

**REL 2071 (08A8): RELIGION AND SUSTAINABILITY
Fall 2016**

T 7 (1:55-2:45); R 7-8 (1:55-3:50)

Class location: AND 134

Instructor: Dr. A. Whitney Sanford

Email: wstanford@ufl.edu

Office hours: T 11:30-1:30; R 9:30-10:30

Office: 107 Anderson Hall

Telephone: 392-1625

Teaching Assistant: Aya Cockram

Email: ayac2889@ufl.edu

Office hours: M/W 10-11:30

Office: 119 Anderson Hall

Telephone: 392-1625

Description

This course examines the relationship between religion and sustainability and explores how the world's different religious traditions address the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability. Topics include social and environmental justice, sustainable consumption, and sustainable agriculture and will highlight multiple religious perspectives.

This fall, students in this class will contribute to the "River of Dreams: The St Johns River and its Springs" exhibit to be held at the Matheson History Museum. This exhibit is an historical and ethnographic study of the St Johns River and its riverine cultures. This project offers opportunities to learn and practice skills in ethnographic fieldwork; digital humanities; public humanities; and exhibit design. In particular, students will learn how to map their projects and how to design an exhibit on Omeka.

Topics and Organization

1. What is Sustainability?

The course begins with an overview of the concept of sustainability, including its origins in the notion of "sustainable development" and contemporary discussions.

2. What is Religious Studies?

We examine different approaches to and definitions of the academic study of religion, highlighting several key thinkers, issues, and perspectives that are especially relevant to Sustainability Studies.

3. Religion and the "Three Legs" of Sustainability

This unit will look at the relations of religion to the three traditional "legs" of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental. Religious approaches to sustainability often emphasize social justice, sometimes as a critique of ecological approaches, and often with a Third or Fourth World perspective. Topics include social and environmental justice movements in the U.S. and elsewhere. Case studies including agriculture, forestry, and other issues will explore the ways the three legs are integrated with more or less success, and the role of religion in such efforts.

4. First Case Study: Religion and Sustainable Agriculture

The next section will look at crucial features of religion and their relations to sustainability, with a focus on community identity, place, religious narratives, and ethics.

5. Second Case Study: Religion and Sustainable Consumption

This section looks at the ways religious ideas and institutions affect consumption practices of individuals and groups.

6. Concluding sessions: The class will finish with a mini-conference in which students present their exhibits on the St Johns River project.

General Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand and learn to effectively communicate the concept of sustainability, the practical issues it involves, and the interdisciplinary nature of its concerns, with particular attention to humanistic dimensions;
2. Students will learn how religion relates to core aspects of sustainability, including its ecological, social, and economic dimensions;
3. Students will learn how diverse cultures, religious traditions, and local communities address problems of sustainability;
4. Students will be able to evaluate the role and effectiveness of a broad range of methods, theories, perspectives, and frameworks relating to humanistic and religious approaches to sustainability;
5. Students will work collaboratively and in multidisciplinary teams on class projects;
6. Students will learn to approach concrete problems, including the case studies addressed in course readings and discussions, in a holistic manner that benefits from interdisciplinary knowledge, systems thinking, and broad stakeholder engagement.

General Education Objectives

1. This course fulfills the Humanities (H) General Education Objective by providing instruction in the key themes, principles and terminology of Religious Studies.
2. General Education Student Learning Outcomes for Humanities courses:
 - a. The course will teach students about the history, underlying theory, and methodologies used in Religious Studies. Both in a separate introductory section on Religious Studies and throughout discussions of other issues and cases, course readings, lectures, and discussions will emphasize the history, theory and methodologies of Religious Studies and their relevance for Sustainability Studies.
 - b. The course will provide students with background on the history, theory and methodologies used in Religious Studies, using case studies focused on sustainability to

illustrate approaches and issues. Readings, class discussions, and writing assignments will focus on developing the skills by which students can identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape the ways people think about both religion and sustainability.

c. The class emphasizes clear and effective analysis, expressed both in class discussions and in written assignments. In reading, discussion, and writing, students will be taught and encouraged to approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives, including diverse cultural and religious traditions as well as different theoretical frameworks within religious studies.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Participation and In-class Assignments (10%).

