Religion, Big History, and Ecology
First Year Seminar, FFYS 1000.52, LMU, Fall 2013
Mondays and Wednesdays, 3 to 4:15, University Hall 1401

Christopher Key Chapple
Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology
Department of Theological Studies
3763 University Hall
Phone: 310-338-2846
Email: cchapple@lmu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 noon and by appointment

Anne Hawthorne, Writing Instructor
3231 University Hall, Phone: 310-339-2542
Email: annehawthorne@gmail.com
Office Hours: 4:30-6:30 Monday and Wednesday, and by appointment

Synopsis of the topic and objectives of the course:
In this course we will explore how some of the world’s religious traditions are responding to the problem of ecological degradation. The course will begin with a summary overview of the emerging field of “big history,” tracing the story of the birth and development of the universe from the great flaring forth to the dawning of the human species. The course will continue with an overview of how the world’s religious traditions are responding to such issues as global climate change, rising species extinctions, issues over access to clean water, and the effects of chemicals within the environment.

Religion, Big History, and Ecology

This course will explore the place of religion within “big history,” also known as the Epic of Evolution or the New Story. Providing an integrated view of the relationship between science, religion, and the flourishing of human cultures, the large frame of big history allows the humanities and the sciences to meet on a common interrelated intellectual field. This course will reflect the interconnectedness of ecological realities as well as provide a framework for coping with the pressing issues of environmental ethics.

Topics to be addressed in this seminar include:
• the interface between religious cosmologies and ecology
• religious experience in Christianity, Yoga, and Hinduism
• the epic of evolution and environmental ethics
• the insights of Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., and Thomas Berry, O.P.
This exploration will help inform and enhance the mission of LMU in its commitment to "educate the whole person, in the service of faith and promotion of justice" by addressing the integration of the historic duality between science and the humanistic disciplines. The seminar will examine the disciplines of cosmology, bioethics, theology, and related fields from a world religions perspective.

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) made education a top priority for the Society of Jesus. Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881-1955), a Jesuit, energized the dialogue between religion and science by suggesting that the story of evolution must be taken into account as part of the mystery of God's creation. Students will be introduced to the key ideas of Teilhard, the French paleontologist who lived and worked for many years in China. Teilhard understood the human being as “emplaced” within an evolving universe. Teilhard notes that the role of human society is to provide a unique opportunity for us to become co-creators in the further development of our own world through our thirst for knowledge and understanding, our interactions and our connectedness to one another and nature, our love for one another, and use of the tools of science and technology. The inspiration provided by Teilhard has resulted in the emergence of a unitive approach to knowledge known variously as the New Story, the Epic of Evolution, and Big History. The ideas that undergird this approach provide a call for an ongoing human ethical response of both a personal and social nature.

Thomas Berry, O.P., has suggested that the university should have the "universe as its originating, validating, and unifying referent" and that education should involve "knowing the universe story and the human role in the story." Thomas Berry, inspired by Teilhard, studies of modern cosmology, and the world’s religious traditions, calls for a recognition of a deep connectedness with all of nature. Professor Cynthia Stokes Brown suggests that we need to weave "the many disciplines of human knowledge together into a single, seamless narrative."

In this course we will explore how science and cosmology have produced a new narrative that holds great potential for creating new models to use in the consideration of the human being and the human place in the universe. By examining the epics of cosmic creation and the evolution of life, connections between individual life and the world that surrounds and often overwhelms us become apparent. Understanding the origins of stars, rocks, oceans, trees, and animals highlights the patterns of emergence and retreat. These same patterns emerge in the "soft" fields of economics, political science, history, theology, philosophy, literature, and the arts, all of which yield infinite interconnections when studied from a global perspective. In particular, in this first year seminar, we will begin by learning about the history of the First Peoples who lived on this bluff, and whose existence is commemorated in a special meditation garden that we will visit the second day of class. We will then learn the story of big history, from the first flaring forth to the present. We will then explore the realm of religious thought, highlighting the vision of multiplicity-in-oneness in Hinduism, the practice of nonviolence to all forms of life in Jainism, the move beyond ego in Buddhism, and the promotion of hope, faith, and charity as a form of ethical inclusivism in Christianity.
By seeing the inter-relationships among disciplines and holding true to the visionary goal of seeing God in all things, students in the seminar will be given tools with which to face our complex, multi-cultural, multi-faceted world within the stated mission of LMU:

