

# SYLLABUS

COURSE:     **Anth/Rel 444 SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY** (Theory) 3 credits

(Exploring the Interface between the Supernatural and the Natural)

TIME:        12:00-1:15 TTh, Spring Semester 2009

PLACE:       Kuykendall Hall 209  
University of Hawai`i at Manoa

## INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Les Sponsel, Professor of Anthropology

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## ORIENTATION

“Throughout history, it [religion] has expressed the deepest questions human beings can ask, and it has taken a central place in the lives of virtually all civilizations and cultures.... Religion persists and is on the rise, even as scientific and non-religious perspectives have become prominent” (American Academy of Religion, “Why Study Religion?,” [www.aarweb.org](http://www.aarweb.org)).

“Most anthropologists like to think of themselves as scientists, and that of course includes anthropologists who study religion. But science is not only a way of gathering data and testing hypotheses; it is also a belief system in its own right.... the study of one belief system by proponents of another belief system is going to raise problems” (Morton Klass, 1995, *Ordered Universes: Approaches to the Anthropology of Religion*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, p xiii).

“The notion that fact can be cleanly separated from value is absurd. The notion that our understanding of the material world can be cleanly separated from our experience of the spiritual world is impossible. The magisteria [science and religion] are mixed, shuffled, irremediably joined” (Bruno Guiderdoni, astrophysicist at the Observatory of Lyon, France) [quoted in *Science and Spirit* May-June 2006 17(3):59].

“Contemporary spiritualities combine practices of particular religious traditions with concern for the global situation and the life of the planet.... are pluralistic and diverse; they search for a global ethic, are concerned with ecology, encourage the cultivation of healthy relationships, support feminism, and pursue peace.... Given the increasing scholarly attention in conferences and publications to the role of spirituality in contemporary culture, it is clear that the academy has recognized spirituality as a subject of study both within and independent of the study of religion” Mary N. MacDonald, 2005, “Spirituality,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (Second Edition), Lindsay Jones, Editor-in-Chief, New York, NY: Thomson Gale 13:8719, 8721.

“... the upsurge of Spirit is the only plausible way to stop the ecological destruction of our planet. Even people who have no interest in a communal solution to the distortions in our lives will have to face up [to] this ecological reality. **Unless we transform our relationship with nature, we will destroy the preconditions for human life on this planet**” (Rabbi Michael Lerner, 2000, *Spirit Matters*, Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Company, Inc., p. 138).

[This is] “...one of the most important new areas of academic inquiry for the twenty-first century” (Richard Foltz, 2003, *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, p. xv).

“The Environmental crisis requires changes not only in public policy, but in individual behavior. The historical record makes clear that religious teaching, example, and leadership are powerfully able to influence personal conduct and commitment. As scientists, many of us have had profound experience of awe and reverence before the universe. We understand that what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with care and respect. Our planetary home should be so regarded. Efforts to safeguard and cherish the environment need to be infused with a vision of the sacred” (statement from “Preserving the Earth: An Appeal for Joint Commitment in Science and Religion,” *Global Forum, Moscow, January 1990*).

During the 1970s, developments like Earth Day, *The Ecologist* magazine, Friends of the Earth, the Green Party, Greenpeace, and the Stockholm Environment Conference reflected a marked increase in international knowledge, awareness, concerns, and actions about the growing environmental crisis in the world. However, after nearly four decades this crisis is even worse including the continuing discovery of new problems like acid rain, global warming, biodiversity erosion, frog abnormalities, bee population declines, and so on. Obviously, the usual remedies for the ecocrisis have proven insufficient, such as environmental science, technology, education, government, laws, and politics. Since the 1990s, an accelerating number of diverse individuals and organizations have been turning to religion and spirituality as the last resort. This “religious environmental movement” is not offered instead of previous approaches, but in addition to them as a

*complement*, an additional component that may finally turn things around for the better. No particular religious or spiritual path is designated as the sole solution for the ongoing and worsening ecocrisis. Instead, scientists, scholars, educators, clerics, adherents, politicians, and others are each looking deeply into their own religion and/or spirituality for elements to construct more viable environmental worldviews, attitudes, values, and practices for themselves and others. The *pivotal idea* is that **“Unless we transform our relationship with nature, we will destroy the preconditions for human life on this planet”** (Rabbi Michael Lerner).

A most exciting and promising whole new trans-disciplinary field, here called spiritual ecology, has been developing since the 1990s. It may be defined as *a diverse and complex arena of intellectual and practical activities at the interface of religions and spiritualities on the one hand, and on the other of ecologies, environments, and environmentalisms*. Accordingly, in 1995, David Kinsley published the first major textbook on this subject, *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Just a year later Roger S. Gottlieb edited a monumental benchmark anthology, *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, and in 2004 he published a second expanded edition.

