

Ecospiritual Activism Research Project (75 pts)

Purpose:

- 1) To explore on-the-ground efforts by ecospiritual and eco-religious activist groups to address specific environmental issues
- 2) To articulate religious principles and values engaged in ecospiritual activism
- 3) To develop skills in collaborative research and presentation

Assignment:

Working in small groups (maximum 4 people) on your selected topic, investigate specific activist efforts based in religious institutions, nonprofits, or ecospiritual activist groups. Examples: global climate change work by North American Coalition for Religion and Ecology, endangered species act lobbying by National Religious Partnership for Life, environmental justice work by Presbyterian EcoJustice Task Force. You can include efforts at the local, national, or international levels -- wherever you can find information about ecoreligious efforts.

Presentations should include:

- 1) specific religious principles and how they are applied environmentally
- 2) specific examples of activism based on religious principles and values
- 3) names of groups and scope of their activities

Prepare for a 15 minute presentation, allowing a few minutes follow-up for questions and comments from the class. We will have four presentations per class, so it will be important to be well rehearsed and use your time effectively.

Write-up: Bring to class on your day of presentation:

- 1) a one-page outline of your presentation with who in your group is doing what
- 2) a list of your sources -- websites, books, brochures (quantity counts!)
(make enough copies for the whole class)
- 3) any props, handouts, posters, communicative aids to show what you've found
(be creative in your method of communication!)
- 4) a one page self-reflection for each person in the group on what you gained from the work and how your group worked together

Caution: Do not postpone this research! You will be dismayed if you run into unexpected delays. With your group, delegate tasks, communicate frequently, share results by e-mail, schedule meetings you can all attend, keep minutes on your plans and findings. I encourage you to think creatively and try many more leads than you expect to pan out. Use any and all of these potential sources of information:

- 1) the Internet -- e.g. BuddhaNet website, etc., Forum on Religion and Ecology
- 2) appendices in back of the text and other books in syllabus bibliography
- 3) Harvard series of Religion and Ecology anthologies (full of case studies)
- 4) Religion and Ecology boxes in Stephanie's office -- newsletters, conference reports
- 5) directories of NGOs in reference library
- 6) your own denomination -- call or write to their headquarters
- 7) brainstorming session with Stephanie, books from her library
- 8) appointment with environmental reference librarian, Laurie Kutner