**RS 370: Religion and Ecology**

**CSUN Spring 2015**

**Mondays 4:00-6:45 PM/Sierra Hall 384**

Dr. Amanda Baugh

Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-3:50 PM, Wednesdays 12:00-2:00 PM

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Course Description:

This course examines how religious beliefs and practices contribute to humans’ protection, utilization, and/or damage of the natural world. Students explore the resources for environmental sustainability within at least two world religions and in new “green” theologies, nature mysticism, and radical environmentalism. Particular attention will be paid to climate change and food ethics, and issues of gender, race, and class. This course is included in the GE Principles of Sustainability Path.

Service Learning Project

Throughout the semester students will collaborate to complete a service-learning project in partnership with the community organization Neighborhood Partners in Action (NPA). Students will conduct research and create a report about the nature and extent of concerns about sustainability in Canoga Park religious communities. The report will contribute to NPA’s goals of improving lives in Canoga Park. Full details of the project will be discussed in class and posted on Moodle. Students should expect to spend at least 15 hours on the service learning project.

According to the official definition adopted by CSUN, Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Faculty choose a limited number of meaningful partnerships with the goal of providing students with different, but consistent off-campus learning experiences. Through service learning, students—from kindergartners to college students—use what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. They not only learn the practical applications of their studies, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

Required Texts:

* Sarah McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology*
* Rebecca Gould, *At Home in Nature: Modern Homesteading and Spiritual Practice in America*
* Additional articles available on Moodle

**Important Student Information**

Here you will fill in important information that will help you throughout the semester.

**Your #** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Please write in the top LEFT corner of everything you hand in)

**Your row** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Please write in the top RIGHT corner of everything you hand in)

**Classmate contact information**: Please get the name and email address of two classmates so you can call on these classmates for help if you miss a class or have a simple question.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preparation

You are expected to be FULLY prepared for each class. This is an upper-level course that requires a significant amount of reading and writing. We will discuss tactics and strategies for reading effectively and efficiently throughout the course, but you must be prepared to dedicate adequate time for reading and preparation. You may be called upon at any time during the class period to answer questions regarding the lecture or required readings. Please bring electronic or printed copies of reading assignments to class on the day when we are discussing them.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class and arrive on time, a professional courtesy to both fellow students and the professor. Your first absence is automatically “excused.” Each additional absence will result in a loss of 1.5 points from your final grade. Excessive absences will also negatively impact your participation grade.

Email etiquette

I am happy to communicate with you via email and will do my best to respond within 24 hours during the week. Messages sent over the weekend will be read on Mondays. In the subject line please indicate the content of the email and begin your message in the following manner:

Dear Dr. Baugh,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am in your RS 370 class.

Evaluation

Your grade will be calculated using the points system. Throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to earn up to 100 points in the following areas:

1. **Class preparation and participation (10 points) –** This includes regular attendance and participating in class discussions. Strong class participation does not mean simply "talking a lot" in class. It means speaking in an informed way about the readings, synthesizing the comments of others and listening with respect and attention to the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of your peers.
2. **“Yes I Did the Reading” (YIDTR) Assignments (15 points)** Careful examination of assigned readings is essential for this discussion-based course, so you will be held accountable for completion of reading assignments each week. YIDTR assignments will generally consist of reading questions to be completed in advance and posted to Moodle. There will be 11 assignments worth 1.5 points each, so you can skip 1 assignment or earn extra credit for completing all 11.
3. **Midterm Exam (20 points)** – The midterm exam will consist of a take-home essay due at the beginning of class on Monday, March 16.
4. **Ecological Footprint Journal (15 points) -** Throughout the semester you will complete 5 short journal entries (1-2 pages each) in which you reflect on your relationship to course concepts. Each assignment is worth 3 points, and some may be substituted for volunteer service at an approved service learning site. Details for this substitution are available on Moodle.
5. **Service Learning Project (20 points) –** Details will be posted on Moodle and discussed in class.
6. **Final Exam (20 points) –** The final will consist of a take-home essay due at the beginning of our scheduled Final Exam period: Monday, May 11 at 5:30 PM.

