



RSOC 140.

ANIMALS, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND WORLD RELIGIONS.

WINTER 2016.

**INSTRUCTOR:
PROF. D. PINAULT.**

**TUESDAY-THURSDAY
10.20am-12noon
KENNA 310.**

**Course prerequisites:
Introductory- and
intermediate-level courses
in Religious Studies.**



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RSOC 140. ANIMALS, THE ENVIRONMENT, & WORLD RELIGIONS.

Winter 2016. Tuesday-Thursday 10.20-12noon, Kenna 310. Prof. D. Pinault.

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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 4.15-5.15pm & by appointment.

Course description.

In this course we will investigate the resources offered by world religions for addressing current crises related to the status of animals and the natural environment.

We'll begin by examining various possible definitions of religion. Thereafter we'll move beyond the traditional framework of such definitions (which focus on the Sacred in relation to humans) to consider the question posed by researcher Donovan Schaefer: "Do animals have religion?" Possible answers to this question may expand our understanding of what it means to be religious as well as hitherto overlooked aspects of existential camaraderie between human and non-human animals.

Next we'll focus on dimensions of six world religions that pertain to these issues: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Attention will be given to traditional views of human-animal relations as reflected in various scriptures, as well as the work of contemporary thinkers who offer new perspectives on environmental theology and issues such as animal suffering (especially with regard to the question of whether animal suffering can be reconciled with traditional doctrines of a benevolent and omnipotent Divinity).

We will also consider the ways in which practices from indigenous traditions (eg, Native American vision quests and Central Asian raven augury) and surviving evidence from ancient faiths (eg, theriomorphic artifacts from pharaonic Egypt and the human-animal hybrids found in recently discovered cave paintings of 33,000 years ago) challenge the cosmic order promulgated by the world religions currently dominating the 21st century. Additionally, we will consider how the "inhumanist" poetry of Californian poet Robinson Jeffers and the "biocentric" worldview of the Deep Ecology movement provide new perspectives that question the anthropocentric assumptions associated with many world religions.

It is the argument of this course that, although world religions and indigenous traditions alike have tended—with some exceptions—to regard animals in terms of their usefulness (whether material or ideational) to humans, nevertheless it should be possible to draw on the resources of these religious traditions—via a process I call "selective appropriation"—to create a theology that emphasizes the spiritual autonomy and intrinsic worth of animals. The environmental mindfulness fostered by such a theology would encourage humans to practice a contemplative way of being that minimizes harm to both animals and the earth.

Course learning objectives.

Santa Clara University's Core Curriculum guidelines list as follows the *goals* of RTC 3 courses: "Critical thinking; ethical reasoning; religious reflection; perspective."

The Core Curriculum guidelines list as follows the *Core Learning Objectives* for RTC 3 courses: --“Students will be able to identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions.”

--“Students will be able to evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.”

Learning objectives for this RTC (Religion, Theology, and Culture) level 3 course.

First, you will be able to *identify* the various perspectives on animals and the natural environment to be found in the scriptures, doctrines, and devotional literature of six major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Second, our study of the doctrines and teachings associated with these six religions will enable you to *evaluate*—and where you deem necessary, *challenge*—the ethical positions offered by these faiths with regard to contemporary questions concerning animals and the environment.

Third, our study of present-day thinkers who both value and question these faiths will help you to *apply insights* from these traditions to contemporary issues related to animals and the environment—eg, the question of animals’ spiritual autonomy and intrinsic worth, and the possibility of reconfiguring human-animal relations so as to replace paradigms of overlordship and dominion with what environmentalist thinker Father Thomas Berry calls “a communion of subjects.” The research project you undertake for this course will be instrumental in helping you *articulate and apply* such insights.

Course syllabus.

(Please note: readings are to be completed in time for the class under which they are listed. Be sure to bring to class the textbooks, photocopied material, and printouts of Camino articles that are assigned for the given day. **NB: No electronic devices—laptops, cellphones, tablets, etc.—are allowed in class.**)

1.) Tuesday, January 5.

Introduction to the course. Categories, terms, and methods of inquiry. A consideration of approaches in the handout sheet “Some definitions of religion”: Schmidt, Geertz, Tillich. The introduction of a question to be considered throughout the quarter: what would be the contours of a religion that integrates humankind with a theology of animals and the earth? **Discussion of ungraded writing exercise.**

Topics to be addressed in your ungraded writing exercise: a.) a statement in which you identify and briefly reflect on your own personal worldview, however you define this for yourself (whether in terms of denominational religious affiliation, unaffiliated spirituality, self-identification as an agnostic, skeptic, atheist, freethinker, etc.). Be sure to take into account the theories in our “definitions of religion” sheet. b.) Summarize and respond to the major arguments in John Macquarrie’s essay “How is Theology Possible?,” in his book *Studies in Christian Existentialism*. **(This text is available under “Files” in the online Camino site for our course. Print out this essay, read it, and bring it to class on Thursday.)** In your summary-response essay, briefly address the following questions: What distinctive approach

does Macquarrie take in defining the term ‘God’ in reply to his physicist-colleague’s question? What does M. identify as the ‘basic polarity of human existence’? How does he define ‘sin,’ ‘grace,’ and ‘God’? Explain his answer to the question ‘Does God exist?’ Which aspects of his presentation, if any, do you agree with, and with which do you take issue? Justify your answer. Give brief citations from the text in support of your answers, and indicate each citation’s page numbers in parentheses. (Suggestion: If you’re unfamiliar with the philosophy of existentialism, check a reference work [Wikipedia’s online article is useful] for a definition and quick introduction to the subject.)

Minimum length of assignment: 500 words/2 pages, typed, double-spaced. Suggested maximum length: 1,000 words/4 pages.

NB: This is an ungraded assignment. ***But failure to submit this assignment at the beginning of class this Thursday, January 7, will result in the lowering of your final grade for this course by at least one step (eg, from C to C-).*** Your final course grade will be lowered an additional step for each day late this assignment is submitted (eg, if your assignment is submitted on Friday, January 8, your final grade will be lowered two steps—eg, from C to D+). I will offer written comments on what you submit, and you will include a revised version of relevant portions of your writing exercise in your first graded summary-response essay (which is due next week).

2.) Thursday, January 7. UNGRADED WRITING EXERCISE DUE.

