The University of Toronto
ENV 333HF: Ecological Worldviews

Term: Fall 2019
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 8-8:30 a.m., in The Buttery, Larkin Building, Trinity College, and by appointment. I want to emphasize my willingness to meet with students outside of class. Feel free to meet me before or after class time to arrange an appointment.

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? 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 will be supplemented by audiovisuals, guest lectures 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, copyplace@bellnet.ca
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 be listed under ENV 100.
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 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.

Recommended:


Course Requirements

a) Final quiz: Nov. 28 (10%) and a note on participation

   It is essential for the success of this course that students attend class regularly and participate in class 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 quiz will be given on the last day of class based on in-class material.

b) 2 Tests (25% each). Two 1.5 hour tests will be given to cover lectures, readings, and class discussions. **Test 1: Sep. 26; Test 2: Oct. 31**

   Make-up tests for those with valid university approved documentation will be held one week after the regularly scheduled test.

c) Major Assignment (40%)  

   There are 3 options for the major assignment, all due by 14 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 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: Class Presentation**

   Students may wish to opt for a **class presentation** instead of a book or film review, but must inform the instructor of their choice to do so by 24 October. Up to three students may work together on any particular class presentation (a legitimate collaboration). Students will hand in 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.

   **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 3-5 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.
Late assignments will not be accepted without university-approved documentation; 3 marks a day will be deducted from late assignments.
All written assignments are to be handed in on paper during class. Valid late assignments will be handed in directly to the instructor or the TA, again in paper format.

I: Introduction and The Modern Worldview

Sep. 5: 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.

2: The Consumerist or “Economist” Worldview

Sep. 12:
This week we will explore the notion of consumerism as promulgated by global capitalism as a worldview.

3: Water and Global Climate Strike Week

Sep 19:
https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2016/09/05/water-is-a-human-right-not-a-merchcommodity.html
Jordan Pearson, “Abolish Bottled Water,” Vice:
Before the Flood Documentary with L. DiCaprio: https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/before-the-flood-2016/
4: Test #1

Sep. 26: This week we will have our first test, location TBA.

5: The Universe

Oct. 3: 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*.


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

6: Aboriginal Approaches to the Environment

Oct. 10: A look at aboriginal lifeways and worldviews.


**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 and Liberation

Oct. 17: Linking ecology and social justice through a liberationist paradigm.


**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. 24:


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

9: Test #2

Oct. 31: **Again, location TBA.**

---Nov. 7: No Classes. Fall Break---

10: Deep Ecology and Gaia: Biocentrism

Nov. 14: **Major assignments due.**

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

### 11: The Natural City and Eastern Religious Perspectives

**Nov. 21:**

**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 Quiz

**Nov. 28:** Final wrap-up, final quiz and party: **B.Y.O.E.F.F (Bring Your Own Eco-Friendly Foods).**