1_student/digital_drop_box.htm.

Gnosis

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Student Ombudsperson and Students' Union Representative

The Student Ombuds Office provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. See www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds for more information. The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at arts1@ucalgary.ca.

Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints. Please check this website and not the nearest assembly point for this course.

Safewalk

The Safewalk program provides volunteers to walk students safely to their destination anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). This service is free and available to students, staff and campus visitors 24 hrs/day, 365 days a year. Call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help phones located throughout campus to request a walk.