Definitions of religion (continued): existentialist perspectives on God, the sacred, and grace (with consideration of the extent to which such terms might apply to both human and non-human animals). Historical perspectives: for how long have hominids been religious?—What evidence does archaeology provide us for the history of religion and human-animal relations? Suggestions from paleolithic Europe and pharaonic Egypt. (Excerpts from Werner Herzog’s *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* and slides of the Egyptian *khepesh* ritual.)

Readings: Macquarrie, “How is Theology Possible?”, in *Studies in Christian Existentialism* (Camino). Read entire syllabus (to ensure you’re familiar with all of the course requirements).

Questions for discussion: See questions above from ‘ungraded writing exercise.’

3.) Tuesday, January 12.

The concept of intrinsic worth and the spiritual autonomy of animals. Do animals have a religion and a spiritual life of their own?: primatologist Jane Goodall examines the evidence. What Carl Jung learned when he encountered the baboons of the Nilotic sun-god. The language of ravens as the “gossip of gods”: scholar Eric Mortensen considers the possibilities. Snow-monkeys and *kecak*-dancers: the blurring of human-animal boundaries in religious activity as shown in the film *Baraka*.

Readings: From Waldau & Patton, *A Communion of Subjects* (henceforth *Communion*): Thomas Berry, “Prologue: Loneliness and Presence,” pp.5-10; Eric Mortensen, “Raven Augury from Tibet to Alaska,” 423-424 & 431 (beginning with “Let us return for a moment to the definition of divine agency...”)–432; Jane Goodall, “The Dance of Awe,” 651-656; Carl Jung, excerpt (attached to syllabus) from *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

Questions for discussion: The Catholic priest Thomas Berry inspired a generation of environmentalists with his writings (the title *A Communion of Subjects* is taken from his work). Try to construct a definition of religion that takes into account Thomas Berry’s notion of animal-

human relations and the importance of animals as well as of humans. Identify what he says about: communion; “pragmatic use”; subject/object distinctions; “mutual indwelling”; and animals as “ensouled beings.” Mortensen, “Raven Augury”: What does Mortensen mean by “divine agency”? What is meant by “augury”? “Divinatory messengers”: from the word “divination.” Check a dictionary for the meaning. What possibilities is Mortensen willing to consider concerning ravens and religion? Jung: This incident is from his travels in Uganda. Compare his experience with baboons with what Jane Goodall says about chimpanzees. What does their “dance of awe” suggest about a.) the origin of religion and b.) the nature of religious ritual?

4.) Thursday, January 14. FIRST SUMMARY-RESPONSE ESSAY DUE.

Do animals share with humans a religious dimension of existence?: a consideration of the evidence.

Readings: Donovan Schaefer, “Do Animals Have Religion?: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Religion and Embodiment” (pp.1-5, available on Camino; reminder: print out a copy and bring it to class.)

Questions for first summary-response essay: First, briefly identify the most important ideas in this essay and then respond to them and evaluate them **in light of the readings and other materials (eg, Macquarrie, Berry, Mortensen, etc.) that have been assigned and/or discussed so far this quarter**. What is your own response to the ideas presented by Schaefer in this essay? Take into account the following questions: What kind of linkage between humans & animals is suggested by this article? What is meant by ‘embodied affects’ in relation to animal-human ritual? Evaluate Barbara Smuts’s experience of the ‘baboon sangha’ and the “ ‘presence’ that emerges between bodies, even across species.” In your opinion, in light of what’s presented in Schaefer’s essay, do animals, in fact, have their own religion(s)? (Be sure to check a reference source for the meaning of **affective (adj.)/affect (noun)** [**NB: Don’t confuse these terms with either ‘effect’ or ‘affect’ (verb)!** *The Wikipedia article ‘Affect (psychology)’ is useful.*].)

5.) Tuesday, January 19. Optional student presentations: introduction to Hinduism.

Hinduism: caste, karma, atman, and reincarnation—their implications for human-animal relations. **Film: 330 Million Gods.**

Readings: Smith, *The World’s Religions*, 12-75 (chapter on Hinduism).

6.) Thursday, January 21.

Transmigration of souls: dignity or degradation for animals in the Hindu cosmos?

Readings: *Communion*: Lance Nelson, “Cows, Elephants, Dogs, and Other Lesser Embodiments of Atman: Reflections on Hindu Attitudes Toward Nonhuman Animals,” 179-193.

Questions for discussion: Summarize and evaluate the arguments in Nelson’s essay. Consider these questions: 1.) (p.181): Bhagavad Gita 5.18: “The wise see the same reality in a Brahmin, dog, and outcaste.” What doctrine is reflected here? How can this view be reconciled with concepts of caste-hierarchy and animal sacrifice? 2.) Given Hindu attitudes to atman, why is it that, according to Hindu tradition, only humans and not animals can attain moksha/moksa? What role does karma play in this anthropocentric view of salvation? 3.) How does caste contribute to the oppression of both animals and certain humans? 4.) What do the stories of the

elephant Gajendra and Yudhisthira's dog tell us about Hindu attitudes to animals, salvation, karma and samsara? In what sense are these stories "potentially antinomian"? (Check a dictionary for this word.) 5.) In your opinion, what aspects of Hinduism could be incorporated into a worldview that recognizes greater worth in animals? What is your overall evaluation of attitudes in the Hindu tradition to animals as reflected in the textual materials you've read so far?

7.) Tuesday, January 26. Optional student presentations: introduction to Buddhism.

Buddhism and Siddhartha's teachings as a reconfiguration of Hindu understandings of caste, atman, and moksha: their implications for animal-human relations. **Film: *Footprint of the Buddha*.**

Readings: Smith, 82-127 (chapter on Buddhism).

8.) Thursday, January 28.

Powerpoint/slide presentation: Borobudur and animal-human relations in the artwork of Indonesian pilgrimage sites.

The Theravada and Mahayana denominations within Buddhism: to what extent do their "rafts of salvation" offer refuge for animals? Animals as teachers and guides for humans: evidence from Southeast Asian Buddhist art at the pilgrimage site of Borobudur on the island of Java.

Readings: *Communion*: Ian Harris, "A Vast Unsupervised Recycling Plant: Animals and the Buddhist Cosmos," 207-217; Ivette Vargas, "Snake-Kings, Boars' Heads, Deer Parks, Monkey Talk: Animals as Transmitters and Transformers in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Narratives," 218-224 (read up to only the bottom of p.224).