A series of ten conferences on the world's religions and ecology were held at the Center for the Study of World Religions (CSWR) in the Harvard University Divinity School from May 1996 to July 1998. They were organized by Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Dr. John Grim, at the time professors in the Department of Religion at Bucknell University of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. These international conferences were collectively attended by more than 700 individuals. Most of the conferences were focused on a particular religion in relation to ecology and environmentalism: Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Indigenous Traditions, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, and Shinto. Subsequently a substantial anthology with an extensive bibliography was published as a result of each conference by Harvard University Press (see below). The primary goal of these conferences and books is to outline the contours of a whole *new multidisciplinary field of study in religion that also has implications for contemporary environmental ethics, public policy concerns, and related matters*. In addition, three culminating conferences in the autumn of 1998 were held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the United Nations in New York City invited by the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), and at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The *Forum on Religion and Ecology* (FORE) arose out of the ten conferences at the CSWR and was announced to the press at the United Nations following a symposium reporting on the conclusions of the Harvard series. FORE recently moved from the Harvard Center for the Environment to Yale University where Tucker and Grim are now located in the Divinity School and the School for Forestry and Environmental Studies (<http://www.religionandecology.org>, <http://fore.research.yale.edu>). The FORE web site is in eight languages and is purported to receive over 60,000 visitors monthly. Two similar organizations developed more recently elsewhere: Canadian Forum on Religion and Ecology (<http://rel.queensu.ca/cfore>) and the European Forum for the Study of Religion and Environment (<http://www.hf.ntnu.no/reInateur>).

A second major initiative is the 2-volume *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, Dr. Bron Taylor, Editor-in-Chief, published by Continuum Press in 2005. With 518 authors and about 1,000 entries in 1,877 pages, this definitive reference work of global and comprehensive scope recapitulates and defines the parameters of discussion regarding nature religion, the natural dimensions of religion, and related matters including spiritual ecology (see the index in the Resource

Guide to Spiritual Ecology near the end of this syllabus). Beyond the printed encyclopedia, the ongoing website for this project provides extensive online resources. (See “Introduction and Reader’s Guide” at <http://www.religionandnature.com>). Furthermore, in 2003, Dr. Taylor and his colleagues in the Department of Religion at the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, launched an exciting new concentration on Religion and Nature in their graduate program (<http://www.religion.ufl.edu>). (Florida is one of two such primary programs, the other being the Spiritual Ecology Concentration within the Ecological Anthropology Program at UH also launched in 2003). Moreover, in April 2006, the inaugural conference was held at the University of Florida for the new International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (ISSRNC) (<http://www.religionandnature.com>).

It is also noteworthy that since 1997 an entire international refereed academic journal focuses on aspects of spiritual ecology: *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* (BL 65 .N35 W675). In 2008 the title was changed to *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, Ecology*. The purpose of this scholarly journal is to offer an interdisciplinary exploration of the environmental understandings, perceptions, and practices of a wide range of different cultures and religious traditions. Disciplines represented include anthropology, environmental studies, geography, philosophy, religious studies, sociology, and theology ([www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)). In addition, a popular periodical, *EarthLight: The Magazine of Spiritual Ecology*, was published for more than a decade, although it was discontinued a few years ago ([www.earthlight.org](http://www.earthlight.org)). Another periodical was launched in 2007 in association with the ISSRNC, the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, succeeding *Ecotheology* ([www.religionandnature.com](http://www.religionandnature.com)) but with a broader scope and aims. (Volume 11 in 2006 was the last of *Ecotheology*).

Proponents of this recent movement argue that religion and spirituality can be important factors in resolving environmental problems. They assert that the *root cause* of the ongoing environmental crisis resides in concerns and choices that are ultimately moral, and that here religion and spirituality can be decisive factors. Thus, spiritual ecology is not merely an academic matter. Indeed, practical action is underway in a remarkable number and variety of substantial initiatives as illustrated for example by the video “Renewal: Stories from America’s Religious Environmental Movement” (<http://www.renewalproject.net>). As another example, since 1995 the *Alliance for Religion and Conservation* in association with the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) in the United Kingdom has been developing numerous projects focusing on the linkage between sacred places in nature and biodiversity conservation ([www.wwf.org.uk](http://www.wwf.org.uk)). One major accomplishment of WWF is the book *Beyond Belief: Linking Faiths and Protected Areas to Support Biodiversity Conservation*, by Dudley, Nigel, Lisa Higgins-Zogib, and Stephanie Mansourian (December 2005) ([www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)). As another illustration, in 1999 the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) sponsored publication of the monumental inventory *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity* co-edited by anthropologist Darrell Addison Posey of Oxford University and others ([www.unep.org/Biodiversity](http://www.unep.org/Biodiversity)). (Also below see *Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection and Action* coedited in 2000 for the UN Environmental Program by Libby Bassett and others).

There are also various academic programs focusing on what amounts to spiritual ecology that have been developing over the last five years at several universities including Drew University, University of Chicago, University of Florida, Graduate Theological Union in the University of California at Berkeley, University of Hawai`i, Ohio Northern University, Schumacher College, University of Toronto, Vanderbilt University, Western Illinois University, and Yale University.

Undoubtedly other universities will develop programs on this subject as well.

**The Spiritual Ecology Concentration within the optional Ecological Anthropology Program at the University of Hawai`i is unique in being *available to undergraduates* as well as graduates and in the special combination of courses available which are cross-listed between the departments of Anthropology and Religion (422 Anthropology of Religion, 443 Anthropology of Buddhism, 444 Spiritual Ecology, and 445 Sacred Places).** Spiritual Ecology is the core course for this optional concentration (see [www.soc.hawaii.edu/Sponsel](http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/Sponsel)). Other relevant courses can be found in various departments and centers to integrate into a meaningful program of studies at either the graduate or undergraduate levels. Undergraduates may pursue such a program through a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies (<http://www.hawaii.edu/libst/>).

