How do our conceptions of humanity, society, history, God, and nature shape our individual and societal lifestyles? What ideas and values should guide us as we seek to address the environmental, social, and economic issues that are facing our planet?

This course takes a cross-cultural and historical look at how religious and secular worldviews influence attitudes, behaviors, and policies toward our natural and social environments. We will learn to appreciate the ambiguous moral and environmental implications of deep-seated religious and philosophical assumptions. We will learn to draw on diverse religious and secular worldviews as resources for our own ecological and moral imaginations, and we will develop some skills for analyzing the ideological and ethical conflicts surrounding selected environmental, social, and economic issues.

General Education Information
While your major course of study will prepare you for your life’s work, General Education is what creates a common intellectual experience for students in all majors, helping you discover that knowledge in one field is connected to knowledge in another, that there is always more to know, and that what you know affects the way you live. This course meets a lower division humanities requirement and is part of the Sustainability Pathway. In addition to sustainability, the course addresses several other GE objectives including personal and social responsibility, diversity, and global engagement.

The Pathways program allows students to earn an interdisciplinary minor simply by completing 18 units across the disciplinary areas within a single Pathway. The benefits of deciding to choose a GE Pathway and earn an interdisciplinary minor while completing GE are many. GE Pathways have been created by groups of committed faculty members with a passion for their Pathway theme. Courses in a Pathway contain shared thematic content, allowing you to learn about a subject deeply from multiple points of view. You can declare a Pathway minor via the Portal in your Student Center; your Pathway minor will appear on your transcript upon graduation.

"Sustainability" means developing an awareness of planetary constraints, behaving as a caretaker for the earth, and planning for future generations dependent on the wellbeing of the planet. The Sustainability Pathway introduces the multiple dimensions surrounding environmental issues and needed skills to enter both the workforce and public life as a socially-responsible and environmentally-minded citizen. To deepen awareness of the complexity of environmental problems and the pressing need for novel solutions, the Sustainability Pathway curriculum addresses such questions as: how can societies be vital, while maintaining healthy ecosystems and creating strong and just economies? How has the natural world shaped our political, social, and economic systems (and vice versa)? How can human innovations and commitment repair ecological damage and lead to a shift in problem solving? This course of study intentionally links the perspectives of multiple academic disciplines around the concept of sustainability, emphasizing systems thinking to address global issues, examining barriers and potential solutions to climate change, natural resource management, and ecosystem restoration. Sustainable behaviors flow from knowledgeable, participatory citizens with an intra-generational awareness of the connections and interdependencies among equitable societies, vital economies, human innovation, and the goods and services provided by stable global ecosystems. For more information about Pathway minors, and for assistance with course selection, visit http://catalog.csuchico.edu/viewer/14/GENED/PATHSUSSUM.html and consult with an advisor in Academic Advising Programs, SSC 220. The Pathway Coordinator is Professor Don Miller, Biological Sciences, HOLT 213.
Course Requirements & Classroom Etiquette

Students will be expected to complete assigned readings and attend class meetings, participate in class discussions and activities, and regularly log-in to the Chico State Portal to access course information and materials through Blackboard Learn (BbLearn).

Please put away reading materials not related to this class. Please turn off and stow cell phones and all other electronic devices before class begins. Disruptive behavior (texting, tweeting, facebooking, talking, etc.) will negatively impact your participation grade. If you are planning on using a laptop computer, please read To Remember a Lecture Better, Take Notes by Hand If you are still planning on using a laptop, please meet with me during the first week of the semester regarding guidelines for computer use during class.

Grades will be based on the following:

Class attendance and participation including occasional in-class writing exercises, small group discussions, peer reviewing, and pop quizzes (worth 15% of the final grade).

Three multiple choice exams. The first and second exams will each be worth 10% of the final grade. The final comprehensive exam will be worth 15% of the final grade. Study guides will be distributed via the portal.

One short response or report (approximately two typed double spaced pages worth 5% of the final grade). Topics, guidelines, and due date to be discussed in class and announced via the portal.

One end-of-semester reflection paper (approximately two typed double spaced pages worth 5% of the final grade). Guidelines and due date to be discussed in class and announced via the portal.

One summary/analysis paper (approximately three to four typed double spaced pages worth 15% of the final grade). Topics, guidelines, and due dates to be discussed in class and announced via the portal.