Grade Range

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 95-100 = A | 77-79 = C+ | 60-63 = D- |
| 90-94 = A- | 74–76 = C | > 60 = F |
| 87-89 = B+ | 70-73 = C- |  |
| 84-86 = B | 67-69 = D+ |  |
| 80-83 = B- | 64-66 = D |  |

Policy on electronics in the classroom

If you wish to use an electronic device for note taking or to access reading assignments **you must sit in the first three rows of the classroom.** Texting, playing games, checking email, shopping, preparing for other classes, or any other distractions during class time are strictly prohibited. Engaging in these activities will negatively impact your grade and result in a revocation of your computer privileges for the rest of the semester.

Plagiarism/Cheating

The CSUN Religious Studies Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence, honesty, and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating or helping someone else cheat will receive an F on the assignment and will be subject to disciplinary action such as suspension or expulsion.

For more information of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 614-615 of the 2010-2012 CSUN catalog. **Remember, too, that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws**. Passing off this information as your own is plagiarism and carries the penalties outlined above.

Accommodation for disabilities

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110 and can be reached at (818) 677-2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at (818) 677-2611. If you would like to discuss your need for accommodations with me, please contact me to set up an appointment.

**RS 370 Class Schedule\***

\*NOTE: Consult Moodle for the most current list of assignments.

Reading assignments and written assignments are subject to revision as needed. I will announce all revisions in class and do my best to make sure that everyone knows about revisions. If you miss class, you must nevertheless submit assignments according to any revisions that we make to the schedule. You should either make sure that you do not miss class or find a sure way of becoming aware of any revisions we make to the schedule or syllabus.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Reading** (All articles are available on Moodle. Books are available for purchase at the Matador bookstore). | **Assignment** |
|  |  | **UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS** |  |  |
| **1** | Jan 26 | What is the environmental crisis? | * Scranton, “Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene”
 |  |
| **2** | Feb 2 | Sustainability defined | * Sarkar, “Sustainability”
* Daly, “The Delusion of Sustainable Growth”
* Boyer, “Creating the New American College”
 | EFJ #1: Becoming Native to CSUN |
| **3** | Feb 9 | Religion and Sustainability: An Overview | * White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”
* Musil, “Behind the Wall”
 | EFJ #2: Ecology and World Religions |
| **4** | Feb 16 | The spectrum of religious environmental concern | * Carr, et. al., “Faithful Skeptics”
* Taylor, “Radical Environmentalism”
 | EFJ #3: My Carbon Footprint  |
|  |  | **UNIT 2: RELIGION AND SUSTAINABLIITY IN CANOGA PARK** |  |  |
| **5** | Feb 23 | Race, class, and environmental justice | * Bullard, “Environmental Racism”
* Bohannon and O’Brien, “Environmental Justice and Eco-Justice”
* Guha, “Radical Environmentalism: A Third-World Critique”
 | EFJ #4: Environmental justice |
| **6** | March 2 | Environmental attitudes and gender/race/class | * Jones, et. al., “Believers, Sympathizers, and Skeptics”
* Additional article TBA
 |  |
| **7** | March 9 | Understanding religion in Canoga Park | * Excerpts from Nye, *Religion, the Basics*
* Canoga Park Resource Inventory
 |  |
|  |  | **UNIT 3: CASE STUDIES – RELIGION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION** |  |  |
| **8** | March 16 | Green Sisters | * Taylor, *Green Sisters*, pp. 1-77
 | MIDTERM EXAM DUE |
| **9** | March 23 | Green Sisters | * Taylor, *Green Sisters*, pp. 78-182
 |  |
| **10** | March 30 | Green Sisters | * Taylor, *Green Sisters*, pp. 183-288
 | EFJ #5: Food consumption  |
|  | April 6 | **HAPPY SPRING BREAK** | **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX** | **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX** |
| **11** | April 13 | At Home in Nature | * Gould, *At Home in Nature*, pp. 1-107
 |  |
| **12** | April 20 | At Home in Nature | * Gould, *At Home in Nature*, pp. 108-170
* Assadhourian, “Consequences of Consumerism”
 |  |
| **13** | April 27 | At Home in Nature | * Gould, *At Home in Nature,*  pp. 171-236
 |  |
| **14** | May 4 | Last Day of Class – Reflections and Conclusions |  |  |
|  | May 11 | FINAL EXAM |  | Final exam is due at the beginning of our scheduled exam period, 5:30 PM. |