Attendance and participation in class discussions and projects, including timely and close reading of all assigned texts. This grade includes the two field assignments.

2. Group project (20% of final grade).

Students will conduct fieldwork, collect materials, and design an exhibit on the Omeka site created for this class. “River of Dreams: The St Johns River and its Springs”, an historical and ethnographic study of the St Johns River, will be held at the Matheson History Museum in spring 2017. This project will serve as a practicum to develop specific skills, including ethnographic skills, exhibit design, and digital humanities. Teams of students will focus on a specific area on the St. Johns or nearby springs, learning about this area’s past, present, and possible future. Students will explore why people come to protect their “places” and learn how concerns such as sea level rise will shape ways of life.

In teams , students will conduct ethnographic and historical research, in consultation with UF libraries and the Matheson Museum. You will contribute digital materials, including photographs, interviews, and historical materials to Omeka site, and each team will create an exhibit on this site. Your Omega site will be a public and permanent demonstration of your work and can be part of a professional portfolio. In this process, students will learn about career opportunities in the public humanities, e.g., museum curator, and will create a digital portfolio that showcases their work. Groups will present their projects at the end of the semester. Please see assignment on Canvas for more details.

3. Two individual essays (4-5 double-spaced pages, 1000 words each). The first draft should both be submitted to Canvas **AND** brought to class for feedback and discussion. First draft – 3 points; final version – 12 points.* Each essay will be worth 15% (or 15 points) of your final grade (30% total).

4. Two hour exams (15% each of final grade; 30% total)

5. Weekly blog entry (10%)

Students will contribute to a group blog documenting their findings for the group project. Each student will contribute one entry of 200-300 words per week. Some entries will reflect assigned field projects. Entries are due by 11 pm, Wednesday night. The first blog entry is due on

Wednesday, September 7, and entries continue until Wednesday, November 30, excluding the week of Thanksgiving. Blog entries should contain 1. materials related to the group project, including 1. photographs, considerations of exhibiting materials, references to historical materials, or a synopsis of what you have discovered; and 2. queries or comments on the relationship between fieldwork exercises and assigned readings.

*Consistent with Gordon Rule standards, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, usage of standard written English, clarity, coherence, and organization. (See below for grading rubric)

Gordon Rule –

This course counts for Gordon Rule 2 credit.

The Writing Requirement (Gordon Rule) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

Course grades now have two components. To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Students will complete two short essays (4-5 double-spaced, 1000 words each).

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, usage of standard written English, clarity, coherence, and organization. Students will receive a grade and corrections on their work. Students will be graded according to the following rubric:

Assessment:

1.) What type of feedback will be provided to the student (in reference to writing skill)?

Grade Corrections Drafts Other

2.) Will a published rubric be used? Yes (see below)

Grading Policies and Scale

Full information about UF's grading policy, including credit for major, minor, General Education, and other requirements, is available at this website:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

The grade scale for this course is as follows:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83

C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
E	Below 60

Please note that a C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, General Education, Gordon Rule, or College Basic distribution credit. To achieve such credit you must achieve a C or better in this class. <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Policies, Rules, and Resources

1. **Handing in Assignments:** Place all papers in my mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of my office, the main department office, or the teaching assistant's office. Please also keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.
2. **Late or Make-Up Assignments:** You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances and with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/3 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.
3. **Completion of All Assignments:** You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing for any assignment. You are responsible for knowing the course requirements and making sure you hand them in. I will not remind you of missing assignments.
4. **Attendance and Participation:** Class attendance is required. Do not register for this class if you cannot arrive on time. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day's readings. Tardiness harms your understanding of the material and disrupts the class. After the first late arrival, the instructor reserves the right to mark you absent, without an excused absence. The instructor will not provide notes or discuss material that has already been covered for students who arrive late, barring extraordinary circumstances (which do not include failing to find a parking place or sleeping in).
5. **Common Courtesy:** Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls or text messages during class will be asked to leave and counted absent for the day. Students may take notes on a laptop computer only with prior approval from the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class. If that occurs, the student will be marked absent for the day.
6. **Honor Code:** On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the

following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>. Any student(s) demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.

