



## Course Description

Does God actually love non-human creatures and have a plan to redeem them in the consummation of the universe? Should Christians care that pollution disproportionately affects communities of color? Should Christians be concerned that what they eat on a regular basis is one of the leading causes of climate change? This course explores these and other questions that arise out of the contemporary global discussion about sustainability and particularly the role of faith in this discussion. The primary thrust of this course is theological reflection on environmental, ethical, and economic problems through class discussions, essays, and a group project, part of which will be presented to the Pepperdine community on Earth Day.

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Class Meetings: Tuesday & Friday 10-11:30a

Office Hours: M 10-12, 1-2; T 11:30-2; W 1-2; R 10-12, 1-2; F 11:30-1 & by appointment in RAC 167

## Student Learning Outcomes

- 1) Assess whether or not Christian theology has the resources to address effectively contemporary ecological issues by looking at Christian understandings of God's love of creation, humanity's role in creation, and non-human creatures' place in God's plan of redemption.
- 2) Define what globalization is, its potential ecological consequences, and how wealth distribution is often (if not always) directly proportional to access to natural resources and the cleanliness of one's local environment.
- 3) Explain what environmental racism is and how it plays out especially in communities of color, where democracy frequently is not practiced seriously due to a multitude of social and political dynamics.
- 4) Design a Christian understanding of sustainability and determine how it might apply specifically to the Pepperdine community.
- 5) Compare/contrast how Christianity and contemporary society understand the role of food, particularly as food relates to concepts of justice and theological identity.
- 6) Communicate informed and coherent opinions on this topic in both verbal and written form.

## Class Participation

Fifteen percent of your total grade will be based upon your participation in class discussions. Your participation will be evaluated in one of two different ways. First, there are at least 26 classes (including the first day) in which class discussion will be the central focus of our time together. In

order to earn a total of 15%, you will need to participate in 15 of those 26 classes. You may earn 1% per day (up to 15%) for each day that you participate in the class discussion.

Second, you can earn 5% (out of the total 15%) of class participation credit by choosing to write five 300-word responses to a given day's reading. Each response must address in specific detail what you think is the most significant issue in that reading and then explain why that issue is so critical. Each response must be turned in via email by 10a on the day of the reading. To receive credit for this, your response must be written in a cogent manner and follow the guidelines set out in the essay section below. If you choose to exercise this option, you must email me by January 21 and tell me which five days you are choosing to complete these responses. Responses not received on those agreed upon days at the 10a deadline will not receive any credit. No matter which of these options you choose, if you are a bit timid, please come talk to me *immediately* about ways to enter class discussions.

I do not suggest that you miss class; however, if you must, then you may miss two classes without penalty to your grade. Each missed class after those two will result in a 2.5% deduction.

"Emergency" absences will not automatically be excused. Excusals for "emergency" absences will only be granted after an explanation has been provided in a face-to-face meeting. Also, you will find out very quickly that I am a stickler for punctuality. You get two unexcused tardies. After that, you will have 0.5% deducted for each tardy. Leaving class early will result in the same penalty.

Students who participate in official University activities (athletics, debate, drama, etc.) must submit to me in writing a schedule of events that will require them to miss class by the beginning of class on January 21. Non-validated absences will be penalized accordingly.

After having far too many problems with students using laptop computers inappropriately in class, I am banning them from the classroom except on days when the reading material is posted online. If I perceive that you are using your computer other than to access the course material, you will be dismissed immediately from class. If you believe that you have sufficient reason to be granted an exception to this ban, please come and talk to me. Phones should be in the "silent" position when you are in my classroom. Answering a phone call, texting, or the perception of texting during class time will result in some form of embarrassment as I draw attention to your disruption or the immediate dismissal from that class meeting.

### Dean's Lecture

On Thursday, January 27, Dr. Chris Field will be delivering a lecture entitled, "The Velocity of Climate Change," from 7-8:30p in Elkins Auditorium. Your attendance at this lecture is mandatory. You will sign in with me *before* the lecture and then sign out with me *after* the lecture is over. Missing this lecture will result in a 2% deduction from your final grade. Any reason for missing this lecture must be discussed with me in person by January 20. A make-up assignment for those who have official University activities or class that evening may be required.

### Essays

Two essays are required. They are worth 50% of your total grade. Each essay is to be 7 to 8 pages in length. One is due at the beginning of the February 18 class meeting and the other is due at the beginning of the April 1 class meeting. In these two essays, you will demonstrate your ability to think critically about a topic that is germane to the subject matter of this class. If you are having any

problems putting your essay together, I offer the following threefold suggestion. First, evaluate or explore the various positions or points of information on a particular topic. Second, analyze or choose between the possibilities you have discovered during the exploration process that you think are most interesting, effective, and/or dissonant from your own position. Third, start writing by engaging in the process of synthesis. By synthesis I mean combine the voices of the scholars you have encountered with your own voice. For example, explain why a particular scholar's position is strong, weak, or both. Or perhaps develop your own solution to a problem based upon your exploration and analysis of an environmental policy dilemma. This method is meant to be helpful, not prescriptive.