Questions for discussion: Summarize and evaluate the arguments in the articles by Harris and Vargas. Consider these questions: Harris, "A Vast Unsupervised Recycling Plant...": 1.) What attitudes to animals does Buddhism share in common with Hinduism? 2.) On p.209 Harris links Buddhist views of animals with Thomas Berry's concept of a "communion of subjects." Do you think this linkage is valid, or is Berry's notion significantly different? Why or why not? 3.) p.211: What does the practice of "animal and bird release, as a merit-making exercise," tell us about Buddhist attitudes to animals and humans and their relative importance? In what various ways can *metta* be used to relate to animals? 4.) p.213: "Instrumentality": a view of something or someone that is determined by how useful (or instrumental) the given thing or person is to the viewer. Keeping in mind Harris's reference to instrumentality, to what extent, in your opinion, does Buddhism show concern for animals? 5.) Harris argues that Buddhism "is not, in essence, an ecological religion." Do you agree? Why or why not? In what ways might Buddhists today engage in what I call "selective appropriation" in order to construct a more ecologically minded religion for the 21st century? Ivette Vargas, "Snake-Kings...": 6.) What do the animal images associated with the "wheel of samsara" and the "wheel of dharma" suggest about animals' status in Buddhism as "metaphors" or as "active agents"? How does the Bodhisattva/peacock poem on p.221 illustrate traditional Buddhism's "metaphoric" view of animals? 7.) Describe *nagas* and their powers. What do stories about Buddhas and *nagas* tell us about Buddhist attitudes to, and ambivalence toward, the natural environment and the animal world?

Friday, January 29: Last day to drop classes without a W!

9.) Tuesday, February 2.

Controversies over Buddhism as a world-hating or world-embracing tradition: the evidence from Naga/serpent-king mythology and the Jataka Tales.

Readings: Camino: *Jataka Tales*, “The Bodhisattva and the Hungry Tigress,” “The Bodhisattva as the Preacher of Patience,” “The Past Lives of Gotama Buddha,” and “Passage Denied: The Naga Who Tried to Become a Monk.”

Questions for discussion: The *Jataka Tales* are ancient stories that reflect traditional popular piety in Mahayana Buddhism. Make use of our four assigned *Jatakas* (with brief citations from the tales, where appropriate, to support your arguments) in answering the following questions: 1.) Which aspects of Buddhism are emphasized (or neglected) in these *Jatakas* in comparison with Buddhism as presented in Smith (*The World’s Religions*) and the film *Footprint of the Buddha*? 2.) What attitude do these *Jatakas* take toward the physical world, the environment, and human life? 3.) What attitude do these tales suggest with regard to animals and animal-human relations? Link your replies with the essays by Harris and Vargas.

10.) Thursday, February 4. SECOND SUMMARY-RESPONSE ESSAY DUE.

Powerpoint/slide presentation: The role of animals in Hindu and Buddhist art.

New understandings of nirvana in relation to personal and collective salvation: “Engaged Buddhism” and recent attempts to reorient the faith from renunciation to involvement with environmental issues.

Readings: Thich Nhat Hanh: *Our Appointment with Life: Sutra on Knowing the Better Way to Live Alone/Discourse on Living Happily in the Present Moment*, 9-62 (pagination in the new edition).

Questions for second summary-response essay: Nhat Hanh is one of the founders of the reform movement known as “engaged Buddhism.” 1.) Compare the traditional Buddhism of the *Jatakas* with Nhat Hanh’s teachings in *Appointment*. Cite relevant passages from our Buddhist stories (‘Hungry Tigress,’ ‘Preacher of Patience,’ ‘Past Lives,’ and ‘The Naga Who Tried to Become a Monk’) and from the essays by Ian Harris and Ivette Vargas in support of your arguments. Take into account the discussion questions above from class #9 in answering this part of your essay. 2.) How does Nhat Hanh link Buddhist doctrines—especially *anatman/anatta* and mindfulness/living in the present moment—with environmental activism? How does he (implicitly or explicitly) reorient traditional Buddhist notions of salvation? 3.) Speculate on the teachings illustrated by the drawing on the cover of the older edition of *Appointment* (see our Camino file if you have the newer edition) in terms of animals, the environment, and religion.

11.) Tuesday, February 9. Optional student presentations: introduction to Jainism.

Powerpoint/slide presentation: Animals in Jain art.

The Jain tradition in South Asia: the doctrine of *ahimsa* (radical nonviolence) and its implications for human understandings of animals and the environment.

Readings: Ninian Smart, “The Jain Tradition,” in *Religions of Asia*, 81-90 (Camino); *Communion*: Christopher Chapple, “Inherent Value without Nostalgia: Animals and the Jaina Tradition,” 241-249.

Questions for discussion: Chapple, “Inherent Value...”: 1.) What do the stories about a.) cobras; b.) lions; and c.) King Yasodhara suggest about Jain attitudes to animals? 2.) To what extent are these attitudes similar to or different from what you have encountered in Hinduism and Buddhism? 3.) Do you see anything morally problematic about the Jain “animal hospitals” as described by Chapple in relation to karma? Discuss. 4.) To what extent, in your opinion, does Jainism recognize animals’ spiritual autonomy (as opposed to, say, their metaphoric/symbolic worth)?

12.) Thursday, February 11. *Research Paper Prospectus Due.*

Powerpoint/slide presentation: Animals & the environment as themes in Jain pilgrimage art.

Lessons to be drawn from greedy crows and elephant corpses: evidence from ancient devotional stories for tensions between ideals and realities in Jain attitudes to the world.

Readings: (all on Camino) Hemacandra, *Lives of the Jain Elders*: “The Story of the Man and the Honey-Drops,” 52-54; “The Story of the Crow,” 65-66; “The Story of the Pair of Monkeys,” 66-68; “The Story of the Charcoal Burner,” 68-69; Pravin Shah, *Jainism: Religion of Compassion and Ecology*, 7-13, 21-26, 35-37; Sadhvi Shilapi, “The Environmental and Ecological Teachings of Tirthankara Mahavira,” 159-168.

