

ENVIRON 298.42 Spirituality & Ecology: Religious Perspectives on Environmental Ethics
Spring, 2008 (Nicholas School of the Environment & Earth Sciences, Duke University)

PART I - ECOLOGY & SPIRITUALITY: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

JAN. 16: Introduction and course overview

Key concepts: nature, religion, spirituality, ethics

Video: "Keeping the Creation" (Union of Concern Scientists & the National Partnership

for Religion & the Environment).

Reading:

1. AGF, 3-18, Preface, Introduction, "Religion and the Human Meaning of Environmental Crisis"

2. ESP, 41-47. "Introduction to Environmental Ethics"

3. ESP, 48-53, "2,000 Years of Ideas About Nature"

JAN. 23: Earth-Human Relations: Our Cosmic and Personal Stories

"Earth Stories: Personal Connections With Nature"

Video: "Thomas Berry: The Great Story"

Reading:

1. AGF, 19-56, "Religion, Nature, Environment"

2. ESP, 20=21, "Speaking in a Foreign Language: Communicating Personal Ethics to Save Forests." Robert Perschel, (The Wilderness Society).

3. Article: "The Big Picture: The Larger Context for All Human Activities," Michael Dowd.

4. Article: "Work, Worship, and the Natural World: A Challenge for Land Use Professions,"

Robert Perschel, 145-160, *The Good in Nature and Humanity: Connecting Science, Religion, and Spirituality*, edited by Stephen R. Kellert and Timothy J. Farnham.

Jan. 30: Religion, Science, and Politics in the Environmental Movement

Reading:

1. AGF, 57-80, "Religious Environmentalism and Secular Society"

2. Article: "Spiritual and Religious Perspectives of Creation and Scientific Understanding of Nature," (Calvin B. DeWitt, 29-48, in *The Good in Nature and Humanity*).

PART II - ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Feb. 6 Religious and Spiritual Values Applied to Environmental Issues

Reading:

1. ESP, 1-22, "Why Should We Talk About Ethics, Values, and Biodiversity?"

2. **ESP, 56-76**, "How Shall We Live? Applying Religious and Ethical Perspectives to the Biodiversity Crisis."

Feb. 13 World Religions and Ecology: Tradition and Transformation

Interfaith Panel (Guests, TBA)

Reading:

1. **AGF, 81-110**, "A Sustainable Religion"

2. **ESP, 29-39**, "Overview of World Religions," (Jane Elder, Marian Farrior).

Feb. 20: Ethical Visions for a Sustainable Future: Personal and Global

Readings:

1. **ESP, 84-89**, "The Earth Charter: Guide to a Sustainable Way Of Life," (Dieter T. Hessel), and 136-139, "The Assisi Declarations," and 140-144, "The Earth Charter."

2. **AGF, 215-243**, "Obstacles, Prospects, Hope."

PART III - ENVIRONMENTALISM IN ACTION

Feb. 27: Spirituality and Environmental Activism

Readings:

1. **AGF, 111-146**, "Religious Environmentalism in Action"

2. **Article:** "Living Simply and Loving It," (Mark A. Burch, 40-41, YES! A Journal of Positive Futures/No. 81)

3. **Article:** "Learning to Live With Less: A Jewish Perspective," Ismar Schorsch, from *Spirit and Nature: Why the Environment is a Religious Issue*, Rockefeller and Elder, editors, Beacon Press, 1992, 27-37.

March 5: What Keeps Us Going? Living Between Hope and Realism

Student Presentations and Group dialogue & discussion

Readings:

1. **AGF, 173-191**, "Opening the Heart: The Ritual Life of Religious Environmentalism"

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 7-16

March 19: Environmentalism as Spirituality?

Student presentations and Group dialogue & discussion

Readings:

1. **AGF, 147-171**, "Environmentalism as Spirituality."

March 26: Where Do We Go From Here? Reflections on Our Life and Vocation

Readings:

1. **AGF, 193-214**, "Five Faces of Religious Environmentalism."

Closing Celebration