While this is not intended to be a research paper, some research may be needed in order for you to appropriately explore an issue. All essay topics must be approved at least 48 hours before the respective deadline. Approval will only be granted after you meet with me and present me with either a one hundred-word summary or a short outline of the essay. **Essays with unapproved topics will be given a zero. Late essays will be given a grade of zero.** In these essays, I will grade your ability to articulate a thesis statement (what do you plan to do in the essay), methodology (how do you plan to do it), and the quality of your reflections. For more on this, see the grading rubric posted on Courses Essays are to be written with page numbers at the bottom of each page, using one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spacing, and Chicago style endnotes. (For help with Chicago style see the following website, [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). If you have not used this style before, make sure to be careful to follow the correct rules when repeating cited resources. I will show examples of this during the course.) Failure to follow these guidelines will result in deductions from your grade.

Following the suggestion of a previous class, essays (and projects) should be turned in on the clean side of "previously used" paper. By "previously used," I mean white 8.5" x 11" paper that has printing on only one side. The used side must not include obscene literature and/or pictures. Also, your essays (with your names redacted) may be shared with other students or professors. If you prefer that your essays not be shared, you must email me your request by January 21. Finally, I keep examples of very good essays in my office if you ever want to look over them.

### Final Exam

The final exam will be in the form of a project to be turned in at the beginning of the April 26 class meeting. (An absence on that day will result in a 5% penalty to your grade.) It is worth 35% of your total grade. Part of this project will be presented to the greater Pepperdine community on Wednesday, April 6 from 10a-2p in the center of campus. Students will only be excused from participation in that day's activities for a documented official University activity, which should be made known to me in writing by January 21. Those excused will receive a make-up assignment; those who were not excused will receive a zero on their group project. More information on this event will follow throughout the course of the semester. You will be divided into small teams and be required to perform the following three tasks:

- 1) In the form of a letter to President Benton, address the following question: Does Pepperdine University have an obligation to become a more sustainable campus? Whether you answer yes or no, your letter must consider at least the relevant theological and social reasons we have discussed in class and are a part of the assigned readings. Whether you answer yes or no, your response must also

take up what role a Christian college campus community plays in our society in the discussion about sustainable lifestyles. This letter must be in essay form. In other words, it is not to be written as a bullet-point style memo. It must be 8-10 pages in length and follow the document requirements outlined in the longer essays section above.

2) Develop a nine-week lesson plan for private Christian high school seniors that deals with the issues involved with globalization, environmental justice, and food in the United States. For the purposes of this assignment, assume that your class meets for one hour per week. These lessons should integrate the Christian perspectives that have been examined during the semester. Each lesson should in precise detail explain what is going to be taught (definitions of key terms, explanations of fundamental concepts, etc.). This part of the assignment may be done in bullet-point or paragraph form. At the end of each lesson, you must explain why the topic of your lesson is of such importance and what exactly you expect the students to learn. This portion should be written in a paragraph. You must also propose 4 projects that could be done during this nine-week period that might help your students better understand, in a practical way, the issues involved in your class. Be sure to explain the “take home message” each project is supposed to have for your students.

3) You will be assigned a booth at Pepperdine’s celebration of Earth Day on April 6. At this booth, you will be required to raise the awareness of someone who passes by on one of the following issues related to Pepperdine’s dining services provider: water use, energy use, paper napkin usage, plastic bottle beverage consumption, take-away container usage, disposable cup usage, food, food packaging, and food waste management. Your “booth activity” must include the exploration of at least one theological concept or virtue and how it relates to sustainability at Pepperdine. This portion of the assignment will be graded on the day of the event.

Ideally, each person in the group will do a fair share of the work and therefore each person will receive the same overall grade. My guess is that this actually happens about 90% of the time. To guard against those who might take advantage of the group project dynamic, I am using the following format. Each member of the group will provide me with grades for everyone (including her/himself) in the group and turn in those grades confidentially to me via email by 10:30a on April 26. Grading will be done using a list of criteria to be determined collaboratively during our January 28 class meeting. These grades will be considered as part of each person’s final grade on the group project.