- The encouragement of learning
- The education of the whole person
- The service of faith and the promotion of justice

**Learning outcomes:**
Students in this first year seminar will study the origins of the universe, the rise of great epochs of geologic and biological development, and the great epics that document human flourishing. They will learn the guiding principles of the world’s primary faiths. This intellectual foundation will prepare them for the issues of stewardship and sustainability that will define their era and their generation. Students who participate in this seminar will be given the opportunity to improve their critical skills and their writing and will hopefully be better equipped as responsible, informed global citizens, ready to meet the challenges of the future.

**Required Books**


**ERES Materials:**
Materials to be posted to Blackboard and/or ERES:


**Book Group** Titles:


**Movies:** *Wall-E; The Day After Tomorrow; A Civil Action, Erin Brockovitch, An Inconvenient Truth*
**Service Options:** Must participate / volunteer twice at same organization

- Green Yoga, Tuesday nights, September 17, and October 15, 237 Hill Street, Santa Monica
- Heal the Bay: Cleanup, Grunion Watching
- Friends of Ballona: Cleanup, Education
- TreePeople: Tree planting and maintenance
- Animal Acres: Farm Animal Sanctuary
- LMU Office of Sustainability
  - Environmental Changemakers, Westchester / Holy Nativity Church Garden / Emerson Garden
  - Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center / Learning Garden
  - Star Eco Station: nature education for teachers

Student groups, to be assigned, will choose one of three learning options, either forming a book club or a movie group or a service activity. The group will then present their experience to the class, summarizing the book or movie or describing their service experience.

**Course Work/Expectations:**
Each student will be responsible for the completion of several assignments: a “launch” essay, a midterm and a final examination; completion of four library tutorials; two reflection essays; one oral presentation; and five page summary précis of a book or motion picture or service experience due one week after the presentation; and a twelve to fifteen page paper, interpreting an environmental challenge in a theological light, drawing from one of the religious cosmological / ethical systems we have studied: the New Story, Christianity, Yoga, Hinduism, or a tradition chosen by the student with the professor’s permission, such as Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Daoism, Rastafarianism, etc. Make certain that your research paper includes proper citations and a bibliography of at least seven sources, only two of which may be web-based. Wikipedia is not appropriate for citation, because its articles are not signed.

The class time will include some walking field trips, some media presentations, an offsite service day, some coordinated activities with Professor Harris’ first year seminar, and some group work.
This is a writing-intensive class and several modalities will be engaged, including essays (for exams), reflection papers, summary/analysis, and a research paper. Professor Anne Hawthorne will provide guidance on how to master each of these styles. A sizable amount of writing instruction takes place in writing conferences assigned at different time in the semester. Please make use of office hours as noted in this syllabus. Other times may be arranged by appointment either before class, by phone, or by skype.

The library tutorials must be accessed online. The modules may be found through MyLMU. Just follow these steps:

- Login to MyLMU Connect at http://mylmuconnect.lmu.edu
- Click on the course title “Religion, Big History, and Ecology,” FFYS 1000.52 to enter the course page.
- Click on the “Information Literacy” link in the course menu on the left-hand side of the page.
- Click the link for the Information Literacy tutorial Module you have been assigned. The tutorial will open in a new window.

Grading policies and standards:
The final grade will be based on an average of all seven assignments. The grading scale is as follows: 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 84-86 = B; 82-83 = B-; 77-81 = C+; 74-76 = C; 70-73 = C-; 60-69 = D; <60 = F.

