

Spring 2012
ECOLOGY OF RELIGION: IMPERIAL SOCIETIES

ANG 6241 (8683)

Lecture session:

Place: Turlington 2341

Professor: Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo

Office: Turlington 131B

Office hours: T: 4:05-7:05 p.m.

Phone: 3922253 Ext 257

Email: caycedo@ufl.edu

This course focuses on analyzing environmental conservationism and its relation to religious belief systems in imperial societies and global superpowers. In this course we will examine the development of British ecological imperialism, American environmentalism, as well as German naturalism from a historical anthropological perspective by looking at the close relationship between environmentalism and religion. This will help us to understand the sources and origins of the concepts created behind the assumed “natural” ecologies of the dominated places.

This approach through a historical anthropology in the ecology of religion focusing on empires and nations has as an objective to understand the structural driving forces in the development of conservationist and environmentalist ideologies at a global scale. These ideologies of conservation, environmentalism, and naturalism expressed in landscape preservation policies are the legacy of the past empires and these models are now imposed by superpowers over nations all over the world creating conflicts by overlapping cosmologies.

We will examine how such processes of imposing new models that appear to be secular, hide “cosmological” models about nature, which are deeply rooted in religious belief systems and nationalistic ideologies that also “naturalize” human beings place in nature. This process of global conservationism affects the daily lives of hunters, gatherers, food producers, and peoples with different cosmologies around the globe. This process creates a new set of problems in relation to space (territorial control of landscapes and cultivated spaces) in terms of who will benefit from their use. From these perspectives we will pursue the following objectives.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To understand the main theoretical and conceptual approaches to the study of an ecology of religion by looking at imperial societies from an anthropological perspective.
- 2) To understand the significance of western religion framework and the patterns of environmental appropriation of space that produce through time.
- 3) To obtain a general comparative understanding of the variation of imperial and nationalistic practices and what they mean in relation to human societies and the environment.
- 4) To understand the relationship between empires and superpowers and ecology in the context of human religious systems and political complexity.

Textbooks:

Daston, Loarraine and Fernando Vidal. 2004. *The Moral Authority of Nature*. University of Chicago Press.

Anker, Peder. (2001). *Imperial Ecology, Environmental Order in the British Empire, 1895-1945*. Harvard University Press.

Ramirez, Susan E. 2005. *To Feed and be Fed; The Cosmological Bases of Authority and Identity in the Andes*. Stanford.

Latour, Bruno. 2010. *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods*. Duke University Press.

Recommended books:

Fox, Stephen. (1985). *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and his Legacy*. The University of Wisconsin Press.

Bosso, Christopher. (2005). *Environment, Inc, From Grassroots to Beltway*. University Press of Kansas.

Crosby, Alfred. *Ecological Imperialism : The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Studies in Environment and History) (Paperback) Cambridge University Press; 2nd edition (January 12, 2004).

Grove, Richard. (1995). *Green Imperialism, Colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600-1860*. Cambridge University Press.

Griffiths, Tom, and Libby Robin. (1997). *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies*. University of Washington Press. Seattle.

Lekan, Thomas (2004). *Imagining the Nation in Nature, Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945*. Harvard University Press.

Brüggemeier, Franz-Josef, Mark Cioc, and Thomas Zeller, Eds. (2005). *How Green Were the Nazis? Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich*. (Series in Ecology and History). Ohio University Press.

EVALUATION: Review papers (20%), a final paper (40%), class presentation of the paper (10%), and class participation (30%).

GRADE SYSTEM:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| Letter Grade | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | D- |
| Grade | 4.0 | 3.67 | 3.33 | 3.00 | 2.67 | 2.33 | 2.00 | 1.67 | 1.33 | 1.00 | .67 |

Assignments: You are expected to do the following:

- 1) Read the assigned material BEFORE coming to class. Many students have difficulty understanding the lectures because they do not familiarize themselves with the material prior to class. Do NOT be one of these students.
- 2) Participate actively in the discussion of the articles.
- 3) Two review papers on the readings. Each one is a synthesis on the readings. Please make an argument where all the readings are cited. Each review is at least 12 pages with a complete bibliography at the end.
- 4) Produce a very original paper, with clear objectives and ideas.
- 5) At the end of the fourth week please submit a long abstract of your paper's proposal. Please include a short list of sources that you are going to consult in order to be approved as a research paper by the instructor.
- 6) A week before the presentation please submit two articles to be read by all the students. The readings should be relevant to your talk and will help in the discussion of your presentation.
- 7) Your presentation should be clear and use any techniques that can help you to make your points.
- 8) Please submit the paper on time.

Disclaimer: Some adjustments may be made in the schedule and class requirements during the course of the semester. All changes will be announced.

