

The University of Toronto
ENV 333HF: Ecological Worldviews

Term: Fall 2020
Instructor: Prof. Stephen B. Scharper (Stephen.scharper@utoronto.ca)
TAs: Ms. Madeleine Fyles (Head TA), madeleine.fyles@mail.utoronto.ca
Ms. Ruseh Oghenekaro, ruseh.oghenekaro@mail.utoronto.ca
Ms. Tamara Kumpan, tamara.kumpan@mail.utoronto.ca
Phone (416) 978-2522 x26312
Time: Thursdays 2:10 p.m.-4 p.m.
Room: This is an On-line Synchronous Course, via Zoom.
Office Hours: Virtually, Thursdays, 11am till 12:30; beginning Sept. 17.

Course Description and Rationale

This course attempts to introduce students to both the scope and seriousness of present ecological concerns, as well as some core principles and concepts in the intersection of environment and culture, through the lens of worldviews. Scientists, policy makers, and activists have of late been frustrated with the long-term efficacy of their actions, and have begun to reflect on the underlying worldviews and core values of their work. Does the neoliberal economic model represent a “worldview,” for example? Does consumerism? What about notions of “progress” or empirical modern science? These questions and emergences have led to a rebirth of interest in secular and religious worldviews as a source of environmental theory and practice. Class lectures on-line will be supplemented by audiovisuals, guest presenters and class discussions.

Course Texts

There are 2 required texts: 1) a photocopied course packet. These readers are being produced by **The Copy Place, 720 Spadina Ave., Suite 103, Toronto, ON, M5S 2T9, 416-961-2679.**

Email: 720thecopyplace@hotmail.ca The Copy Place owner, Patrick, will prepare and ship the readings packet domestically and internationally to students. Please email him directly for pricing, payment, and shipping details. Once contacted, he will ship within 24 hours.

2) Scharper, Stephen Bede. *For Earth's Sake: Toward a Compassionate Ecology*. Toronto: Novalis, 2013. This book will be available in the **University of Toronto Bookstore, 214 College St., (416) 640-7900. N.B.: It might also be listed under ENV 100. (An e-copy is also being currently explored for the library.)**

N.B. For each week, there will be Readings assigned which students will be required to read and will be material upon which students may be tested. There will also be Supplemental readings—these are not required, and students will not be tested on their content. Should students wish to include the Supplemental readings in any of their course essay tests or other assignments, they are perfectly welcome to do so. In other words, anything listed after “Reading” is required; anything listed after “Supplemental” is not. Please note the numbers of each reading in the Course Packet, which will be cited within the syllabus to help you identify weekly required and supplemental readings.

A Note on Communication: For all course questions related to course logistics, e.g., due dates, scheduling issues, etc., **please contact Head TA Ms. Madeleine Fyles.**

Submission of Assignments: All written assignments, unless otherwise indicated, should be submitted via Quercus. If problems are encountered, please email assignments directly to **both** Ms. Madeleine Fyles and the instructor.

Recommended:

- Berry, Thomas. *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Berry, Thomas. *The Great Work*. New York: Random House, 2000.
- Boff, Leonardo and M. Hathaway. *The Tao of Liberation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2009.
- Brown, Peter G. and G. Garver. *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008.
- Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1962.
- Foltz, Richard C., ed., *Worldviews, Religion and Environment: A Global Anthology*. Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 2003.
- Gottlieb, R. *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Hallman, David G. *Spiritual Values for Earth Community*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2000.
- Hunter, Emily. *The Next Eco-Warriors: 20 Young Women and Men Who Are Saving the Planet*. Berkeley, Cal.: Conari Press, 2011.
- Klein, Naomi. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2014.
- McKibben, Bill. *Enough: Staying Human in an Engineered Age*. New York, Houghton-Mifflin, 2003.
- Rockefeller, S. and J.C. Elder. *Spirit and Nature*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- Scharper, Stephen. *Redeeming the Time: A Political Theology of the Environment*. New York: Continuum, 1998.
- Hawken, Paul. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and No One Saw It Coming*. New York: Viking, 2007.
- Scharper, Stephen Bede and H. Cunningham. *The Green Bible*. New York: Lantern Books, 2002.
- Wright, Ronald. *A Short History of Progress*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2004.

