

## **Faith, Ethics & the Biodiversity Crisis**

TESP 152 Spring 2010: MW 3:30-5:15pm

Third level Religious Studies

Keith Douglass Warner OFM, Kenna 321

[Kwarner@scu.edu](mailto:Kwarner@scu.edu)

Biologist E.O. Wilson popularized the neologism “biodiversity” only in 1986. It succinctly conveys the full range of life on Earth, but builds upon ancient human concern for nature. It also provides an entryway to the idea of nature conservation, which can be traced back to the beginnings of human cultures. The present collapse of Earth’s biodiversity is a major issue facing human society. Members of all religions are responding as part of the “Greening of Religions,” also known as religious environmentalism, based on religious environmental ethics. A quarter-long research project drives our intellectual work in this class. This class investigates the following research question:

- **How have the religions of the world reinterpreted their tradition (or how could they) so as to play a leadership role in conservation of biodiversity?**

This question emerges from your instructor’s curiosity, research and teaching over many years. This research question is broken down into discrete tasks, with mileposts throughout the quarter.

This class and its multi-part research assignment are designed to address the two learning objectives in the Religion, Theology & Culture 3 course in the new core curriculum. As a result of this class, students will:

1. Be able to identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions. (Critical Thinking; Ethical Reasoning; Perspective)
2. Be able to evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society. (Critical Thinking; Religious Reflection)

### **Required texts**

Callicott, J. Baird. 1994. *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*. Berkeley: UC Press.

Gottlieb, Roger S. *A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Wilson, Edward O. *The Future of Life*. New York: Vintage, 2002.

A reader from Copycraft with the following:

The Biodiversity Project, 2002. *Ethics for a Small Planet: A Communications Handbook on the Ethical and Theological Reasons for Protecting Biodiversity*, Madison, Wisconsin. Selections.

Pedersen, K.P., 1998. *Environmental Ethics in Interreligious Perspective*. In: S.B. Twiss and B. Grelle (Editors), *Global Ethics: Comparative Religious Ethics and Interreligious Dialogue*. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado.

The Assisi Documents, in *Ethics for a Small Planet*.

Tucker, M.E., 2002. *Religion and Ecology: The Interaction of Cosmology and Cultivation*. In: S.R. Kellert and T.J. Farnham (Editors), *The Good in Nature and Humanity*. Island Press, Washington, pp. 65-90.

Warner, K.D., OFM, 2008. The Moral Significance of Creation in the Franciscan Theological Tradition: Implications for Contemporary Catholics and Public Policy. University of St. Thomas Law Journal, 5(1): 37-52.

World Wide Fund for Nature, Equilibrium and Alliance of Religions and Conservation, 2005. Beyond Belief: Linking Faiths and Protected Areas to Support Biodiversity Conservation. WWF, London. Selections.

### Student performance

The evaluation of student performance will be based on the following assignments.

Date	Part	%	Description
April 5	1	5	Spiritual autobiography of your relationship with the earth
April 12	1	2	Homework 1a: trace a religious environmental ethic idea through the course readings
April 21 (1 day before Earth D)	1	4	HW 1b: Identify and analyze two scriptural texts for implicit ethical valuation of nature (alternatively: you can analyze 1 religious ritual). Everyone will read one of these texts at an Earth Day meditation (must be present to get full credit)
April 28	1	15	<b>Research project 1c: answer research question 1. Due by email</b>
May 5	2	2	HW 2a: profile a scholar, leader, or organization that has reinterpreted a religious teaching to create an intellectual resource for environmental ethics
May 10	2	2	HW 2b: describe how that profiled in HW2a has applied this to a real world conservation issue
May 12	2	15	<b>Research project 2c: answer research question 2. Due by email</b>
May 19	3	2	HW 3a: outline of the digital imovie + pics. Due by email.
May 24	3	8	HW 3b: literature review for rp3c. Due by email.
June 2	3	10	Imovie due in class—you must bring a completed version to be shown in class
June 9	3	20	<b>Research project 3c: answer research question 3. Due by email.</b>
June 9	3	10	<b>Final reflection paper. Due by email.</b>
		5	Attendance and participation

**How to turn in assignments.** Homework 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, and the first religious reflection paper are due in hard copy in class on the day indicated. All other written assignments are due to the dedicated email account: [FEBC152@gmail.com](mailto:FEBC152@gmail.com)

**Expectations for student performance and attainment:** Students will receive written feedback from the instructor on homework on their papers, and in email feedback on

assignments submitted electronically. This will assess whether the students are mastering the basic material necessary to successfully progress through the stages of the research. The instructor will meet with each research team, in or out of class, in preparation for submitting all three stages, and provide recommendations for what to include in each stage of the project. Students will receive feedback on their performance to improve by the instructor’s written comments on written work (including pre-deadline drafts), and by attending office hours.

