

Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) HE 367.02

Religion, Ethics, and the Environment

The Ohio State University, School of Environment and Natural Resources
Honors Embedded (HE) Course Proposal/Syllabus

Instructor:

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Summer Term 2009 (5 credits)
Stone Lab Term 2: July 23-Aug 22
T,R,S 8:00am-4:00pm

No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions. The proof that conservation has not yet touched these foundations of conduct lies in the fact that philosophy and religion have not yet heard of it. – Aldo Leopold (1949)

I used to think the “big three” were climate, biodiversity, and pollution, and that better science and policy would solve these. But after many years of work I think pride, apathy, and greed are even bigger. We need cultural and spiritual transformation, and science doesn’t do that—the church does that. – Gus Speth (2007)

Course Description: The recent growth of religious involvement in environmental stewardship marks an important cultural development in the United States. As research reveals, in America the most significant source of environmental values is religion and spirituality, and religious communities are increasingly providing resources and teachings to reinforce, diversify, and deepen the foundations of environmental ethics. These religious environmental teachings are informed by environmental science, and expressed within the various moral and ethical frameworks found in diverse communities of faith. While most Americans see ethics within their religious framework, they also show a broad appreciation for a range of other religious and philosophical views. What does this mean for environmental citizenship in America? What does this mean to each of us as individuals?

“Religion, Ethics, and the Environment” provides a unique second writing course opportunity to explore the moral and spiritual underpinnings of environmental ethics in America and in students’ own lives, in the inspirational setting of Gibraltar Island in Lake Erie. Now home to OSU’s Stone Laboratory, the facilities on Gibraltar (including Cooke Castle) were constructed by Civil War financier Jay Cooke in the 1860s. Cooke was also known for his role in establishing Yellowstone National Park. These origins suit the course, as indicated by various accounts: “The island and its peaceful surroundings became a haven of retreat for the Cooke family and their acquaintances during the hard times of the Civil War,” and against “the rigors of the business world.” “Cooke envisioned the island residence not only as a place to commune with nature and family, but as a personal seminary,” where “he could study and discuss his religious interests with many clergy who he invited to retreat there.” ENR 367.02 returns a portion of this legacy to the island by providing students with an ideal setting for contemplation, study, and discussion of the complex and diverse religious and spiritual sources of environmental values in America, in conversation with the ecological challenges evident in the Lake Erie basin.

This course will examine the development and influence of religious thinking about the environment in America, and explore the underpinnings of environmental values in American culture. Until recently, many environmental thinkers were convinced that religion was largely a barrier to environmental citizenship in Western culture, due to the influence of theories about the anthropocentric focus of Western religion. Today, the nearly universal attention given by religious communities to environmental concerns is overturning that perception – indeed, sociologists have concluded that if anything, religion is helping the environmental cause, and many environmental leaders now see religions as crucial to solving environmental problems. Whether in the Vatican’s bid to become the world’s first carbon-neutral state, the host of environmental policy statements generated by religious denominations, the embrace of “creation care” by evangelical Christians, or the rise of faith-based environmental organizations, religious teachings and worldviews are being applied as never before to help solve environmental problems and preserve ecological integrity.

In “Religion, Ethics, and the Environment” students will closely examine these developments through lecture, discussion, activities, and written assignments. We begin by taking advantage of Stone Lab’s research setting to learn about the most significant ecological issues facing the Lake Erie basin. In the early sessions of the course, we will also explore some of the fundamental questions underlying our intellectual emphases, loyalties, affections, and convictions regarding religion and environmental citizenship. What is religion? Nature? Ethics? Science? What are people for? What is scientific knowledge? Moral knowledge? We will also examine the question of whether (or to what extent) Western Judeo-Christian traditions are responsible for modern ecological problems.

Next we will look at a range of religious environmental expressions in America, from environmentalism itself, to expressions in Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian (including mainline Protestant, Evangelical, and Catholic) traditions. In light of debates about the differences between liberal and conservative Christian views, we will examine social thought on character and virtue ethics, and ecologically relevant conceptions of sin, salvation, and cosmic reconciliation. We will also discuss *environmental (or eco-) justice* and *creation spirituality*, two other prominent approaches to religion and the environment in the United States. At the end of the course, we will reflect on the themes of Sabbath, thanksgiving, praise, and hope.

No matter what religious tradition we identify with, if any, how do we integrate our most deeply held values and beliefs with ecological facts, social realities, economic forces, and hopes for sustainability? In what ways do religion, spirituality, and faith provide cultural resources for environmental sustainability, and shape the landscape of environmental citizenship in America? These and other questions will guide our inquiry.