Small group research project and presentation (worth 25% of the final grade). Students will be organized into small groups that will be responsible for selecting and researching a topic related to the course. During the last few weeks of the semester groups will make short presentations of their research in class. Research and presentation guidelines and other details will be discussed in class and announced via the portal.

Required Texts

(Available from the campus bookstore, online booksellers, and on library reserve.)

David Kinsley, Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective

Steven C. Rockefeller and John C. Elder, (editors), Spirit and Nature: Why the Environment is a Religious Issue

Roderick Frazier Nash, (editor), American Environmentalism: Readings in Conservation History

A collection of electronic texts available in Blackboard Learn (BbLearn).

Academic Integrity Policy

All quotations and paraphrases in your written work must be properly referenced. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and referral to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The University’s policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct can be found at http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity.shtml The Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities has also established a policy on academic integrity, honesty, and plagiarism. For an explanation of the policy and a tutorial visit: http://www.csuchico.edu/crh/crh/programs/academic-integrity.shtml

By submitting written assignments, you are indicating that you understand and agree to abide by this policy.
Students with Certified Disabilities:
If you have a documented disability that may require reasonable accommodations, please contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) within the first two weeks of the semester for coordination of your academic accommodations: 530 898-5959; http://www.csuchico.edu/dss/ Please note that you may be required to show documentation of your disability.

CLASS SCHEDULE: TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS
(subject to revision)

I. INTRODUCTION
1st & 2nd weeks

Worldviews, Ethics, and Ecology
Readings: David Kinsley, Ecology and Religion, pp. xv-xxi; Lester R. Brown, “Preface” & chapter 1 “Selling Our Future” from Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization (BbLearn)

The Idea of Sustainability
Reading: Richard Heinberg, “What is Sustainability?”; “The Ethical Dimension of Sustainability (the 3 Es of Sustainability”; “Triple Bottom Line (the 3 Ps of Sustainability)” (all in BbLearn)

II. MODERNITY, CAPITALISM, & CONSUMERISM
3rd & 4th weeks

Origins and Structure of the “Modern” Worldview
Readings: David Kinsley, Ecology and Religion, chapter 10

“Affluenza” and the Consumer Lifestyle
Reading: David A. Crocker, “Consumption and Well-Being” (BbLearn)

EXAM T 2/17 (date subject to revision)

III. SPIRIT AND NATURE: WHY THE ENVIRONMENT IS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE
5th – 7th weeks

Native American, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist Voices
Readings: Rockefeller and Elder, Spirit and Nature, Introduction, chapters 1&3, italicized introductions to each chapter, and one additional chapter of your own choosing; David Kinsley, Ecology and Religion, pp.42-50, 174-177; Black Elk, in Nash, American Environmentalism, #1
Recommended: David Kinsley, Ecology and Religion, pp. 3-21

8th & 9th weeks

Debating the Environmental Legacy of Christianity
Recommended: Kinsley, Ecology and Religion, pp. 164-177

SPRING BREAK FALLS BETWEEN THE 8TH & 9TH WEEKS

EXAM Th 3/26 (date subject to revision)

IV. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND DEBATES
10th week

The Value of Wilderness: Conservationism vs. Preservationism
Mainstream and Radical Environmentalism: Philosophical and Tactical Debates; Ecofeminism; Bioregionalism; Deep Ecology; Ecoactivism
Readings: David Kinsley, Ecology and Religion, chps. 16, 14, 15, pp.217-221, and Conclusion; Donna Ladkin, “Introduction to Ecofeminism” (BbLearn); Great Earth River Institute, “What is Bioregionalism” (BbLearn); the following selections are in Nash, American Environmentalism: Gary Snyder, "Respect for Nature" #36; Kirkpatrick Sale, "Schism in Environmentalism" #44; Edward Abbey and Dave Foreman, “Monkeywrenching” #46; George Sessions and Bill Devall, "Deep Ecology" #47

13th week
Debating Climate Change; Lester Brown and Plan B
Readings: a collection of short readings under the heading “Debating Climate Change” (BbLearn); Lester R. Brown, chapter 10 “Can We Mobilize Fast Enough” from Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization (BbLearn).

14th & 15th weeks
Small Group Research Presentations

FINAL EXAM:
RELS 247-01 Th 5/14 10:00
RELS 247-02 Th 5/14 2:00
PLEASE NOTE DATE AND TIME
PLEASE DO NOT ASK TO RESCHEDULE THE FINAL EXAM