

**RELIGION 3492: RELIGION, ETHICS, AND NATURE
FALL 2020**

Instructor: Christopher Lomelín
Office: 017 Anderson Hall
Contact: lomelince@ufl.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

OVERVIEW

This course examines the ethical dimensions of humans' interactions with the environment. We will look at materials from a variety of religious traditions in order to explore the ways different religious traditions and philosophical approaches answer the following questions:

1. What is "nature"?
2. Why do people value it?
3. How should people treat nature?

The diverse perspectives offered in the readings will provide a framework for thinking both about social-political ethics and about contemporary environmental issues, both practical and theoretical. We will examine the ways different problems have been approached, the assumptions underlying those approaches, and their strengths and weaknesses. We will also use the readings to evaluate specific local and regional environmental issues.

COURSE FORMAT

In order to ensure the safety of students and the instructor, this course has been moved online for Fall 2020. In designing this course, I have made every attempt to replicate a discussion oriented style class. You are expected to be prepared for group discussions, live or asynchronous, by completing all readings, films, and assignments before class. Each week will alternate between discussion forums and live Zoom meetings, so pay close attention to the schedule and Canvas announcements regarding any changes or updates to the schedule. You can join Zoom meetings from the "zoom conferences" link in our course Canvas site.

GENERAL EDUCATION DESCRIPTION

HUMANITIES DESCRIPTION

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

WRITING REQUIREMENT

The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. This course carries 4000 words that count towards the University Writing Requirement. You must turn in all written work counting towards the 4000 words in order to receive credit for those words. The writing course grade assigned by the instructor has two components: the writing component and a course grade. **To receive writing credit a student must satisfactorily complete all the assigned written work and receive a minimum grade of C (2.0) for the course.** It is possible to fail to meet the writing requirement and still earn a minimum grade of C in a class, so students should review their degree audit after receiving their grade to verify receipt of credit for the writing component.

The writing requirement for this course will be fulfilled by the two essays. Through writing and revising the papers, and participating in peer review, students will learn to organize their arguments with an appropriate thesis statement, detailed outline, adequate and relevant support for arguments, and clear and correct writing style. In writing assignments, students demonstrate skills in framing arguments, developing plans (outlines), identifying appropriate and accurate support for arguments, and introducing and concluding papers in persuasive and clear ways.

Students will receive feedback from the instructor on the final papers, including comments and suggestions on both content and writing, within 2 weeks of submitting papers. This feedback will address content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and other mechanics. I will provide specific guidelines for individual assignments closer to the time each is due.

In addition to the feedback from the instructor and the peer review, I encourage you to seek help from the university's Writing Studio (www.writing.ufl.edu), which offers support for writing in all fields and can be very helpful both in developing your first drafts and in polishing those drafts.

REQUIRED READINGS

Books

1. Dale Jamieson, *Ethics and the Environment: And Introduction* (Cambridge, 2008).
2. J. Baird Callicot, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Environmental Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (University of California Press, 1994).
3. Sarah McFarland Taylor, *Ecopiety: Green Media and the Dilemma of Environmental Virtue* (NYU Press, 2019)

Articles and Chapters (Available on Canvas)

1. Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," from *A Sand County Almanac* (Ballantine, 1970), 237-244.
2. Lynn White Jr. "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-1207.

3. Matthew B. Arbuckle and David M. Konisky, "The Role of Religion in Environmental Attitudes." *Social Science Quarterly* 96.5 (2015): 1244-1263
4. Sunaura Taylor, "The Chimp Who Spoke," from *Beasts of Burden*
5. Sunaura Taylor, "Ableism and Animals," from *Beasts of Burden*
6. Sunaura Taylor, "What is an Animal?" from *Beasts of Burden*
7. Rita Gross, "Buddhist Resources for Issues of Population, Consumption, and the Environment," in *Buddhism and Ecology*, 291-312.
8. Joanna Macy, "The Greening of the Self," from *Dharma Gaia*, 53-91.
9. Gary Snyder, "Nets of Beads, Webs of Cells," from *A Place in Space*, 85-93.
10. Amanda J. Baugh, "Nepantla Environmentalism: Challenging Dominant Frameworks for Green Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* XX.XX (2020): 1-27.
11. Ramachandra Guha, "How Much Should a Person Consume?" *Vikalpa* 28.2 (2003): 1-11.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Short Essays--(20% each, 40% total). Students will submit two, 2000 word essays over the course of the semester. Feedback in the form of a grade, peer review, and corrections will be provided within two weeks of receipt of assignment. Additional guidelines will be posted to Canvas.