Prerequisites: English 110 or 110.01 or 110.03 or equivalent. Not open to students with credit for LARCH/ENR 367. No background in environmental ethics, religion, or philosophy is presupposed, although students with such background will be able to work on assigned papers at a more advanced level.

Course Format: This course benefits from the unique “immersion” format and outdoor classroom opportunities provided by the Stone Lab summer session. Classes are held from 8am-4pm on T, R, and Sat for five weeks. Three class days will involve field trips on Lake Erie to

explore ecological issues on the lake (two days) and for a reflective solo experience (one day). Classroom sessions will combine lectures and instruction with discussions of assigned readings and other topical issues. Some topics will be engaged as a Socratic dialogue, others in traditional lecture presentation; occasional guest speakers will add variety to the schedule as well. Discussions will be led by Dr. Hitzhusen, and will involve examination of course readings, including written responses to assigned texts. Students will also be given journaling time during each day of class, to reflect and write about experiences and questions encountered in the course. *Additional opportunities and objectives are detailed below for Honors students taking ENR 367.02 as an Honors Embedded course.*

Course Objectives: The main objectives of the course are as follows:

- 1) To introduce the development and diversity of religious responses to environmental concerns in North America, including trends, debates, and ideas that have shaped the field.
- 2) To develop students' capacities for critical reading, thinking, writing, and discussion; and for aesthetic and historical response and judgment regarding ethical and moral dimensions of environmental issues within American culture.
- 3) To facilitate students' reflection on how their spirituality and values shape their own engagement in environmental citizenship, through writing, discussion, exercises, and journaling.
- 4) To analyze the contribution of religion to solving environmental problems, and to explicate religious and spiritual values relevant to ecological issues in the Lake Erie basin.

As a **GEC Second Writing Course**, ENR 367.02 will help students:

1. Extend their ability to read carefully and express ideas effectively through critical analysis, discussion, and writing.
2. Further develop basic skills in expository writing and oral expression.
3. Further develop basic skills in effective communication and in accessing and using information analytically.

As a GEC Arts and Humanities "**Cultures and Ideas**" course, ENR 367.02 will help students:

1. Develop abilities to analyze, appreciate, and interpret major forms of human thought and expression.
2. Develop abilities to understand how ideas influence character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

As a GEC "**Social Diversity in the United States**" course, ENR 367.02 will help students:

1. Describe the role of religion in the pluralistic institutions and cultures of the United States.
2. Recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values regarding appreciation, tolerance, and equality of others.

Requirements and Grading: Grades will be determined on the basis of the following assignments, in accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-7-21 (100% = 1000 points):

- 1) Environmental Autobiography and Peer Review: 15% (150 points)
- 2) Final Exam: 25% (250 points)
- 3) Term Paper: 35% (350 points)
- 4) Participation: discussion, journaling, and weekly writing assignments: 25% (250 points)

1) Environmental Autobiography and Peer Review (15%)

In the first week of the course, you will write a 5-page, double-spaced environmental autobiography describing the formative experiences, values, and beliefs that make up your view of environmental citizenship (due Saturday, July 25). You will then peer-review another student's autobiography before revising your own in response to your peer reviewer's comments (due Thursday, July 30). Your grade for the assignment will be based on the final version of your essay (80%) and on the quality of your peer review (20%).

2) Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will consist of two parts: two short essays (30 minutes each) and six mini-essays (5 minutes each). One short essay and all of the mini-essays will cover specific topics from the course, and the second short essay will integrate material from the entire course.

3) Term Paper (35%)

You will be responsible for selecting one of two key environmental issues facing the Lake Erie basin as the focus of your term paper. You will prepare an 8-10 page (double spaced) paper introducing the ecological issue you've chosen, and discussing the moral and ethical dimensions of that issue, based on your own research and following upon material covered in the course. Part of your research will include a field trip to a research site highlighting your issue. As an Appendix to the paper, you will also prepare a 1-2 page "denominational policy statement" expressing, from the religious perspective of your choice, an ethically, theologically, and morally informed view of the issue. You may draw on examples of existing denominational policy statements discussed in the course for this Appendix. An outline of your paper will be due for instructor feedback on Monday, August 4. Further format and content guidelines will be handed out in class.

