**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE**

**RS 356: Religion and Ecology**

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**Office Hours Thurs: 11 AM -Noon**



*“When we harm the Earth, we have harmed ourselves. And when we heal the Earth, we heal ourselves.”* Charlene Hosenfeld

*“Earth does not belong to humanity, but humanity belongs to the Earth.*” Chief Seattle

Course Description: This course will explore the issue of climate change and religious responses to the challenges of climate change to humanity and other life. Matthew Fox observed, “…the killing of Mother Earth in our time is the number one ethical, spiritual, and human issue of our planet.”

We will investigate how religious resources are re-interpreted, used for an ethic of restraint to consumerist culture, commitments to eco-justice, and the development of an eco-spirituality that requires the development of a new model of living responsibly and interdependently with the Earth and other life.

**RS 356 Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students will be able to analyze, interpret and reflect on the cultural forces and factors that shape religious expression in the contemporary era (approximately the previous 20 years).
2. Students will be able to explain and give examples of a diversity of contemporary religious outlooks using critical reasoning as well as empathy.
3. Students will recognize and reflect upon religious or spiritual values found in contemporary literature, music, art, and popular culture.
4. Students will demonstrate (orally and in writing) a recognition of the difference between an academic approach to religion and a personal, devotional approach; and will be able to demonstrate a basic level of proficiency in locating academic resources and primary material for the study of contemporary religion.

**GE Arts & Humanities Student Learning Objectives**

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.

**GE Writing Intensive Student Learning Objectives**

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.

In each WI course students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words.

**Required Texts:**

**Most of these texts may be purchased as amazon kindle book as discounted prices. You may download a kindle app for pc as well as mobile devices.**

**You can purchase used texts as well significant savings.**

* Sallie McFague with David Lott: Sallie McFague; Collected Writings, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2013, ISBN-13**:** 978-0800699888 (kindle format)
* Evelyn Tucker & John Grim (ed) *Thomas Berry: Selected Writings on the Earth Community*, Orbis Books, 2016. (kindle format) ISBN 13: 978-1626980952
* Anne Benevenuti, *Spirit Unleashed: Re-Imagining Human-Animal Relations*, Eugene, Cascade Publications, 201 (kindle) ISBN 13: 978-1625641878
* Joanna Macy, Thich Nhat Hanh, Wendell Berry, Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth, The Golden Sufi, 2013, ISBN **13:** 978-189035045, (kindle format)
* Jay McDaniel, *Of God and Pelicans: A Reverence for Life*, Chalice Press, 2000, ISBN-13: 978-0827221307

Plus assigned articles:

Forthcoming Book: Robert E. Shore-Goss, *God is Green: A Eco-Spirituality of Incarnate Spirituality*. Cascade Publications.

Internet sources and articles and videos.

**Some Good Resources:**

Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, <http://fore.yale.edu/>

Interfaith Power & Light, <http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/>

Green Faith, <http://www.greenfaith.org/?gclid=CP-Yi5mrxs4CFYphfgodxkcO7A>

**Some youtubes:**

Falling in Love with God’s Earth, Rev. Dr. Bob Shore-Goss

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deOVqVEGv08>

State of the Earth,

Part 1 Rev. Dr. Bob Shore-Goss <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExLSvJXWjlQ>

State of the Earth, Part 2, Rev. Dr. Bob Shore-Goss

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-e2oOB2sqrA>

Greening your Campus, Part 1 Rev. Dr. Bob Shore-Goss

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPuCEr1lClQ>

Greening your Campus, Part 2, Rev. Dr. Bob Shore-Goss

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXODDBieD6I>

**Requirements:**

Class attendance, readings, and participation: 10%

Weekly Journal: 40% of your cumulative grade for the semester.

You engage a particular topic, issue, author, or course concern each week with an entry 2 pages or so. At the end of each month, you will turn your journal entries.

Final research paper: 10-15 pages) 50 % of your final grade. This gives you the opportunity to take a particular topic of thematic covered during the semester. You will be required to have a bibliography of at 10 works, not listed on the syllabus.