- a. Choose two of three questions to respond to in about 1000 words each. Questions will draw from all readings materials before October 7th. Each response should directly address the assigned readings without outside research. **Due Sunday, October 11th at 11:59pm.**
- b. Independent/Group Research Essay. This course culminates with a digital media project based on the teachings and principles of Sarah McFarland Taylor's *Ecopiety*. Students will research an issue related to environmental ethics or environmental policy and discuss how to meaningfully call the public to action. This research will inform student's final project. You may collaborate with others, however, each group member must submit an original paper in order to comply with the University Writing Requirement. **Due Sunday, November 23rd at 11:59pm.**

Attendance and Participation--(20%). The participation grade will be based on performance in five reading quizzes (10%) and attendance in live Zoom meetings (10%). Zoom meetings provide students the opportunity to explore concepts and ideas in-depth, as discussion forums cannot replicate the live collaborative environment of an in-person seminar. These meetings are an essential and required component of the course and students are expected to come prepared to participate in group discussions by completing all assigned readings and assignments before

class. **As live meetings are limited, after three unexcused absences students will not pass the course.** Students should pay close attention to the schedule as each week will be different. Any changes or updates to the schedule will be posted to Canvas.

Discussion Posts—(15%). Each week, students will respond the discussion board by Thursday at 11:59pm. During weeks without a live meeting, students will respond to a question based on the week’s readings. During weeks with a live meeting, students will pose questions based on the week’s readings in preparation for the live Zoom meeting on Friday. Questions should further the conversation whenever possible, but misunderstandings, clarifications, or practical applications can be posed.

Digital Media Restorying Project--(15%). Students will utilize research from Short Essay #2 to create a digital media project. There are myriad platforms including, YouTube, podcasts, and websites, but you may use any platform with prior approval. Additional guidelines will be posted to Canvas

Group Presentation—(10%). After add/drop, students will be randomly assigned into groups of 4-6 students (dependent upon final number of enrolled in the course). Each group will create a Voicethread presentation on one of the available readings listed on the schedule (**8%**). In order to encourage an equitable division of labor, each group member will complete an anonymous peer review (**2% upon completion—may affect individual presentation grades**).

GRADE SCALE

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>GPA points</u>
A	94-100	4.0
A-	90-93	3.67
B+	87-90	3.33
B	84-86	3.0
B-	80-83	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	74-76	2.0
C-	70-73	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	64-66	1.0
D-	60-63	0.67
E	0-59	0

POLICIES AND RULES

Attendance and Reading: Absence for reasons of illness, religious holiday, or official university business is excused. Please inform me as early as possible and provide appropriate documentation. All students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to discuss the readings at every class meeting. Students are allowed three unexcused absences. After the third unexcused absence students will automatically fail the course.

Policy on Late Assignments: Students may receive an extension on Short Essays only in extraordinary circumstances or with prior, written documentation. Whenever possible, requests should be submitted prior to the due date. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down a full letter grade for each day late (B+ to C+).

Please note, late work that involves technical difficulties with online submissions must be accompanied by a ticket number from UF Help Desk. If you have a problem accessing materials or submitting assignments, contact UF Help Desk immediately before contacting the instructor. If your ticket number indicates that you waited until the last minute to submit an assignment, an extension will not be granted.

Submitting Assignments: All assignments will be submitted electronically via Canvas and screened for plagiarism through Turnitin.

Communication Guidelines: Students are encouraged to contact the instructor ufl.edu email for questions, clarifications, requests and assistance, academic or otherwise. **Do not contact the instructor via Canvas message or respond to assignment comments on Canvas.** If you would like to respond to a comment on an assignment, you must contact the instructor via ufl.edu email.

Please remember that your correspondences represent you and the way you regard your academic progress; all correspondences are to be written in a respectful, professional manner. Thus, written correspondences to the instructor or fellow classmates are official correspondences and should be approached with a degree of formality, not composed as you might structure text messages or chats. All emails must include a subject, polite greeting, direct and clear body, and a polite salutation; the instructor will request revision of correspondences that do not adhere to this format.

Additionally, students will be advised to “SEE SYLLABUS” for questions that students can answer easily by looking in the syllabus (quiz dates, for example). During the week the instructor requests 24 hours to reply to student emails (48 hours on weekends). *****In emergency situations that require immediate attention, please add ‘URGENT ’to the subject line of your message.*****

Academic Honesty: All work submitted must be completed without unauthorized assistance, collaboration, or deliberate misrepresentations. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else's material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without according him/her/them proper recognition (through a footnote, for instance). Other forms of cheating (particularly downloading material from the Internet and presenting as if it were yours) will also be subject to the same action. **I operate under a zero tolerance policy and any instance of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course;** in such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean. All UF students are expected to abide by the Student Conduct Code, which can be found at

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php> (Links to an external site.). If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These can be found at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

Accommodations for Disabilities: Students who need classroom accommodations or other reasonable modifications to satisfy course criteria must register with the Disability Resource Center of the Dean of Students Office, who will work with you and the instructor to make

appropriate arrangements. You can contact the Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565 or <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>.

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Writing Studio: If you want to improve your writing, the Writing Studio is a free service for current UF graduate and undergraduate students providing you with the opportunity to work one-on-one with a consultant to help you become a more effective writer. Appointments may be scheduled online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/for-students/schedule-an-appointment/>.