From the above, it is certainly obvious that substantial progress has been made in the development of basic and applied work in spiritual ecology, including major international conferences, an international scholarly organization, two academic journals, major textbooks and anthologies, web sites with substantial resources like FORE, university programs with specialized courses, and so on. All of this is even more impressive because it has transpired mostly since the 1990s, although there are some deep roots historically. Already it is feasible for someone to develop a whole career in teaching and/or research focused on spiritual ecology in general or in the case of a particular world religion such as Buddhism. The extensive resources listed in the accompanying guide further documents this extraordinary and promising development. (For more resources see FORE at <http://www.yale.edu/religionandecology> as well as the chapters and bibliographies in major texts and anthologies by Roger S. Gottlieb and others).

The present advanced course offers a systematic, thorough, in-depth, and critical exploration and analysis of this flourishing, exciting, and most promising new subject as a frontier for *research, teaching, activism, and spirituality*. Here at UH spiritual ecology is approached predominantly from the academic, scientific, and anthropological perspectives, the latter encompassing *holism, culture, cross-cultural comparisons, and ethnographic fieldwork*. However, the guide includes resources for individuals who may wish to pursue spiritual ecology beyond academic concerns for their own personal growth and well being.

Here the term spiritual ecology is used simply because it is more inclusive than religion, referring to ideas and actions in this domain by individuals as well as organizations, and because it parallels the names of other primary approaches within ecological anthropology like historical ecology and political ecology. [See Leslie E. Sponsel, 2007, "Spiritual Ecology: One Anthropologist's Reflections," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 1(3):340-350].

The above and many other exciting developments reflect the rapidly growing momentum of diverse intellectual and practical interest and activities in this new frontier of spiritual ecology. This must overlap with the strong concern among college and university students with both environmentalism and spirituality, the latter as revealed by ongoing surveys of the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (<http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu>). Spirituality and environmentalism do not arise spontaneously in a vacuum, they are grounded and motivated by intellectual as well as practical activities in a dynamic and dialectical process.

## **FORMAT**

Course material will be covered through an integration of lectures (15), student panel discussion of readings (7), selected films (12), web sites, and other resources as indicated in the Schedule below.

Students are required to be open minded as well as courteous and professional in class. *Any student can say anything as long as it is relevant, concise, and polite.* The ideals of freedom and democracy apply in this class, even if they are restricted elsewhere. Being concise is important because there is a wealth of course material to cover in the very limited time of each class meeting, and because everyone who wishes should have an opportunity to contribute to discussion, rather than one or a few persons dominating the class for an entire semester.

The only prerequisite for this course is Anth 152 Culture and Humanity or 200 Cultural Anthropology, although 415 Ecological Anthropology, 422 Anthropology of Religion, and related courses such as in basic ecology or environmental studies would be helpful. However, most of all, the student simply needs an *open mind* together with intellectual curiosity and serious commitment, attributes of any reputable scientist or scholar worthy of the title.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The three primary goals of this course are to:

1. provide a systematic and in-depth *cross-cultural* survey of the relationships between religions and nature with an emphasis on an anthropological perspective;
2. allow each student to penetrate especially deeply into the ecology of the religion of her or his choice with an emphasis on its *cultural and natural contexts*; and
3. provide an inventory, primarily through this syllabus, of *key resources* on spiritual ecology, including books, periodicals, articles, reference works, videos, and internet web sites for present and future study and research. (See accompanying “Spiritual Ecology: Guide to Resources”).

The learning outcomes for achieving these three objectives will be measured by several graded exercises as indicated below.

## **GRADING**

The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

1. class attendance together with active and meaningful participation in the general discussion of assigned readings and other resources (10%);
2. a *systematic and penetrating team* discussion by a coordinated student panel on one or more

chapters in the Gottlieb textbook as indicated in the Schedule (30%);

3. take-home mid-term examination (answer one question in an essay of 1-2 pages typed single-spaced) (20%); and

4. take-home final examination (answer two more questions, each 1-2 pages typed single-spaced) (40%).

**The mid-term examination essay is due on March 19, and the final examination essays on May 12.** The latter should be turned in at the beginning of the class meeting for the final examination or left in the instructor's mailbox in Saunders Hall 346. See Appendix I on pages 15-16 in this syllabus for guidelines and questions for these examinations.

Student work will be evaluated for:

1. achieving the primary *objectives* of the course;
2. *general knowledge* of all required reading assignments and of all material presented by the instructor in lectures and from class discussions, videos, and so on;
3. clear, concise, logical, analytical, and critical *thinking*; and
4. regular, active, and meaningful *participation* in class discussions of assigned readings.

Undergraduate and graduate student work will be graded separately, and greater sophistication is expected for the latter including a higher quantity and quality of work. Graduate students are also expected to undertake extra readings of their choice in pursuing their own special topical and regional interests.

Class **attendance** will be taken at every class meeting during the first ten minutes of the period. Students are expected to arrive on time to class, stay and remain attentive throughout the entire period, and to come to every single class meeting throughout the entire semester. An absence requires a convincing written excuse from an appropriate official source such as a medical doctor. *The final course grade will be reduced by one whole letter grade for every three unapproved absences.*

*Any students who wish to sleep or to carry on private conversations should do so outside of the classroom to avoid distracting other students and the instructor. In short, like the instructor, students are expected to take this class seriously. Anyone who does not is wasting the time of other students and of the instructor; thus, they should drop the course immediately instead of waiting until the end of the semester to receive a poor or failing grade.*

Extra credit may be earned by writing a one-page reaction (not summary) to a video, journal article, book chapter, lecture, or class discussion from any of the material covered in the syllabus or class. Five high quality extra credit papers can make the difference for a borderline course grade (e.g., B+ to A-), while ten such papers can elevate the course grade to the next higher level (e.g., B to

A). Other alternatives for more extra credit include writing a review of an extra book or an extra report based on library or field research, but, in any case, the specifics have to be approved in advance by the instructor. Thus, in principle, with enough high quality work any student can earn an A in this course.