Questions for discussion: Hemacandra, *Lives of the Jain Elders*: These stories reflect traditional Jain popular piety. 1.) “The Man and the Honey-Drops”: What sort of audience do you think might have been targeted by such tales? Why are the teachings presented in the form of stories (instead of, say, commandments or doctrinal statements)? Compare the raft image in Jainism with the use of the same image in Buddhism (cf. H. Smith’s chapter on Buddhism). 2.) “The Story of the Crow”: The story’s narrator is the ascetic Jambu, who tells the tale to his wives as he tries to resist their attractions. How would you characterize the tone, language, and incidents described in this story? What theme is presented by this story, and what effect do you think this story was intended to accomplish? What was your own response to this story? What views of women, animals, and human life emerge from such a tale? Does this story remind you of any Buddhist Jatakas we’ve read? Discuss. 3.) “The Pair of Monkeys”: What do animals and humans share in common with regard to choice, karma, and samsara? 4.) “The Charcoal Burner”: What does this tale suggest about the worth of our physical world? 5.) Shilapi, “Environmental and Ecological Teachings...”: In what ways does Shilapi modify traditional Jainism? How does she reinterpret renunciation, and what traditional notion of Jainism does she refute? Compare her approach with that of Thich Nhat Hanh. 6.) Shah, *Jainism: Religion of Compassion...*: This text, published by an American Jain organization, is a recent attempt to update Jainism for young American Jains. Compare the 21st-century approaches of Shah and Shilapi with Hemacandra’s ancient stories, noting differences (and similarities, if any) with regard to values, teachings, tone, and style.

13.) Tuesday, February 16.

Optional student presentations: introduction to animist/indigenous/primal traditions (cf. Huston Smith’s chapter on “The Primal Religions” in *The World’s Religions*).

Film: *The Way of the Ancestors* (“Long Search” Series).

Animals and the environment from the perspective of indigenous religions. The “Deep Ecology” movement and radical spiritual alternatives to the expansion of human dominion over the earth.

Readings: *Communion*: Kimberley Patton, “Caught with Ourselves in the Net of Life and Time: Traditional Views of Animals in Religion,” 27-39; John Grim, “Knowing and Being Known by Animals: Indigenous Perspectives on Personhood,” 373-top of 381; Camino: Zimmerman/Atkisson, “Introduction to Deep Ecology” (from the journal *In Context: A Quarterly of Humane Sustainable Culture*).

Questions for discussion: 1.) Patton, “Caught with Ourselves...”: p.30: “Animals and human thought belong together, for the latter seems to require the former.” According to Patton, how does human thought about animals help us make sense of our world? 2.) She refers repeatedly, on Pp.32 and 36, to animals’ (especially wild animals’) spiritual “autonomy.” What is meant by this term? 3.) Why is this autonomy of animals so attractive to humans and important in human religious activity? (Keep in mind the legend on p.32 of how a shaman acquired his spirit-name “Squirrel.”) 4.) How might Robinson Jeffers respond to this notion of animals’ autonomy and their existence as “other nations” (Patton, p.32)? 5.) Grim, “Knowing and Being Known by Animals”: Grim uses the word “relational *epistemé*” (pp.375-376) as a way of referring to an *epistemé* (system of knowing/system of knowledge) among indigenous people that differs significantly from epistemologies among modern industrialized societies with regard to animals. According to Grim, what characterizes indigenous *epistemé*, and how is it inculcated and acquired? (Hint: take into account what he says about “mold[ing] human bodies” (pp.374, 377) and “somatic, sensual training” (p.374). Note, too, that on p.380 Grim describes this relationality as an “achievement”—which implies we have to work at this.) 6.) What is meant by the term “numinous world” (p.375) in the American Indian Black Elk’s vision? Relate the notion of shamanistic “wounding” to the process whereby the shaman referred to on p.32 earned the spirit-name “Squirrel.” 7.) In defining indigenous religion, how does Grim differentiate it from other faiths? (NB: “immanent”: inherent in/dwelling in a landscape {as opposed to “transcendent”}). 8.) Is Deep Ecology identical in its attitudes to animals and the environment with the attitudes espoused by the indigenous traditions and traditional worldviews described by Patton and Grim? Why or why not? 9.) “Introduction to Deep Ecology”: What critique is offered here of modernity and “personal salvation,” and what concepts are offered in their place?

14.) Thursday, February 18. THIRD SUMMARY-RESPONSE ESSAY DUE.

The “inhumanist” poetry of Robinson Jeffers: possibilities for a nonanthropocentric/biocentric spirituality?

Readings: Robinson Jeffers, *Selected Poems*: “Night,” “Shine, Perishing Republic,” “Tor House,” “Hurt Hawks,” “Rock and Hawk,” “Love the Wild Swan,” “Return,” “The Purse-Seine,” “The Excesses of God,” “Advice to Pilgrims,” “Calm and Full the Ocean,” “The Old Stonemason,” “The Beauty of Things,” “Animals,” “De Rerum Virtute,” “Birds and Fishes.”

Questions for Third Summary-Response Essay: Jeffers, the son of a Protestant minister, lived much of his life roaming the Monterey coast, studying nature, and composing poetry in a stone tower and home (“Tor House”) he built himself on the Carmel shore, within sight of the Pacific Ocean. Use brief quotations from his poems to support your arguments in answering the following questions: 1.) Keeping in mind the notion of spiritual autonomy (the idea that beings have worth in and of themselves, and not simply instrumentally—that is, in relation to their usefulness to other species), compare Jeffers’s view of animals and the environment with what we have encountered in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, indigenous traditions, and “Deep Ecology.” 2.) What is your own response to his poetry? 3.) In your opinion, to what extent is

Jeffers successful in constructing an “inhumanist” (nonanthropocentric/biocentric) spirituality, and what insights does his inhumanism offer with regard to animal spirituality, animal-human relations, and environmentalism? 4.) What view of human civilization, God, and traditional religion is suggested by his poems? Do his poems offer the raw material for a different kind of religion? Discuss.

NB: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19: LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES!

15.) Tuesday, February 23. *Optional student presentations: introduction to Judaism.*

An introduction to Judaism and the concept of “Abrahamic traditions.”

Readings: Bible, Genesis, chapters 1-11; Exodus, chapters 1-15; Huston Smith, 282-307 (part of the chapter on Judaism); *Communion*: Dan Cohn-Sherbok, “Hope for the Animal Kingdom: A Jewish Vision,” 81-90.

Questions for Discussion: What do these readings tell us about divine-human relations in terms of “covenant,” history (note the significance of the lives of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and the events of the Passover and Exodus), and prophethood (note also the book of Exodus 15.20-21)? Compare the Abrahamic doctrine of monotheism with the concepts of divinity and godhood in the karmic and indigenous traditions (while noting also the role of the “pillar of cloud” and the “pillar of fire” in the Biblical account of the Exodus). Analyze the notion of “revelation” with regard to Judaism and the Abrahamic faiths (giving special attention to the terms “scripture” and “Torah”). Where might we locate the concept of revelation in the other traditions we’ve studied so far this quarter? What is distinctive about animals in relation to humans and God as presented in Jewish scripture? What does Cohn-Sherbok emphasize with regard to human-animal relations in his interpretation of Judaism for the 21st century?

