Religion & Nature in Theoretical Perspective and Occidental History
(12 May 2017, prepared by Bron Taylor)

This reading list is for those taking a qualifying exam drawing on both religion and nature theory and exploring the religion and nature nexus in the Occidental world, especially in North America.

The first references, both required and recommended readings, represent a “Theory Focus.” The second references, also with both required and recommended sections, represent the “Occidental and North America Focus.” There are, of course, historical dimensions in the readings listed under theory and theoretical dimensions in the historical sections. Students should be able to address historical and theoretical issues that have emerged from not only religious studies but also anthropology, environmental history, and various critical schools and figures associated with postmodern, postcolonial, and other post-structuralist schools of thought and the environmental humanities generally.

Although not listed, students are expected to have a good knowledge of classical and contemporary trends in the study of religion, including figures such as Marx, Freud, Durkheim, Weber, Muller, and others, which have been the focus of the programs Method and Theory courses. There are also a few references likely to appear on the Environmental Ethics exams, which are also important in terms of the unfolding religion and nature discourse in North America.

The recommended readings are provided for two reasons: (1) as a resource for future reading, course preparation and research and (2) to indicate important scholars and issues you should at least have a modest understanding about. Ideally, you will familiarize yourself with the recommended readings during the process leading up to taking your exams.

Reading lists for individual students may be modified by negotiation with committee members.
Religion & Nature Exam – Theory Focus

Required books and articles ~ theory focus


Recommended books and articles ~ theory focus

Darwin, Charles, On the Origin of Species and The Descent of Man


**Recommended books ~ mixed methods social scientific research:**


Religion & Nature Exam – Occidental & North America Focus

Required books and articles ~ Occident focused


• Cronon, “The trouble with wilderness; or, getting back to the wrong nature” (69-90), and “Toward a Conclusion” 447-460.
• Carolyn Merchant, “Reinventing Eden: western culture as a recovery narrative.”
• The entire book has been widely read among environmental studies scholars and the rest is highly recommended. Contrast with Soule and Lease, and Sutter (below)


Diamond, Jared. Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed. New York: Viking, 2005. Especially the Prologue, Chapter 1 (Montana), Chapter 4 (the Anasazi), Chapter 5 (the Maya), Chapter 6-8 (Norse expansion).


140-144, June 2013; the entire forum is downloadable at The World With Us: The State of American Environmental History.


• Abrahamic traditions entries, starting with the anchor entries in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
• Latin American religions and nature entries, such as Amazonia, Aztec & Inca Cultures, Andean Religions, Umbanda, Spiritism, and Santeria (following cross references)


Recommended books and articles ~ Occident focused

**General studies**


- Georgina Drew, “A retreating Goddess? Conflicting perceptions of ecological change near the Gangotri-Gaumukh glacier”
- Noor Johnson, “Healing the Land” in the Canadian Arctic: Evangelism, knowledge, and climate change.
- Robin Globus Veldman, Andrew Szasz, and Randolph Haluza-Delay, “Climate change and religion as global phenomena: Summing up and directions for further research” (volume conclusion)
- Also, Hermesse (evangelical Christians and Mayan cosmology in Guatemala) and Nita (Christian and Muslim climate activists in Great Britain), Agliardo (on US Catholics).

**Anthologies and Textbooks**


**Recommended books and articles ~ tradition specific studies**

See detailed Occidental Cultures bibliography

**Judaism**


**Christianity**


Fowler, Robert Booth, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (North Carolina, 1995)


Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Fortress, 2000)


________. *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology* (Fortress, 2000)


Islam


**THE AMERICAS**

**Critical Background and Key Historical Studies**

Galleano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America* (or is there some environmental & religion history that would be even better?)

Indigenous Societies


Weaver, Jace, ed. *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environmental Justice*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1996. (Especially Weaver’s contributions.)


North America


**Mesoamerica (misc)**


**South America (misc)**
