FALL 2016

REL 394 (course line 91223)
JST 394 (course line 91215)
SOS 394 (course line 91570)
LL 240 3:00-4:15

**RELIGION AND ECOLOGY**

Instructor:

Professor Hava Tirosh-Samuelson
Coor Hall 4466
Hava.Samuelson@asu.edu
(480) 965-7767 (office)
Office Hours: T/TH 1:00-2:30

Teaching Assistant: Isobel-Marie Johnston
izjohnston2@asu.edu

**Course Description:**

The world today is in the midst of a major ecological crisis that is manifested in extreme weather events, loss of biodiversity, depletion of fisheries, pollution of air, water, and soil, prolonged draughts, and mass extinction of species. Since the 1970s world religions have begun to grapple with the religious significance of the environmental crisis, examining their own scriptures, rituals and ethics in order to articulate religious responses to the ecological crisis. This course explores how the Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—have addressed the ecological crisis for the past fifty years. Preserving the distinctiveness of each religious tradition, this course examines the resources for ecological responses within each tradition; the emergence of new religious ecologies and ecological theologies; the contribution of world religions to environmental ethics; and the degree to which the environmental crisis functioned as the basis of interfaith collaboration. Special attention will be given to the contribution of religion to animal studies, ecofeminism and goddess religion, and religion and the science of ecology, and the interplay between faith, scholarship and activism.

**Required Texts (to be purchased):**


**Additional Readings available on Black Board:**

Additional essays and book chapters from the following books are available on the Black Board site for the course:


**Requirements:**

1. Assignment # 1: Review of Bauman (et al), *Grounding Religion* (15%)
3. Assignment # 3: Review of Roger Gottlieb, *A Greener Faith* (15%)
4. Assignment # 4: Review of Adamson (ed. et al) *Keywords for Environmental Studies* (15%)
5. Final Research Paper (30%) (choose a topic from the suggested list for a paper of 10-12 pages)
6. Class Reports about Environmental Activism (5%)
7. Class Attendance and Participation (5%)

Grading Scale:

A+: 95-100  
A:  91-94  
A-: 87-90  
B+: 83-86  
B:  78-82  
B-: 74-77  
C+: 69-73  
C: 64-68  
D: 60-63  
E: under 60

Course Policies

Withdrawals and Incompletes:
http://www.asu.edu/aad/catalogs/general/ug-enrollment.html#grading-system

Academic Dishonesty: The School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies abides by ASU’s “Student Academic Integrity Policy.”
http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is stealing. Whenever you borrow a phrase, sentence, paragraph—even an idea stated in your own words—from any outside source (news writing, magazine, TV show, book) without giving credit to that source, you have plagiarized. Plagiarism is cheating yourself and someone else. The consequences are severe including failure for the assignment, probable failure for the course, disciplinary referral to the Dean and possible expulsion from the University. For more information, see the Writing Programs Guide at http://english.clas.asu.edu/writingprograms.

Disability Accommodations: Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations: Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) should contact DRC immediately. Their office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. DRC staff can also be reached at: 480-965-1234 (V), 480-965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit:
Course Outline

All assigned readings should be read before class. We will discuss the readings in class.

Unit I: World Religions and the Ecological Crisis

Introduction

8/18: Session # 1: Introduction to Course

Week 1: Framing the Problem

8/23 Session # 2: Environmental Studies: Creating a Shared Vocabulary

Readings:

Adamson (ed. et al) Keywords in Environmental Studies:

We will discuss the following entries:

“Anthropocene;” “Bioregionalism,” “Biosphere,” “Climate Change,”
“Conservation-Preservation,” “Ecology,” “Environment,” “Environmentalism(s),”
“Environmental Justice,” “Extinction,” “Natural Disaster,” “Nature,” “Species,”
“Sustainability.”

8/25 Session # 3: Religion as the Cause of the Environmental Crisis

Readings:

Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, “Religion,” in Keywords in Environmental Studies, pp. 172-174.


