

TITLE:	Religion and the Environment
DATED:	September 2016
LEVEL:	7
CREDITS:	20
JACS CODE:	V610

AIM(S)

- To examine critically the ecological legacy of a variety of religious traditions.
- To assess the extent to which 'religion' can be a useful resource for the formulation of a positive 21st century environmental ethic.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Engage critically with the hermeneutical and exegetical challenges of approaching religion, and interpreting ancient texts, from an ecological perspective.
- Analyse a range of themes pertaining to the environment that arise from engagement with major and lesser known religious traditions.
- Evaluate the message/s of religion in light of the modern environmental crisis and the need to encourage positive attitudes towards issues of environmental sustainability and care.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

- Creation vs. chaos in the mythology of the ancient Near East.
- The biblical creation narratives and the ideal of 'stewardship' in the Abrahamic faiths.
- The corruption and redemption of creation in Judeo-Christian tradition; God's environmentally catastrophic judgement on sin.
- The contribution of Francis of Assisi and medieval Christian theology to issues of environmental sustainability.
- The ecological outlook of the major eastern traditions: the deification of nature in the Vedas; *dharma* and the natural world; cow veneration and its environmental implications; creation as a 'cooperative' and the interconnectedness of the cosmos in Hindu and Buddhist thought.

- Indigenous traditions and the ideal of 'kinship' with earth (with a particular emphasis on Native American perspectives on environmental justice).
- The neo-pagan approach to environmental ethics.

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

E.g. Lectures will introduce the students to the concepts, principles and practices of the topics studied for the module. Tutorials and seminars will introduce practical examples which will be used to support the application, discussion, and critical evaluation of techniques learned. Case studies will also be used to develop understanding and application of the techniques.

The allocation of teaching to deliver the module is:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning		
Independent learning	200	100%
Placement learning		
TOTAL	200	100%

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Component 1 – 50%

Coursework: 1 essay (2500 words)

Assessment Component 2 – 50%

Coursework: 1 essay (2500 words)

Example:

Critically evaluate the ecological legacy of ONE major religious tradition and its sacred text/s.

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written exam	
Coursework	100%
Practical	
TOTAL	100%

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

Does the module contribute to ESD?	<u>Yes</u>
	No
If yes please provide brief details (no more than 100 words):	

The content of this module relates directly to the sustainability agenda of UWTSD. It also contributes to the agenda in its broadest sense by encouraging students to think about skills they require to solve their academic problems. These are transferable skills and assist in nurturing critical and creative thinking. As such the module is focused on meeting the immediate needs of the students while also equipping them to think critically and solve problems in an unknown future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essential

Gottlieb, R. S., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

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Habel, N. C., and Trudinger, P., *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008).

Horrell, D. G., *The Bible and the Environment* (London: Equinox, 2010).

Jenkins, W. J., Tucker, M. E., and Grim, J. (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

Recommended

Adams, E., *The Stars Will Fall from Heaven: Cosmic Catastrophe in the New Testament and its World* (London: T&T Clark, 2007).

Anderson, B. W., *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

Batchelor, M., and Brown, K. (eds.), *Buddhism and Ecology*, World Religions and Ecology (London: Cassell, 1992).

Bauckham, R., *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2010).

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De Angeles, L., Orr, E. R., and van Dooren, T. (eds.), *Pagan Visions for a Sustainable Future* (Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 2005)

Dien, M. I., *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2000).

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Websites

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