## **READINGS**

Every student is required to thoroughly read and help discuss every chapter in the required textbook:

Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., 2006, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press (new \$65.20 and used \$49.40 at UH Bookstore, \$52 new and from \$10.95 used at Amazon.com).

This text should be available in the UH Bookstore. Furthermore, the UH Bookstore now makes available purchases online at: [www.bookstore.hawaii.edu](http://www.bookstore.hawaii.edu) (successively click on Manoa, textbooks, Anthropology, 444 Spiritual Ecology, and Sponsel). This and related books may also be available through local bookstores (e.g., Barnes and Noble or Borders) or an internet bookseller such as the following:

<http://www.amazon.com>

<http://www.abebooks.com>.

<http://www.alibris.com>

<http://www.bestbookbuys.com>

<http://www.booksamillion.com>

Students may reduce the cost of texts by purchasing a used copy, reselling it at the end of the semester to the UH Bookstore or another outlet, or sharing it with others.

When presenting a class discussion of a particular religion, then it is important to consult other sources in addition to the Gottlieb text, such as a relevant book below from the Harvard University Press series on Religion and Ecology:

Chapple, Christopher Key, ed., 2002, *Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*. BL 1375 .H85 J35 2002

Chapple, Christopher Key, and Mary Evelyn Tucker, eds., 2000, *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*. BL 1215 .N34 H56 2000

Foltz, Richard, Frederick Denny, and Azizan Baharuddin, eds., 2003, *Islam and Ecology*. BP 190.5 .N38 I85 2003



Girardot, N.J., James Miller, and Liu Xiaogan, eds., 2001, *Daoism and Ecology: Ways Within a Cosmic Landscape*. BL 1923 .D36 2001

Grim, John A., ed., 2001, *Indigenous Traditions and Ecology: The Interbeing of Cosmology and Community*. GN 470.2 .I53 2001

Hessel, Dieter T., and Rosemary Radford Ruether, eds., 2000, *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*. BT 695.5 C49 2000

Tirosh-Samuels, Hava, ed., 2002, *Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word*. BM 538 .H85 J85 2002

Tucker, Mary Evelyn, and Duncan Ryuken Williams, eds., 1997, *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. BQ 4570 .E23 B83 1997

Tucker, Mary Evelyn, and John Berthrong, eds., 1998, *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Human*. B127 .C65 C64 1998

Another source is a relevant article in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* or other material cited under the topic in the Spiritual Ecology Resource Guide following this syllabus. The periodicals *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* (BL 65 .N35 W675, [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl), <http://micro189.lib3.hawaii.edu/ezproxy/details.php?dbId=37832> ) and *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* (<http://www.equinoxpub.com>) also have relevant articles. Yet another useful source is the special issue “Nature As Thou” in the periodical *CrossCurrents* for Summer 1994 at: <http://www.crosscurrents.org/nature.htm>. Also see the FORE website: <http://www.yale.edu/religionandecology>. (This last web site includes a brief summary for each world religion of its relation to ecology as well as a wealth of other information).

In addition, some books, book chapters, and periodical articles will be recommended in the syllabus below, the guide, and in class as optional reading. Students are encouraged to pursue their individual interests in exploring some of these resources like viewing extra videos and surfing web sites. The instructor should be alerted if there is any problem with any of the web sites listed here or recommended during class.

Students who take advantage of as many of the resources provided in this course as feasible will obtain a systematic and thorough overview of the subject. Those who do not do so are short-changing their own education and future.

If any student feels the need for reasonable accommodations because of the impact of a disability, then she or he should contact the KOKUA Program in QLCSS 013 (phones 956-7511 or 956-7612), and/or speak to the instructor in private to discuss specific needs. The instructor is quite willing to collaborate with any student and KOKUA about needs related to a documented disability.

## SCHEDULE

### JANUARY

13 T Course Orientation: Syllabus Q & A  
 Video: *Keeping the Earth: Religious and Scientific Perspectives on the Environment*  
 (40 min.) VHS 13215  
 Reading assignment: Gottlieb Introduction

15 Th **PREFACE**  
**Why spiritual ecology?**

Lecture 1: "Why Spiritual Ecology?"  
 Video segment: *Renewal: Nature Meditations* (6 min.)  
 Gottlieb Ch. 18

Sponsel, L.E., 2007, "Religion, Nature and Environmentalism," *Encyclopedia of Earth*  
[http://www.eoearth.org/article/Religion,\\_nature\\_and\\_environmentalism](http://www.eoearth.org/article/Religion,_nature_and_environmentalism)

### **PART I. LANDSCAPE**

**What is the context of spiritual ecology?**

20 T Video: *Endangered Planet* (60 min.) VHS 18269

22 Th Lecture 2: "Ecocrises, Environmentalisms, Environmental Studies"  
 Gottlieb Ch. 17

27 T Video: *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Self* (26 min.) VHS 14703  
 Gottlieb Introduction

### **PART II: ROOTS**

**What are the origins of spiritual ecology?**

29 Th Video: *From the Heart of the World: The Elder Brother's Warning* (90 min.) VHS 6070

**FEBRUARY**

3 T Lecture 3: “Animism: The Original Spiritual Ecology”  
Gottlieb Chs. 11-12

5 Th Lecture 4: “From St. Francis of Assisi to the Alliance of Religions and Conservation”  
Gottlieb Ch. 2

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10 T Lecture 5: “Lynne White’s Critique of Christianity and the Emergence of Ecotheology”  
Gottlieb Ch. 20

White, Lynn, Jr., 1967 (March 10), “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,”  
*Science* 155(3767):1203-1207 [handout].

