

# Religion & Nature

Dr. Bron Taylor; Religion 6167, section 6536, Fall 2007  
Core Seminar, Graduate Program in Religion and Nature, The University of Florida

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# Religion & Nature

Graduate Seminar, Religion 6167, Section 6536, Fall 2007

## Syllabus

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## Purpose and Objectives

This course explores theoretical approaches and understandings regarding the complex relationships between ecosystems, religions and cultures. It will prepare religion graduate students to make informed decisions regarding the unique contributions they might make to the nascent and emerging “religion and nature” or “religion and ecology” field. It will enable other graduate students to appreciate the extent to which the “religion” variable is involved in shaping nature-related attitudes and behaviors, and to integrate the study of religion into their own chosen fields, whether these are more theoretically or practically inclined.

While the course will examine religious environmental ethics through a variety of critical lenses and such subjects will certainly be discussed regularly, the coursework and focus of classroom discussions will primarily be scientific rather than normative: the effort will be to understand what has been and is going on in the realm of religions and nature, and how perceptions of nature and religion interactions are understood and contested by scholars, rather than upon what we think ought to occur. Ethics is the focus of another of the core, Religion and Nature seminars, as well as of a variety of electives offered.

The course will draw on a number of sources. Introductions to a variety of theoretical approaches, and background articles on a wide range of nature-related religious phenomena, will be provided in readings from *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (2005). Books and articles works by key figures will provide an opportunity for in-depth exposure to some of the approaches discussed in the materials introduced in the encyclopedia. Guest scholars will serve as resource people during the course.

The course shall be conducted in collaboration with its participants and will be in a seminar format. This syllabus is, therefore, tentative. It may be revised during the course and updated at the course website. The online version will be the one governing the course, including its schedule, readings, and requirements. It should be consulted weekly. To further facilitate communication, students must provide a valid email address and download messages every 48 hours or so during the semester, so as to not miss important announcements or requests for help from other course participants.

This syllabus provides the usual course outline, assignments, and grading information, as well as extended introductions and resources to explore further, beyond what is possible in this course, its major conundrums and themes. By doing, it also provides a starting point for a variety of research projects pertinent to this course and the study of religion, nature, and culture more generally. This syllabus is subject to modification as we, working together, discover additional or superior resources to consider. Course assignments will include intensive reading and the preparation of critical analyses of them prior to class, written responses to periodically-given, take-home essay questions, and a major research paper (or in some, negotiated cases, through a take-home final exam). Details will appear in subsequent versions of this syllabus.

## Required Texts

- Burkert, Walter. *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Berkes, Fikret. *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management*. Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis, 1999.
- Glacken, Clarence. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.
- Rappaport, Roy A. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Worster, Donald. *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1993 (second edition). (1977 first edition is acceptable.)
- Shepard, Paul. *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*. San Francisco: Island Press, 1998.

## Course Outline in Five Modules

- 1) Nature as the Habitat of Religion and Culture
  - Biology and the Roots of Religion & Ecological Approaches to the Study of Religion
  - Primate Spirituality, Paleolithic Religions, and the “Worship of Nature”
- 2) World Environmental History & Religion
  - Agriculture and The Birth of the Gods
  - Occidental History, Religions, and Nature
  - Asian Civilizations, Religions, and Nature
- 3) Scientific Paradigms and the Transformation of “Religion and Nature” Discourses
- 4) “Religion and Nature” in twentieth century scholarship (from *the Sacred and the Profane* to “Ecological Anthropology” and “Religion and Ecology”)
  - Mircea Eliade, cultural geography, and theories of ‘sacred space’
  - Religions as adaptive and maladaptive ecological strategies.
  - Environmental Concern, Religious Studies, the “Religion and Ecology” field, and debates about the environmental tendencies of religious types.
  - Religion’s role in the environmental & social collapse; environmental reform?
- 5) Religion, Nature, and the Future of Religion and Nature
  - Social Scientific Perspectives on Environmentalism, Nature, and Religion, from Quantitative Data to Colin Campbell’s “Cultic Milieu” Theory.
  - Green Nazis and the Shadow Side of Nature Religions.
  - Contemporary Construction of Nature Religions and Pagan Spiritualities
  - Secularization Theories and ‘Spiritualities of Connection’ to Nature.

## Course Assignments

1. Consistent, quality preparation for class by reading, taking notes, and completing weekly assignments (20% of course grade).
2. Preparation and presentation of the designated “Special Assignment” reading (5%)
3. Two take-home essay exams (25% each)
4. Final research paper or review essay (as negotiated with instructor) (25%).