Health and Counseling: Health and counseling services are available for students in the event personal problems threaten to hinder academic performance. You can contact UF Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>; 352-392-1575, 301 Peabody Hall; Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1171; Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161; and the University Police Department: 352-392-1111. For assistance with professional development and resume writing, you can consult the Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 352-392-1601.

SCHEDULE

Changes to the Schedule: If changes are made to the schedule, students will be informed in advance and will be responsible for completing the assignments/readings by the updated due date. **All mandatory meetings will take place on Fridays, except where noted below.**

Mandatory Meetings: Live Discussion Meetings: **M 8/31**, 9/4, 9/18, 10/2, 10/16, 10/23, **W 10/28**, **M 11/2**, 11/6, 11/13, 11/20.

Project Presentation Days: F 12/4, M 12/7, W 12/9.

Supplemental Meetings: In addition to the above listed meetings, there will be opportunities for additional, AMA style meetings. In order to make myself available for supplemental meetings, a quorum of at least 10 students will be needed. Attendance at these meetings is highly encouraged (but not required), as I can provide nuance and clarifications on the spot. Potential supplemental meetings will be announced on Canvas. At the time of this writing, there are two scheduled supplemental meetings to discuss the Digital Media Restorying Project on **M 11/30** and **W 12/2**.

Day	Date	Topic/Assignment
M	8/31	Introduction to the course Guest Lecture, Anna Peterson, "Introduction to Environmental Ethics" Live Zoom Meeting
W	9/2	White, "The Historic Roots of our Ecological Crisis" Leopold, "The Land Ethic"

Day	Date	Topic/Assignment
F	9/4	Arbuckle & Konisky, "The Role of Religion in Environmental Attitudes" Live Zoom Meeting Syllabus Quiz due Saturday 9/5 at 11:59pm
M	9/7	Labor Day (No Class)
W	9/9	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 1
F	9/11	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 2 Reading Quiz 1 due 11:59pm, Saturday 9/12
M	9/14	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 3
W	9/16	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 4
F	9/18	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 5 Live Zoom Meeting
M	9/21	Taylor, <i>Beasts of Burden</i> , "The Chimp Who Spoke"
W	9/23	Taylor, <i>Beasts of Burden</i> , "Ableism and Animals"
F	9/25	Taylor, <i>Beasts of Burden</i> , "What is an Animal?" Reading Quiz 2 due 11:59pm, Saturday 9/26
M	9/28	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 6 (42 pages)
W	9/30	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , Ch. 7
F	10/2	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 1 Live Zoom Meeting
M	10/5	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 2
W	10/7	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 3
F	10/9	No Assigned Readings: Work on Short Essay 1, due 11:59pm, Sunday, 10/11
M	10/12	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 4
W	10/14	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 5
F	10/16	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 6 Live Zoom Meeting Reading Quiz 3 due 11:59pm, Saturday 10/17
M	10/19	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 7-8
W	10/21	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 9
F	10/23	Callicot, <i>Earth's Insights</i> , Ch. 10 Live Zoom Meeting

Day	Date	Topic/Assignment
M	10/26	Gross, "Buddhist Resources"
W	10/28	Macy, "The Greening of the Self" Snyder, "Nets of Beads, Webs of Cells" Live Zoom Meeting
F	10/30	Baugh, "Nepantla Environmentalism" Reading Quiz 4 due 11:59pm, Saturday 10/31
M	11/2	Sarah McFarland Taylor, <i>Ecopiety</i> , "Introduction" and Ch. 1 Live Zoom Meeting
W	11/4	Sarah McFarland Taylor, <i>Ecopiety</i> , Ch. 2
F	11/6	Sarah McFarland Taylor, <i>Ecopiety</i> , Ch. 3 Live Zoom Meeting
M	11/9	Sarah McFarland Taylor, <i>Ecopiety</i> , Ch. 4
F	11/13	Sarah McFarland Taylor, <i>Ecopiety</i> , Ch. 5 Live Zoom Meeting
M	11/16	Sarah McFarland Taylor, <i>Ecopiety</i> , Ch. 6
W	11/18	Sarah McFarland Taylor, <i>Ecopiety</i> , Ch. 7
F	11/20	Sarah McFarland Taylor, <i>Ecopiety</i> , "Conclusion" Live Zoom Meeting
M	11/23	Guha, "How Much Should a Person Consume?" Short Essay due 11/23 at 11:59pm
W	11/25	Thanksgiving Break
F	11/27	Thanksgiving Break
M	11/30	No Assigned Readings. Work on Restorying Group Presentation. Supplemental Zoom Meeting
W	12/2	No Assigned Readings. Work on Restorying Group Presentation. Supplemental Zoom Meeting Restorying Project due Thursday, 12/3 at 11:59pm
F	12/4	Group Presentations Live Zoom Meeting
M	12/7	Group Presentations Live Zoom Meeting
W	12/9	Group Presentations Live Zoom Meeting