Religion and Ecology in America
Religious Studies 193 / Environmental Studies: 189
Winter 2017

Professor Inés Talamantez
Lecture: T Th 9:30-10:45AM
Office: HSSB 3069
Location: Arts 1356
Office Hours: Tues. 11 AM - 12 PM,
Thu. 11 AM - 12 PM,
or by appointment
Email: talamant@religion.ucsb.edu

Course Description:

This course will analyze specific themes critical to the understanding of indigenous ways of knowing and the impact of colonialism, especially in California. We will explore the major factors contributing to the intellectual history of Indigenous America and contemporary ecological and environmental concerns. The course addresses questions of de-colonization, values, and raising consciousness for balanced living including a discussion of water and efficient energy use, an evaluation of health risks, and concerns for a sustainable community. Topics include: How perceptions of nature have changed across cultures and over time, how media affects the contemporary American experience both within our inner human nature and the natural world, and how we experience ourselves in the world. Lectures will be based on Native American Religious Traditions, the meaning of Standing Rock, and special emphasis on why water is considered sacred.

Course Requirements:

Class participation is mandatory along with working in a reading group. Groups will discuss readings on a regular basis and select a member of the group to present to the class the highlights of their discussion (this will be further discussed in class). This requires that each student read and prepare before each class session. A 3-paged abstract will be due during midterms. This abstract will be an outline of your final essay and should provide an annotated bibliography. The final paper must be written in essay format and will focus on readings, lectures, or other class material. Your final paper will be 20-pages and should provide a synthesis based on what you have learned in this course and provide a conclusion for further research. Students will present their final papers individually on the day assigned by the instructor (in alphabetical order by last name). Everyone must be present during all the oral presentations. Papers are to be turned in before presenting.

Grading:

Required attendance and group reading participation on daily discussion = 15%
Abstract (3 pages) plus an Annotated Bibliography = 15%
Final Paper (15 pages) = 40%
Oral Presentation (5 minutes) = 30%
Required Texts:

- Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth.*
- M. Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild: The Management of California’s Natural Resources.*

Recommended Readings:

- Jerry Mander. *In the Absence of the Sacred.* (1991)

Course Lectures and Readings:

Jan 10: Course Introduction

Jan 12: READING DUE: Berry, *The Dream of the Earth,* Chapter 1, 2, 3

Jan 17: READING DUE: Berry, *The Dream of the Earth,* Chapter 4, 5, 6

Jan 19: READING DUE: Berry, *The Dream of the Earth,* Chapter 9, 10, 11

Jan 24: READING DUE: Berry, *The Dream of the Earth,* Chapter 12, 14, 15, 16

Jan 26: READING DUE: Anderson, Introduction and Chapters 1-3

Jan 31: READING DUE: Anderson, Chapters 4-6

Feb 7: READING DUE: Anderson, Chapters 7, 8, 12 plus Coda pg. 358

Feb 9: READING DUE: Nelson, pg. 1-76


March 2: Guest Speaker

March 7: *In The Reverence of the Light* (film)

March 9: Oral Presentations and Final Papers due
March 14: Oral Presentations and Final Papers due

March 16: Oral Presentations and Final Papers due

Final Exam Date: March 21, 8am – Finish Oral Presentations and Course Summary