**Grading policy.** Research papers will be graded according to the following standards.

An excellent paper will: demonstrate a strong understanding of key interpretive concepts in the study of religious environmental ethics; examine thought-provoking issues in the reinterpretation and application of these principles; propose conclusions for contemporary understanding of these themes; demonstrate mastery of the course texts; and manifest a cogent organization, clear argument, and excellent writing skills.

A very good paper will: demonstrate understanding of key concepts in the study of religious environmental ethics; examine issues in the reinterpretation and application of these principles; have some kind of conclusion about the topic; be well organized; offer an argument; demonstrate knowledge of course texts; and demonstrate very good writing skills.

A good paper will: demonstrate some understanding of concepts in the study of religious environmental ethics; refer to issues in the reinterpretation and application of these principles; have some organization and argument; and demonstrate university level writing skills.

An acceptable paper will: address a topic in the study of religious environmental ethics; have marginal organization and argument; be written understandably.

Without the elements described under “acceptable” a paper will be unacceptable.

Grading matrix for TESP 152

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D and below
95-100	91-94	88-90	84-87	81-83	78-80	74-77	71-73	60-70

**Attendance policy.** Santa Clara University emphasizes student-teacher interaction in the classroom. Five points can be earned by full attendance and participation: 3.5 for attendance and 1.5 for classroom participation. You may miss 2 class meetings without penalty. Each subsequent class absence (starting with the third) will result in a lost attendance point for each class missed. Thus if you miss 2 classes, you will lose none of the attendance points, but if you miss 3 classes, you will earn no more than 1.5 points. Excused absences do not count against you. An excused absence requires an email to the instructor before class (one time only), or a doctors note. Normally, I will circulate a sign-in sheet at the beginning of class. I may use group classroom presentations to take attendance.

**Academic integrity.** “The University is committed to academic excellence and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite any sources they use. A student who is guilty of a dishonest act in an examination, paper, or other work required for a course, or who assists others in such an act, may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a grade of “F” for the course.” Consult [www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm](http://www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm).

**Use of Wiktionary and Wikipedia.** Please use these as sources for word definition and background information. You might also find scholarly sources through footnotes. You are

hereby *prohibited from using them as scholarly sources in this class* (i.e., citing them in a footnote). Treat them like asking your smart uncle: get some basic information that orients you toward genuine scholarship. This class demands your research use quality evidence, more than the level provided by these sources alone.

**Technology in the classroom.** Please silence your cell phone when in class. Please only use your laptop during the class periods devoted to research planning (to read the pdf texts). In my experience giving lectures, laptops are frequently used for activities unrelated to the class, so please be discrete.

**Disabilities Accommodations.** To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disabilities Resources in Benson Center, (408) 554-4111 or TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide appropriate documentation to that office prior to receiving accommodations.

**Four types of assignments** compose the course work for this class: six short homework assignments; three 5-7 page research papers; two 2 page religious reflection papers; and an imovie. The homework assignments are generally short – about one page single spaced – and designed to get students started on writing the research papers. Ideally, if well thought through, text from the homework assignments will serve as the basis of the research papers. The research papers require students to gather, analyze and discuss scholarly literature provided on the Angel library (not class texts). The religious reflection papers require students to reflect on the religious implications of nature for their lives and vocations.