16.) Thursday, February 25. *Optional student presentations: introduction to Christianity.*

An introduction to Christianity. “Let them have dominion over . . . all the wild animals of the earth”: challenges and opportunities in appraising the Biblical legacy with regard to humankind’s stewardship of the environment.

Readings: Bible, (New Testament) Gospel of Mark, chapters 1-16; Gospel of John, chapter 20.1-31 (Christ’s resurrection and the “Doubting Thomas” episode); Smith, 317-346 (chapter on Christianity); *Communion*: Jay McDaniel, “Practicing the Presence of God: A Christian Approach to Animals,” 132-145; from the Bible: *Genesis* chapters 1-4 (Creation & Fall; cf. Gen. 1.20-28, in *Communion*, p.38, n.27); from the Bible: *Book of Revelation* 12.7-12 (Satan’s rebellion and the “fall of the angels”); Michael Lloyd, “Are Animals Fallen?”, pp.147-160 (Camino). Check a reference work (such as Britannica’s online encyclopedia) for “Gnosticism”; Process Theology/Process Theodicy (cf. Alfred North Whitehead).

Questions for discussion: 1.) In your opinion, is it possible to reconcile Deep Ecology and its principles with monotheistic faiths such as Judaism and Christianity or karmic religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism? Why or why not? 2.) McDaniel: “Practicing the Presence of God”: How does he Christianize the concepts of environmentalism and animals’ spiritual autonomy? That is, what doctrines from Christianity does he reinterpret and apply to animals and the environment? (Discuss, eg, what is meant by “sacramental presences” on p.138). 3.) How does McDaniel’s notion of prayer link Christian concepts of God as Creator and Spirit with: a.) the concept of animals’ spiritual autonomy as found in Jeffers’s poems and b.) Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of mindfulness/living in the present moment? (Hint: keep in mind the notion of “sacraments”.) 4.) How does Lloyd explain what is called “evil natural law” among

animals? What is your own assessment of his explanation? Are his claims sensible? Appealing? Repugnant? (Take into account the Biblical account of Creation and the “Fall of the angels” to which Lloyd refers.) 5.) What are the Christological implications of the “Doubting Thomas” episode and the lingering and still-visible marks of the Crucifixion in the body of the post-Resurrection Christ?

17.) Tuesday, March 1.

The divine pathos: Christian use of the Jewish concept of the shekinah (also spelled “sheckhina”) and God’s shared exile with His people as a way to suggest God’s ongoing participatory suffering and involvement with humankind. Implications of this concept for a Christian environmentalism.

Readings: Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 3-61; Camino: Jürgen Moltmann, “The Crucified God,” 1-11; Camino: Sallie McFague, “An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity Have It?,” 29-43.

Questions for discussion: 1.) Moltmann, “The Crucified God”: What role does the reality of Auschwitz and the Holocaust play in Moltmann’s theology? (NB: *Sch’ma Israel*: this is one of the most important prayers in Judaism: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy God, the Lord is one”; cf. the Biblical book of Deuteronomy 6.4). 2.) What does Moltmann mean by the concept of an “apathetic God,” and why does he reject this theology? 3.) What alternative theology is offered by the Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel (note the importance of *sheckhina*—“dwelling”/the divine presence among people in this world), and how does Moltmann combine Heschel’s Jewish theology with the Crucifixion of Christ? 4.) Sallie McFague, “An Ecological Christology...”: What is meant by the concept of life as “cruciform” and “the cruciform reality of Christian life”? 5.) How does McFague apply Moltmann’s notion of “the crucified God” to environmentalism? 6.) How does Linzey expand Moltmann’s theological argument?

18.) Thursday, March 3. FOURTH SUMMARY-RESPONSE ESSAY DUE.

Environmentalist implications of kenotic theology. Christ crucified, God wounded: divine suffering as a continuous and enduring act of solidarity with a ravaged earth and all its inhabitants.

Readings: *Letter to the Philippians* 2.1-11; Camino: “Kenosis: Christian Texts—Bible, Dupuis, Taylor, pp.1-3; “Kenosis: Von Balthasar/Lamb of God,” pp.1-5; Mark Wallace, “The Wounded Spirit as the Basis for Hope in an Age of Radical Ecology,” 51-72; Jay B. McDaniel, “Can Animal Suffering Be Reconciled with Belief in an All-Loving God?,” pp.161-170 (Camino).

Questions for Fourth Summary-Response Essay: The New Testament’s *Letter to the Philippians* contains the key Biblical passage that forms the basis of kenotic theology: “He [the second Person of the Trinity] emptied himself” (the adjective kenotic comes from the Greek word *kenosis*: “emptying”). Bear in mind this theology of *kenosis* (God voluntarily “emptying” Himself of various forms of divine power) as you read Wallace, von Balthasar, Dupuis, Taylor, and the other texts assigned for this essay. Wallace, “The Wounded Spirit...”: 1.) What is meant by “the wounded Spirit,” and how does this concept reflect or modify Moltmann’s theology of “the crucified God” and McFague’s concept of “the cruciform reality of Christian life”? 2.) Compare Wallace’s “wounded Spirit” with Robinson Jeffers’s “wild god of the world” (from

Jeffers's poem "Hurt Hawks"). How do they differ? Do they share any similarities? Comment on this in the light of animal-human relations and environmentalism. 3.) McDaniel: What is the implication of the word "tragedy" (as used by McDaniel, p.163) to describe the situation of animals in the natural order? How does McDaniel make use of process theology, and what conception of God does he emphasize to address the issue of animal suffering? What is particularly Christian in his approach, and how does he differ from Lloyd ("Are Animals Fallen?")? 4.) Discuss von Balthasar and Adrienne von Speyr's kenotic Christology (giving attention especially to the reality of Christ's suffering and von Balthasar's focus on Jesus as the Lamb of God "that was slain from the foundation of the world" [cf. Rev. 5.1-6.11 & 13.8]) and the potential of this kenotic Christology for addressing the reality of the suffering of both animals and humans. Take into account here the implications of Linzey's insistence on "a fully incarnational theology in which God actually does what is claimed" (*Animal Theology*, p.50) and the Christology implicit in the Gospel of John 20.1-31.

