TESP 84 Spirituality & Sustainability: Vocational challenge & the greening of religions
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Submit assignments to: kDwarner@gmail.com
Kenna 321: Office hours M 5:30 pm and W 3 pm

**Course description**

The term “spirituality” has taken on remarkable prominence in American culture, but its varied use defies consistent definition. Spiritualities are rooted in religion and religious practice, but find specific expression in cultural and personal contexts. Spirituality may carry a deeply individualistic or even narcissistic meaning, or it may indicate the movement of one’s whole being toward a life of religious, social, and personal integrity. In the context of a Jesuit education, spirituality can be understood to responding to call, the needs others have for our gifts and talents, and for living a good life.

The term “sustainability” emerged during the 1980s to project a framework for addressing the scale and complexity of the ecological crises facing our planet. At a fundamental level, the term reminds us that we cannot continue depleting resources and generating hazardous wastes and greenhouse gasses indefinitely without serious consequences for future generations. The UN definition indicates that addressing our environmental crises requires the integration of social, economic, and ecological dimensions of sustainability. Environmental leaders have begun describing sustainability as an ecological
and inter-generational definition of justice, and using the concept of “ecological footprint” as a way to make visible human impacts on the earth. This has evolved into the term “carbon footprint” to represent the impact of fossil fuel use on our climate. A few visionary religious leaders propose a spiritual approach to sustainability as well, one based on global ethics and consciousness, a process known as “the greening of religion.” Since this is also a religious studies course, we will look at the role of spirituality and consciousness in cultural transformation. This course will invite you to consider your own consciousness, and to take seriously the spiritual practices we will examine.

We will intensively examine the issue of global climate disruption since this is the most ominous threat to sustainability efforts. The course will introduce the concept of climate justice, and student will make an iMovie about a spirituality approach to this topic. This course will tackle the “why” questions, such as: why should we consider future generations in our actions? Why should we re-think and re-design our energy economy?

**Student learning objectives**

This class has 3 generic learning objectives as a *Religion, Theology and Culture 2* course (expressed in numbers 1-3, below), as well as objectives specific to an inter-disciplinary course addressing spirituality and sustainability issues (in letters a-c).

**As a result of this class, students will be able to:**

1. **analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena** (Complexity; Critical Thinking)
   a. To understand the multiple meanings of spirituality, key elements of spirituality, and recent currents in the study of spirituality
   b. To describe how and explain why religious leaders are articulating their traditions with concern for sustainability
   c. To think critically about the Christian story and Buddhist practice in light of the challenge posed by the sustainability crises and new approaches to cosmology

2. **integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena** (Complexity of Content as well as of Method; Critical Thinking)
   a. To integrate and compare religious and scientific ways of knowing and valuing nature and the natural world
   b. To demonstrate knowledge of the complex, contested and contradictory meanings of sustainability, the global sustainability crisis
   c. To articulate spirituality and justice with efforts to advance climate justice

3. **clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence** (Reflection; Critical Thinking)
   a. To articulate and reflect upon emerging elements of one’s own vocation, and to demonstrate the application of some practical tools for discerning this in light of global environmental disruption.
   b. To reflect upon and articulate his or her own spirituality, and to consciously shape its trajectory, specifically as a student at Santa Clara.
   c. To articulate the emerging field of climate ethics with their own moral beliefs, and to demonstrate comprehension of the ways in which people are using ethics to urge political action on climate changing gasses
Student evaluation
There are two general types of assignments for this course: personal reflection essays (R) and outreach activities (O). Religious studies courses require students to clarify and express their personal beliefs and values. Your instructor will not evaluate your personal reflections for their religious doctrine, but rather the quality of your critical thinking and intellectual rigor. This course integrates religious, scientific and social disciplinary perspectives, and you will be evaluated based on your demonstration of integrating these approaches. Boldface dates are confirmed; others are subject to revision. All assignments will be emailed to me at kDwarner@gmail.com. They are due at 11.59 pm, unless otherwise noted.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>The vocation of Julia Butterfly Hill reflection (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td><em>via positiva</em> reflection (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>Show <em>The Economics of Happiness</em> to 2+friends, calculate their carbon footprint, discuss and report back (O)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td><em>via negativa</em> reflection (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Feb 29</td>
<td>A mid-term about the content of selected chapters from the books in this course</td>
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<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Organize and lead an earth meditation activity with 2+ friends in the spirit of <em>via transformative</em>, and report back (O)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Plan for and report on solar house tour to middle schoolers (O)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>Create an iMovie about spirituality and climate justice (O)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Take home final. You will present the iMovie to 2+friends and ask for their feedback; the take home will ask you to reflect on climate justice and your vocation, in light of what Sandra Schneiders says about spirituality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>In-class participation (attendance =7; participation= 3)</td>
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Required Texts


Several readings from the WWW. See schedule, and Camino.