**Course outline and assigned readings** (W=See Keith’s webpage; R=copycraft reader)

Class	Reading & mileposts (!!!) for this day	Classroom questions
March 29		What is religious environmentalism (RE)? Its relationship to BD?
March 31	W: Warner, Species Preservation Matters! Wilson: 1 (Prologue optional) Gottlieb: Preface, Introduction Callicott: Preface	What is biodiversity? How does BD differ from other environmental problems?
5 (w2)	R: Assisi Declarations R: Ethics for a Small Planet (1–67) Wilson: 2	How have/can religions value(d) biodiversity?
7	!!!-- <b>Review of ARC projects</b> R: Pedersen, Points of Religious Agreement on Env Ethics Gottlieb: 1	How has religious environmentalism (RE) come about?
12 (w3)	!!!-- <b>Pick a religion &amp; a dyad partner</b> Callicott: Chapter 2 R: Warner, Moral Significance Wilson: 3	How does RE use ethical concepts? Genesis creation stories as case study

14	<b>!!!--How to use library in this course</b> R: Tucker, The Interaction of Cosmology and Cultivation	Cosmovision and primary text
19 (w4)	<b>!!!--Report scoping primary sources</b> Wilson: 4	How are humans creating the BD crisis?
21	<b>!!!--Present some values; read Primary Source @Earth Day Meditation</b> Gottlieb: 3	How to brainstorm a title and an outline for 1c What difference do sacred texts make?
26 (w5)	<b>!!!—How to answer research question 1</b> Gottlieb: 4 Wilson: 6	What difference does religion make in these RE cases?
28	<b>!!!--How to identify retrieval in the Angel library chapters</b> Gottlieb: 7	How do religious leaders come to speak out on this?
May 3 (w6)	<b>!!!— how &amp; why of an annotated analytical bibliography</b> Wilson: 7 Callicott: 9	Keith's research projects
5	<b>!!!--How &amp; why to Bronco Express</b> Gottlieb: 6	What role could ritual play?
10 (w7)	R: WWF, Beyond Belief 1-16	Can hotspots translate to protecting places?
12	<b>!!!—What is a storyboard?</b> R: WWF, Beyond Belief 31-39	How have religions changed their views?
17 (w8)	Callicott: 10 Wilson: 5	What are religious conservation initiatives?
19	<b>!!!--Imovie lab session!!</b>	Bring storyboard and pictures on your jump drive!!!
24 (w9)	<b>!!!--How to do the final research project</b> R: Ethics for a Small Planet (92-108)	Best practices in communicating RE & BD protection?
26	Callicott: 6, 7 or 8	How do Indigenous spiritual traditions approach biodiversity?
31	<b>No class—memorial day</b>	<b>—do homework! ;-)</b>
Weds June 2	Presentation of Imovies	Last class session Weds of week 10

## **RESEARCH PROJECT for the retrieval of religious environmental ethics for biodiversity conservation Part 1 (Faith, Ethics & Biodiversity Crisis Spring 2010)**

Here is the research question driving the three-part research project:

- How have the religions of the world reinterpreted their tradition (or how could they) so as to play a leadership role in the conservation of biodiversity?

The entire course is designed to provide you the resources to address this by gathering, evaluating, organizing, analyzing and presenting qualitative data.

The three parts investigate the following research questions:

1. Which religious values and ethical principles -- found in the primary sources (scriptures & instructional stories & myths & rituals) of one religious tradition -- could potentially be retrieved to support contemporary conservation efforts?
2. What work have contemporary religious leaders, scholars and groups done to reinterpret these traditional teachings and practices so as provide a rationale for contemporary nature conservation?
3. How have contemporary religious leaders and groups drawn from the reinterpretation process to support (through moral discourse and material resources) biodiversity conservation initiatives in the contemporary world?

For each part, students will conduct research in pairs to maximize the efficiency of research activities. Student dyads will work collaboratively to conduct research as a team, and present some of this material orally in class together. Students will submit their own written work.

### **Research Project Part 1. Ethical principles**

Homework 1a (=HW1a) asks students to describe an ethical idea in one religious tradition, drawing from four course texts (Caldicott; Gottlieb; Pederson; Assisi Declarations). HW1b asks students to identify two Scriptural texts -- or one ritual practice -- from the religious tradition being studied, and to analyze this for implicit ethical valuation of nature. Research paper 1 will answer research question 1, drawing from the material identified in HW1a and HW1b, plus the scholarly literature on Angel, and supported by citations in footnotes. Students will fulfill RTC3 Learning Objective 1 by identifying diverse perspectives and evaluating ethical positions on the contemporary concern for the environment. Part 1 will require students to critically analyze religious ideas, writings or rituals for environmental values; to demonstrate ethical reasoning in analysis of these sources; and to identify perspectives within a religious tradition.