19.) Tuesday, March 8. Optional student presentations: introduction to Islam.

The concept of environmental stewardship in Islam: evidence from the Qur'an. The historical background: human-animal relations in the Jahiliyah (the religion and society of pre-Islamic Arabia).

Readings: Smith, 221-266 (chapter on Islam); *Communion*: Richard Foltz, "'This She-Camel of God is a Sign to You': Dimensions of Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Culture," 149-159; Camino: Qur'an, selected verses (including verses describing Allah as *al-Ghani*); Camino: Farid al-Din Attar, "The Legend of Ibrahim ibn Adham (from *Muslim Saints and Mystics*) and "A Hermit Questions the Ocean" (from *The Conference of the Birds*); Jahiliyah poetry on human-animal relations (Camino).

Questions for discussion: 1.) What evidence does Jahiliyah poetry provide for views of animals in Jahiliyah (pre-Islamic) Arabia? 2.) Foltz, "This She-Camel of God...": Compare traditional Islamic attitudes to animals with attitudes found in other religious traditions and worldviews we have studied this quarter. 3.) Qur'an verses: compare the Qur'an's description of Allah as *al-Ghani* ("the One who is free of all needs") with Christian Trinitarian/kenotic views of "the crucified God" and "the wounded Spirit," as found in Von Balthasar, Moltmann, Wallace, McFague, etc.

20.) Thursday, March 10. RESEARCH PAPER DUE.

Environmentalism and Islam (cont'd). Concluding discussion: a comparison of Abrahamic, karmic, indigenous, and "inhumanist" traditions with regard to human/non-human relations and the spiritual autonomy of animals.

No new readings.

Required textbooks (available for purchase in the campus bookstore).

- 1.) Robinson Jeffers. *Selected Poems*. Vintage.
- 2.) Andrew Linzey. *Animal Theology*. University of Illinois Press.
- 3.) Thich Nhat Hanh. *Our Appointment with Life: Discourse on Living Happily in the Present Moment*. Parallax Press.
- 4.) Huston Smith. *The World's Religions*. Harper San Francisco.
- 5.) Paul Waldau & Kimberley Patton, eds. *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics*. Columbia University Press.

Camino readings (in process: throughout the quarter, check the "Files" section of this course's online Camino page for newly added texts).

Jataka Tales. "The Bodhisattva and the Hungry Tigress." "The Bodhisattva as the Preacher of Patience." "The Past Lives of Gotama Buddha." "Passage Denied: The *Naga* Who Tried to Become a Monk."

Ninian Smart. "The Jain Tradition," in *Religions of Asia*, 81-90.

Hemacandra. *Lives of the Jain Elders*: "The Story of the Man and the Honey-Drops." "The Story of the Crow." "The Story of the Pair of Monkeys." "The Story of the Charcoal-Burner." Sadhvi Shilapi. "The Environmental and Ecological Teachings of Tirthankara Mahavira," 159-168.

Michael Lloyd. "Are Animals Fallen?," in *Animals on the Agenda*, edited by Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 147-160.

Sallie McFague. "An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity Have It?," 29-43.

Mark Wallace. "The Wounded Spirit as the Basis for Hope in an Age of Radical Ecology," 51-72.

Jay B. McDaniel. "Can Animal Suffering Be Reconciled With Belief in an All-Loving God?," in *Animals on the Agenda*, edited by Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 161-170.

Carl Jung. Excerpt from *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. (photocopy handout)

Pravin Shah. *Jainism: Religion of Compassion and Ecology*. (photocopy handout)

Zimmerman/Atkisson. "Introduction to Deep Ecology" (available online).

Jürgen Moltmann. "The Crucified God," 1-11 (available online).

Bible. *Genesis* 1-4; *Letter to the Philippians* 2.1-11; *Book of Revelation* 12.7-12 (available online).

Qur'an. Selected verses.

Farid ud-Din Attar. *Conference of the Birds*, selections.

Course requirements and grading.

(NB: Course requirements include an ungraded writing assignment (described above) which, if not submitted on time, will adversely affect the final grade.)

The final grade will be assigned on the following basis:

4 summary-response/reflection essays, each worth 15%.	Total: 60%
Research paper.	20%
Class participation.	20%

(NB: Class participation entails daily contributions to classroom discussions in which you demonstrate that you've carefully read and prepared the assigned texts for the day and can draw on the thoughtful notes you've written in response to our daily assigned readings. Additionally,

you have the option of giving a brief [10-minute] oral presentation [accompanied by a typewritten handout, one copy for each of your colleagues and for me] in which you lead the class in examining a specific topic as indicated above in the syllabus.)

Summary-response/reflection essays.

Each page of every essay should have a header that includes your name, the title of the essay, and the page number.

NB: Online/electronic submissions are NOT accepted. You are to submit a paper copy of each assignment to me in person.

For each essay assignment, you are to *summarize* what you identify as the principal ideas presented in all of the readings for the given class and then make an informed *response* to these ideas. Your essay will demonstrate your thoughtful *reflection* on what the assigned readings offer in the way of insights on religion, animals, and the environment.

NB: You are required to answer all the questions in the syllabus under each essay assignment. These questions are meant to guide you through the readings, help you become alert to the issues raised in these texts, and stimulate personal and critical responses to the readings. You are also required to take into account prior readings from the syllabus that are relevant to the assigned questions.

I am especially interested in *your own personal response* to, and *informed evaluation* of, the issues addressed by our readings. Thus you are urged to include your own insights and opinions and incorporate them into your responses to the assigned questions.

Your response is to be subjective, informed, and comparative. That is, you will bring to bear your own opinionated viewpoint: what you write will express your creative and personal response to the material (feel free to use the first person: criticize, condemn, praise, and render judgment). But your judgments will be analytical and informed: ie, you will demonstrate your close acquaintance with and careful reading of the assigned material.

Your essays will also be *comparative*: your evaluations of the assigned material will show how scriptures, doctrines, folktales, myths, etc. from one religious tradition may offer fresh perspectives for assessing another. Your essays will also be comparative in that you will assess the value of a given author's assertions in light of other assigned texts you will have read up to that point in the quarter.

Suggested length of each summary-response essay: 5 to 6 pages (you may exceed this length if necessary, but bear in mind that added length doesn't necessarily generate an enhanced grade).

NB: Since these assignments are designed to equip you to participate in classroom discussions, it is vital that you submit each essay on time (that is, at the beginning of class on the due date).

