**RS 370: Religion and Ecology**

**CSUN Fall 2015**

**Mon & Wed 12:30-1:45, Sierra Hall 314**

Dr. Amanda Baugh

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 11:00-12:20

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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 approximately 10 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:

* David Haberman, *River of Love in an Age of Pollution* (2006) – [RLAP]
* Katharine Wilkinson, *Between God and Green* (2012) – [BGG]
* Additional articles available on Moodle – [M]

**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. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Professor Baugh’s Three Cardinal Rules

The following guidelines are written in stone and should be memorized, internalized, and adhered to. Failure to adhere to these rules will result in the bestowal of the instructor’s wrath and will negatively impact your grade.

1. **Arrive on time** (or early). Class begins promptly at 12:30. This means you should be in your seat ready to discuss course assignments every Monday and Wednesday at 12:30, not 12:31 or 12:35.
2. **No cell phones. Ever.** Your phone must be turned off and properly stowed in your bag prior to class takeoff (which is promptly at 12:30. See Rule #1). Your phone should NEVER be in your hand, on your desk, in your pocket, or anywhere else that it might distract you, your classmates, or the professor. Note that the professor is easily distracted by cell phones.
3. **Always bring the assigned reading to class**. You have a reading assignment for every class meeting and class time will be devoted to discussing that reading. In order to participate in close readings and discussions it is imperative that you have all texts assigned for the day in hand. For articles available on Moodle you must either bring a printout or have access to the document on a computer/tablet (see below for Policy on Electronics in the Classroom). IT IS NEVER OKAY TO ACCESS COURSE MATERIALS USING A CELL PHONE (See Rule #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 two absences are automatically “excused.” Each additional absence will result in a loss of 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 200 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 (30 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 3 points each, so you will earn extra credit if you successfully complete all assignments. LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON.
3. **Quiz on Ecological Ethics (10 points)** – There will be a brief, in-class quiz during week 5. The quiz will take place at the beginning of class, and you must be present in order to take the quiz. There will be no make-ups except in the case of extreme, DOCUMENTED emergencies.
4. **Analytical Essays (70 points)** – You will complete two analytical essays throughout the semester. You can earn up to 35 points of each essay.
5. **Ecological Footprint Journal (20 points) -** You will submit 3 short journal entries (1-2 pages each) in which you reflect on your relationship to course concepts. These exercises will help prepare you for the final project. Each journal entry is worth 7 points, so you will receive one extra point if you earn full credit on all 3 entries. Instructions will be discussed in class and posted on Moodle.
6. **Service Learning Project (30 points) –** Details will be posted on Moodle and discussed in class. This project involves components that will be completed as an individual and as a group. The final group submission is due at the beginning of our scheduled final exam time.
7. **Ecological Autobiography (30):** Your final assignment is to write an Ecological Autobiography. You will briefly present your autobiography to the class on May 6 and will submit the formal paper by the beginning of our scheduled final, Tuesday May 13 at 5:30 PM. Instructions will be discussed in class and posted on Moodle.

Grade Range

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| --- | --- |
| 188-200 = A | 153-159 = C+ |
| 180-187 = A-  | 148-152 = C |
| 174-186 = B+ | 140-147 = C- |
| 168-173 = B | 120-139 = D |
| 160-167 = B- | <120 = F |

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** |
|  |  | **FOUNDATIONS** |  |  |
| **1** | Aug 24, 26 | Course Introduction | * Hawken, “The Power of Environmental Activism” (M)
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| **2** | Aug 31, Sept 2 | Key concepts: religion and sustainability  | * Nye, “Religion: Some Basics” (M)
* Hall, “Lived Religion” (M)
* Sarkar, “Sustainability
* WATCH: *The 11th Hour*
 | EFJ #1: Becoming Native to CSUN |
| **3** | Sept 9 | Religion and Ecology: An Introduction | * White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”
 |  |
|  |  | **THE WATER CRISIS**  |  |  |
| **4** | Sept 14, 16 |  | * RLAP Introduction
* In-class film screening on Hinduism
 |  |
| **5** | Sept 21, 23 |  | * RLAP ch 1-2
 | Prepare for Quiz on Ecological Ethics |
| **6** | Sept 28,30 |  | * RLAP ch 3-4
* In-class film screening: *Flow*
 |  |
| **7** | Oct 5, 7 |  | * RLAP ch 5-6
 | EFJ #2 – My Water Footprint |
|  |  | **CLIMATE CHANGE**  |  |  |
| **8** | Oct 12, 14 |  | * Understanding Climate Change
* Bill Moyers, “Is God Green?”
 | ESSAY #1 Due |
| **9** | Oct 19, 21 |  | * BGG Intro, ch 1-2
 |  |
| **10** | Oct 26, 28 |  | * BGG ch 3-4
 | EFJ #3: My Carbon Footprint |
| **11** | Nov 2, 4 |  | * Class Visitor: David Haberman
* BGG ch 5-6
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| **12** | Nov 9, 11 |  | * BGG conclusion
 | **ESSAY #2 DUE** |
|  |  | **ENVIRONMENTAL INEQUALITIES** |  |  |  |
| **13** | Nov 16, 18 | Gender, Race, and Class | * Bullard, “Environmental Racism” (M)
* Bohannon and O’Brien, “Environmental Justice and Eco-Justice” (M)
* Ecofeminism (M)
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| **14** | Nov 23, 25 | Intersectionality | * Dorceta Taylor, “Women of Color, Environmental Justice, and Ecofeminism” (M)
* Shamara Shantu Riley, “Ecology is a Sistah’s Issue Too” (M)
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| **15** | Nov 30, Dec 2 |  | Work on service learning project |  |
| **16** | Dec 7 |  |  | Ecological Autobiography Due |

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.