**Attendance policy**

Santa Clara University emphasizes student-teacher interaction in the classroom. Due to circumstances beyond our control, this particular course will only meet 17 times. Ten points can be earned by full attendance and full participation: 7 for attendance and 3 for classroom participation. You may miss 1 class meeting without penalty. Each subsequent class absence (starting with the second) will result in a lost attendance point for each class missed. Thus if you miss 1 class, you will lose none of the 7 attendance points, but if you miss 3 classes, you will miss 3 points. Excused absences do not count against you. An excused absence requires an email to the instructor before class (one time only), or a doctors note. Normally, I will circulate a sign-in sheet at the beginning of class. Alternatively, I will start with an unannounced quiz, or use group classroom presentations to take attendance.

**Disability Accommodation Policy:** To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in The Drahmann Center in Benson, room 214, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must provide documentation of a disability to Disability Resources prior to receiving accommodations.

**Academic integrity.** Consult [www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm](http://www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm). "The University is committed to academic excellence and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite any sources they use. A student who is guilty of a dishonest act in an examination, paper, or other work required for a course, or who assists others in such an act, will receive a grade of “F” for the course.” This course includes several assignments which require work with one partner and one assignment that requires coordination with a group. You are expected to work collaboratively with your partner(s) and be aware of what he or she is doing. For these assignments I expect that you will discuss the ideas from class, but that you will do your writing individually. This does not mean that you and your partner turn in the same text, or that you may copy each other’s work. I encourage you to discuss the material from this class and its vocation implications with others from this class and other friends. I insist that your writing assignments be your own, original work.

**Technology in the classroom.** Please silence your cell phone when in class. Please do not use your laptop to take notes. Please use pen and paper. In my experience too often this is used for activities unrelated to the class. There will be some exceptions, for example, for the WWW readings and for the iMovie project, which I will announce in advance.

**Readings** JBH=Julia Butterfly Hill; ASV=A Sacred Voice; DEC=Developing Ecological Consciousness; ESL=Engaged Spiritual Life; CFC = Care for Creation; W=the web
The Earth is calling
1a January 9
1b Jan 11. No class--but reading report due by noon on Friday 13 on JBH p 1-62; ASV preface & ch 1; Michael Himes videos. See info on Camino webpage.
2a Jan 16 (No class --MLK day)
2b Jan 18. JBH p 63-183; ASV ch 2, 3

Via positiva
3a Jan 23. JBH p 184-250; DEC preface, 1.
3b Jan 25 DEC 2; ESL forward & introduction.
-->Vocation of JBH paper due 1/26.
4a Jan 30 DEC 3; CFC introduction, 1, 2
4b Feb 1 DEC 4; CFC 3, 4, 5; ESL 1.
-->Via positiva reflection due 2/2.

Via negativa
5a Feb 6 DEC 5; ESL 2
-->Economics of Happiness report due 2/7.
5b Feb 8 DEC 6; ESL 4; CFC 6, 7; Eaarth 1.
6a Feb 13 Eaarth 2. W=Schneiders, “Religion vs. Spirituality.”
6b Feb 15 DEC 7; CFC 9;
-->Via negativa paper due 2/16
7a Feb 20 (no class -- Prez day)

Via transformativa
7b Feb 22 DEC 8; iMovie lab session in the library
8b Feb 29. Midterm. St. Francis Pledge
--> Earth meditation activity report due 3/1.

Climate justice
9b March 7 Eaarth. 4
10a March 12 Eaarth afterward
10b March 14 iMovie due. Four showings in Viewing and Taping B, 3.30-8pm
Finals week March 20. No class. The take home final will be due by email