

Anyone who will read the anarchist and radical environmentalist journals will see that opposition to the industrial-technological system is widespread and growing

Theodore Kaczynski,
aka the Unabomber

Course Description

Critical examination of the emergence and social impacts of Radical Environmentalism, with special attention to its religious and moral dimensions, and the ecological and political perceptions that undergird its controversial strategies designed to arrest environmental degradation.

Course Overview and Objectives

During the 1980s and much of the 1990s and beyond, thousands of environmental activists were arrested for resisting through civil disobedience and creative blockades deforestation and other forms of environmental destruction, especially in North America, Australia, and England. Some took up sabotage concluding that civil disobedience was not enough, driving spikes into trees to prevent them from being cut down and torching heavy equipment and buildings, for example. Since the early 1990s, activists from the "Earth Liberation Front" destroyed over 120 million dollars worth of property in a campaign against those engaged in genetic engineering, habitat destruction, and animal exploitation. This group, and the Animal Liberation Front with which it sometimes cooperates, is considered by some law enforcement authorities to be the #1 domestic terrorism threat in the United States and England. Indeed, the most radical of these groups wonder when the time will come to emulate confessed Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, whom they consider a folk hero. Some envision a violent anti-industrial revolution, such as those who threw bricks through the windows of multinational corporations during the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle. Whatever their chosen tactics, the radical environmentalists leading the anti-globalization

Radical Environmentalism

**. . . from Earth First! & the
Earth Liberation Front to
the Unabomber and the
anti-globalization resistance**

Fall 2017

Wednesdays 4:05-7:05p.m.

Rel 3938 (undergraduate section)

Rlg 6167 (graduate section)

***Instructor: Dr./Prof. Bron Taylor
The University of Florida***

Office: Anderson 121;
Office Hours
W: 1:30-3:00 p.m.
And by appointment

Prof. Taylor's recent syllabi are available at:
<http://www.brontaylor.com/courses.html>

resistance claim that corporations and governments are engaged in a sinister, profit-driven mission that fuels environmental degradation and species extinctions, while corrupting if not destroying democracy and violating human rights.

This course seeks to understand the worldviews (ecological understandings, cosmologies, religious perceptions, and political ideologies). and to assess the impacts (past and future), of the subcultures that constitute radical environmentalism, as they engage in trenchant struggles over the earth's living systems.

Specifically, in this class we will explore:

- 1) The historical emergence and diverse forms of radical environmentalism (social ecological, deep ecological, ecofeminist, anarcho-primitivist, bioregionalist, and animal liberationist, to name a few).
- 2) The ecological and political views that typify radical environmentalists.
- 3) The metaphysical, spiritual and ethical beliefs and perceptions that animate radical environmentalists.
- 4) How the radical environmental forms cross-fertilize and the limits of such cross-fertilization.
- 5) The internal disputes and factions among and within radical environmental groups, and the contested nature of the various approaches.
- 6) The criticisms of radical environmental groups by political conservatives and liberals, whether environmentalist or not.
- 7) The role that radical environmentalism plays or is likely to play in the future in violent conflicts over natural systems.
- 8) The likely futures for humans and nature in the context of intensifying, environment-related social conflict, where radical environmentalists play an increasing role.

Through such exploration students will be ready to assess the extent to which radical environmentalism and the dynamics it produces is a positive or negative social movement.

Required Readings:

Readings preceded by an asterisk should be purchased; all others will be on reserve or otherwise made available, but purchase is recommended of the major ones, such as by Bender, Abbey, Zakin, and Devall/Sessions

* Abbey, Edward. *The Monkeywrench Gang*. New York City: Avon, 1975.

_____. *Desert Solitaire* University of Arizona Press, 1968/1988.

Devall, Bill and George Sessions, eds. *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered*. Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith, 1985.

- * Foreman, Dave. *Rewilding North America: A Vision for Conservation in the 21st Century*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2004.
- Taylor, Bron, ed. *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995. (also on reserve)
- Zakin, Susan. *Coyotes and Town Dogs: Earth First! and the Environmental Movement*. New York: Viking, 1993.

Special research archive, hosted by the Rachel Carson Center:

[Bron Taylor's Print History and Digital Archive of Earth First!, Wild Earth, Live Wild or Die, and Alarm](#)

Schedule ~ Overview

Module I (weeks 1-5)

Tributaries and the Early Years: A historical overview of the sources, worldview, and mythic structure of Radical Environmentalism, with special attention to ethical and ecological claims, ritualizing, and political impacts. (10 year period, through 1980).

Module II (weeks 6-9)

The Critique and Negative Reaction: From “wise use” partisans to environmental and other philosophers, to law enforcement authorities.