## Weekly Reading Assignments

One of the most important skills for a scholar to master is being able to understand the most important aspects various writings and being able to communicate the key points to readers and students. This course is structured to enhance these skills. Nearly every week you will be asked to write a 500-750 word review of that week's readings. As you read, these are the questions you should be sure you can answer before moving from section to section and author to author:

- 1) What are the main questions the author is trying to answer?
- 2) What are author's main arguments in this regard?
- 3) What sorts of evidence does the author muster in advancing this perspective?
- 4) Who (individuals, groups, schools of thought) are the main proponents of views the author is defending or contesting? In other words, who are his or her intellectual allies and adversaries? (In this course, more specifically: What are the main approaches to understanding the relationships between religion and nature that the author is explicitly or implicitly promoting or criticizing?)
- 5) What are the chief objections that these others would raise about the author's argument and evidence?
- 6) What do the people on the various sides of these arguments think is at stake? Put simply, why does it matter, if it does, and if it does not, why do they *think* it does?

Discussion in class will be, first and foremost, a process of wrestling with these questions. Come well prepared to do so.

## Writing Quality

It is not possible to separate the quality of one's thinking from its written expression. Evaluation of written work will reflect this so it is strongly recommended that all students review and consult regularly the course's [writing well](#) primer.

## "Special Assignment" readings & Exams

These will be explained in class. Dates for exams are indicated in the weekly schedule and special assignment presentations and scheduling will be negotiated with the instructor.

## Research Paper

You will write a research paper (or in some, negotiated cases a review essay) in which you identify and analyze one or more scholarly approaches to understand the relationships among what people various call "religion," "culture", and "nature." Given the extensive reading list of the course itself, the expectation is not that you will write a long paper, but rather, that you will select an area you're most interested in and read as deeply into it as time allows, writing a 5,000-10,000 word paper in which you explain the approach(es) explored and whether and why you find it/them compelling. This can provide you with a platform for further deepening your engagement with a subfield so that you could extend this interest into future work. You will make a 15 minute presentation of what you've learned in class.

## Weekly Schedule With Themes & Assignments

Arrive at class, and at all subsequent sessions, having read the readings appearing under the date for that class and following any other assignments specified.

### Module I: Nature as the Habitat of Religion and Culture

- “Religion and Nature” as a field
- Biology and the Roots of Religion; and Ecological Approaches to the Study of Religion
- Primate Spirituality, Paleolithic Religions, and the “Worship of Nature”

*Introduction: We begin this course by introducing the “Religion and Nature” field and illuminating how the graduate program in Religion and Nature seeks to explore it. This module continues by introducing evolutionary/ecological approaches to the complex relationships between Homo sapiens and their habitats. This module, although brief, is critically important and will undergird much of the subsequent readings and discussion.*

### August 28 ~ Introducing “Religion” and “Nature”

#### Assignments

- 1) Come at class ready to discuss all this week’s readings *in depth*.

#### Readings:

Bron Taylor, “[Introduction](#),” *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. This provides a broad overview of the religion and nature field. Recommended also: the [Project History](#), and [Readers Guide](#).

Bron Taylor, [Exploring Religion, Nature and Culture: Introducing the Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture](#), *JSRNC* 1.1 (2007): 5-14.

Kocku von Stuckrad, [Finding Data: Some Reflections on Ontologies and Normativities](#)

Adrian Ivakhiv, [Religion, Nature and Culture: Theorizing the Field](#)

Stewart Guthrie, [Opportunity, Challenge and a Definition of Religion](#)

Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature" in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980).

**Required Core Reading:** Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (1-55).

#### Recommended:

Joseph Bulbulia, “[The cognitive and evolutionary psychology of religion](#)” *Biology and Philosophy* 19: 655-86, 2004.

Continue with:

Background and Comparative Readings (bold are the most important): **[Animism](#)**;  
Anthropologists; [Goodall, Jane](#); [Primate Spirituality](#).

### September 4 ~ Religion and Nature in Evolutionary/Ecological Context

#### Assignments

- 1) By midnight 2 September send by mail attachment a 500-750 word analysis of the argument in Burkert, relating it to the encyclopedia entries you have read. Come to class ready to discuss all this week's readings *in depth*.
- 2) Be prepared to present ideas for special readings assignments; and all assigned readings, below.

### Readings:

Bron Taylor, "[Ecology and Nature Religions](#) from the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (2nd ed., 2005)

Larry Sullivan, "[Worship of Nature](#)" from in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (2nd ed., 2005)

Steven Kellert, [Connecting with Creation: the Convergence of Nature, Religion, Science and Culture](#)

Continue with:

[Background and Comparative Readings from the ERN: Hunting and the Origins of Religion; Magic](#); Paleolithic Religions and Paleolithic Art; "Rock Art"; Wonder toward Nature.

[Required Core Readings](#): Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (56-179).

