ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
Elon University - Fall 2004

Professor Rebecca Todd Peters
Office: Alamance 318 B; Phone: 278-5247
Office hours: W 8-10 am; Th 12:15-2 pm
and by appointment
rpeters@elon.edu

Religious Studies 348
Carlton 309
T-TH - 10:30 – 12:10 pm
final exam– Dec. 10, 11:30–2:30

COURSE PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES:
This course begins with the assumption that there is an environmental crisis. We will not spend a great deal of time trying to “prove” this in any systematic way. Rather, our time will be spent exploring two areas – the theoretical frameworks through which people approach the world and the environment and the concrete physical examples of how this crisis manifests itself in our world. These two elements – theory and praxis – will provide the methodological framework for examining environmental ethics.

Theory is important because we must understand the ideas behind the problems and the ideas that enable solutions. Praxis is important because theory in and of itself does not alter the destruction of the earth. We will be examining a variety of different worldviews and ideas about how to approach and understand the natural world. We will use these as windows into understanding how human relationship with the earth impacts human treatment of the natural world. This will serve as the foundation for developing critical skills for “doing ethics” in relation to the environmental crisis.

The structure of this course can best be described as “non-traditional.” We will be meeting frequently at the lodge for class and you will be required to make connections between the issues and ideas we are studying in class and your own life, both personally and collectively. You will be required to do both personal reflection and critical analysis of assigned readings.

By the end of this course students should be able to:
- identify your own worldview and relationship with the natural world
- exhibit a critical understanding of the environmental crisis
- demonstrate familiarity with a variety of religious and philosophical approaches to the environment
- analyze a particular environmental problem and offer several responses

COURSE MATERIALS:
available at bookstore:

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Theory and Praxis
Theory and praxis are never entirely separate enterprises. Each is constantly informing and influencing the development of the other. Throughout the course you will have the opportunity of demonstrating your ability to combine theory and praxis in reflecting on environmental problems and their solutions.

Readings (theory)
daily response papers
You are required to write one and half to two pages responding to the day’s reading. This is to be a critical assessment of the reading in which you engage the ideas expressed by the author(s) of a particular assignment. You must do more than just agree or disagree with them, you must express why you do so. These response papers make up a large part of our class discussion as well as your grade. These must be typed, double-spaced, and turned in by the
end of class each day (hand written response papers will not be accepted). **Response papers will not be accepted on the days a student is absent.** You will get a score of credit or no credit. You will receive credit for these papers if you demonstrate that you have read the material and critically engaged it on some level. Work that seems too quick or careless will receive no credit.

**Activities and projects (praxis)**

*environmental journal – all semester*

You will be required to keep an environmental journal for this course. Individual assignments will be turned in throughout the semester and you will be required to turn in the whole journal on the last day of class (Dec. 7). A more complete description of the contents of the journal can be found below.

**Mid-term – Oct. 9**

Your mid-term will be a take home essay in which you develop your own environmental worldview drawing upon the traditions and theories that we have studied thusfar. This essay must be 3-5 pages, typed, doubled-spaced, and you must document your sources (Chicago Manual of Style).

**Campus Project – all semester**

A major portion of your grade will come from your participation in a campus wide project related to the environment. This project will be developed and implemented by the class as a whole and will require your attention throughout the semester. You will be required to document your contributions to the project and to write a final essay (4-6 pages) reflecting on the project. This essay will be due at 11:30 am on December 10 (the scheduled final exam period for this class) and we will meet during this time to evaluate the project.

**ASSESSMENT**

25% - daily response papers  
25% - environmental journal  
50% - campus project (participation, process, essay, and evaluation)

You will get credit or no credit for your daily response papers. If you are having difficulty getting credit on these assignments, make an appointment with me immediately so that we can discuss how you can improve your writing. Daily response papers will be graded as follows: out of 26 class days, you will be expected to turn in 20 daily writing assignments (11 before midterm and 9 after midterm), additionally the mid-term will count as 5 credits. Your daily writing grade will be determined as follows: 30-25 points = A; 24 = A-; 23 = B+; 22-21 = B; 20 = B-; 19 = C+; 18-17 = C; 16 = C-; 15 = D+; 14-13 = D; 12-0 = F.

**COURSE BUSINESS**

**Contact with Professor:**

I enjoy meeting you during my office hours and even at other times. Feel free to talk about the course, questions you have, issues/points you do not quite understand, and anything else that is important to you. I am also very responsive to email and will make every effort to respond to your messages within 24 hours (though I don’t always check my email over the weekends).

**Blackboard:**

It is your responsibility to check the Blackboard site on a regular basis. I will use it extensively as a way of communicating with you about assignments and other course material. It will also be a critical way for you to coordinate your work on the class project.