**PART II: TRUNK****What is the main structure of spiritual ecology?**

12 Th Video: *Thoreau at Walden Pond* (21 min.) VHS 21767\*  
Lecture 6: “Thoreau as Naturalist, Environmentalist, and Spiritual Ecologist”  
Gottlieb Ch. 19

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17 T Middlebury Interfaith Dialogue on Religion and Environment  
Video: *Spirit and Nature* (88 min.) VHS 5326

19 Th continued

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24 T Lecture 7: “Shakers and Movers in Spiritual Ecology I: Teilhard, Berry, and Swimme”  
Gottlieb Ch. 18

26 Th Lecture 8: “Shakers and Movers in Spiritual Ecology II: Rockefeller, Tucker, Grim, Taylor,  
and Gottlieb”

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**MARCH**

3 T PANEL1: Judaism and Islam – Gottlieb Chs. 1, 8

5 Th PANEL 2: Christian Religions – Gottlieb Chs. 2-4

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10 T PANEL 3: Jainism, Hinduism, and Buddhism – Gottlieb Chs. 5-7

12 Th Lecture 9: “Priests and Water Temples in Bali”  
 Video: *Sacred Balance* (segment on Bali)  
 Gottlieb Ch. 6

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17 T Lecture 10: “Natural Wisdom: Buddhist Ecology and Environmentalism”  
 Gottlieb Ch. 7

Sponsel, L.E., and Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel, 2008, “Environment and Nature in Buddhism,” in *Encyclopedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures* (Second edition), Helaine Selin, ed., New York, NY: Springer 1: 768-776 [handout as email attachment].

19 Th PANEL 4: Daoism and Confucianism – Gottlieb Chs. 9-10

***ESSAY DUE FOR MID-TERM EXAMINATION***

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24 T \*\*\*\*\* Spring Recess \*\*\*\*\*

26 Th continued

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31 T **PART III: BRANCHES**  
**What are the ramifications of spiritual ecology?**

Lecture 11: “Pioneers in Anthropological Aspects of Spiritual Ecology”  
Gottlieb Ch. 12

## APRIL

2 Th Lecture 12: “Sacred Caves, Buddhist Monks, Bats, Forests, and Biodiversity Conservation in Thailand”  
Gottlieb Ch. 7

Crites, Jennifer, “Spiritual Ecology,” *Malamalama*  
<http://www.hawaii.edu/malamalama/2007/09/index.html>.

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7 T PANEL 5: Religious Environmentalism - Gottlieb Chs. 21-23, 25

9 Th **PART IV: LEAVES**  
**What energizes spiritual ecology?**

Interfaith issues, commonalities, communities, and initiatives  
Video: *Renewal* (90 min.)

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14 T PANEL 6: Religions Address Key Environmental Issues - Gottlieb Chs. 13-16

16 Th **PART V: FLOWERS, FRUITS, AND SEEDS:**  
**What are the benefits of spiritual ecology?**

Environmental Restoration of a Sacred Island  
Video: *Kaho`olawe Aloha `Aina* (57 min.) DVD 3185

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21 T Lecture 13: “The Earth Charter as Universal Environmental Ethic and Global Warming”  
Video segments: *Planet In Peril: Global Warming*  
Gottlieb Ch. 17

23 Th **PART VI: DISEASES AND PESTS**  
**What are the obstacles to spiritual ecology?**

Lecture 14: “Science and Religion: Divergences and Convergences”

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28 T Sacred Mountain – Mauna Kea  
Video: *Mauna Kea: Temple Under Siege* (69 min.) VHS 21514

30 Th Lecture 15: “Tibet: From Reverence to Destruction”

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## MAY

5 T PANEL 7: Science and/or Religion? - Gottlieb Chs. 17, 20, 24

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12 T noon-2:00 **SACRED TREES**  
**What are the conclusions of spiritual ecology?**

FINAL EXAMINATION  
(turn in final examination essays)

Video: *Butterfly* (80 min.) VHS 18644 (extra credit for viewing video)

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## **APPENDIX I. GUIDELINES FOR MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMINATION ESSAYS**

Answer one question of your choice in an essay for the mid-term. Possible questions to select from for your essay are listed below. Examination essays will *not* be accepted by email or fax. One letter grade will be subtracted for each day that the examination is late. **The mid-term examination comprises 20% of the total course grade, the final examination 40%. They are due on March 19 and May 12, respectively.**

**One or more letter grades will be subtracted from the exam grade for failure to follow these guidelines.** Each answer should be a clear and concise but penetrating essay. Limit each of your answers to two pages typed single-spaced. (The instructor will not read more). Include introductory and concluding paragraphs. Identify by number 3-5 main points. Instead of quotes use paraphrasing, don't waste space. Use the spelling and grammar check on your computer to try to catch any errors in the final draft of your essay.

