

**University of Toronto, School of the Environment**  
**ENV430: Community Research in Environment and Faith**

Winter 2025, Wednesdays 10 am -12 pm

**General Information**

Time: Wednesdays 10 am - 12 pm

Instructor: Prof. Tanhum Yoreh

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Office hours (virtual or in-person): Wednesdays, 12 pm -1 pm or by appointment

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**Course Description**

This community engaged research course explores the richness and complexity of faith-based environmentalism. The greening of religion is a process that is unfolding in real time and is of increasing importance to sustainability discourse and pedagogy. This greening, however, is not a monolithic process; it is rich and complex and to be understood it needs to be encountered from multiple dimensions. Each religious denomination/community/organization has its own language, a unique set of values, and a rationale for why they focus on some forms of engagement and not others.

In this course we will work together with community partners. Time in the classroom will be spent building knowledge of the discipline through the discussion of theories and ideas, acquiring research skills, and unpacking field experiences. Time in the field will be spent engaging with the work of community partners and learning from them. To deepen community engagement and reciprocal enrichment, course assignments will support community partners in enhancing their environmental engagement. The course is designed to bridge classroom knowledge with real-world experiences that allow for critical reflection and creative expression.

**Learning outcomes**

1. Acquire foundational knowledge about the intersection of religion and environmentalism.
2. Gain fluency in the language and core concepts that are used in discourses of faith-based environmentalism.
3. Recognize, identify, classify, and compare different typologies of faith-based environmentalism.
4. Develop critical research skills for community-engaged projects and beyond.
5. Think creatively about how to communicate complicated and sensitive ideas to a diverse public.

## **Delivery**

In person.

## **Quercus**

Quercus is integral to this course. Please login regularly. All assignments are to be submitted via the Quercus assignment portal.

## **Schedule and Readings**

**\*Please note that additional readings may be assigned**

**\*The order of the lectures may change with advance notice**

**\*During the later weeks of the course, there will be built-in time for group work in class**

### **January 8 – Introduction**

- Get to know each other.
- What is the course about?
- What is research?
- What does research in the field of faith-based environmentalism look like?
- Our research question

Readings:

Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim. 1997. "The Challenge of the Environmental Crisis." Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, Religions of the World and Ecology Series, Series Foreword. <https://fore.yale.edu/Publications/Books/Religions-World-and-Ecology-Book-Series/Challenge-Environmental-Crisis>

Edward Bell, Alan Bryman and Steven Kleinknecht. "Chapter 1: General Research Orientations." *Social Research Methods*. 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2022.

### **January 15 – Meet Community Partner**

- Meet Interfaith Minister Michelle Singh, Executive Director of Faith and the Common Good
- Divide into groups
- Project related theory and theoretical framework

Readings: Khoersen, Jens, Julia Blanc, and Fabian Huber. "Tensions in Religious Environmentalism." In *Religious Environmental Activism: Emerging Conflicts and Tensions in*

*Earth Stewardship*. Edited by Jens Koehrsen, Julia Blanc, and Fabian Huber, 1-25. New York: Routledge, 2023.

### **January 22 – Greening of Religion Hypothesis; Faith-Based Environmentalism; Faith-Based Environmentalism in the GTA**

Readings: Caldwell, C., N. Probst, and T. Yoreh. “Shades of Green: Environmental Action in Places of Worship.” *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences* 12, no. 3 (2022): 430-452. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13412-022-00760-2>

Hitzhusen, Gregory. E., and Mary. E. Tucker,. “The Potential of Religion for Earth Stewardship”. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 11, no. 7 (2013): 368–376. <https://doi.org/10.1890/120322>

### **January 29 – Literature Reviews and Ethics**

- What is an annotated bibliography?
- What is a literature review?
- What are research ethics?
- How do research ethics apply to the course project?
- Bibliography blitz (in-class exercise)

Readings: Edward Bell, Alan Bryman and Steven Kleinknecht. “Chapter 3: Research Ethics.” *Social Research Methods*. 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2022.

### **February 5 (Philosopher’s Walk) – Field Day with Shoresh**

### **February 12 – Engaging Public Audiences Workshop**

- Workshop hosted by TA

Readings:

Phaedra C. Pezzullo and Robert Cox. “Chapter 1: Defining Environmental Communication.” *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere*. 6th Edition. Sage Publications, 2021, 2-25.

Katie L. Burke. “12 Tips for Scientists Writing for the General Public,” July 31, 2015. <https://www.americanscientist.org/blog/from-the-staff/12-tips-for-scientists-writing-for-the-general-public>

Elisabeth Pain. “Writing Tips for Reaching the Public,” *Science*, August 13, 2015. <https://www.science.org/content/article/writing-tips-reaching-public>

## **February 19 – Reading Week (no class)**

## **February 26 – Interviews, Transcription**

Reading: Edward Bell, Alan Bryman and Steven Kleinknecht. “Chapter 11: Interviewing in Qualitative Research.” *Social Research Methods*. 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2022.