7. Accommodation for Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

8. Counseling Resources: Resources available on-campus for students include the following:

- University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
- Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

9. Software Use: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

10. Writing Assistance: In addition to scheduling time with the instructor, students are highly encouraged to seek assistance from the University Reading and Writing Center (<http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/index.html>). For additional assistance, I recommend Joshua Sowin’s “A Guide to Writing Well” (<http://www.fireandknowledge.org/archives/2007/01/08/a-guide-to-writing-well/>). The University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center is also a valuable resource, especially for basic citation information: (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>).

Required Readings

PLEASE NOTE: All readings will be available online on Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Schedule

** PLEASE NOTE: There may be changes in dates and assignments as the semester proceeds. Students will be informed of any changes and will be responsible for having assignments completed by the updated due dates.

TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT

I. INTRODUCING SUSTAINABILITY

This section defines sustainability as a cultural, environmental, and social objective, and

introduces the approach of Sustainability Studies.

- August 23 Introduction to the course
- August 25 Willis Jenkins, “Sustainability Theory”
Stephanie Kaza, “Why Environmental Humanities?”
<http://www.uvm.edu/~skaza/publications/assets/envhumanities.PDF>

II. INTRODUCING RELIGIOUS STUDIES

This section will begin to define Religious Studies as a humanistic discipline, its unique theoretical and methodological perspectives, and its distinctive contributions to Sustainability Studies.

- August 30 Bauman, “Introduction”, and “Religion: What is it, who gets to define it, and why does it matter?”
- September 1 Horgan, “Why Study Humanities?”
Visit to Matheson History Museum
- September 6 **Omeka Workshop with Suzan Altieri/UF Library**
- September 8 Wrisley, “Spatial Humanities”
See: <http://ejatlas.org/>
Visit to Map and Imagery Library
- September 13 **Site Visit and Mapping Assignment**
Wilson, “Map: The United States of Watersheds” (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2013/11/19/map-the-united-states-of-watersheds/>)
Giesecking, “The People, Place, and Space Reader”, Chapter 1 (<http://peopleplacespace.org/toc/section-1/>)
- September 15 Selections from *Bartram’s Travels*
Due: Mapping Assignment and Initial Omeka Uploads
- September 20 Berra, “Conservative Rebels” (Canvas)

III. RELIGION AND SUSTAINABILITY: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

Reading and discussions in this section focus on religion’s roles in the social and economic aspects of sustainability. It emphasizes the role of religious perspectives and values in definitions of economic justice, a central value of sustainability, and in ecological economics. Theoretical emphasis will be on the ways religion, as a humanistic and cultural phenomenon, interacts and influences these other aspects.

- September 22 Rose Zuzworsky, “From the Marketplace to the Dinner Plate”

(Canvas)

Due: First draft of essay #1

September 27 Rawlings, “Hyacinth Drift”
Alderson, “The Inaugural Bartram History Paddle on the St. Johns River,
Florida”

September 29 Turcotte, “For This is an Enchanted Land”

Visit to MKR Archives/Flo Turcotte

Due: Final draft of essay #1

October 4 Scott Russell Sanders, “Wilderness as Sabbath for the Land”

Newton, Julianne, “Sustainability: A Dissent”

October 6 Examination #1

IV. RELIGION AND SUSTAINABILITY: ECOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

Readings and discussions in this section focus on religion’s interactions with the environmental aspects of sustainability, including both the practical contribution of religious activists and the theoretical perspectives of religious studies scholars.