Student Learning Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the major foundational writings of the field of religion and ecology.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of sustainability and understand how concepts of sustainability are connected to issues of social justice, the environment, and the economy at local, regional, and global levels.
3. Describe and analyze the teachings of at least two major religious traditions as they pertain to sustainability and environmental ethics, such as the ethics of reproduction, land usage, animal rights, and waste disposal. These will be examined with particular attention to how sacred texts and central myths are interpreted.
4. Describe and analyze the teachings of at least one religious outlook outside the mainstream – such as new “green” theologies, nature mysticism, and radical environmentalism – as they pertain to sustainability issues and the natural environment.
5. Explain how issues of gender, race, and class contribute to religious outlooks and practices in general and specifically how in regard to matters connected to environmental sustainability.
6. Critically analyze how their own religion/worldview addresses ecological issues at the local, regional, and global levels.
7. **SERVICE LEARNING OBJECTIVE**: Students will recognize that they can have an impact in the world, specifically with regard to pressing environmental issues.

GE Student Learning Outcomes

Goal: Students will understand the rich history and diversity of human knowledge, discourse and achievements of their own and other cultures as they are expressed in the arts, literatures, religions, and philosophy.

Students will:

1. Explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning, values, discourse and  expression in one or more eras/stylistic periods or cultures;
2. Analyze, interpret, and reflect critically upon ideas of value, meaning, discourse and  expression from a variety of perspectives from the arts and/or humanities;
3. Produce work/works of art that communicate to a diverse audience through a  demonstrated understanding and fluency of expressive forms;
4. Demonstrate ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative  development within the arts and humanities;
5. Use appropriate critical vocabulary to describe and analyze works of artistic expression,  literature, philosophy, or religion and a comprehension of the historical context within  which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged;
6. Describe and explain the historical and/or cultural context within which a body of work  was created or a tradition emerged.

Principles of Sustainability Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to define sustainability and understand how concepts of sustainability are connected to issues of social justice, the environment, and the economy at local, regional, and global levels.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of key concepts related to the study of sustainability, including planetary carrying capacity, climate change, and ecological footprint.
3. Students will be able to explain how sustainability relates to their lives and their values, and how their actions impact issues of sustainability at the individual, and at local, regional, and global levels.

Writing Intensive (GE Designation WI)

Goal: Students will develop their abilities to express themselves and the knowledge they have obtained through practicing various forms of writing within different disciplinary contexts. Writing intensive courses will build upon the skills gained in the Analytical Reading and Expository Writing section of Basic Skills. In each WI course students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Develop and clearly define their ideas through writing;
2. Ethically integrate sources of various kinds into their writing;
3. Compose texts through drafting, revising, and completing a finished product;
4. Express themselves through their writing by posing questions, making original claims, and coherently structuring complex ideas;
5. Revise their writing for greater cogency and clarity;
6. Utilize adopted communication modes and documentation styles of specific disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE, etc) where appropriate.

**GRADE TRACKING WOKRSHEET**

Please note that I do NOT use the Moodle grade book to calculate your grades. If you wish to keep track of your grade throughout the semester, please use this worksheet. Record your points earned each time you receive a graded assignment.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **ASSIGNMENT** | **POINTS EARNED** | **POINTS POSSIBLE** |
|  |  |  |
| YIDTR #1 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #2 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #3 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #4 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #5 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #6 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #7 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #8 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #9 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #10 |  | 1.5 |
| YIDTR #11 |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| EFJ #1 |  | 3 |
| EFJ #2 |  | 3 |
| EFJ #3 |  | 3 |
| EFJ #4 |  | 3 |
| EFJ #5 |  | 3 |
|  |  |  |
| Service Learning Pt 1 |  | 7 |
| Service Learning Pt 2 |  | 7 |
| Service Learning Pt 3 |  | 7 |
|  |  |  |
| Midterm Exam |  | 20 |
| Final Exam |  | 20 |
| Participation |  | 10 |