**Writing:**

Good writing skills are a critical aspect of a college education. Clarity of thought, good organization and presentation of ideas, original thinking, and creativity are required to receive an “A” on your formal essay assignments. I am happy to discuss your writing problems with you on an individual basis. You may also want to consider visiting the Writing Center to work on any of these areas.
GRADING POLICY:
Unless you have made a prior agreement with me, I will take off one grade level (A becomes a A-) for each day an assignment is late. Papers with an undue number of errors of punctuation, spelling, or grammar will be penalized one full letter grade (A becomes a B). Written work will be evaluated in terms of your depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, clarity of writing, and ability to address issues raised in the class and in readings on the topic at hand. Grades given reflect the following criteria of judgment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A: Excellent depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, and writing style; demonstrate creativity and mature analytical skills in going beyond the primary requirements of the assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B: Good to Very Good, thoughtful reflection, good analysis, clear writing style</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C: Satisfactory, meet minimum requirements of assignment but not much more</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D: Unsatisfactory, but some effort to meet minimum requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
<td>F: Failure to meet minimum requirements</td>
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STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:
Learning is not a passive experience, but an interactive one that requires effort on your part as a student. This classroom will function as a cooperative learning environment. **To this end, each student should:**

- **Attend class regularly** - If you miss class, you are responsible for checking with classmates to find out what you missed. **The professor will not update you on the content of the class period.** After three absences your final grade will be reduced by one percentage point each day you are absent. If you miss more than ten class periods (that’s five weeks of class), you will fail the course.

- **Complete your own work** - Elon has an honor code which is taken very seriously by this professor. If you have even the slightest question about what is appropriate collaborative work, *ASK THE PROFESSOR!* Failure to do so could permanently affect your academic future.

- **Turn in assignments on time** - There are no exceptions, lateness will be penalized - see grading policy.

- **Actively participate in class** – As a course focused on participatory learning it is essential for all students to contribute to the variety of classroom discussions and activities that occur throughout the semester.

ELON ACADEMIC HONOR CODE:
Elon students are expected to:
- *refrain from cheating, including plagiarism.*
- *refrain from lying.*
- *express opinions with civility and with consideration for the opinions of others.*
- *respect shared intellectual property and resources.*
- *promote the importance of the honor code in all their interactions for the benefit of the learning community.*
Schedule of Readings

Aug. 31 – orientation to course
Sept. 9 – *WRE*, ch. 3 – “First Peoples”, p. 77 – 111
Sept. 16 - *Watersheds*, ch. 1
Sept. 21 - *WRE*, ch. 6 – “Chinese Traditions”, p. 208 – 245
Sept. 23 - *Watersheds*, ch. 2
Sept. 28 - *WRE*, ch. 8 – “Judaism”, p. 279 – 317
Sept 30 - *Watersheds*, ch. 3
Oct. 5 – *WRE*, ch. 9 – “Christianity”, p. 318 – 356
Oct. 7 – class cancelled for Fall Forum
Oct. 8 – Fall Forum – you must attend at least one activity of the Fall Forum
Oct. 14 - *Watersheds*, ch. 5
Oct. 19 – No class – fall break
Oct. 21 - *Watersheds*, ch. 6
Oct. 28 - *Watersheds*, ch. 7
Nov. 2 – *WRE*, ch. 13 – “Ecofeminism”, p. 456 – 492
Nov. 4 - *Watersheds*, ch. 8
Nov. 9 – *WRE*, ch. 14 – “Voices from the Global South”, p. 493 - 523
Nov. 11 – *Watersheds*, ch. 9
Nov. 16 - *WRE*, ch. 15 – “New Cosmologies and Visions”, 524 – 560
Nov. 18 – *Watersheds*, ch. 10
Nov. 23 – AAR/SBL (work on campus project – guest lecturer)
Nov. 25 – no class - THANKSGIVING BREAK
Nov. 30 – *WRE*, ch. 16 – “Globalization, Community, and Ecojustice”, 561 – 590
Dec. 2 – *WRE*, ch. 16 – “Globalization, Community, and Ecojustice”, 561 – 590 continued
Dec. 7 – no reading, prepare for final presentation
Dec. 10 – Final exam period
Environmental Journal

Rationale
The purpose of the environmental journal is to allow you to reflect on your own environmental habits and commitments. You will be expected to make weekly entries in the journal. Early in the semester this will take on the form of making lists of your personal environmental impact. Later in the semester you will be expected to keep track of what you are contributing to our class project and to reflect on how the project relates to the readings and class discussions.

Format
All materials in the journal should be typed and placed chronologically in a 1 inch, 3 ring binder to be submitted to the professor.

Aug. 31 – Sept. 6
environmental family tree (Aug. 31)
environmental impact journal – food (Sept. 7)

Sept. 7 - Sept. 13
environmental impact journal – waste (Sept. 14)

Sept. 14 - Sept. 20
environmental impact journal – energy (Sept. 21)

Sept. 21 - Sept. 27
environmental impact essay (Sept. 23)
assessment of Elon’s environmental impact (report due Sept. 28)

Sept. 28 - Oct. 4
brainstorm of possible projects (Sept. 28)
come to consensus on campus project (Sept. 30)

Oct. 5 - Oct. 11
detailed plan and timeline for your project (Oct. 19)

Oct. 12 - Oct. 18
Oct. 19 - Oct. 25
Oct. 26 - Nov. 1
Nov. 2 - Nov. 8
Nov. 9 - Nov. 15
Nov. 16 - Nov. 22
Nov. 23 – Nov. 29
Nov. 30 – Dec. 6
Dec. 7 - last day of class
weekly entries on what you contribute to the project
weekly reflections on how the project relates to the readings and course discussions