Course Requirements

a) Final short in-class reflection: Dec. 3 (10%) and a note on participation

It is essential for the success of this course that students attend class regularly on-line and participate in class break-out discussions. (All of us are part of this learning process!) Students are granted one unexcused absence; any further absences should be cleared with the instructor. **A final short essay will be assigned and completed during class-time on the last day of class based on in-class material and submitted via Quercus.**

b) 2 Short Essay Tests (30% each). Two 1.5 hour essay-based tests will be given during class time to cover lectures, readings, and class discussions. **Test 1: Oct. 1; Test 2: Nov. 5.**

c) Major Assignment (30%)

There are 3 options for the major assignment, all due by 12 November.

Option #1: Book or Film Review

The review can be of any book or film dealing with the class theme subject to the approval of the instructor. The review will be 7-10 pages typed, double-spaced. In the review, at least three sources should be cited, and students can explore an environmental theme as it pertains to an ecological worldview in a film (feature film or documentary) or book of their choice.

Option #2: Presentation

Students may wish to opt for a **presentation** instead of a book or film review, but must inform the instructor of their choice to do so **by 22 October**. Up to three students may work together on any particular class presentation (a legitimate collaboration). Students will submit via Quercus a one-page summary of their thesis as well as their bibliography on the day of the presentation. If a group presents, students will submit these individually and include what part of

the presentation each was responsible for. These will be scheduled later in the term individually with the instructor via Zoom.

Option #3: Journal

Students may wish, in lieu of a research paper or seminar, to prepare a written **journal reflection** with three parts.

Part 1: Reflection on a personal experience of nature or the wilderness and how it shaped your own worldview(s).

Part 2: A reflection on an older person’s perspective concerning his or her understanding of nature, changes in the environmental situation over this person’s life and this person’s ecological worldview.

Part 3: Reflection on two class readings which most clearly speak to your own ecological worldview and why.

Each part should be 3-4 pages typed, double-spaced. The entire journal should thus be no more than 15 pages.

Plagiarism, as you know, is an academic offense. For guidelines on this issue, please visit: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

All written assignments are to be handed in via Quercus at the end of class.

I: Introduction and The Modern Worldview

Sep. 10: Why a Course in Ecological Worldviews?

The Nature of "Eco-Crisis"

We will go over course requirements and goals and begin the semester by discussing the terms of the course and some dimensions of the so-called environmental crisis as well what is meant by “worldviews.” This week we will discuss notions of development and modernity as a worldview and its relationship to our current ecological situation.

Reading: David Orr, “What Is Education for?”

<https://www.context.org/iclib/ic27/orr/>

2: The Consumerist or “Economist” Worldview
--

Sep. 17:

This week we will explore the notion of consumerism as promulgated by global capitalism as a worldview.

Reading: F. Heylighen, C. Joslyn, and V. Turchin, “What Is a World View,” # 1 Course Packet (CP), Scharper, Foreword and Introduction, 11-21 and “The Ecological Crisis,” 47-56.

David Loy, “The Religion of the Market,” #4 CP, Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," #6 CP, and Scharper, “Revered Billy’s Crusade against the ‘Shopocalypse,’” 30-32, and “The Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill: Would the Precautionary Principle Have Averted This Disaster?” 115-120.

Supplemental: Arthur Waskow, “And the Earth Is Filled with the Breath of Life,” #17 CP, and Ahmed Motiar, “The Path of Submission and the Renewal of the Sacred Balance,” #18 CP.

3: Water

Sep 24:

Reading: Vasudha Narayanan, “Water, Wood, and Wisdom: Ecological Perspectives from the Hindu Traditions,” #16 CP, Scharper, “Water as a Human Right, Not a Commodity,” *Toronto Star*:

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2016/09/05/water-is-a-human-right-not-a-mere-commodity.html>

Jordan Pearson, “Abolish Bottled Water,” *Vice*:

https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/9a3zb8/abolish-bottled-water-nestle-great-lakes-canada

Before the Flood Documentary with L. Dicaprio: <https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/before-the-flood-2016/>

Supplemental: Clément Vidal, “What Is a Worldview,” #2 Course Packet (CP), Eric Assadourian, “The Rise and Fall of Consumer Culture,” #3 CP, and Richard Foltz, “Islamic Environmentalism in Theory and Practice,” #19 CP.