### [Special Assignment Readings](#):

Frazer, Sir James George. *The Golden Bough: A History of Myth and Religion*. London: Chancellor Press, 1994. [Presenter: Dr. Taylor]

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Worship of Nature*. London: MacMillian, 1926. [Presenter: Dr. Taylor]

### Web Resources

[Pascal Boyer's website](#) and expanding cognitive science website, "[Experimental Studies of Supernatural and Religious Concepts](#)"

### [Module I: Further and Future Reading ~ Evolution and Religion \(focus on origins and the emergence of the scholarly discussion\)](#)

Atran, Scott. *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Bloch, Maurice. *Prey Into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Boyer, Pascal. *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1994.

Boyer, Pascal. *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*. New York: Basic, 2002.

Burhenn, Herbert. "Ecological Approaches to the Study of Religion." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 9, no. 2 (1997): 111-26.

Burkert, Walter. *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Cauvin, Jacques. *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture*. Translated by Trevor Watkins. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Dennett, Daniel C. *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*. New York City: Viking, 2006.

Frazer, Sir James George. *The Golden Bough: A History of Myth and Religion*. London: Chancellor Press, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Worship of Nature*. London: MacMillian, 1926.

Guthrie, Stewart. *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Hultkrantz, Ake. "Ecology of Religion: Its Scope and Methodology." In *Science of Religion Studies in Methodology*, ed. Lauri Honko, 221-36. Berlin: Mouton, 1979.

Kellert, Stephen R. and Edward O. Wilson, eds. *The Biophilia Hypothesis*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1993.

Olson, Carl. "Chapter 3: The Quest for the Origins of Religion." In *Theory and Method in the Study of Religion*, ed. Carl Olson, 49-99. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. Chapter 9: "Ecological/Biological Approaches." In *Theory and Method in the Study of Religion*, ed. Carl Olson, 439-75. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.

- Wilson, David Sloan. *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society*. Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 2002.
- Wilson, Edward Osborne. *Biophilia*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000.

## Module II: World Environmental History & Religion

- Occidental History, Religions, and Nature
- Asian Civilizations, Religions, and Nature

*Introduction: We have thus far seen some ways in which an evolutionary approach can be deployed to wonder about the origins of religion and to consider the importance of nature as the habitat in which humans wonder about, make sense of, and cope with, their wide, wild world. An examination with ecological lenses of the emergence and evolution of “occidental” and “oriental” civilizations, suggests that, as religions emerged, split, fought, lived, died, splintered, and fused, nature was more than a physical resource for the combatants; nature was a wellspring for reflection, a ubiquitous symbolic resource, the very humus out of which religious life emerged and grew. This did not lead, however, to an ethical valuing of nature. Indeed, a case can be made that while religions were inevitably and inexorably rooted in nature, the more “civilized” they became, the less intrinsically valuable nature became. Instead, the world became a place of religious trial in a broad narrative in which the climax of the story was, in one way or another, divine rescue from this world.*

### September 11 ~ Ancient Occidental Civilizations

#### Assignment

- 1) Be prepared to discuss all readings to date. By midnight 9 September send by mail attachment a 500-750 word analysis of Glacken’s treatment of the Ancient World; with reference to other of this weeks readings where illuminating.

Background and Comparative Readings: Burhenn, Herbert. “Ecological Approaches to the Study of Religion.” *Method and theory in the study of religion* 9, no. 2 (1997): 111-26; *From the Encyclopedia: \*Ecology and Religion; Creation Myths of the Ancient World; Creation Stories in the Hebrew Bible; Delphic Oracle; Domestication; Egypt–ancient; Egypt–pre-Islamic; Greco-Roman World; Greece–Classical; Greek Paganism; Mesopotamia–Ancient; Ovid’s Metamorphoses; Roman Britain; Roman Natural Religion; Roman Religion and Empire.*

Required Core Readings: Glacken, Clarence. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. Part I, “The Ancient World” (1-168).

Special Assignment Reading: Luke Johnston on David Sloan Wilson’s *Darwin’s Cathedral*.

### September 18 ~ Occidental Religions through the Middle Ages

#### Assignment:

- 1) Be prepared to discuss all readings to date. By midnight 16 September send by mail attachment a 500-750 word analysis of the Glacken’s treatment of the Christian Middle Ages.”

Background and Comparative Readings: *From the ERN, essential readings in bold.* Eden and other Gardens; **Eden's Ecology**; Hebrew Bible; Jewish Intertestamental Literature; \***Judaism**; Christianity (1) – Introduction *through* Christianity (6b2)–Greek Orthodoxy; \***Book of Nature**; \***Natural Law and Natural Rights**; **Islam**; Muhammad; The Qur'an; Gardens in Islam.

Required Core Readings: Glacken, Clarence. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. Part II, "The Christian Middle Ages" 171-351.

Special Assignment Reading: *Boyer's Explaining Religion*

Further and Future Reading:

Foltz, Richard C., Frederick M. Denny and Azizan Baharuddin, eds. *Islam and ecology: a bestowed trust*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Hessel, Dieter T. and Rosemary Reuther. *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Tirosh-Samuelson, Hava, ed. *Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed World*. Religions of the World and Ecology. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002.

