

**YALE / COURSERA
MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES (MOOCS)**

“Religions and Ecology: Restoring the Earth Community”

LINKS

Yale/Coursera Online Courses: fore.yale.edu/online-courses

Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology: fore.yale.edu

A comprehensive online library of resources on the world’s religious traditions and corresponding environmental values, teachings, and practices

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the courses and what is covered in these courses?

1. Introduction to Religions and Ecology
*Broad introduction to the study of religion and history of ecology
Highlights moral force of religions and ecology
Prepares learners for the other courses*
2. Indigenous Religions and Ecology
Africa, Asia, Americas, Pacific Regions
3. South Asian Religions and Ecology
Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Baha’i Faith
4. East Asian Religions and Ecology
Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Shinto, Korean Shamanism
5. Western Religions and Ecology
Judaism, Christianity, Islam
6. Christianity and Ecology
Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical

Why religion and ecology?

- Religions recognize the unity and interdependence of humans with nature
- Ecological sciences affirm this deep interconnection with the natural world
- This partnership can inspire work for the wellbeing of the Earth community

Why do religions matter when we talk about environmental problems and solutions?

- The environmental crisis is not simply a political, economic, or technological problem; it is a moral and spiritual call to long-term change.
- Religious narratives resonate with large numbers of people — 85% of the world’s population belong to religious communities.
- Religions have educational institutions around the world that can inspire people for an ecologically just future. These courses support such educational missions.
- Religious structures and sacred spaces provide a symbolic and practical context for aligning humans with nature.

- Religions have financial assets that are being used for transformative change, such as divestment and reinvestment.

Why these courses?

- There is a need for broader literacy and deeper knowledge of the world's religions and their ecological contributions. These courses contribute such a perspective.
- These courses make these educational resources accessible to a wide array of learners.
- They recognize the longstanding contributions of Indigenous peoples in offering visions and practices for ecological flourishing
- They celebrate the vitality of religiously-informed action for the Earth

To whom will these courses appeal?

- Lifelong learners curious to know more about world religions and ecology
- Environmental professionals eager to deepen the discourse of environmental protection and conservation
- Those working with non-profit organizations and NGOs on issues of ecological justice, especially where minority communities are adversely affected
- Those involved in education:
 - College students interested in expanding their coursework
 - Secondary and university teachers developing curriculum
 - Advanced high school students looking for a broader view of religion and spirituality
- Those involved in the world's religions:
 - Religious leaders and laity who want to know how they can contribute to interreligious dialogue on environmental issues
 - Religious communities interested in building engaged projects, such as the restoration of local bioregions.

What can be learned from these courses?

- Religious communities
 - What environmental and ecojustice activities are already going on in my own religious tradition?
 - What can I learn from other examples of faith-based action on behalf of the Earth?
 - What opportunities are there for interreligious engagement?
- Environmental actors/researchers
 - What other voices or ways of knowing might I learn from in pursuing ecological conservation and restoration?
 - How is ecojustice contributing to long range solutions to environmental and social problems?
- Policymakers
 - As we seek answers to complex environmental problems, religions can be active participants in finding solutions along with scientists, economists, and

policymakers. This partnership integrates the moral force of religions in responding to environmental problems and climate emergencies.

How do the Yale Coursera courses and the Yale Forum website go together?

- These courses are supplemented with a robust website that features statements, publications, and engaged environmental projects of the world's religions.
- The website also highlights actions of religions on the climate emergency and ecojustice.

Who designed these courses?

Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim teach at Yale University where they co-direct the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology. They hold joint appointments at Yale School of the Environment and Yale Divinity School where they teach a variety of courses on religion and ecology. They have been developing the field of religion and ecology for over 25 years with many other partners, including the Yale Forum Advisory Group.

Grim and Tucker have written and co-edited a number of books which are foundational texts for these online courses. They include the Harvard series on Religions of the World and Ecology, *Ecology and Religion*, *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, and the Orbis series on Ecology and Justice. They are also using *Faith For Earth*, a book created by the Parliament of World Religions and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Tucker and Grim have previously launched another set of online courses with Yale/Coursera named "Journey of the Universe: A Story for Our Times." Those courses provide access to the Emmy Award-winning *Journey of the Universe* film, book, and conversations on the epic story of cosmic evolution and explore the influence of Thomas Berry, the cultural historian who inspired the field of Religion and Ecology and the Journey of the Universe project.

Press kit for John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker: <https://fore.yale.edu/About-Us/Who-We-Are/Our-Directors>

Advisory Group, Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology: <https://fore.yale.edu/About-Us/Who-We-Are/Advisory-Group>

MOOCs production team

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