Print out 2 copies of each essay, one to be placed on my desk at the beginning of class, the other to be used by you for your reference in our discussions.

Each essay is to be typed, double-spaced, and is to include brief paginated citations of the texts used in support of each of your arguments.

Please note: each paper must be handed in on time, at the beginning of class on the day it is due. I will lower the grade for your essay by at least one step (eg, C becomes C-) if you fail to submit your essay at the beginning of class on the due date. I will lower the grade by at least two steps (eg, C becomes D+) for papers submitted the day after they are due. The grade given for a particular essay will be lowered an additional step for each further day late the paper is submitted. Lateness penalties also accrue over weekends; thus the grade for a paper due on a Thursday that is submitted the following Tuesday will be lowered six steps (eg, B becomes D). *The same lateness penalties also apply to your research paper.*

Please note: *Thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and intellectual creativity* are the prime criteria I consider in grading your essays.

NB: If you want an extension on an assignment for medical reasons, you must bring me a signed note from a physician.

Research paper. This is to be 10 pages in length (you may exceed this length if necessary, but see the caveat above on lengthy papers), typed, double-spaced, with footnotes and bibliography. The research paper will entail your analysis and creative investigation of a topic related to contemporary issues involving religion, animals, and the environment. Your paper must include a *comparative* dimension: ie, **you are to include comparisons of your chosen topic with texts from our syllabus readings involving at least three of the religious traditions we study this quarter.**

The initial paragraphs of your research paper must include a **thesis statement** that clearly indicates: a.) the precise topic you're investigating; b.) the research method you're using (eg, textual analysis, personal interviews, visits to local places of worship, etc.); and c.) the argument of your paper: ie, what you plan to demonstrate or prove via your investigation.

I will be happy to meet with you throughout the quarter to critique rough drafts and outlines as you work on your research project. If my office hours don't fit your schedule, simply let me know, and you and I will find a time to meet that's mutually convenient.

Each page of your research paper should have a header that includes your name, the title of the essay, and the page number.

NB: Online/electronic submissions are NOT accepted. You are to submit a paper copy of the completed research paper to me in person on the due date.

By **Thursday, February 11**, you are to submit to me a typed one-page prospectus that briefly identifies the topic of your research project and the texts on which you will focus.

The completed research paper is due **Thursday, March 10**. Please note that this paper is to be submitted to me on time. Lateness penalties apply, per the notice above concerning the summary-response/reflection essays.

Examples of research projects:

A.) Analysis of Anne Rudloe’s book *Butterflies on a Sea Wind: Beginning Zen* (Rudloe is a marine biologist who applies her studies in Zen Buddhism to her work with animals and the environment). Your analysis of Rudloe’s book should include comparisons with the readings from our syllabus in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.

B.) Analysis of contemporary views of the relation between religion and issues linked to animals and the environment, as perceived by members of a selected Bay Area faith community (linked to one of the religions we study this quarter). This will be based on your field trips to a local temple, mosque, or church, and your interviews with members of that community. Your analysis will include fieldwork (which may also entail witnessing temple rituals and being given a tour of the site, as well as interviews with religious authorities and laypeople) and comparisons of your field data with the views expressed in our syllabus readings from the Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions. Your comparisons should also bring in aspects of the indigenous and Abrahamic faiths we study this quarter.

C.) An analysis of Robinson Jeffers’s nature poetry and “inhumanist” thought, which will constitute a significant elaboration and development of the Jeffers material assigned in the syllabus. Such a project will entail: further readings in Jeffers, to include additional poems beyond those in the syllabus as well as his prose—letters, essays, speeches, etc. (A good starting point is Albert Gelpi, ed., *The Wild God of the World: An Anthology of Robinson Jeffers*, Stanford University Press, 2003); and a visit to Tor House (Jeffers’s onetime residence in Carmel), together with a guided tour of the site and, if possible, interviews with members of the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation. Some members of the Tor House Foundation have published poems inspired by Jeffers’s vision (volumes of such poetry are on sale at Tor House). You may try your hand at such creations if you wish and append your own poem as part of your project. As with the other projects, your analysis should include a comparison of Jeffers’s work with syllabus texts from at least three of the traditions studied this quarter (eg, Mark Wallace’s “Wounded Spirit” essay and Eric Mortensen’s essay on Central Asian raven augury).

D.) A work of creative fiction or poetry. You have the option of writing a short story, myth or poem that addresses the themes explored in this course. Appended to your story/poem should be a detailed discussion of the sources on which you drew (including at least three texts from our syllabus) for inspiration and how you made use of these sources.

E.) A paper based on your own close and sustained observations of wildlife here in the Bay Area (eg, the sandhill cranes in the vicinity of Lodi, whales in Monterey Bay, animals in Elkhorn Slough, etc.). Your paper should include both your own reflections on the creatures you observe in the light of our religious readings and discussions throughout this quarter, as well as imaginative attempts to describe and discuss the animals you observe and their behavior as seen through the lens of at least three different religious traditions we’ve studied this quarter (be sure to cite relevant texts, such as Schaefer’s essay “Do Animals Have Religion?”). Give consideration to the environmental context of your encounter(s) with attention to human-animal relations in the setting you’ve chosen.

With regard to issues of participation and grading, please note the following:

Frequent **absence** from class will hurt your participation grade for the quarter. **“Frequent” here means more than one unexcused absence during the quarter. After the first unexcused absence, your final grade for the course will be lowered one step (eg, C becomes C-) for each unexcused absence.**

Of course illness or personal circumstances might arise that necessitate your absence; if this occurs please contact me at once so that we can discuss your situation. **(NB: A note from the Cowell Student Health Center does NOT automatically excuse your absence.)**

You should never be absent without notifying me. If you know in advance you must be away, please notify me of this. If you suddenly and unexpectedly miss class for any reason, you must contact me immediately (via email, voice-mail, or a visit to my office) to explain why you missed class. This won't excuse your absence but it will let me know you take your responsibilities seriously and plan to continue in our course. This is a courtesy to me; and I value courtesy.

NB: Whenever you email me, be sure to include the following in the subject line: **your name; our course title; topic of email.** Thus, eg: Johanna Anthrozoos/RSOC 140/request for meeting.

NB: Electronic devices of any kind (laptops, tablets, smart phones/cell phones, pagers, etc.) may not be used during our class time. Please be sure all such devices are turned off and out of sight. Students using such devices in class will be considered absent for that day and penalized accordingly. (See above under “absence.”) This means you will need to bring pens/pencils and a paper-notebook with you to class for note-taking. Students with special needs should furnish me the requisite permission forms from the Disabilities Resources Office.

