Course Description
The study of global religions helps us understand how “the environment” is made up of both visible and unseen phenomena. This can include the ethics, values, and expressions that shape responses to environmental change, challenge, and crisis, along with religious commitments that can lead to cooperation or conflict about resources. In this course, we will answer questions such as: Why have some environmentalists claimed that worldviews that are "anthropocentric" (human-centered) are root causes of environmental problems; and, how is it that many people, religious and non-religious, expect that religions can provide awareness, and even hope, to confront today's environmental challenges? Course draws on diverse case studies from named and unnamed religious traditions, including forms of Christianity (Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox), Islam, Hinduism and other systems of Southern Asia, and those of native tribes of Wisconsin. Course fulfills degree requirements in Environmental Studies and Religious Studies.

Readings and Materials:
Other material is available for students on Learn@UW

Course Assessment. The course consists of

25% of grade midterm exam
30% “ five section assignments to be presented in section (about 2 pp. each); revised versions due for grading in the last week of class
25% “ essay (5-6 pp.); due at Ms. Gade’s office at or before at time scheduled by University for final exam. Hardcopy only.
10% “ lecture quizzes/writing
10% “ attendance and preparation (including timely completion of section assignments)

Submission of all written assignments, including the final assignment, is expected in order to pass the class. THERE IS NO SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM.
Written Section Assignments and Essay
Students must attend all section meetings; missing more than two sections may result in a significantly lower grade for “Quizzes/Attendance.” In five designated weeks, there will be written section assignments due. Guidelines for each of these assignments are found on the last page of this syllabus. Submission of written section assignments will be recorded on the day they are originally due (but they will not yet be graded). At the end of the term, please submit this work as a packet to Ms. Gade for grading. You may revise any assignments you wish prior to submission for final grading.

A fuller essay of 5-6 pages is due at or before the time of the scheduled final exam.

Quizzes and Attendance
There will be six in-class quizzes or writing assignments in lecture over the course of the term. They may cover the reading assigned FOR THAT DAY. They will be graded on a scale, 1-10. The lowest mark will be dropped; in the case of a missed quiz, the “zero” corresponding to that absence will be the dropped grade. A student who has missed more than 2 quizzes may present a valid written excuse for make-up. Medical absences with an official caregiver’s note are always excused, as are religious observances.

In addition to section attendance (which is recorded), attendance at lectures is also factored into the grade for attendance and preparation.

Academic Honesty
Academic dishonesty is a serious problem. Instances of suspected plagiarism or cheating are reported to the Office of the Dean of Students for notification and possible investigation, following official university procedures. If you have any questions about academic honesty, such as how to cite in a paper, please don’t hesitate to ask. Ms. Gade and your instructors are happy to answer your questions, and will be providing guidance throughout the term in this critical area.

Course Outline (subject to further revision for 2015-2016)

Week of January 19. Introducing a Study of Religion and Ecology

Introduction to the Course; Methods and Approaches in the Study of Religion; “World Religions” and Environmental Studies


Week of January 26. Cosmology and Christianities

Theory of “The Sacred” in the Study of Religion; Christian East / West: Orthodox Religious Thought and Practice

Eliade, Patterns In Comparative Religion, pp. 1-38 and 437-465
Week of February 2. Varieties of Christianity

Global Christianities: Catholic / Protestant, North / South; Christology

McFague, “An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity Have It?” Worldviews, pp. 334-341

SECTION ASSIGNMENT 1 IS DUE DURING SECTION THIS WEEK
(see last page of syllabus for topic guidelines)

Week of February 9. Tradition and Authority

PROFESSOR CALVIN DE WITT VISIT (to be confirmed)

DeWitt, “Three Big Questions,” Worldviews pp. 349-357

Ecofeminism

SECTION ASSIGNMENT 2 (see last page of syllabus for topic)

Week of February 16. Islam

Qur’an and Sunnah/Hadith; Sufism/Philosophy, Experience and Muslim Esoteric Piety


Qur’an chapters: 16 Al-Nahl, 25 Al-Furqan, 30 Al-Rum, 81 Al-Takwir (listen on www.quranexplorer.com)

Week of February 23. Global Muslim Ecology

Norms and Islamic Approaches to Ecology; Muslim Messages

Ibrahim Abdul Matin, “The Earth is a Mosque,” in Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet, pp. 1-17
SECTION ASSIGNMENT 3 (see last page of syllabus for topic)

Week of March 2. Buddhism
Buddhism: Overview; Theravada Buddhism in Global Context
Harris, “Ecological Buddhism,” Worldviews, pp. 171-180

Week of March 9. Ritual Action and Symbol
Monks Ordaining Trees

Recommended Further Study
Darlington, The Ordination of a Tree: The Thai Buddhist Environmental Movement

SECTION ASSIGNMENT 4 (see last page of syllabus for topic)

Week of March 16. Exam Week
March 16. Film: Renewal
March 18. EXAM

Week of March 23. Beyond “East and West”
Critique and the Sociology of Religion; Comparing Environmental “Utopias”
White, “Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis,” in Worldviews pp. 30-39
Guha, How Much Should a Person Consume?, pp. 71-89

WEEK OF MARCH 30: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES

Week of April 6. Introduction to Hinduism
Origins & Development
Haberman, River of Love, Introduction (pp. 1-13)
SECTION ASSIGNMENT 5 (see last page of syllabus for topic)

Week of April 13. Devotion and Justice

Hinduism: Devotional Traditions

Haberman, River of Love, Ch. 1, Ch. 2 Ch. 3 (pp 14-94)
Learn@UW: Bhagavad Gita [on “Sources for the Study of Hinduism”]

Optional Reading on Jainism
Vallely, “From Liberation to Ecology: Ethical Discourses Among Orthodox and Diaspora Jains”
Chapple, “Contemporary Jaina and Hindu Responses to the Ecological Crisis,” in Worldviews, pp. 113-118

Week of April 20. World-Making

Pollution; Cultivating Service: Politics and Practice

Haberman, River of Love, Ch. 4 (pp. 95-140) and Ch. 5 and Ch. 6 (pp. 141-196)

Week of April 27. Modern Indian Environmental Ethics/ History

Guha, How Much Should a Person Consume?, Ch. 2 (pp. 35-89) and Ch. 4 (pp. 90-151, UCalif ed.)

Week of May 4. WRAP-UP

May 4. Film: Green Fire
Reading (for May 4)
Leopold, “Excerpts from A Sand County Almanac,” Worldviews, pp. 431-433

May 6. Discussion of final assignment; SECTION ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE
SECTION ASSIGNMENTS (due in class during section meeting in the designated week)

About 2 pp. each

1. **Week of February 2.** How can Eliade’s ideas on hierophany (i.e., “any manifestation of the sacred, in whatever form”) relate to the presentation of Orthodox views on the environment?

2. **Week of February 9.** How do tradition and its authority guide Christian approaches to the environment? *Compare* at least two approaches: e.g., ecofeminism, evangelicalism, “Protestant” and “Catholic” views, including liberation theology.

3. **Week of February 23.** How do Islamic norms of the seen and unseen relate to environmental action? And/or How Do Muslims care for the environment for the sake of God?

4. **Week of March 9.** How is the ritual practice of Buddhist tree ordination as described by Darlington symbolic and/or real?

5. **Week of April 6.** How can “critique” (such as in Lynn White’s famous essay) help us to understand what Guha calls “environmental utopias” in Asia and the Americas?

DUE WEDNESDAY MAY 6, IN CLASS:
REVISED VERSIONS OF 5 ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE TO MS. GADE IN CLASS FOR GRADING