*Ultimately your essays must be the product of your own individual scholarship and creativity.* Any plagiarism will be rewarded with an automatic F for the final course grade and reported to the office of the Dean. However, you are welcome to consult with any individual as well as any print and internet resources, although covering the *required readings for the course is by far the most important*. Just be careful to properly acknowledge the source for very specific information, ideas, and the like. Also, be sure to include your own insights, comments, reactions, and criticisms.

Cite the course textbook and other sources including lectures, videos, case studies, websites, class discussions, and handouts. In each reading citation include the author, year, and page (for example, for a chapter in the Gottlieb textbook, cite Hart 2006:65-66). Other sources can be documented as follows: (lecture Feb. 24), (panel Mar. 10), (video title), or (personal communication with Bishop Desmond Tutu). It is not necessary to append a bibliography with the full citation of sources if they are already in the syllabus.

The purpose of the essay is to: (1) convincingly demonstrate your familiarity with the course material, (2) present a critical analysis of it, and (3) discuss your own reactions to it. **Your grade will be based on this purpose plus satisfying the above guidelines and the grading criteria and course objectives listed earlier in the syllabus.**

**SOME POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND EXAMINATION ESSAYS**

1. How has nature or a specific environment influenced a particular religion and/or the related behaviors of individual adherents and society, and/or the converse?
2. Compare the similarities and differences among the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values of three or more distinct religions in relation to nature and environment.
3. Several parallel themes or underlying common denominators in the spiritual ecology of world religions have been identified from various sources in the course. Write an essay elaborating on one or more of these themes for one or more religions.
4. Describe and explain how a particular religion is responding to the contemporary ecocrisis, and how this in turn is affecting that religion.
5. Why do discrepancies arise between the religious ideals and the daily actions of followers, and how might the discrepancies be reduced?
6. How has interfaith dialogue on spiritual ecology generated environmental action from the national to the international levels?
7. Is the study of spiritual ecology an academic, scientific, and/or religious or spiritual matter?
8. What is the relationship between the natural and the supernatural in spiritual ecology?
9. How do politics enter into spiritual ecology?
10. How is spiritual ecology influencing “secular” components of culture and society?
11. What role has spiritual ecology played in the history of ecology, environmentalism, and/or conservation in the U.S.A. and/or elsewhere?
12. Argue the pros and/or cons of spiritual ecology, or analyze its contributions (actual and potential) as well as limitations.

**Also see possible questions in the course Schedule, the Gottlieb textbook (pp. 406, 413), *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (pp. vii-viii) at <http://www.religionandnature.com>, and in Table 10-1 “Questions to Shape a New Ethics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (pp. 148-149) of Gary T. Gardner’s book *Inspiring Progress: Religion’s Contributions to Sustainable Developments* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006).**

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## APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTOR

### SOME BACKGROUND

The instructor holds a B.A. in Geology from Indiana University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Anthropology from Cornell University. He has taught at seven different universities in four countries, twice on a Fulbright Fellowship. Since 1981 he has served on the faculty of the University of Hawai'i where twice he won an Excellence in Teaching Award. In recent years he has taught the following courses related to spiritual ecology, all cross-listed between Anthropology and Religion: 422 Anthropology of Religion, 443 Anthropology of Buddhism (new course for Fall 2009), 444 Spiritual Ecology, and 445 Sacred Places. The instructor has conducted field research with his wife Dr. Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel in Thailand during most summers since 1986 on related subjects including sacred trees, sacred caves, and Buddhist ecology. Among his extensive publications are 6 journal articles, 10 book chapters, and articles in 5 encyclopedias on aspects of sacred places and spiritual ecology listed below. His recent related articles in the *Encyclopedia of Earth* are readily available online at: <http://www.eoearth.org>. He is an invited member of the Advisory Board of the Forum on Religion and Ecology (formerly based Harvard University and recently moved to Yale University), and was one of the Associate Editors for the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* as well as a founding member of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture. For other information see the instructor's homepage at: <http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/Sponsel>.

### HIS PUBLICATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT

#### Journal Articles

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*Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution* (Praeger Publishers).

# **SPRITUAL ECOLOGY:**

## **RESOURCE GUIDE**

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*Millennium Part IV: An Ecology of Mind* (David Maybury-Lewis) (VHS 6355, 60 min.)

*Reluctant Saint: Francis of Assisi*

*Sacred Balance* (David Suzuki)

*St. Francis of Assisi*

*Water: Sacred and Profaned*

*The Wilderness Idea: John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and the First Great Battle for Wilderness* (VHS 17105, 58 min.)