## September 25 ~ Religions Originating in Asia

Assignments:

1. Complete previous Module II readings and those listed immediately below.
2. Be prepared to discuss the key dimensions of Asian religions that seem to promote or hinder environmentally beneficent behavior.
3. **Take Home Exam's distributed; due BEFORE CLASS, 2 October. Those not in attendance lose ½ grade on their take home exam; Those late lose ½ each day (cumulative) it is late.**

Required Core Readings: *All readings from the ERN, essential readings in bold.* *India and South Asia:* **India; Hinduism, Jainism**; Ahimsa; Bhagavadgita; Dharma–Hindu; Jataka Tales; Prakriti; Tantra; Yoga and Ecology; (*Buddhism, originating and spreading from India*): **Buddhism; Buddhism–East Asia; Buddhism–Tibetan; Zen Buddhism; Japanese Religions**; Buddhahood of Grasses and Trees; Indra's Net; (*Chinese Religions*): **Chinese Traditional Concepts of Nature; Confucianism; Daoism**; Creatures' Release in Chinese Buddhism; Martial Arts.

Special Assignment Reading: *Guthrie's Faces in the Clouds*.

Further and Future Reading:

Bernard, Rosemarie. *Shinto*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Chapple, Christopher Key, ed. *Jainism and Ecology*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Chapple, Christopher Key and Mary Evelyn Tucker. *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Girardot, N. J., James Miller and Xiaogan Liu. *Daoism and Ecology: Ways within a Cosmic Landscape*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Tucker, Mary Evelyn and Duncan Ryuken Williams, eds. *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997.

## October 2 ~ Emerging Civilizations

Assignments:

- 1) **Take Home Exam's due; see above**
- 2) Read ahead into module III if possible.

Special Assignment Reading: Suggestions: Eisenberg or Lansing (below) or Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Module II: Further and Future Reading ~ focus on emerging civilizations

- Carrasco, David, ed. *The Imagination of Matter: Religion and Ecology in Mesoamerican Traditions*. Oxford: BAR International Series, 1989.
- Eisenberg, Evan. *The Ecology of Eden*. New York: Random House, 1998.
- Harris, Marvin. "The Myth of the Sacred Cow." In *Man, Culture, and Animals*, eds. Anthony Leeds and Andrew P. Vaya, 217-28. Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*. New York: Random House, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Cultures*. New York: Random House, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle." *Current Anthropology* 7 (1966): 51-66.
- Lansing, J. Stephen. *Priests and Programmers: Technologies of Power in the Engineered Landscape of Bali*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Lansing, J. Stephen and James N. Kremer. "A Socioecological Analysis of Balinese Water Temples." In *The Cultural Dimension of Development: Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, eds. D. M. Warren, L. Jan Slikkerveer and David Brokensha, 258-68. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1995.
- Lodrick, Deryck O. *Sacred Cows, Sacred Places: Origins and Survivals of Animal Homes in India*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1981.
- Oelschlaeger, Max. *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Simoons, Frederick J. "Questions in the Sacred Cow Controversy." *Current Anthropology* 20 (1979): 467-93.

### **Module III: Scientific Paradigms and the Transformation of "Religion and Nature" Discourses**

*Introduction: The advent of natural science through a monkeywrench into the mainstreams of religious perception and identity by, as much as anything else, challenging human understanding of nature itself. The scientific worldview, where it took root, eroded earlier religious understandings and certainties, transforming both religions themselves, and kindling an entire, new, discussion of the relationships between nature and religion. Broadly understood, the encounter between "Religion and Science" has had far reaching impacts that have only just begun, and whose impacts are only in their infancy. Among the most dramatic results is the grafting of scientific understandings onto already existing religious forms, and the invention of entirely new religious forms based on these new understandings.*

*This and the subsequent two modules explore the cultural earthquake brought on by the transformation of scientific paradigms, and wrestles with questions regarding the possible long-term impacts, including environmental impacts, of these developments.*

#### **October 9 ~ Science, Religion, and "Paradigm Shifts"**

##### *Assignment:*

- 1) Be prepared to discuss all readings to date. By midnight 7 October send by email attachment a 500-750 word analysis of the periods covered in the assigned readings by Glacken and Worster.
- 2) Be prepared to explain to the class the significance of the required readings below in "background and comparative readings"

**Background and Comparative Readings:** *From the ERN: Philosophy of Nature; Western Esotericism;* (*physics*): Bateson, Gregory; Berman, Morris; Bohm, David; Burroughs, John; Capra, Fritjof; **Chaos; Complexity Theory; Darwin, Charles;** Einstein, Albert; Linnaeus, Carl; Pauli, Wolfgang; Peat, F. David; Prigogine, Ilya; Sagan, Carl; Sheldrake, Rupert (*biosphere and ecosystem science*): **Darwin, Charles; Haeckel, Ernst; Holism; Leopold, Aldo; Carson, Racheal; Gaia; Gaian Pilgrimage;** Ouspensky, Pyotr Demianovich; Pantheism; Panentheism; Smuts, Jan Christiaan; Thoreau, Henry David; **Wilson, Edward O.** (*reactionary responses*): **Creationism and Creation Science;** Wise Use Movements.