4) Participation: discussion, journals, and weekly writing assignments (25%)

Each student will be required to keep a journal during the course and a short writing period will be provided on each day of class for journaling. Journals will not be graded for content, but will be checked for completion. On most class days, you will be responsible for short written responses to assigned readings. The readings will complement the lecture material for each class, and discussion sessions will consist of discussion and questions related to the reading and to the week's lectures. Your participation grade will be determined by the completeness of your journal, the quality of your written responses, and your participation in discussion, in equal parts. Due to the

condensed format of the course, attendance in all classes is required: your participation grade will be significantly affected by any absences.

Honors Embedded Course Objectives and Requirements: Honors credit will be available for the following enhanced expectations and experiences, which will provide leadership opportunities and challenge students to an even deeper level of engagement with the course material. These expectations are in addition to normal course objectives and requirements.

Honors Embedded Objectives:

- 1) To provide leadership opportunities for Honors students to teach peers through experiential lessons and lead a discussion of a course reading.
- 2) To complete an individually selected term project to explore more fully some aspect of religion, ethics, and the environment and contribute to the student's growth in wisdom.

Honors Embedded Requirements:

1) Lead Class Activity and Discussion

In consultation with the instructor, prepare an experiential learning activity related to a course reading. After leading the activity with the class, you will facilitate a discussion that follows from the exercise and relates to the course reading. The activity and discussion should be approximately one hour in length.

2) Weekly Meetings With Instructor

Each week, Honors students will meet with the instructor outside of class (time tbd) to discuss course material and pursue individual questions and interests related to but beyond the scope of the class. This regular meeting time will also serve as a brainstorming, planning, and discussion-revision opportunity related to your individual term project.

3) Term Project

In lieu of the course term paper described above, you will be responsible for choosing a topic unique to your interests and preparing a 10-12 page paper due by the end of finals week, on Thursday, August 27. Your paper must relate in some significant way to the subject matter of the course as reflected in the course title and syllabus, but this leaves you with a good deal of latitude. I hope that you will find a topic that will be enjoyable and that will permit you to grow in your understanding of your own beliefs, values and moral commitments—as you interact with the worldviews, ideas, and moral views of others. Your topic must be approved by Dr. Hitzhusen before you write the paper. You will also be required to hand in an outline of your paper two weeks before the paper is due (August 10), to permit Dr. Hitzhusen to give you feedback on your topic.

Alternative formats in lieu of a paper (e.g., video project, musical project, art project) will be considered by Dr. Hitzhusen on an individual basis. Honors students should consider discussing alternative projects with Dr. Hitzhusen before the start of the term.

Honors Embedded Grade Scheme: The following revised grade scheme applies to Honors students. Grades will be determined on the basis of the following assignments, in accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-7-21 (100% = 1000 points):

- 1) Environmental Autobiography and Peer Review: 10% (100 points)
- 2) Final Exam: 20% (200 points)
- 3) Participation: discussion, journaling, weekly writing assignments, and weekly meetings with instructor: 20% (200 points)
- 4) Class Activity and Discussion Leadership: 10% (100 points)
- 5) Honors Term Project: 40% (400 points)

Carmen: This class will be administrated using Carmen; on the class website you will find the course syllabus, reading list, links to weekly homework assignments, announcements, and Points. To gain access to the Carmen website, go to <http://class.osu.edu>, sign in with your OSU ID (e.g., hitzhusen.3) and your password, and navigate to the ENR 367.02 website. You can also find a PDF copy of *the Student Guide to WebCT: The Basics* at <http://telr.osu.edu/webct/overview/basics.pdf>

Make-up Work: Make-ups for assignments will not be scheduled in the case of an unexcused absence (and in some cases, may not be rescheduled for logistical reasons). There are three situations that constitute an "excused absence" from class. They are: 1) students who participate in a *documented* University sanctioned event, 2) students who have a *documented* death in the family, and 3) students who have received *documented* medical attention for an illness. Students who will be participating in University sanctioned events must provide the instructor with a copy of the scheduled events and those classes that will be missed. This documentation must be on University letterhead, signed by the coach/supervisor, and given to the instructor within the first two weeks of the quarter.

Late Assignment Policy: To receive full credit for writing assignments, work must be turned-in on time and in condition to be evaluated. Papers with excessive errors (15 or more) will be returned for resubmission and will be treated as if they are late. Late assignments will incur a deduction of 50% of the total point value for each 24-hour period (or portion) that they are late (including weekends). In-class assignments missed because of an unexcused absence cannot be made-up or repeated.

