

**Queen's University**  
**Department of Religious Studies**  
**RELS-235 Religion and Environment**  
**(Fall, 2011)**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jason James Kelly

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**Office:** Theological Hall, Rm. 403

**Office hours:** Wed. 1:00-2:30 pm, or by appointment

**Time:** Wed. 2:30-5:30 pm

**Location:** Ellis Hall, Rm. 327

**TA:** Meaghan Weatherdon

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**Pre-Requisites:** Level 2 or above or 6.0 units at the 100 level in RELS

**Course Description:** In this course students will learn about the various ways people's religious beliefs and practices shape their understanding of the environment, and vice versa. By examining sources from different disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology, this course offers a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between religion and the environment. This course is designed to provide students with the intellectual tools to critically engage with many of the challenges facing religion and its various responses to the ecological crisis.

## Textbooks

Check the campus bookstore for these titles

1. Loyal Rue. 2005. *Religion is not about God: How Spiritual Traditions Nurture our Biological Nature*. Rutgers University Press.
2. John Carroll. 2004. *Sustainability and Spirituality*. SUNY Press.
3. David Barnhill and Roger Gottlieb, eds. 2001. *Deep Ecology and World Religions*. SUNY Press.
4. Courseware.

## Course Requirements

1. You are expected to do the assigned readings and attend class.
2. In-class midterm exam worth **25%** based on questions relating to the lectures and readings. The date of the midterm exam is **Nov. 2**.
3. Take-home final exam worth **50%** based on questions relating to the lectures and readings. The final exam is due **Dec. 16**.
4. Essay assignment worth **25%** and is due **Nov. 30**.

Date	Topic and Readings
Sept 14	<p><b>Introduction of Course, Class and Instructor.</b></p> <p>This class will define the questions that the course will investigate and the ways in which students will be evaluated.</p>
	<p><b>Evolution and Religion</b></p>
Sept 21	<p><b>Evolution and Human Nature</b></p> <p>This class discusses the evolution of the universe and the place of human life and culture within the larger story of evolution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Religion is not about God</i> part I</li> </ul>
Sept 28	<p><b>The Role of Religion within Evolution</b></p> <p>How has religion shaped the place of human beings within the universe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Religion is not about God</i> part II</li> </ul>
Oct 5	<p><b>Evolution and the Future of Religion</b></p> <p>What are the prospects for religion in the future life of the human species?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Religion is not about God</i> part III</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Religious Responses to the Ecological Crisis</b></p>
Oct 12	<p><b>Responses from non-Western Traditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deep Ecology and World Religions</i> Ch. 1-4</li> </ul>
Oct 19	<p><b>Responses from Western Traditions Pt. 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deep Ecology and World Religions</i> Ch. 5-8</li> </ul>
Oct 26	<p><b>Response from Western Traditions Pt. 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deep Ecology and World Religions</i> Ch. 9-12</li> </ul>
Nov 2	<p><b>In-class midterm exam and discussion of essay assignment</b></p>
Nov 9	<p><b>Religions as Alternative Ways of Living: Theory</b></p> <p>We examine the ways in which religious communities are developing sustainable forms of living.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sustainability and Spirituality</i> Ch. 1-4</li> </ul>

Nov 16	<p><b>Religions as Alternative Ways of Living: Practice</b></p> <p>Continuing the previous week's book, we look at case studies in how religious communities are engaged in sustainable living.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sustainability and Spirituality</i> Ch. 5-9</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Nature Mysticism</b></p>
Nov 23	<p><b>Cosmic Consciousness pt. 1</b></p> <p>What is nature mysticism and how does it relate to our understanding of religion and the environment? We examine classic examples of nature mysticism in the writings of Walt Whitman, R.M. Bucke, and Edward Carpenter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courseware: Walt Whitman, R. M. Bucke, and Edward Carpenter</li> </ul>
Nov 30	<p><b>Cosmic Consciousness pt.2</b></p> <p>We continue our discussion of nature mysticism by examining the writings of Richard Jefferies and Paul Marshall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courseware: Richard Jefferies and Paul Marshall</li> <li>• Essay assignment is due</li> </ul>

## Student Resources

### General Statement on Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate [Report on Principles and Priorities](#))

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see [Academic Regulations](#) [PDF]), on the Arts and Science website and from the instructor of this course.

Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.