Before you begin any part your research, check out some of examples of the religious biodiversity conservation projects reported on the Alliance for Religion and Conservation webpage. This will help you choose well. You can be much more efficient with your time if you do some advance “poking around” to find out what kind of principles, reinterpretation processes, and projects are associated with specific faith traditions. Here are some examples organized by specific faith: [http://www.arcworld.org/projects\\_by\\_faith.asp](http://www.arcworld.org/projects_by_faith.asp). And here are some other examples: <http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectId=50>. You will likely want to study how religious traditions outside of US have engaged conservation (these are more interesting cases). Here are the religious traditions that I want the class to study:

1. Hinduism
2. Buddhism

3. Islam
4. Orthodox Christianity
5. Roman Catholicism
6. Protestant denominations (outside the US)
7. Indigenous spiritual traditions: Maori in New Zealand or Aboriginals in Australia (these cases are really interesting, but difficult to study, and will require extra effort on your part)
8. Judaism
9. Additional Asian traditions ((Daoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shintoism)

The primary research materials you will use to address these questions are found on the Angel website for the class, and in books on reserve (72 hour check out) in Orradre. You may use other webpages, but you must ask my permission (by email) before you use them.

### **HW 1a**

Homework 1a asks students to describe an ethical idea in one religious tradition, drawing from four course texts (Caldicott; Gottlieb; Pederson; Assisi Declarations). Write one page single spaced about an ethical principle and how it appears or does not appear in the four texts. You might pick an ethical idea from the “Assisi Principles” or from Pederson’s *Eight points of religious agreement in environmental ethics*

These are taken from Pedersen 1998 [ethics keywords by KDW]

1. The natural world has value in itself and does not exist solely to serve human needs. [not only humans]
2. There is a significant continuity of being between humans and non-human living beings, even though humans have a distinctive role. [continuity]
3. Non-human beings are morally significant, in the eyes of God or the cosmic order. They have their own unique relations to God, and their own places in the cosmic order. [morally significant]
4. The dependence of human life on the natural world can and should be acknowledged in ritual and other expressions of appreciation and gratitude. [dependence and gratitude]
5. Moral norms such as justice, compassion and reciprocity apply both to humans and non-humans. The well-being of humans and the well-being of non-humans are inseparable. [inter-dependence]
6. There are legitimate and illegitimate uses of nature. [legitimate uses]
7. Greed and destructiveness are condemned. Restraint and protection are commended. [restraint]
8. Human beings are obliged to be aware and responsible in living in harmony with the natural world, and should follow the specific practices for this prescribed by their traditions. [harmony]

### **HW 1b**

HW1b asks students to identify two Scriptural texts -- or one ritual practice -- from the religious tradition being studied, and to analyze this for implicit ethical valuation of nature. The best examples of how this is done are in the discussions of Genesis 1-2 in Gottlieb chapter 2 and Callicott chapter 2, and by Mary Evelyn Tucker (“Religion and Ecology: The Interaction of Cosmology and Cultivation”). To find these scriptures, you should look in the following sources.

These recent, scholarly sources will refer to ancient sacred texts, which you then have to track down.

- i. The hot links to the Introductions to books by the *Forum On Religion and Ecology*: <http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/index.html>.
- ii. The religion-specific chapter taken from Gottlieb’s Handbook on Religion & Ecology
- iii. The religion-specific entry in the Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature (on reserve in the library)

To orient you to your specific religion, both partners should read:

Religion & FORE Source	“Handbook” Source on Angel
1. <a href="#">Hinduism</a>	Hinduism–Dwivedi–Hindu Religion & Env
1. <a href="#">Buddhism</a>	Buddhism–Kaza–The Greening of Buddhism
1. <a href="#">Islam</a>	Islam–Folz–Islam
1. Orthodox <a href="#">Christianity</a>	Orthodox Christianity–Chryssavgis <a href="http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/environment">http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/environment</a>
1. Roman Catholic <a href="#">Christianity</a>	Catholicism–Hart
1. Protestant <a href="#">Christianity</a>	Protestant–Santmire
1. <a href="#">Indigenous spiritual traditions</a>	Indigenous–Grim
1. <a href="#">Judaism</a>	
1. Additional Asian traditions ( <a href="#">Daoism</a> , <a href="#">Confucianism</a> , <a href="#">Shintoism</a> , <a href="#">Jainism</a> , Sikhism, Zoroastrianism)	Jainism–Chapple

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, one member of your research team will report orally to the class: “The values and ethical principles from tradition \_\_\_\_ that could potentially be retrieved to support contemporary conservation efforts are...” The other member of the dyad will identify one *primary source* (scripture or instructional story or myth) in the religious tradition you are studying and read it at the Interfaith Earth Day Celebration.