## **March 5 – Data Visualization and Infographics Workshop**

- Workshop hosted by Data Librarian Kelly Schultz

## **March 12 – Thematic Analysis and Coding**

Readings: Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology.” *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

## **March 19 – Group work in class**

## **March 26 – *How to Leverage your Experience for Future Career Opportunities* (Workshop)**

- Workshop delivered by Career Exploration and Education Centre at U of T

## **April 2 – Student Presentations (celebratory!)**

Partner and guests in attendance (at the Experiential Learning Commons)

## **Evaluation**

You are part of a group in a professional setting. Your group is depending on you for your contributions. All deadlines should be strictly adhered to.

## **Late Penalties**

Unless you are granted an extension, all late assignments will be docked 1% per day (not including weekends). Extensions will only be granted under extenuating circumstances.

**Attendance and Participation (10%)** Description: This mark will be based on regular attendance in class and group meetings. You are expected to be active participants in class and in the group meetings with the instructor. You should come to class prepared, having done the readings and ready to discuss your work. **\*Individual Mark\* Based on performance throughout the year.**

**Journal-style field trip report (15%)** Description: Summarize the field trip – What did you see, hear, and learn? What was the most interesting part of the field trip that you encountered? What surprised you? What are some ways in which the classroom content relates to your experience? What were the goals of the host? Were they successful at delivering their content? What values

did they emphasize? What content was faith specific and what was universally applicable? Write your assignment using a first-person perspective. **\*Individual Mark\* Due February 12**

**Literature Review (15%)** Description: This assignment is meant to be the backbone of your research project. You are expected to research approximately 10 articles/books/book chapters/websites/reports and write a report on your findings. The group should meet to break down the literature review into sub-topics. Each individual will be responsible for covering their sub-topic. Your review should demonstrate an understanding of your subject matter and should be written formally with citations. Some sub-topics are broader than others. You may choose to work together with a partner from your group on your literature review. The individual literature reviews will be graded as individual marks. Each individual review must also be included in the complete group literature review. It will take some editing to collate all the individual sub-topics into a coherent narrative. Do not neglect this component. The group literature review will be the basis of your group mark. **\*Individual Mark = 10%, Group Mark = 5%. Due February 26**

**Oral Presentation (15%)** Description: Not long before the final report is due, your group will give an oral presentation on their project. Each member of the group will participate in the presentation, not only on putting it together, but in delivering the presentation. You will be graded on the content of your presentation, the mechanics of your delivery, your ability to respond to questions and critiques effectively, and the overall cohesiveness of your presentation. **\*Group Mark = 5%, Individual Mark = 10%\* In class, April 2**

**Partner Deliverable (10%) Description:** Create a 1–2-page distilled version of your findings. The deliverable should be aesthetically pleasing, include only relevant information, and framed in the style of an executive summary. **Due in hardcopy (and on Quercus) April 2 – to be handed to partner during oral presentation. \*Group Mark\***

**Final Report (30%)** Description: The final report is the culmination of your research efforts throughout the year. Each student should contribute approximately 2000 words to the report. A group with 6 students will be expected to produce a report that is approximately 10000-12000 words in length (not including bibliography). You will need to add a theoretical framework, a methodology, limitations, findings, conclusion, and bibliography, in addition to your literature review. **Due April 9 \*Group Mark\***

**Peer Review (5%)** Description: At the end of the course you will submit a peer review on the performance of your group members (1-page max). Your mark will be based on the thoughtfulness of your remarks and the review should demonstrate that you've taken the time to think about the group dynamics. What worked well? What didn't work well? Did group members contribute equally? What effort did the group make to address outstanding issues? **\*Individual Mark\* - Due April 9**

### **Useful resources**

The Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale  
<http://fore.yale.edu>

The International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (See journal)  
<https://www.issrnc.org>

Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology  
<http://www.brill.com/worldviews-global-religions-culture-and-ecology>

UN Environment Programme: Faith for Earth Initiative  
<https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/faith-earth-initiative>

### **Recommended reading**

Jenkins, W., M. E. Tucker and J. Grim (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology*. New York: Routledge (2017). (available online)

Veldman, Robin Globus, Andrew Szasz, and Randolph Haluza-DeLay (eds.) *How the World's Religions Are Responding to Climate Change: Social Scientific Investigations*. New York: Routledge, 2014. (available online)

Koehrsen, Jens, Julia Blanc, and Fabian Huber (eds.) *Religious Environmental Activism: Emerging Conflicts and Tensions in Earth Stewardship*. New York: Routledge, 2023. (available online)

### **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/>).

See also: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>

### **Artificial Intelligence**

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools and apps is strictly prohibited in all course assignments unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor in this course. This includes ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Microsoft Copilot and other AI writing and coding assistants. Use of generative AI in this course may be considered use of an unauthorized aid, which is a form of cheating.

### **Plagiarism Detection Tool**

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://teaching.utoronto.ca/resources/plagiarism-detection/>).”

### **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.

### **Writing Assistance**

If you find that you need some additional assistance with your writing, see this excellent resource that offers advice on academic writing: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/>