Week 2: The Field of Religion and Ecology

8/30 Session # 4: World Religions Take Note of the Environmental Crisis

Readings:

Statements from Pope John Paul II; American Baptist Churches, USA; Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America, in This Sacred Earth, edited by Roger S. Gottlieb, pp. 230-269.*

Recommended:


9/1 Session # 5: From Eco-Theology to Religion and Ecology

Readings:

Bauman (et al), Grounding Religion, pp. 1-26; 50-63.


Unit II: The Hebrew Bible: The Cause of the Problem or the Solution to It?

Week 3: Creation in the Hebrew Bible

9/6 Session # 6: Genesis and the Creation of the Human: Human Dominion?

Readings:


9/8 Session # 7: Nature in the Bible
Readings:


Week 4: Covenantal Environmental Ethics

9/13 Session # 8: Creation Care in the Bible: Soil, Plants and Animals

Readings:


“Sacrifice In Leviticus: Eco-Friendly Ritual or Unholy Waste, in Horrell (ed. at al), *Ecological Hermeneutics*, 32-45.*

9/15 Session # 9: Holiness, Morality, and the Concern for the Marginal

Readings:


9/20 Session # 10: Theology of Grace and the Environment

Readings:


9/22 Session # 11: Imitation Christi and Christian Environmental Ethics

Readings:


**Assignment # 1 Is Due**

**Unit III. Judaism and the Environment**

**Week 6: Rabbinic Judaism**

9/27 Session # 12: The Sanctification of Nature in Rabbinic Judaism

Readings:


9/29 Session # 13: Sacred Texts and Jewish Alienation from Nature

Readings:


Recommended:


**Week 7: The Jewish Return to the Holy Land**

10/4 Session # 14: The Zionist Return to the Holy Land: Continuity or Revolution

Readings:


10/6 Session # 15: Environmental Challenges and Solutions in the Holy Land

Readings:

D. E. Ornstein, A. Tal, and C. Miller (eds.), *Between Ruin and Restoration: An Environmental History of Israel* (selected chapters):*


**Week 8: Contemporary Eco-Judaism**
10/11 FALL BREAK (no Class) # 16: Jewish Eco-Theology and Activism

Readings:

10/13 Session # 17: Tikkun Olam: Jewish Environmental Activism

Readings:


Recommended:


Report on 10 Jewish environmental organizations (5 from the US and 5 from Israel).

**Unit IV: Christianity and the Environment**

**Week 9: Sources of Christian Environmental Theology**

10/18 Session # 18: Catholic Sources

Readings:


10/20 Session # 19: Protestant Eco-Theology

Readings:


Calvin DeWitt, “Creation Environmental Challenges to Evangelical Theory,” in R.J. Berry (ed.), *The Care of Creation*, pp. 60-73; *


**Assignment # 2 is Due!**

Week 10: Christian Environmental Ethics

10/25 Session # 20: The Principles of Christian Environmental Ethics

Readings:

Kathryn Lila Cox, “Green Solidarity, Liberation Theology, the Ecological Crisis and the Poor,” in Winright (ed.), *Green Discipleship*, 266-284.*


Patricia M. Mische,” “The Integrity of Creation: Challenges and Opportunities for Praxis,” in *Christianity and Ecology*, pp. 592-602.*

10/27 Session # 21: Christian Environmental Activism

Report: Discuss 10 Christian environmental organizations (1 Catholic; 4 Protestant, 3 Greek Orthodox and 1 non-denominational).

**Unit V: Islam and the Environment**
Week 11: Islam and the Environmental Crisis

11/1 Session # 22: Reinterpreting Islam


11/3 Session # 23: Islamic Philosophy and Theology of Nature


Week 12: Islam in a Global Context

11/8 Session # 24: What Islam Shares with Judaism and Christianity and Where It Differs


11/10 Session # 25: Islamic Environmentalism Worldwide


Report on 10 Muslim environmental organizations (three from Asia, three Africa, three from the Middle East and one from the U.S.).
Unit VI: Religion and Ecology: An Assessment

Week 13: Religious Environmentalism In America

11/15 Session # 26: How Did Religion Shape American Environmentalism

Readings:


Assignment # 3 is Due!