D: minimal performance; C: basics are covered with organizational and grammatical errors; B: solid material, solid presentation; A: creative, articulate, inspired

Class rules

Please turn off and put out of sight all electronic devices, including cell phones and computers. Please take your notes by hand.

Please make yourself available for e-mail communication. Forward your LMU account to your preferred e-mail account if necessary.

Please follow the Lion's Code and the LMU Community Standards. Be careful not to commit plagiarism.

If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision.
Schedule: Monday and Wednesday afternoons, 3 to 4:15
Please complete readings by the date indicated.

August 26:
Welcome and Introductions
Topic: On Being a College Writer

August 28: A Sense of Suangna
Campus Walk; Visit to Suangna Springs
Read: Hugo Reid, Electronic Reserve
Read Austin, Electronic Reserve

September 2
No Class, Labor Day
Due: Essay by email to annehawthorne@gmail.com
Who are you in relation to the land?
Where are you in relation to the four directions?

September 4
Epic of Evolution / Journey of the Universe Film
“The Depths of Time and Space”
Brown, 3-74
Sign up for 15 minute writing conference, September 4, 9, or 11

September 9
“Ten Thousand Warm Years”
Early Agriculture and the First Cities
Brown, 75-109
Writing workshop: preparing for the first response paper due September 16th
Library Tutorial must be completed on Using Information Ethically

September 11
The Growth of Civilization
Brown, 110-187

September 16
Industrialization and Its Consequences
Brown, 189-248
Awareness and Ecological Connection
Read Dillard, ERES
FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE:
Big History and Ecology

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 17
6 P.M. GREG BOYLE, S.J., AUTHOR

September 18
Joint Class: THST VILLAGE
Tattoos on the Heart, part one
pp. xi-82

September 23
Tattoos on the Heart, part two, pp. 83-212
Christian Awareness and Action

September 25
Midterm Examination

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
YOGA DAY, 1 P.M. TO 9 P.M.
REGISTER AT EVENT PAGE, http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/yoga

September 30
In Praise of Mother Earth:
Hinduism and Ecology
Read pp. 1-30

October 2
Hinduism and Ecology
Read pp. 31-63

October 7
Yoga and Ecology
Read Essays on ERES:
Chapple introduction: 97-104;
Sign up for writing conferences October 9 or 14
October 9
Yoga and Ecology Part two:
Read ERES, Chapple, 145-167
Writing workshop: Principles of Revision

October 14
Journey of the Universe Book
Read 1-34

October 16
Journey of the Universe
Read 35-80
SECOND RESPONSE PAPER DUE:
Christianity and Social Ecology OR
Hinduism and/or Yoga and Ecology

October 21
Journey of the Universe
Read 81-131

October 23
Earth as a Sacred Community
Read Evening Thoughts, 1-42

October 28
Creative Continuity
Read Evening Thoughts, 43-86
Writing workshop: oral presentations; summary analysis
Sign up for writing/presentations October 30 or November 4

October 30
Global Warming
Read Evening Thoughts, 87-126
Due: Library tutorial: Starting your research assignment
Writing workshop: the research paper
November 4
Viability and Sustainability
Read Evening Thoughts, 127-170

November 6
Student Presentations
Due: Library tutorial: Types of information

November 11
Student Presentations
Due: Library tutorial: Finding and evaluating information
Go to: http://libguides.lmu.edu/fys

November 13
Student Presentations
FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER DUE TO ANNE HAWTHORNE
Sign up for writing conferences:
November 18, 20, 25 or December 2

November 18
Student Presentations

November 20
Student Presentations

November 25
Writing Workshop with Anne Hawthorne

November 27
No class, Thanksgiving

December 2
Student Presentations

December 4
FINAL PAPER DUE
Preparation for Final Exam

December 11, 2 to 4 p.m., Final Exam
Americans with Disabilities Act: Students with special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Daum Hall Room 224, 310-338-4535) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the “LMU Honor Code and Process” which appears in the current LMU Bulletin (see http://www.lmu.edu/about/services/registrar/Bulletin/Bulletins_in_PDF_Format.htm.)