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<http://www.crle.org>

*EarthLight: The Magazine of Spiritual Ecology*

<http://www.earthlight.org>

*Ecotheology: The Journal of Religion, Nature and the Environment* (1996-2006)[successor is the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* starting in 2007]

<http://www.ecotheology.org>

<http://www.equinoxpub.com/journals/main.asp?jref=6>

<http://www.religionandnature.com>

*Environmental Ethics* GF 80 .E59

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*Ethics, Place and Environment: A Journal of Philosophy and Geography*

*Ethics and the Environment*

<http://iupjournals.org>

*Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* (2007- )

<http://www.natureandreligion.com>

*Resurgence: An International Forum for Ecological and Spiritual Thinking*

<http://resurgence.gn.apc.org>

*Talking Leaves: A Journal of Our Evolving Ecological Culture*

<http://www.talkingleaves.org>

*The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy* [Deep Ecology] (19 - ) QH 540.5 .T8

<http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca>

*Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* (1997- ) BL 65 .N35 W675

<http://brill.nl>

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Alliance of Religion and Conservation

<http://www.arcworld.org>

American Anthropological Association (Society for the Anthropology of Religion)

<http://www.aaanet.org>

<http://www.aaanet.org/sar/index.html>

American Academy of Religion (especially Religion and Ecology Interest Group)

<http://www.aarweb.org>

<http://www.religionandnature.com/aar/>

Canadian Forum on Religion and Ecology (CFORE)

<http://rels.queensu.ca/cfore>

CoNexus Press

<http://www.conexuspress.com>

Earth Island Institute

<http://www.earthisland.org>

<http://www.earthisland.edu>

European Forum for the Study of Religion and Environment

<http://www.hf.ntnu.no/relnateur>

Forum on Religion and Ecology(FORE) [initially at Harvard University, then moved to Yale University, resources especially Religions, Publications, Statements, and Events)

<http://environment.harvard.edu/religion>

<http://www.religionandecology.org>

<http://fore.research.yale.edu>

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Green Earth Foundation

<http://www.rmetzner-greenearth.org>

International Society for Environmental Ethics

<http://www.cep.unt.edu/ISEE.html>

The International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture



<http://www.religionandnature.com>

National Religious Partnership for the Environment

<http://www.nrpe.org>

Renewal: Stories from America's Religious Environmental Movement

(<http://www.renewalproject.net>)

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*An Inconvenient Truth: A Global Warning* (DVD 4726, 96 min.)

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*What's Up With the Weather?* (DVD 6947, 114 min.)

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An Inconvenient Truth [Al Gore on global warming]

<http://www.climatecrisis.net>

Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action

<http://christiansandclimate.org>

Climate Crisis Coalition

<http://www.climatecrisiscoalition.org>

EcoBuddhism

<http://www.ecobuddhism.org>

Ecological Footprint

<http://lead.org/leadnet/footprint/info.htm>

Garrison Institute (Satyagraha Project on Climate Change)

<http://www.garrisoninstitute.org>

Interfaith Power and Light

<http://www.theregenerationproject.org>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UNEP)

<http://www.ipcc.ch>

Kyoto Protocol

<http://unfccc.int/>

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

<http://www.maweb.org/en/index.aspx>

Pew Center on Global Climate Change

<http://www.pewclimate.org>

Real Climate: Climate Science from Climate Scientists

<http://www.realclimate.org>

Stop Global Warming

<http://www.StopGlobalWarming.org>

World Climate Research Programme

<http://www.wmo.ch/web/wcrp/wcrp-home.html>

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*Sacred Wilderness: The Teachings of Rocks and Waters* (VHS 13756, 31 min.)

*Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter* (DVD 3965, 103 min.)

*Wisdom of Faith* (VHS 14492, segment on Buddhism, 30 min.)

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DharmaNet International

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Joanna Macy

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Mandala Center

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Mountains and Rivers Order of Zen Buddhism (Tremper, NY)

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Leslie E. Sponsel's homepage (explore under Buddhism)

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## Videos

*Embracing the Earth: Dances with Nature* (VHS 14047, 23 min.)

*Mauna Kea: Temple Under Siege* (VHS 21514, 69 min.)

*Mount Shasta: Cathedral of Wilderness*

*Sukhavati: Place of Bliss* (VHS 16129, 80 min.)

*White Shamans, Plastic Medicine Men* (VHS 18382, 27 min.)

## Web sites

Academic Info

<http://www.academicinfo.nt/religindex.html>

Alex Grey

<http://www.alexgrey.com>

Allfaiths Press

<http://allfaithspress.com>

Aquarius Age

<http://www.aquariusage.com>

Association for Religion, Ecology, and Society

<http://www.arecology.org>

Bioneers

<http://www.bioneers.org>

Center for Ecozoic Studies

<http://www.ecozoicstudies.org>

Center for Education, Imagination, and the Natural World

<http://www.timberlakefarm.org>

Center for the New Age

<http://www.sedonanewagecenter.com>

Circle Sanctuary

<http://www.circlesanctuary.org>

Crown Point Ecology Center

<http://www.crownpt.org>

De Gaarde

<http://www.degaarde.org>

Dream of the Earth Program

<http://www.DreamOfTheEarthProgram.org>

Dream of Earth Retreat

<http://www.dream-of-earth-retreat.com>

Earth and Spirit Council

<http://www.earthandspirit.org>

Earthcare Connections

<http://www.earthcare.ca>

*EarthLight: The Magazine of Spiritual Ecology*

<http://www.earthlight.org>

Earth Literacy Companions

<http://www.earthlinks-colorado.org>

Earth Vision: Nature in the Light of Spiritual Ecology

<http://www.evbooks.net>

Earthen Spirituality Project & Sweet Medicine Women's Center

<http://www.earthenspirituality.org>

Ecopsychology

<http://www.new-ecopsychology.org>

Foundation for Global Community

<http://www.globalcommunity.org>

*Gaian Voices*

<http://www.gaianvoices.com>

Genesis Farm

<http://www.globaleduc.org/genfarm.htm>

Green Museum

<http://www.greenmuseum.org>

Humans and Nature

<http://www.humansandnature.org>

Inner Circle [Wicca]