11/17 Session # 27: Environmental Spirituality as a Challenge to Religion

Readings:

Bron Taylor, “Earth First! From Primal Spirituality to Ecological Resistance,” in *This Sacred Earth*, 545-556.*


Week 14: Sustainability and Eco-Justice as Religious Values

11/22 Session # 28: Eco-Justice and Religion

Readings:


11/24 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (no class)

Week 15: Religion and Ecology in the Academy

11/29 Session # 29: Eco-Feminism: Gender and the Ecological Crisis

Readings:


Greta Gaard, “Ecofeminism,” in Adamson (ed. et al), *Keywords in Environmental Studies*, pp. 68-70.

12/1 Session # 30: Religion and the Science of Ecology

Readings:


Assignment # 4 is due in Class.

Final research paper is due on December 6 during the Final Exam (2:30-4:20).

Topics for Research Papers on Religion and Ecology:

- The Bible as an Environmental Text
- The Bible as an Environmentally Inconvenient Text
- Environmental Wisdom in the New Testament
• Christian Eco-Theology (e.g., Thomas Berry; Holmes Rolston III; Sallie McFague, Calvin B. DeVitt, Rosemary Reuther, Willis Jenkins; John E. Cobb, Kristine Keller; Larry Rasmussen).

• Jewish Eco-Theology (e.g., Abraham Joshua Heschel; Arthur Waskow, Arthur Green; David Seidenberg; Ellen Bernstein; Jeremy Benstein).

• Muslim Eco-Theologian (e.g., Sayyed Hosseyn Nasr; Richard Foltz)

• Ecofeminist Spirituality (e.g., Rosemary Radford Reuther; Sallie McFague; Elizabeth E. Johnson; Starhawk; Rianne Eisler; Gloria Orenstein; Jill Hammer).

• Eco-Feminism as a Critique of Religious Traditions

• Christian Eco-Justice: Theory and Practice

• Muslim Environmentalism: Theory and Practice

• Religious Environmentalism as a Critique of Modernity

• Religious Environmentalism as a Critique of Capitalism

• Religious Environmentalism as a Post-Colonial Critique

• Radical Environmental Movements: Religion and Green Politics

• Judaism and Vegetarianism

• Animal Rights in Christianity

• Christian Environmental Virtues

• Treatment of Animals in Judaism

• Eco-Kosher: Jewish Environmental Ethics

• Eco-Hallal: Muslim Environmental Ethics

• Religion and Sustainability

• Ecological Spirituality

• Religious Environmentalism and Peace Efforts in the Middle East

• Christian Environmentalism and Indigenous Environmental Spirituality
• Eco-Criticism

• Environmental Spirituality in Contemporary Literature

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Environmental Studies:


Lee, Kai N. and Willian Freundenberg. *Humans in the Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Studies*.


Religion and Ecology: Overviews


**The Bible and the Environment:**


Habel, Norman C. and Shirley Wurst (eds.) *The Earth Story in Genesis* (The Earth Bible 2; Sheffield and Cleveland Ohio: Sheffield Academic Press/Pilgrim Press, 2000.)


**Judaism and the Environment:**


**Christianity and the Environment**


Tucker, Mary Evelyn and John Grim (eds.). *Religion and Ecology: Can the Climate Change?* In *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 130 (no. 4) (Fall 2001).


**Islam and the Environment:**


**Ecological Spirituality:**


Environmental Philosophy and Ethics:


**Ecofeminism and Earth-Based Spirituality:**


**Religion and Animals:**


**Encyclopedias:**


**Journals:**

*Ecotheology*
*Environmental Ethics*
*The Ecologist*
*Eleventh Commandment Newsletter*
*Environmental Review*
*Environmental Theology*
*Environmental History*
*Environmental Justice*