Academic Integrity: It is our intent to treat each of you as if you are honest. We assume that whatever you say or do is done in good faith. If we suspect that you have breached that trust, our intention is to report any suspected academic misconduct through appropriate channels to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. The Ohio State University Student Handbook covers the subject should you not understand what academic misconduct is. Of course, we will be happy to discuss the topic with you on a no fault basis if we are consulted before the fact. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

Disability Services: Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Course Readings:

Required Texts:

Required readings for the course will be made available in a **course readings packet** (purchase information here), and you are expected to bring the readings packet to class for discussion purposes. **In addition, the following texts are required:**

Pollan, Michael. *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*. New York: Grove Press, 1991.
Wirzba, Norman. *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006.

Suggested Texts:

Copies of the following texts will be placed on reserve in the Stone Lab library; you are encouraged to purchase your own copy to supplement the course materials if your budget allows:

Dunlap, Thomas R. *Faith in Nature: Environmentalism as a Religious Quest*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004.
Kellert, Stephen R., and Timothy Farnham, eds. *The Good in Nature and Humanity: Connecting Science, Religion, and Spirituality with the Natural World*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2002.
Kearns, Laurel, and Catherine Keller, eds. *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.
Bouma-Prediger, Steven. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Bibliography of additional suggested readings will be provided on the Carmen course web site.

Packet Readings Bibliography (* = additional suggested readings):

Baer, Richard A. Jr. "Our Need to Control: Implications for Environmental Education." *The American Biology Teacher* (November, 1976): 473-476, 490.

Baer, Richard A. Jr. "Praise for All Things." *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 2.2 (1979): 124-133.

- Barbour, Ian. *Religion in an Age of Science*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990, 31-92.
- Berry, Wendell. *What are People For?* New York: North Point Press, 1990, 123-125.
- *Berry, Wendell. "The Ecological Crisis as a Crisis of Character." In *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1986, 17-26.
- Bouma-Prediger, Steve. "What Kind of People Ought We Be?" In *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001, 137-160.
- *Crosby, Donald A. "A Case for Religion of Nature." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 1.4 (2007): 489-582.
- Fleming, Patricia Ann. "Can Nature (Legitimately) Be Our Guide?" In *Religion and the New Ecology*, edited by David M. Lodge and Christopher Hamlin. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.
- Goodenough, Ursula. *The Sacred Depths of Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, 152-174.
- *Gottlieb, Roger S. "Religious Environmentalism: What it is, Where it's Heading and Why We Should be Going in the Same Direction." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 1.1 (2007): 81-91.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. "Character, Narrative, and Growth in the Christian Life." In *A Community of Character*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, 129-135, 145-152.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. "Toward an Ethics of Character." *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, 48-67.
- Hitzhusen, Gregory E. "Biblical Wilderness Theology: Spiritual Roots for Environmental Education." *Taproot* 17.1 (2007): 9-13.
- Hitzhusen, Gregory E. "Judeo-Christian Theology and the Environment: Moving Beyond Scepticism to New Sources for Environmental Education in the United States." *Environmental Education Research* 13.1 (2007): 55-74.
- Kinsley, David. "Buddhism: Ecological Themes." In *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995, 84-98.
- *Kinsley, David. "Christianity as Ecologically Harmful," and "Christianity as Ecologically Responsible." In *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995, 103-124.
- Kupfer, Joseph H. "Virtue and Happiness in Groundhog Day." In *Visions of Virtue in Popular Film*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999, 35-60.

- Niebuhr, Reinhold. "Man as Sinner." In *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation, Vol. I*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964, 178-207.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. "Wisdom, Grace, and Power." In *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation, Vol. II*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964, 98-126.
- Ozdemir, Ibrahim. "Toward an Understanding of Environmental Ethics from a Qur'anic Perspective." In *Islam and Ecology*, edited by Richard C. Foltz, Frederick M. Denny and Azizan Baharuddin. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003, 3-37.
- Pura, Murray. "The Divine Game of Pinzatski" *Crux* 24. 4 (December 1988): 8-10, also In *With Heart, Mind & Strength: The Best of Crux, 1979-1989*, edited by Donald M. Lewis. Langley, B.C. : Credo, 1990, 261-266.
- *Santmire, H. Paul. "Reenacting the Story Ritually: Beyond the Milieu of the Gothic Spirit." In *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000, 74-92.
- Schumacher, E.F. "Preface[s] to the 1989 Edition," and "Buddhist Economics." In *Small is Beautiful*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989, ix-xxiii, 56-66.
- The Green Bible*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008. (Selected introductory essays.)
- Tirosh-Samuels, Hava. "Introduction. Judaism and the Natural World." In *Judaism and Ecology*, edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuels. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002, xxxiii-lxii.
- *Tucker, Mary Evelyn. "Ecology, Religion & Policymaking: Survey of the Field." *Bulletin of the Boston Theological Institute* 6.2 (Spring 2007): 8-15.
- UK Lifemakers Foundation, and Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences. *Muslim Green Guide to Reducing Climate Change*. 2008.
- Upton, Charles. *Who is the Earth? How to See God in the Natural World*. San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2008, 1-12, 42-47, 90-91.
- Ware, Bishop Kallistos. "Safeguarding the Creation for Future Generations." Paper presented at The Symposium on the Adriatic Sea, "A Sea at Risk, A Unity of Purpose," June 6-10, 2002.
- White, Lynn, Jr. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-07.
- Wood, Alan. "Relativism" In *Unsettling Obligations: Essays on Reason, Reality, and the Ethics of Belief*. Stanford: CSLI Publications, 2002, 131-157.

