RELG 28000.00
SPC TPC: WILD AND MINDFUL: A STUDY OF ECOLOGY AND RELIGION
Fall 2016 (201510) 12-week
CRN: 1636
Prerequisites: None
Instructor: Kerry Skora
4 credit hours

Course Description: This course serves an introduction to the study of ecology and religion.

Using a variety of thinking tools—from dialogue to case studies, and from analysis to phenomenological interpretation—students are introduced to new ways of understanding human ecology. On the surface, this is a course on walking in the woods. However, we will not only study such journeys, we will participate in such journeys. We will be led on our journey by religious studies and environmental studies scholars, including Belden Lane and others, who understand “hiking in the wilderness” as a spiritual or existential discipline. We will learn new skills, from mindfulness and paying attention to “traveling lightly,” and, with the help of our authors and guides, and through first-person study, practice, and discipline we will both think about and try to cultivate new capacities, from silence and solitude, to joy and wonder. Thus, we will attempt to understand “being in the wilderness” every which way: objectively, subjectively, and intersubjectively; how it relates to embodiment, motility, interaction and interdependence with the more-than-human world that surrounds us, including landscape and the beings and life forms dwelling therein; and the deep influences and transformations that potentially arise in the human encounter with “the wilderness.” Our ultimate goal is to develop a deep understanding of our wild environments and the wild selves they give rise to. Throughout, we engage in spiritual and/or existential reflection on being in the wild with the help of numerous trailblazers who we take as our guides, using the maps they have left for us, through own reflective, spiritual, existential, transformative, meaningful, joyful, awesome, and wonderful walks in the woods.