October 11 Sarah Taylor, “It Isn’t Easy Being Green”
(Canvas)

October 13 **Creating and Curating Exhibits/Visit with Rebecca**

Fitzsimmons

Reading TBA

Due: Museum Visit and Next Round of Omeka Uploads

October 18 Haberman, “River of Love in an Age of Pollution”

Draft of Essay #2

V. FIRST CASE STUDY: RELIGION AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

This case study begins to show the concrete significance of religion and related cultural values in food production and distribution systems.

October 20 Zeller, “Quasi-American Foodways”
All materials should be uploaded to Omeka site.

October 25 Sanford, “Thinking about GMOs in ‘Religion and Food’”

Due: Final version of essay #2

October 27 **Group Conferences—Exhibit Design**

VI. SECOND CASE STUDY: RELIGION AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

In this section, consumption is examined as a second concrete illustration of religion's role in shaping sustainable values and practices.

- November 1 Mattson, "The Islamic View on Consumption and Material Development in Light of Environmental Pollution"
- November 3 Sanford, "Rethinking Abundance"
Due: In-class exhibit progress reports
- November 8 Nash, "On the Subversive Virtue: Frugality"
- November 10 Examination #2**
- November 15 Visit with Rebecca Fitzsimmons/In-class project workshop
- November 17 Group conferences
- November 22 AAR**
- November 24 Happy Thanksgiving!**

VII. FINAL CONFERENCES

- November 29 **Group presentations**
- December 1 **Group presentations**
- December 9 Conclusions and discussion

Grading Rubric for Essays:

Qualities & Criteria	Unsatisfactory (C-or below)	Satisfactory (B-C range)	Satisfactory (A-B+ range)
<p>Content/Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All elements of the topics are addressed • Critical evaluation and synthesizing of sources • Information based on careful research • Coherence of information <p>(Weight 60%)</p>	<p>The essay is not objective and addresses poorly the issues referred in the proposed topic. The provided information is not necessary or not sufficient to discuss these issues.</p>	<p>The essay is objective and for the most part addresses with an in depth analysis most of the issues referred in the proposed topic. The provided information is, for the most part, necessary and sufficient to discuss these issues.</p>	<p>The essay is objective and addresses with an in depth analysis all the issues referred in the proposed topic. The provided information is necessary and sufficient to discuss these issues. Critical thinking and synthesis of sources is fully evident</p>
<p>Quality of Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of sentences and paragraphs • No errors and spelling, grammar and use of English • Organization and coherence of ideas <p>(Weight 25%)</p>	<p>The essay is not well written, and contains many spelling errors, and/or grammar errors and/or use of English errors. The essay is badly organized, lacks clarity and/or does not present ideas in a coherent way.</p>	<p>The essay is well written for the most part, without spelling, grammar or use of English errors. The essay is for the most part well organized, clear and presents ideas in a coherent way.</p>	<p>The essay is well written from start to finish, without spelling, grammar or use of English errors. The essay is well organized, clear and presents ideas in a coherent way.</p>

<p>References and use of references</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarly level of references • How effective the references are used in the essay • Soundness of references • APA style in reference list and for citations <p>(Weight 15%)</p>	<p>Most of the references used are not important, and/or are not of good/scholarly quality. There is not a minimum of 4 scholarly resources, and/or they are not used effectively in the essay. References are not effectively used, and/or correctly cited and/or correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.</p>	<p>Most of the references used are important, and are of good/scholarly quality. There is a minimum of 4 scholarly resources that are for the most part used effectively in the essay. Most of the references are effectively used, correctly cited and correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.</p>	<p>All the references used are important, and are of good/scholarly quality. There is a minimum of 4 scholarly resources that are used effectively in the essay. All the references are effectively used, correctly cited and correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.</p>
<p>Overriding criterion: Originality and authenticity. If the essay is identified as not being original, and/or not done by the student, the instructor has the right to grade the paper as an F.</p>			

*Rubric originally developed by Dr. Stella Porto of UMUC