Module III (weeks 10-12)

Distributaries and fellow Travelers: from Bioregionalism, to Conservation Biology, to the Earth Liberation Front and Green Anarchism.

Module IV (weeks 13-15)

Key issues in the Future of Radical Environmentalism: including foci on social philosophy, biocentric axiology, violence, globalization, and spirituality.

Schedule ~ Details

Requirements and Evaluation

The requirements, indicated below, and the reading schedule that follows, may be modified during the course. This will occur sometimes because new developments will be documented or sources discovered that will be added to and or supplant existing readings. For this reason, students should consult the online syllabus every week to access the current version of the syllabus.

Some students will negotiate with the course instructor deviations from these standard requirements and readings. Individual course contracts will then be operative, which better focus this course's work on an aspect of radical environmentalism particularly relevant to a given student's research agenda.

Undergraduate Section:

Periodic quizzes or short essays on the week's readings and classroom experiences. These will constitute 20% of the course grade and some of them will not be announced previous to their administration. The lowest score will be dropped.

Take Home Examinations. There will be two intensive take home essay examinations, which students will have one week to complete. Each will constitute 30% of the course grade.

Reflection Paper. Each student will complete a reflective paper about radical environmentalism. This paper will have two dimensions: the first will be a personal reflection based on their own experimentations during the course with the epistemologies typically found in radical environmentalism; the second will be a critical evaluation of what the student takes to be the essential features of such social phenomena. Worth 20% of the course grade. Papers should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words. This assignment will be discussed further in class.

Research Option: Ambitious students wishing to read more deeply and write a research paper may, with the permission of the instructor, fulfill the course requirements for the Graduate Section. Those who do so conscientiously will receive an upgrade up to a one full grade from that which would result from the points alone.

Graduate Section:

Course Participation. It is expected that all readings will be completed and assimilated prior to Monday evening's class, and that graduate students will participate actively in classroom discussions, demonstrating this careful preparation. Unusually strong or weak preparation and classroom contributions may affect the final course grade.

Take Home Examinations. There will be two intensive take home essay examinations, which students will have one week to complete. Each will constitute 25% of the course grade.

Reflection Paper. Same as above, but worth 10% of the course grade.

Research Paper. Each student will complete a research paper and must be prepared to present material from this research to the discussion section of either the undergraduate or graduate seminar, sometime during the semester, by arrangement with Dr. Taylor. *A rough draft should be turned in by week 12.* Research Topics should have something directly to do with radical

environmentalism — potential subjects include its inspirations, activists, campaigns, spirituality, ethics, attitudes toward ‘wilderness’, gendered or ethnic dimensions, other social causes, social philosophies, ecological views, strategies and tactics (including violence and civil disobedience), forms *Ecological Resistance Movements* outside of North America,” and more. Articles must be carefully researched and consistently cited according to a standard, scholarly format (e.g. Chicago A or B, American Psychological Association, Modern Language Association).

Note: All students are required to abide by the [Student Honor Code](#), which governs academic honesty and more. Read it.

All students are expected to attend every class session. Much that happens in class cannot be conveyed afterward, and the instructor will not revisit lectures during office hours. Unexcused absences negatively affect course grades. Except in the case of medical emergency, excused absences require prior notification. All excused absences require documentation, such as a doctor’s notice.

Additional Required Readings for Graduate Section

- Bender, Frederic L. *The Culture of Extinction: Toward a Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. Humanity Books, 2003 (also on reserve).
Katz, Eric, Andrew Light and David Rothenberg. *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays on Deep Ecology*. MIT Press, 2000 (also on reserve).
Lewis, Martin W. *Green Delusions: An Environmentalist Critique of Radical Environmentalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992 (also on reserve).

Recommended Movement Anthologies (widely available online)

- Best, Steven and Anthony Nocella, eds., *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth*. (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006).
Burks, David Clarke, ed. *Place of the Wild: A Wildlands Anthology*. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1994.
Butler, Tom. *Wild Earth: Wild Ideas for a World Out of Balance*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed, 2002.
Davis, John, ed. *The Earth First! Reader: Ten Years of Radical Environmentalism*. Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs Smith, 1991.
Drengson, Alan and Yuichi Inoue, eds. *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology*. Berkeley, California: North Atlantic, 1995.
List, Peter C., ed. *Radical Environmentalism: Philosophy and Tactics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993.
Sessions, George, ed. *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995.

Selected Course Bibliography

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_____. *The Monkeywrench Gang*. New York City: Avon, 1975.
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Arnold, Ron. 1997. *Ecoterror: The Violent Agenda to Save Nature--the World of the Unabomber*. Bellvue, Washington: Free Enterprise.