Attendance. Please note also that I take attendance at the beginning of each class. I consider you late if you arrive after I finish taking attendance. Frequent lateness will affect your participation grade adversely. “Frequent” here means more than three instances of lateness during the quarter. After the third instance of lateness, your participation grade will be lowered one step (eg, C becomes C-) for each instance of lateness. If you arrive late for any class, please let me know at the end of the period that you are here so I can note your tardy presence (as you can see from the above, absence is penalized more heavily than tardiness). Note also that if you arrive more than twenty minutes late to class, you will be marked as absent for that day. Early departure from class (especially without notifying me first) may also cause you to be marked as absent.

A note on participation and reading. To be able to participate in classroom discussions, you need to remember clearly the content and significance of the assigned readings. This can be challenging, especially given the large number of primary and secondary sources assigned for this quarter.

Worth emphasizing here: Class **participation** is an important part of this course. Thus you should make your best effort to attend class regularly and participate actively in classroom

discussions. The assigned readings are to be completed before the class for which they are due. Reading each assignment in advance is essential to your informed and thoughtful participation. **This is an important point to emphasize: your presence in class will contribute to your participation grade only if you prepare in advance and then actively contribute to classroom discussions.**

Preparing in advance entails ***not only carefully reading the assigned texts but also taking notes on the material***: indicate what you agree or disagree with, what you don't understand, what moves you or puzzles or disgusts you. All such notes will be vital for the intellectual grappling with the subject matter that takes place during classroom discussions. **Bring these notes to class along with the texts assigned for that day.** This will equip you to enjoy (rather than merely suffer through) each day's discussion.

NB: Come to class each day prepared to discuss the numbered questions in the syllabus linked to the given day's readings.

Writing assignments and academic honesty. It is your responsibility to ensure that work you submit as your own is in fact your own, and that you acknowledge properly any sources from which you take ideas and phrasing. I comply with University policies regarding plagiarism and academic honesty (consult the discussion entitled "Academic Integrity" in the Undergraduate Bulletin). Should you need clarification concerning this issue, please consult me before submitting your essay.

This is my response when a student engages in plagiarism: the student receives an F for the plagiarized assignment. The student also receives an F for the course and is expelled from my course. Additionally, I send a report of the student's plagiarism to Santa Clara University's Office of Student Life and I consult with the Dean of Student Life concerning the possibility of further disciplinary action.

In **grading** your work this quarter I use the following criteria:

F: unacceptable. With regard to essay assignments, this is the only grade for which I permit a rewrite. The highest grade I will award a rewrite, however, is D.

D: acceptable, even if unsatisfactory.

C: adequate; satisfactory.

B: good; impressive work.

A: outstanding. Indicates work that excels in meeting the standards of thoroughness, creativity, and sustained and thoughtful engagement with the assigned subject matter.

Additionally, please note the following **grade scale**:

A = 96-100%

A- = 90-95%

B+ = 86-89%

B = 80-85%

B- = 76-79%

C+ = 70-75%

C = 66-69%

C- = 60-65%
D+ = 56-59%
D = 50-55%
D- = 46-49%
F = 45 or less

Disability accommodation policy: If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, www.scu.edu/disabilities, as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please initiate a conversation with me about your accommodations during my office hours within the first two weeks of class. Students who are pregnant and parenting may also be eligible for accommodations. Accommodations will only be provided after I have verification of your accommodations as approved by Disabilities Resources, and with sufficient lead time for me to arrange testing or other accommodations. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at [408-554-4109](tel:408-554-4109).

An excerpt from the psychologist CARL JUNG's autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (published in 1961), describing his travel experiences in Uganda:

It was a profoundly stirring experience for me to find, at the sources of the Nile, this reminder of the ancient Egyptian conception of the two acolytes of Osiris [the pharaonic vegetation god and lord of the underworld], Horus [the falcon god associated with sunrise and daylight] and Set [the desert god associated with dust storms, darkness, and violence]. Here, evidently, was a primordial African experience that had flowed down to the coasts of the Mediterranean along with the sacred waters of the Nile:...the rising sun, the principle of light like Horus;[and]...the principle of darkness, the breeder of fear.

The important thing...is the moment when, with the typical suddenness of the tropics, the first ray of light shoots forth like an arrow and night passes into life-filled light. The sunrise in these latitudes was a phenomenon that overwhelmed me anew every day...I formed the habit of taking my camp stool and sitting under an umbrella acacia just before dawn. Before me, at the bottom of the little valley, lay a dark, almost black-green strip of jungle, with the rim of the plateau on the opposite side of the valley towering above it.

At first, the contrasts between light and darkness would be extremely sharp. Then objects would assume contour and emerge into the light which seemed to fill the valley with a compact brightness. The horizon above became radiantly white. Gradually the swelling light seemed to penetrate into the very structure of objects, which became illuminated from within until at last they shone translucently, like bits of colored glass.

Everything turned to flaming crystal. The cry of the bell bird rang around the horizon. At such moments I felt as if I were inside a temple. It was the most sacred hour of the day. I drank in this glory with insatiable delight, or rather, in a timeless ecstasy.

Near my observation point was a high cliff inhabited by big baboons. Every morning they sat quietly, almost motionless, on the ridge of the cliff facing the sun, whereas throughout the rest of the day they ranged noisily through the forest, screeching and chattering. Like me, they seemed to be waiting for the sunrise. They reminded me of the great baboons of the temple of Abu Simbel in Egypt, which perform the gesture of adoration. They tell the same story: for untold ages men have worshiped the great god who redeems the world by rising out of the darkness as a radiant light in the heavens.

At that time I understood that within the soul from its primordial beginnings there has been a desire for light and an irrepressible urge to rise out of the primal darkness. When the great night comes, everything takes on a note of deep dejection, and every soul is seized by an inexpressible longing for light.

Student information sheet for RSOC 140.

NAME _____ Year (Soph, Jr, Senior, etc.) _____

Local address _____

Telephone/cellphone _____

Email address _____

Major (also indicate any Minor Concentrations/Pathway) _____

Previous coursework in Religious Studies _____

Previous coursework in Environmental Studies _____

Previous experience with wildlife/animals (volunteer service, biology fieldwork, etc.) _____

Competence in languages other than English (speaking/reading/writing) _____

Particular interests in the study of animals, the environment, and religion _____