### Required Core Readings:

Glacken, Clarence. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, part III “Early Modern Times” (read carefully: 355-497, then read quickly and/or peruse the rest of the volume to discern its main argument).

Worster, Donald. *Nature’s Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press. Read the entire book, but especially carefully Parts I, and III - VI. (If you have the first edition, borrow the second edition and read part VI (pp. 340-433), which is an expansion of the Epilogue in the first edition.

Special Assignment Reading: (Suggestions): Gunderson, Lance H. and C. S. Holling. *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Systems of Humans and Nature*; James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (NY: Penguin, 1987); Bramwell, Anna. *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History*; Midgley, Mary. *Evolution as a Religion*.

### Module III: Further and Future Reading ~ Scientific Paradigms, Religion, and Nature

Bateson, Gregory. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine, 1972.

Berman, Morris. *The Reenchantment of the World*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Berry, Thomas. *The Dream of the Earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988.

Bramwell, Anna. *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.

Capra, Fritjof. *The Tao of Physics*. third ed. Boston: 1975; reprint, Boston: Shambhala, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

Fortey, Richard. *Life: A Natural History of the First Four Billion Years of Life on Earth*. New York: Knopf, 1998.

Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. New York: Penguin, 1987.

Golley, Frank Benjamin. *A History of the Ecosystem Concept in Ecology*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993.

Gunderson, Lance H. and C. S. Holling. *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Systems of Humans and Nature*. Covelo, CA: Island Press, 2002.

Heisenberg, Werner. *Physics and Philosophy*. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Lovelock, James. *Gaia: A New Look At Life on Earth*. revised ed. Oxford: 1979; reprint, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Macy, Joanna. *World As Lover, World As Self*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1991.

Midgley, Mary. *Evolution as a Religion*. London: Routledge (1985, revised with new introduction, 2002).

McGrath, Alister E. *Science and Religion: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999.

Odum, Howard T. *Environment, Power, and Society*. New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1971.

Primavesi, Anne. *Gaia's Gift*. London & New York: Routledge, 2003.

Real, L. A. and J. H. Brown, eds. *Foundations of Ecology*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Sagan, Carl. *Carl Sagan’s the Cosmic Connection*. second ed. 1974; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Swimme, Brian and Thomas Berry. *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era: A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992.

### **Module IV: “Religion and Nature” in twentieth-century scholarship (from the Sacred and the Profane and “Ecological Anthropology” to “Religion and Ecology”)**

- **Religions as adaptive and maladaptive ecological strategies (with special reference to the indigenous societies and “traditional ecological knowledge.”**
- **Mircea Eliade, cultural geography, and theories of ‘sacred space’**
- **Environmental Concern, Religious Studies, the “Religion and Ecology” field, and debates about the environmental tendencies of the “world religions” of the east and west.**
- **Religion’s role in the environmental & social collapse; and environmental reform?**

*Introduction: not only were there upheavals in science during the 20th century, anthropology and religious studies went through their own dramatic transformations. Among the most significant that were directly nature-relevant were analyses of the importance of human perceptions of sacred space, and the role of such perceptions in religious and environmental practices. In the latter part of the 20th century, some anthropologists and religious studies scholars began not only to analyze the relationships between religions, cultures, and environments, but they began to, in some cases explicitly, in others implicitly, promote what they had come to believe were environmentally beneficent forms of religion. This module explores these developments, correlating them with the changing scientific paradigms encountered in the previous one, which sets the stage for asking in the next module about the future of nature-related religion and its likely impacts on nonhuman nature.*

## October 16 ~ Religion, Ritual and Ecological Adaptation

### Assignments:

1. Be aware that next week you have double length readings paper due on ecological anthropology and the work of Roy Rappaport
2. Be prepared to summarize up front in class the readings from the ERN and Rappaport's reading, thus far.

**Background and Comparative Readings:** \***Ecological Anthropology;** \***Ecology and Religion; Ethnobotany; Evolutionary Biology, Religion, and Stewardship;** Harris, Marvin; Rappaport, Roy; A Religio-Ecological Perspective on Religion and Nature; Sky.