ATTENDANCE is required. Final grades will be reduced one grade level for two unjustified absences. Students who are unable to come to class on a regular basis due to special circumstances should see the instructor at the beginning of the term to discuss such circumstances. Finally, please avoid at all costs coming in or walking out of the classroom in the middle of lectures. This is most rude and disruptive.

Week 1, Introduction: Nature, Religion before Imperial Societies.

Week 2, Building a theoretical base of an ecology of religion and empire: historical perspectives.

Reading:

Assman, Jan. What is “cultural memory”?

Assmann, Jan. Understanding Polytheism.

Glacken, Clarence. Preface, Introduction, Chapter 4, and 10 from *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*.

Glacken, Clarence. 1992. Reflections on the History of Western Attitudes to Nature. *Geojournal* 26(2):103-111.

Week 3, Building a theoretical base of an ecology of religion and empire: historical perspectives.

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/weber/protestant-ethic/index.htm>

Taubes, Jacob. 2009. *Occidental Eschatology*. Book 1 and 4.

Week 4, Nature in Imperial Societies

Reading:

Daston and Vidal, Introduction and chapters 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Week 5, Nature in Imperial Societies

Readings:

Crosby, Alfred. *Ecological Imperialism : The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* Cambridge University Press. Introduction.

Anker, Peder. (2001). *Imperial Ecology, Environmental Order in the British Empire, 1895-1945*. Harvard University Press.

Week 6, The Nature of German Forestry.

Readings:

Radkau, Joachim. (2005). Germany as a focus of European “Particularities” in Environmental History. In *Germany’s Nature, Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History*, edited by T. Lekan and T. Zeller. Pp. 17-32. Rutgers University Press.

Imort, Michael. (2005). A Sylvan People, Whilelmine Forestry and the Forest as a Symbol of Germandom. In *Germany’s Nature, Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History*, edited by T. Lekan and T. Zeller. Pp. 55-80. Rutgers University Press.

Sunseri, Thaddeus. (2005). Forestry and the German Imperial Imagination. Conflicts over Forest Use in German East Africa. In *Germany’s Nature, Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History*, edited by T. Lekan and T. Zeller. Pp. 81-107. Rutgers University Press.

Lekan, Thomas (2004). *Imagining the Nation in Nature, Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945*. Chapter one. Harvard University Press.

Brüggemeier, Franz-Josef, Mark Cioc, and Thomas Zeller, Eds. (2005). *How Green Were the Nazis? Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich*. (Series in Ecology and History). Ohio University Press. (chapters 2 and 7, 8).

Week 7, Environmentalism, conservatism and the ecology of religion in the US: origins.

Reading:

Anderson, Virginia. 2004. *Creatures of Empire*. Chapter 2. Oxford University Press.

Lewis, Michael. 2007. *American Wilderness: A New History*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 10,11, 13.

Recommended reading:

Fox, Stephen (1985). *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and his legacy*. The University of Wisconsin Press.

Week 8, US Imperial Ecology, and Religion

Readings: Bosso, Christopher (2005). *Environment, Inc., From Grassroots to Beltway*. University Press of Kansas (chapters 1 and 2)

Chapin, Mac. (2004). *A challenge to Conservationist*. World Watch. November/December.

Jelinski, Dennis E. 2005. There is No Mother Nature—There is No Balance of Nature: Culture, Ecology and Conservation. *Human Ecology*, Vol. 33, No. 2:271-288.

Taylor, Bron. 2010. *Dark Green Religion*. Chapters 1 and 2.

Week 9, Non-Western view on Cosmology or the Ecology of Religion in a Mesoamerican Empires

Readings:

Descola, Philip. 1996. Constructing natures: symbolic ecology and social practice. In *Nature and society: anthropological.perspectives* (eds) P. Descola & G. Pálsson, 82-102. London: Routledge.

Lopez Austin, Alfredo. Aztec Animism.

Mesoamerican Ritual Economy, Chapters 1, 9, 13.

Week 10, Non-Western view on Cosmology or the Ecology of Religion in the Inca Empire.

Readings:

Ramirez, Susan E. 2005. *To Feed and be Fed; The Cosmological Bases of Authority and Identity in the Andes*. Stanford.

Week 11, Future Conceptual Avenues for an Ecology of Religion:

Readings:

Mauss, Marcel. The Gift.

Pietz, William. The problem of Fetish I, II and III.

Pietz, William. Fetishism and materialism.

Graeber, David. Fetishism as a social creativity.

Graeber, David. Marcel Mauss revisited, The false coin of our dreams.

Week 12, Future Conceptual Avenues for an Ecology of Religion:

Readings:

Readings: Latour, Bruno. 2010. On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods. Duke University Press.

Week 13, Presentation of papers and discussion.

Week 14, Presentation of papers and discussion.

Week 15, Presentation of papers and discussion.

Week 16, Presentation of papers and discussion.

Week 17, Final Paper due.