**Research paper 1c should answer the following research question:**

1. Which religious values and ethical principles -- found in the primary sources (scriptures & instructional stories & myths & rituals) of one religious tradition -- could potentially be retrieved to support contemporary conservation efforts?

Research paper 1 will answer research question 1, drawing from the material identified in HW1a and HW1b, plus the scholarly literature on Angel, and supported by citations in footnotes. To answer this research question, your paper will have several components, drawn from prior text you have written for homework. You will want to:

- a. *describe* one or more sacred text from a specific religious tradition’s primary sources (hw1b);
- b. *identify* the environmental wisdom and ethical principles that could potentially be retrieved (hw1a);

- c. *explain* what could be reinterpreted for contemporary conservation efforts, and how it could be used.

You might think of this as a “testing” of Pedersen’s 8 points by checking to see if and how they are present in the primary sources of the tradition that you study, and how they could be used. These are *potential* intellectual and ethical resources for religious environmental ethics. You will demonstrate your learning in two ways: an initial oral presentation on Earth Day by your team, and a written analysis of the 8 points in the religious tradition you are studying

For the primary sources, you will have to skim the Angel book chapters and review the books on reserve in Orradre. To find them, you would want to comb through the readings to find references to ancient writings/texts/teachings are discussed as being relevant to contemporary environmental concerns. Pay special attention to any primary sources referenced by more than one contemporary author.

The kinds of questions to address are below. You and your partner might draw different conclusions, depending on the specific primary texts you use.

1. Which of Pedersen’s 8 points are **well supported** by these texts in this tradition?
2. Which of the 8 are **not supported**?
3. What are you able to identify as the “**key ideas**” in these sources – and the cosmology they suggest -- that could potentially be used to support nature conservation? [Are they more specific than Pederson’s points? Do they differ from her points?]
4. What kind of “**potential proxies**” for biodiversity are described as having intrinsic value in this tradition? [e.g., mountains, rivers, deserts, specimens...]

Note that you must thoroughly justify any statements you make about these texts with a complete citation in the form of a **footnote** (use Arabic numbers; do not use Roman numbers or letters to indicate footnotes). This is true for all 4 parts of this research project. The following are the formats you must use. Follow this format exactly. For a primary text itself, identify it and describe it as best you can in a footnote, and then fully cite the printed source where you found it. To create a footnote in Word, click

“Insert  Reference  Footnote”

A book:

Gottlieb, Roger S. *A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

A chapter in an edited book:

Pedersen, Kusumita P. "Environmental Ethics in Interreligious Perspective." In *Global Ethics: Comparative Religious Ethics and Interreligious Dialogue*, edited by Sumner B Twiss and Bruce Grelle. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998.

A journal article

Warner, Keith Douglass, OFM. "The Greening of American Catholicism: Identity, Conversion and Continuity." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 18, no. 1 (2008): 113-42.

A webpage

Pope John Paul II. Peace With God The Creator, Peace With All Of Creation [World Day of Peace Message, 1990]. Retrieved January 13, 2009, from <http://conservation.catholic.org/ecologicalcrisis.htm>.

Assignments due later in the quarter:

#### Part 2. Reinterpretation process

HW2a is a brief profile of one religious scholar, leader, or organization that has self-consciously reinterpreted religious teachings or practices to create intellectual resources for contemporary religious environmental ethics. HW2b is a brief profile of one scholar, leader or organization that has applied this to a real-world biodiversity conservation project. Research paper 2 will answer research question 2, drawing from the material identified in HW2a and HW2b, plus the scholarly literature on Angel, and supported by citations in footnotes.

#### Part 3. Application to real world projects

HW3a is an initial literature review of scholarly materials that will be used to write research paper 3. It will require an analysis of at least 6 scholarly sources. HW3b is the outline of the imovie plus the digital pictures that will be used in the making of the imovie. Research paper 3 will answer research question 3, drawing from all the materials students have previously written, and supported by citations in footnotes. The imovie will report in a visual and auditory way the implications of student research.