**Required Core Reading:** Rappaport, Roy A. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (chs. 1-6, pp. 1-215)

**Special Assignment Readings: (Suggestion):** Ellen Messer and Michael Lambek. *Ecology and the Sacred: Engaging the Anthropology of Roy A. Rappaport*. University of Michigan Press, 2001 [Presenters TBA]; Jared Diamond's *Collapse*, esp, prologue, ch 6-9, and part IV [Dr. Taylor Presentation]

## October 23 ~ Indigenous Peoples and “Traditional Ecological Knowledge”

### Assignments

1. Bring copies of an outline of your proposed research paper to class and be prepared to discuss it.
2. By midnight 21 October send by email attachment a 1000-1,500 word summary/analysis of the perspective of Roy Rappaport; ideally with reference to the his place in the emerging field of Ecological (or Environmental) Anthropology.
3. Be prepared to discuss Rappaport's book and the following readings.

**Background and Comparative Readings:** **Mother Earth; Native American Languages;** Noble Savage (various); \* **Traditional Ecological Knowledge;** Traditional Environmental Knowledge among Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

### Required Core Readings:

Rappaport, Roy A. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (chs 7-14, pp. 216-461).

**Special Assignment Reading: (Suggestion):** David Abram. *The Spell of the Sensuous*.

## October 30 ~ “Sacred Ecology” and Sacred Geography

### Assignments

- 1) Bring copies of an outline of your proposed research paper to class and be prepared to discuss it.
- 2) By midnight 28 October send by email attachment 750 word summary/analysis of the perspective in Sacred Ecology and the fault lines between it and American Indians as “First Ecologists” and other, relevant, ERN entries you have read.

**Background and Comparative Readings: American Indians as "First Ecologists";** Nobel Savage; Sacred Geography in Native North America; **Sacred Mountains;** Sacred Groves in Africa; Sacred Sites in England; **Sacred Space/Place;** Savages.

**Required Core Readings on Sacred Ecology (complete):**

Berkes, Fikret. *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management*. Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis, 1999, read I, pp. 1-55 (especially well), then more rapidly, parts II & III, pp. 59-183.

**Special Assignment Reading. (Suggestion):** Krech, Shepard (3rd). *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. New York: Norton, 1999; or the special issue on Animism & Conservation in the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 1/4 (December 2007).

**Further and Future Reading:**

Bender, Barbara and Margot Winer, eds. *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place*. Oxford & New York: Berg, 2001.

Carmichael, David L., Jane Hubert, Brian Reeves and Audhild Schanche. *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994.

Chidester, David and David Linenthal, eds. *American Sacred Space*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Gregory, Derek. *Geographical Imaginations*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1994.

Hirsh, Eric and Michael O'Hanlon. *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Ivakhiv, Adrian. *Claiming Sacred Ground: Pilgrims and Politics at Glastonbury and Sedona*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Jones, Lindsay. *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison -- Monumental Occasions: Reflections on the Eventfulness of Religious Architecture (V. 1 of 2)*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Lane, Beldon. *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality*. New York: Paulist, 1988.

Schultes, R. E. and S. Reis. *Ethnobotany: Evolution of a Discipline*. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1995.

Schultes, R. E. "Reasons for Ethnobotanical Conservation." In *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: A Collection of Essays*, ed. R. E. Johannes. Geneva: International Union for the Conservation of Nature, 1989.

Sears, John. *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Shepard, Paul. *Man in the Landscape: A Historic View of the Esthetics of Nature*. second ed. 1967; reprint, College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1991.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. "Discrepancies Between Environmental Attitude and Behaviour: Examples From Europe and China." *The Canadian Geographer* 12 (1968): 176-91.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Landscapes of Fear*. Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1980.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Turner, Victor. "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 166-230, in *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: symbolic action in human society* (Cornell University Press, 1974).

Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1975.

## **November 6 ~ "Sacred Space" Theories, and Environmental Conservation (Recognizing/Constructing/Contesting Natural Places as Sacred Spaces)**

### *Assignments*

- 1) By midnight 4 November send by mail attachment a 500-750 word analysis of the various perspectives in this week's readings. Do this in two parts: (1) discuss the fault lines between Eliade and his progeny, religion scholars interested in promoting green religion and their critics. (2) Summarize the faultlines between Chidester and Linenthal in their introduction to *American Sacred Space* and other theorists on sacred space, including Eliade and those discussed by Anttonen.

**Background and Comparative Readings:** Earth Mysteries; Eliade, Mircea; \*[Religious Studies and Environmental Concern](#) (and adjacent entry): **Critical Perspectives on "Religions of the World and Ecology"; Religious Environmentalist Paradigm;** Wilson, Edward O.

**Required Core Readings:** David Chidester and Edward Linenthal, "[Introduction](#)" and Bron Taylor, "[Resacralizing Earth: Pagan Environmentalism and the Restoration of Turtle Island](#)" in *American Sacred Space* (ed. Chidester & Linenthal); Veikko Anttonen, "[Sacred](#)" in W. Braun and R. T. McCutcheon, eds., *Guide to the Study of Religion*.

**Special Assignment Reading possibilities:** Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*; J. Z. Smith, *To Take Place*. Lane, Beldon. *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality*; Ingold, Tim. *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge, 2000.