ENR 367.02: Religion, Ethics, and the Environment
 OSU/SENR Course Offering at Stone Laboratory, 5 credit hours
 Summer 2009, July 23-August 22

Schedule:

Key: J = journaling time; D = discussion of readings

Tue	Thur	Sat
<p>July:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Class #</p>	<p>23: Intro Class Course Overview Expectations Exercise Assignments overview Autobiography Exercise Intro Lecture and DVD Journaling</p> <p>Find journaling locations 1</p>	<p>25: Religion & Ecology Basics J; Lynn White Thesis Lecture, D (White; Hitzhusen) Denominational Env'l Policies Communication Workshop Expository Writing; Peer Review</p> <p>Eco-Autobiographies due 2</p>
<p>28: Lake Erie Ecology Basics J; Lake Erie Basin issues (Guest) Religion, Ethics, Nature: What are People for? D (Berry) Second Nature, D (Pollan)</p> <p>Pollan response due 3</p>	<p>30: 1st Field Trip to Research Site J; Research-issue synopsis What is Science? D (Barbour) Online research: Lake Erie basin issues</p> <p>Barbour response due; Eco-Autobio revision due 4</p>	<p>August: 1: 2nd Field Trip to Research Site J; Research-issue synopsis Epistemology: scientific knowledge, moral knowledge, D (Baer, Fleming) Online research: L. Erie issues</p> <p>Fleming response due 5</p>
<p>4: American Religious Environmentalism J; Relativism, D (Wood) Diversity of American Response: stewardship, eco-justice, creation spirituality; Native American Abrahamic sources: Genesis of Ecotheology; wilderness theology, D (Hitzhusen)</p> <p>Wood response, outlines due 6</p>	<p>6: Abrahamic Traditions J; Judaism, D (Tirosch-Samuelson) Judaism & Ecology Exercises (Biers-Ariel et al.) Islam, D (Ozdemir) Muslims and Climate Change, D (IFEES)</p> <p>Tirosch-Samuelson response due Ozdemir response due 7</p>	<p>8: Abrahamic Traditions J; Protestant, Catholic & Evangelical Christian Responses Other Christian Responses, D (Ware) Sin, Grace, and Cosmic Reconciliation, D (Niebuhr)</p> <p>Niebuhr response due Ware response due 8</p>
<p>11: Eastern & Other American Traditions J; Buddhism, D Buddhist Economics, D (Schumacher) Religious <i>Environmentalism</i>, D (Dunlap); Environmental Justice</p> <p>Kinsley response due Goodenough response due 9</p>	<p>13: Solo Individual solo reflection and journaling day Location tba (shuttle to smaller island)</p> <p>Upton reading; Pura reading Term papers due 10</p>	<p>15: Environmental Virtue J; Vision, Character, Virtue, D (Bouma-Prediger) Environmental Virtue, D (Hauerwas) Groundhog Day, film and D (Kupfer)</p> <p>Hauerwas response due Bouma-Prediger response due 11</p>
<p>18: Sabbath & Divine Play Sabbath, D (Wirzba) Praise, D (Baer) Celebration and Beauty</p> <p>Wirzba response due Baer response due 12</p>	<p>20: Conclusions Final lecture Appreciations in natural media Final exam review</p> <p>Revised term papers due 13</p>	<p>22: Final Exam Stone Lab Term 2 ends</p> <p>Final exam in-class 14</p>
<p>(25) OSU exam week</p>	<p>(27) Honors Term Projects Due</p>	