4: Test #1

Oct. 1: This week we will have our first test, during class.

5: The Universe

Oct. 8: This week we will investigate the new cosmology proffered by Thomas Berry, a Roman Catholic priest and cultural historian, and Brian Swimme, a gravitational mathematician, who co-wrote *The Universe Story*.

Reading: Thomas Berry, "The New Story", #21 CP, Joanna Macy and Molly Young Brown, “The Basic Miracle: Our True Nature and Power,” #22 CP, Scharper, “Green Dreams: Religious Cosmologies and Environmental Commitments, 35-40 and “The Rise of Nature Deficit Disorder,” 33-34.

Supplemental: Theodore Roszak, “Where Psyche Meets Gaia,” #8 CP and Matthew Fox, “Creation Spirituality,” #20 CP.

6: Indigenous Approaches to the Environment

Oct. 15: A look at aboriginal lifeways and worldviews.

Reading: Melissa Nelson, “Lighting the Sun of Our Future: How These Teachings Can Provide Illumination,” #9 CP, John Mohawk, “Clear Thinking: A Positive Solitary View of Nature,” #10 CP, Scharper, “O Ye of Little Eco-Faith,” 65-67.

Supplemental: Greg Cajete, John Mohawk, and Julio Valladolid Rivera, “Re-indigenization Defined,” #11 CP, and Derrick Jensen, “Saving the Indigenous Soul: An Interview with Martin Prechtel,” #12 CP.

7: Ecology, Liberation, and Ecofeminism

Oct. 22: Linking ecology and social justice through a liberationist paradigm.

Reading: Scharper, “Option for the Poor and Option for the Earth: Toward a Sustainable Solidarity,” 154-171, and “Ecofeminism: From Patriarchy to Mutuality,” 85-114, Murray Bookchin, “What Is Social Ecology?,” #23 CP, and Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, “The Environmentalism of the Poor,” #24 CP.

Supplemental: Greta Gaard and Lori Green, “Ecofeminism: Towards Global Justice and Planetary Health,” #7 CP and Vandana Shiva, “Development as a New Project of Western Patriarchy,” #25 CP.

8: Deep Ecology and Gaia: Biocentrism

Oct. 29:

Reading: Scharper, “The Gaia Theory,” 68-82, Warwick Fox, “Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy for Our Times?” #6 CP, and James Lovelock, “Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth (Oxford University Press, 1979, v ii-12.) CP—this reading is unnumbered and is at the very end of the course packet.

Supplemental: David Loy, “Healing Ecology,” #15 CP.

9: Test #2

Nov. 5: Today we will have our second in-class test.

---Nov. 12: No Classes. Fall Break---

10: COVID-19, Climate Change, and the Contested Worldviews of Science

Nov. 19: ***Major assignments due.**

Reading: To Be Announced

11: The Natural City and Eastern Religious Perspectives

Nov. 26:

Reading: Scharper, “From Community to Communion: The Natural City in Biotic and Cosmological Perspective, 135-150 and Tu Weiming, “The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature,” #13 CP.

Supplemental: Po-Keung Ip, “Taoism and the Foundations of Environmental Ethics,” #14 CP.

12: Rituals of the Life Cycle and Final Short In-Class Essay

Dec. 3: Final wrap-up, final short essay. Today there will be a short 15-minute in-class essay.

Reading: Scharper, “From Corpse to Compost,” and “The Bride Wore ...Green,” 126-134 and “On Sacrifice, Spirituality, and Silver Linings,” 172-174. Scharper, “Conclusion: From Sustainable Development to Sustainable Liberation: Toward an Anthropoharmonic Ethic,” 180-199.

On Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student’s individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
3. Making up sources or facts.
4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
2. Looking at someone else’s answers during an exam or test.
3. Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>).

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility: if you require accommodations for a disability, or have any other accessibility concerns about the course, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.