### Further and Future Reading ~ Evolution and Religion (focus on indigenous societies and 'traditional ecological knowledge')

Anderson, Eugene N. *Ecologies of the Heart: Emotion, Belief, and the Environment*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Berkes, Fikret. *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management*. Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis, 1999.

Berkes, Fikret, Johan Colding and Carl Folke. *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: Building Resilience for Complexity and Change*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Berkes, Fikret and Carl Folke. *Linking Social and Ecological Systems*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Bloch, Maurice. "People Into Places: Zafimaniry Concepts of Clarity." In *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*, eds. Eric Hirsh and Michael O'Hanlon, 63-77. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Prey Into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Carrasco, David, ed. *The Imagination of Matter: Religion and Ecology in Mesoamerican Traditions*. Oxford: BAR International Series, 1989.

Eisenberg, Evan. *The Ecology of Eden*. New York: Random House, 1998.

Grim, John A. *Indigenous Traditions and Ecology: The Interbeing of Cosmology and Community*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Harris, Marvin. "The Myth of the Sacred Cow." In *Man, Culture, and Animals*, eds. Anthony Leeds and Andrew P. Vaya, 217-28. Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*. New York: Random House, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Cultures*. New York: Random House, 1977.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle." *Current Anthropology* 7 (1966): 51-66.

Hughes, J. Donald. *Pan's Travail: Environmental Problems of the Ancient Greeks and Romans*. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Ingold, Tim. *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Krech, Shepard (3rd). *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. New York: Norton, 1999.

Lansing, J. Stephen. *Priests and Programmers: Technologies of Power in the Engineered Landscape of Bali*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Lansing, J. Stephen and James N. Kremer. "A Socioecological Analysis of Balinese Water Temples." In *The Cultural Dimension of Development: Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, eds. D. M. Warren, L. Jan Slikkerveer and David Brokensha, 258-68. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1995.

- Lawson, E. Thomas and Robert M. McCauley. *Rethinking religion: connecting cognition and culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Lodrick, Deryck O. *Sacred Cows, Sacred Places: Origins and Survivals of Animal Homes in India*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1981.
- Messer, Ellen and Michael Lambek. *Ecology and the Sacred: Engaging the Anthropology of Roy A. Rappaport*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.
- Moran, Emilio, ed. *The Ecosystem Approach in Anthropology*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1990.
- Oelschlaeger, Max. *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Rappaport, Roy A. *Ecology, Meaning and Religion*. Richmond, California: North Atlantic, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Simoons, Frederick J. "Questions in the Sacred Cow Controversy." *Current Anthropology* 20 (1979): 467-93.

## **Module V: Religion, Nature, and the Future of Religion and Nature**

1. Social Scientific Perspectives on Environmentalism, Nature, and Religion, from Quantitative Data to Colin Campbell's "Cultic Milieu" Theory.
2. Green Nazis and the Shadow Side of Nature Religions.
3. Contemporary Construction of Nature Religions and Pagan Spiritualities
4. Secularization Theories and 'Spiritualities of Connection' to Nature.

*Introduction: Clearly, during the second half of the 20th century some lay observers and scholarly analysts were hoping for, and in some cases romantically expecting, a revitalization or invention of religious forms and practices that would lead human cultures toward environmentally sustainable lifeways and livelihoods. During the same period, more cautious voices arose questioning whether religion could evolve into an environmentally progressive social force, or even wondering whether religion is an important variable in culture-nature interactions. Other voices expressed alarm at the apparent growth of nature-related spiritualities, noting that such religion has sometimes been closely connected to pernicious political ideologies such as Nazism. Still others wondered whether secularization, fueled by the slow if steady advance of scientific understandings of the universe, would erode religious belief altogether, and thus the influence of nature-related religion. And yet others asserted that the future of religion, if there is to be any millennia from now, would and must be fused to such scientific understandings. All of this raises anew questions about the future of religion.*

*There is already some evidence of scientific understandings of the universe being consecrated in contemporary religion. In some cases sacralized scientific narratives are grafted onto pre-existing religious forms while in other cases they are emerging and evolving with little explicit reference to previous forms. The question with which we leave this course is whether such forms of "religion" or "spirituality" are likely to be main streams in the future of religion, or rather, small this tributaries from the mainstreams, which then dry up quickly. The answer to that question is one that may well preoccupy much future scholarship inquiring into the nature of the relationships between human cultures, religions, and environments. The answer may also play a role in whether and to what extent humans continue to simplify and degrade the earth's living systems.*

**November 13 ~ Social Science, Religion and Nature**  
(and considering Nature Religions and their "Shadow Side")

*Assignments*

- 1) Prepare careful notes and be ready to spontaneously summarize and discuss this weeks readings.