### Grading

The grading breakdown is as follows:

Two Essays	50%
Group Project	35%
Class Participation	15%

A = 100-93; A<sup>-</sup> = 92-90; B<sup>+</sup> = 89-87; B = 86-83; B<sup>-</sup> = 82-80; C<sup>+</sup> = 79-77; C = 76-73; C<sup>-</sup> = 72-70;  
D<sup>+</sup> = 69-67; D = 66-63; D<sup>-</sup> = 62-60; F = 59-0

Some students think that putting effort into a course automatically equals an “A” or a “B” grade, regardless of any demonstration of their ability to think clearly about the course material. While I expect that you will need to put a great deal of effort into this course, I do not grade you on your level

of effort since effort does not equal the ability to think clearly. In this course, students will display their ability to think clearly about the course material through written assignments and oral discussion. According to the Seaver College academic catalog, an “A” grade represents an “excellent” ability to think clearly about the course material. A “B” grade represents a “good” ability to think clearly about the course material. A “C” grade represents “average” ability to think clearly about the course material. A “D” grade represents “below average” ability to think clearly about the course material. An “F” grade represents a “failure” to think clearly about the course material..

### **Grade Disputes**

If you receive a grade that you want to dispute, my policy is for you to take the 24 hours after I return the assignment to think about the grade and determine whether you believe it was fair. If you believe it was fair but have questions regarding how you might improve, feel free to come by my office and we can discuss ways to improve your next assignment. After 24 hours, if you believe the grade was unfair, please come to office hours or arrange an appointment for us to discuss your concerns about the grade. If you choose to dispute a grade, you must come to my office with a specific written proposal regarding the grade you believe to be appropriate based on what you turned in and explain why the grade change you propose is warranted. All grade disputes must be handled within seven days after the assignment was returned.

### **Ethics**

According to Seaver College, any cheating (the use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aid in an academic exercise as well as collusion in visual or oral form) or plagiarism (a writer appropriates another’s ideas without proper acknowledgement of the source or uses another’s words without indicating that fact through the use of proper annotation) will be reported to the chairperson of the Religion Division and the Academic Dean of Seaver College. Penalties for such behavior may include expulsion from Pepperdine University.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Main Campus, Tyler Campus Center 264, x6500) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit <http://www.pepperdine.edu/disabilityservices/> for additional information.

### **Intellectual Property**

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor, are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person. Electronic devices (e.g., laptops, cell phones, PDAs, calculators, recording devices) are not to be used during class discussions, lectures or exams without prior permission of the instructor.

**Required Texts**

Jennifer Clapp & Peter Dauvergne, eds, *Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

Sallie McFague, *A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

James Nash, *Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991).

Nick Spencer, Robert White & Virginia Vroblesky, *Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009).

Selected readings posted on Courses.

<b>Course Schedule</b>		
	January 11	Introduction
	January 14	Read <i>Loving Nature</i> chapter 1
	January 18	Read <i>Loving Nature</i> chapter 2
	January 21	Read <i>Loving Nature</i> chapter 3, <i>A New Climate for Theology</i> chapter 2
	January 25	Read <i>Loving Nature</i> chapter 4, <i>A New Climate for Theology</i> chapter 3
	January 27	Dean's Lecture (7-8:30p in Elkins)
	January 28	Read <i>Loving Nature</i> chapter 5
	February 1	Read <i>Loving Nature</i> chapter 6
	February 4	Read <i>Loving Nature</i> chapter 7
	February 8	Read <i>Loving Nature</i> chapter 8
	February 11	Read <i>Paths to a Green World</i> chapter 1
	February 15	Read <i>Paths to a Green World</i> chapter 2, <i>A New Climate for Theology</i> chapter 5
	February 18	Read <i>Paths to a Green World</i> chapter 4
	February 22	Read <i>Paths to a Green World</i> chapter 5 (119-34) & chapter 6
	February 25	Read "Does Environmentalism Promote Injustice for the Poor?"
	March 1	<b>No Class</b>
	March 4	<b>No Class</b>
	March 8	Read "Environmental Justice in the 21st Century"
	March 11	Read "Environmental Racism: Beyond the Distributive Paradigm"
	March 15	Read <i>Quest for Environmental Justice</i> chapter 4
	March 18	Read <i>Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living</i> chapter 2
	March 22	Read <i>Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living</i> chapters 4 & 5
	March 25	Read <i>Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living</i> chapter 6

	March 29	Read <i>Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living</i> chapter 7
	April 1	Video & Discussion
	April 5	Read <i>A New Climate for Theology</i> Chapters 7 & 8
	April 6	Earth Day
	April 8	Read “Frugality”
	April 12	Read “Faithful Feasting”
	April 15	Read “Biblical Vegetarianism?” & “Vegetarianism as a Biblical Ideal”
	April 19	Read “Eucharistic Eating” & “Protological & Eschatological Vegetarianism”
	April 22	Catch-up Day
	April 26	Meeting Time 10:30a-1p
<b>Due Dates</b>	January 28	Group Grading Criteria
	February 18	First Essay
	April 1	Second Essay
	April 6	Earth Day Project
	April 26	Group Project
<b>Important Dates</b>	January 14	Last day of add/drop period
	January 24	Last day to change to CR/NC status
	March 14	Last day to withdraw with grade of “W”
	April 15	Last day to withdraw with grade of “WP/WF”