**Requirements:**

Class attendance, readings, and participation: 10%

Weekly Journal: 40% of your cumulative grade

You are to engage a particular topic, issue, or course concern each week from either the readings, internet assignments, or classroom discussions with an entry 2 pages or so. At the end of each month, you will turn your journal entries.

Final research paper: 10-15 pages). 50 % of your final grade. This gives you the opportunity to take a particular topic of thematic and/or author(s) covered during the semester.

**Weekly Assignment:**

**August 29 Introduction**

Tucker & Grim, Introduction and Chapter 1

Google and Find Out about Thomas Berry

Spiritual Ecology, chapter 1

**No Class Labor Day September 5**

Tucker & Grim, Chapters 2-4

Spiritual Ecology, chapter 2-3

Google and Explore: Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology (This is a very resource center for many topics in this course. Check, in particular, the Harvard University Religion and Ecology series.

**September 12 New Story of the Universe.**

Tucker & Grim, Chapters 5-7

Spiritual Ecology chapter 4-6

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rS5byHRScVY**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rS5byHRScVY)

**September 19**

Tucker & Grim, Chapters 8-10

Spiritual Ecology, chapter 7-8

Shore-Goss, Introduction

**September 26**

Finish Tucker & Grim

Spiritual Ecology 4 & 5

Shore-Goss, chapter 1

Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis”, <https://www.uvm.edu/~gflomenh/ENV-NGO-PA395/articles/Lynn-White.pdf>

Google: Find out about Leonardo Boff

**October 3**

McFague, chapters 1-2,14

Salle McFague at Yale Divinity School, A New Climate Theology

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjK4d8ci1e0**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjK4d8ci1e0)

Shore-Goss, chapter 2

**October 10**

Shore-Goss, chapter 3-4

Spiritual Ecology 9-10

McFague, chapter 8-9

**October 17**

Shore-Goss, chapter 5

McFague, chapters 4-5, 16-17

**Journal Entries for the last 8 weeks due. Email:** **Robert.goss@csun.edu**

**Recommended:**

Mark Wallace, “The Green Face of God: Christianity in an Age of Ecocide,” <http://www.crosscurrents.org/wallacef00.htm>

**October 24**

Shore-Goss, chapter 6

McFague, chapters 13,15-16

Spiritual Ecology, 11-13

**October 31**

Shore-Goss, chapter7.

McFague, chapter 10, 13

Spiritual Ecology,

**November 2**

Benevenuti, chapters 1-2

McDaniel, Introduction & chapter 1

**Recommended:**

Andrew Kzma, “A Catholic Response to Factory Farming,” [file:///G:/Green/Green%20Theology%20Book/Animals/Kuzma%20-%20Factory%20Farming.pdf](file:///G%3A/Green/Green%20Theology%20Book/Animals/Kuzma%20-%20Factory%20Farming.pdf)

**November 7**

Benevenuti, chapters 3-4

Shore-Goss, chapter 8

McDaniel, chapter 2

**Recommended:**

Andrew Aghapour, ”What If Animals Believe in God?,” (interview with Aaron Gross) <http://religiondispatches.org/what-if-animals-believe-in-god/>

**November 14**

Benevenuti, chapter 5-6

McDaniel, chapter 3

**Recommended:**

Beatrice Marovich, “Do Dogs Have a Soul?,” <http://religiondispatches.org/dogs-of-life/?utm_source=Religion+Dispatches+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d42b5ceb36-RD_Daily_Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_742d86f519-d42b5ceb36-42427113>

**November 21**

Shore-Goss, chapter 9

McDaniel, chapter 4

**November 28**

McFague, 19-20

Spiritual Ecology, chapters 14-17

**2nd Part of Journal Assignment Due**

**December 5**

Shore-Goss, Epilogue

Spiritual Ecology, chapters 19-20

**Final Paper Due December 15.**

Final research paper: 10-15 pages) 50 % of your final grade. This gives you the opportunity to take a particular topic of thematic covered during the semester. You will be required to have a bibliography of at 10 works, not listed on the syllabus.