**Background and Comparative Readings:** ATWA, Corrington, Robert; Elves and Land Spirits in Pagan Norse Religion; \*Fascism; Heathenry (Ásatrú); Odinism; Paganism; Neo-paganism and Ethnic Nationalism in Eastern Europe; Protestant Ethic; Savitri, Devi; \*[Social Science on Religion and Nature](#); \*White, Lynn—Thesis of; Wicca; Unitarianism.

**Required Core Readings:** From Kaplan and Lööw, eds. *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization*. (Lanham, Maryland: Altamira, 2002): Bron Taylor's, "[Diggers, Wolves, Ents, Elves, and Expanding Universes](#): Bricolage, Religion and Violence from Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front to the anti-globalization resistance (26-76).

**Recommended Reading:** Tuan, Yi Fu. "Discrepancies between environmental attitude and behavior: examples from Europe and China" from the *Canadian Geographer* 12(3): 176-91, 1968. Glenda Wall, "Barriers to individual environmental action: the influence of attitudes and social experiences" *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 95(32) [google/online]. Catherine Albanese, *Nature Religion in America*.

**Special Assignment and Extra-Credit Reading: (Suggestion):** Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture*. New York & London: Routledge, 2003. Michael York, *Pagan Theology*. Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 2004

**Further Reading ~ Constructive Nature Religion:**

Corrington, Robert S. *Nature's Religion*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997.

Crosby, Donald A. *A Religion of Nature*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2002.

Pike, Sarah. *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

York, Michael. *Pagan Theology*. Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 2004.

**Further Reading ~ Right-Wing Ideology and Religions of Nature:**

Bramwell, Anna. *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Blood and Soil: Walter Darré and Hitlers Green Party*. Buckinghamshire, UK: Kensal, 1985.

Ferry, Luc. *The New Ecological Order*. Paris: 1992; reprint, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Gardell, Mattias. *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003.

Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas. *Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth and Neo-Nazism*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas. *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology*. New York: New York University Press, 1994.

Goodrich-Clarke, Nicholas. *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*. New York & London: New York University Press, 2002.

Kaplan, Jeffrey. "Savitri Devi and the National Socialist Religion of Nature." *The Pomegranate*, no. 7 (February 1999): 4-12.

Zimmerman, Michael E. *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

## **November 20 ~ American Academy Of Religion Meeting**

No class ~ focus on research project

## **November 27 ~ Religion, Nature, and the Future**

### **Assignments**

- 1) Prepare careful notes and be ready to spontaneously summarize and discuss this weeks readings.
- 2) Student presentations may begin tonight and continue next week.

**Background and Comparative Readings:** Berry, Thomas; Bioregionalism and the North American Bioregional Congress; **Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites**; \*Christianity (9)—Christianity's Ecological Reformation; [Council of All Beings](#); [Deep](#)

[Ecology](#); [Earth Charter](#); [Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front](#); \***Epic of Evolution**; Evolutionary Evangelism; Genesis Farm; **Magic**; [Radical Environmentalism](#); Redwood Rabbis; \***Religious Naturalism**; Swimme, Brian.

**Required Core Readings:** Shepard, Paul, *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*, esp. chs. 1, 6, 8, 9; ["Earth and Nature-Based Spirituality From Deep Ecology to Radical Environmentalism" \(part I\)](#), *Religion* 31(2): 175-193, 2001, and ["Earth and Nature-Based Spirituality From Earth First! and Bioregionalism to Scientific Paganism and the New Age" \(part II\)](#), *Religion*, 31 (3) 225-245, 2001.

**Optional Readings:** from [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org), [www.ethologicaethics.org](http://www.ethologicaethics.org), and see [The Great Story](#) for the website of 'evolutionary evangelist' Michael Dowd.

**Special Assignment Reading:** Atlee, Tom. *The Tao of Democracy: Using Co-Intelligence to Create a World That Works for All*. Cranston, RI: The Writer's Collective, 2003.

**DVDs:** "Celebrating Evolution" & "Evolutionary Christianity" with Michael Dowd and Connie Barlow

**Further and Future Reading:**

Bruce, Steve, ed. *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *God is dead: secularization in the west*. Oxford, England: Blackwell, 2002.

Campbell, Colin. "The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization." *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain* 5 (1972): 119-36.

Stark, Rodney and William Baines Bainbridge. *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985.

Taylor, Bron. "[A Green Future for Religion?](#)" *Futures Journal* 36, no. 9 (2004).

Warner, R. Stephen. "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *American journal of sociology* 98 (1993): 1044-93.

Wilson, Bryan. "Secularization: The Inherited Model." In *The Sacred in a Secular Age*, ed. Phillip Hammond, 9-20. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985.

## **December 4 ~ Student Presentations**

### *Assignments*

- 1) Be prepared to summarize your research.
- 2) **Research Papers Due.**
- 3) **Take home essay final distributed in class. Due by midnight, Wednesday, 11 December.**