<http://www.wicca.com>

Institute for Deep Ecology

<http://www.deep-ecology.org>

Institute of Global Education

<http://www.ecopsych.com>

Intermountain Synthesis Center (Mt. Shasta)

<http://www.intermountainsynthesis.org>

La Vista Ecological Learning Center

<http://www.lavistacsa.org>

LinkLight

<http://www.linklight.com>

Living Water Spiritual Center

<http://www.e-livingwater.org>

Morning Star Retreat Center

<http://www.morningstarretreatcenter.nrt>

Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center/Save Mount Shasta

<http://www.mountshastaecology.org>

Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center

<http://www.narrowridge.org>

New Age Truth

<http://www.newagetruth.com>

New Age Web Works

<http://www.newageinfo.com>

Orthodox for Religion, Science and the Environment (RSE)

<http://www.rsesymposia.org>

Partner Earth Educational Center

<http://www.partnereartheducationcenter.com>

Places of Peace and Power (Martin Gray)

<http://www.sacredsites.com>

<http://sacredsites.com>

Religious Tolerance

<http://www.religioustolerance.org>

RiverWind Foundation

<http://www.theriverwindfoundation.org>

Sacred Earth Network

<http://www.sacredearthnetwork.org>

Sacred Ground International

<http://www.sacredgroundintl.org>

Sacred Land Film Project

<http://www.sacredland.org>

Sacred Media

<http://www.SacredMedia.com>

Sacred Nature: A Center for Spiritual Ecology

<http://www.sacrednature.net>

Sacred Sites International

<http://www.sitesaver.org>

Shepherd's Corner

<http://www.sheperdscorner.org>

Skyline Eco-Contemplative Center

<http://www.ecocontemplative.org>

Sophia Center

<http://www.hnc.edu/sophia/faculty.html>

Sophia's Portico

<http://www.sophiasportico.org>

Spirit in Nature

<http://www.spiritinnature.com>

Spirit Wheel – Spiritual Ecology

<http://www.spiritwheel.com/specology.htm>

*Talking Leaves: A Journal of Our Evolving Ecological Culture*

<http://www.talkingleaves.org>

*The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy*

<http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca>

Tribes of Creation

<http://www.tribesofcreation.com>

UNESCO - World Heritage Sites

<http://www.unesco.org/uhc/nwhc/pages/sites/main.htm>

UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (see report on “The Spiritual Life of College Students: A National Survey of College Student’s Search for Meaning and Purpose”)

<http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu>

University of Florida, Department of Religion, Fields of Study, Religion and Nature

<http://www.religion.ufl.edu>

University of Hawaii, Spiritual Ecology Concentration

[www.soc.hawaii.edu/Sponse1](http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/Sponse1)

University of Metaphysical Sciences

<http://www.umsonline.org>

Unity with Nature - Acadia Friends Meeting

<http://home.acadia.net>

Waterspirit

<http://www.stellamarisretreatcenter.org/waterspirit.html>

Whidbey Institute

<http://www.whidbeyinstitute.org>

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## **PROGRAMS**

Boston Theological Institute – Religion and Ecology

[http://www.bostontheological.org/programs/religion\\_and\\_ecology.htm](http://www.bostontheological.org/programs/religion_and_ecology.htm)

California Institute of Integral Studies

<http://www.ciis.edu>

Drew University (Laura Kearns)

<http://www.drew.edu>

University of Chicago – Religion and Environment Initiative

<http://rei.uchicago.edu>

University of Florida – Religion and Nature (Bron Taylor)

<http://web.religion.ufl.edu/gradprog/field-nature.html>

Graduate Theological Union – University of California at Berkeley

<http://www.gtu.edu>

University of Hawai`i

Spiritual Ecology Concentration in the Ecological Anthropology Program (Leslie E. Sponsel)

<http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu>

<http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/Sponsel>

Institute for Cultural Ecology (David Adams)

<http://www.cultural-ecology.com>

Ohio Northern University – Working Group on Religion, Ethics, and Nature

<http://www/onu.edu>

Schumacher College (Satish Kumar)

<http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk>

<http://schumachercollege.gn.apc.org/http://www.schumacher.org.uh>

University of Toronto

<http://www.religion.utoronto.ca>

Vanderbilt University – Ecology and Spirituality in America (Beth Conklin)

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu>

Western Illinois University

<http://www.wiu.edu>

Yale University – School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim)

<http://fore.research.yale.edu>

<http://www.religionandecology.org>

<http://www.yale.edu/forestry>

<http://environment.yale.edu/climate/working-groups/religion-ethics/>

Bear & Co.  
 Cassell  
 Destiny Books  
 Ecopress  
 Fortress Press  
 Franciscan Press  
 Harvard University Press  
 Inner Traditions  
 New Society Publishers  
 Open Court  
 Orbis Books  
 Parallax Press  
 Paulist Press  
 Routledge  
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**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION AND NATURE**

Bron Taylor, Editor-in-Chief, 2005, New York, NY: Continuum Press.

This is a topical index of entries of special relevance, but not an exhaustive inventory. Entries on most religions other than Buddhism have not been included here. Likewise, most entries on specific cultures are not included here. Those persons interested in such topics should consult the reference book itself and its index. This inventory is not intended to be comprehensive.

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