- Best, Steven, and Anthony J. Nocella, eds. 2004. *Terrorists or freedom fighters: reflections on the liberation of animals*. New York: Lantern.
- Best, Steven, and Anthony J. Nocella, eds. 2006. *Igniting a revolution: voices in defense of the Earth*. Oakland & Edinburgh: AK Press.
- Bey, Hakim. T.A.Z. 1991. *The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*. Autonomedia.
- Bishop, James. 1994. *Epitaph for a desert anarchist: the life and legacy of Edward Abbey*. New York & Toronto: Atheneum.
- Cahalan, James M. 2001. *Edward Abbey: a life*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Boggs, Carl. 2012. *Ecology and revolution: global crisis and the political challenge, Environmental politics and theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bradford, George. 1989. *How Deep Is Deep Ecology? A Challenge to Radical Environmentalism*. Ojai, California: Times Change Press.
- Cahalan, James M. 2001. *Edward Abbey: a life*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Carter, Alan. 1999. *A Radical Green Political Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Crist, Eileen. 2008. "Against the social construction of wilderness." In *The wilderness debate rages on: continuing the great new wilderness debate*, edited by Michael P. Nelson and J. Baird Callicott, 500-525. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.
- Davis, John, ed. 1991. *The Earth First! Reader: Ten Years of Radical Environmentalism*. Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith.
- Diehm, Christian. 2011. "Ecotage, ecodefense, and deep ecology." *The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy* 27 (2).
- Farrell, Justin. 2015. *The battle for Yellowstone: morality and the sacred roots of environmental conflict*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Foreman, Dave. 1991. *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*. New York: Harmony Books.
- _____. 2004. *Rewilding North America: a vision for conservation in the 21st century*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- _____. *Take back conservation*. Durango, Colo.: Raven's Eye Press.
- Foreman, Dave, and Laura Carroll. 2014. *Man swarm: how overpopulation is killing the wild world*. 2nd ed: Live True Books.
- Jensen, Derrick. *A Language Older Than Words*. New York: Context, 2000.
- Jensen, Derrick. 2006. *Endgame*. Seven Stories Press. 2 vols (New York: Seven Stories Press).
- Kaczynski, Ted. [Industrial Society and Its Future](#). (Click title; widely available on the internet.)
- Kuipers, Dean. 2009. *Operation bite back: Rod Coronado's war to save American wilderness*.
- LeVasseur, Todd. "Decisive ecological warfare: triggering industrial collapse via deep green resistance." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 11 (1, 2017):109-130.
- Levine, Margarita, and Michael Levine. 2001. "A critique of ecofeminism." In *Environmental ethics: readings in theory and application*., edited by Louis Pojman. Wadsworth.
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- McBay, Aric, Lierre Keith, and Derrick Jensen. 2011. *Deep green resistance: strategy to save the planet*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Merchant, Carolyn. 2005 [1992]. *Radical ecology: the search for a livable world*. New York & London: Routledge.
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- Murray, John A., ed. 2015. *Abbey in America: a philosopher's legacy in a new century*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

- Nocella, Anthony J., Richard J. White, and Erika Cudworth. 2015. *Anarchism and animal liberation: essays on complementary elements of total liberation*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Nocella, Anthony J. 2014. *Defining critical animal studies: an intersectional social justice approach for liberation, Counterpoints: studies in the postmodern theory of education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Parson, Sean. 2008. "Understanding the ideology of the Earth Liberation Front." *Green Theory & Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy* 4 (2):50-66.
- Pellow, David N. 2014. *Total liberation: the power and promise of animal rights and the radical earth movement*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Pickering, Leslie James. 2003. *The Earth Liberation Front, 1997-2002*. South Wales, NY: Arissa.
- Pike, Sarah M. 2017. *For the wild: ritual and commitment in radical eco-activism*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Roselle, Mike, and Josh Mahan. 2009. *Tree spiker: from Earth First! to lowbagging: my struggles in radical environmental action*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Scarce, Rik. 1990. *Ecowarriors: understanding the radical environmental movement*. Chicago: Noble.
- Shepard, Paul. 1998. *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*. San Francisco: Island Press.
- Spece, Darren. 2017. *Defending giants: the redwood wars and the transformation of American environmental politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Taylor, Bron. 1991. "The religion and politics of Earth First!" *The Ecologist* 21 (6):258-66.
- _____. 1995. "Resacralizing earth: pagan environmentalism and the restoration of Turtle Island." In *American Sacred Space*, edited by David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, 97-151. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- _____. 1996. "Ecological resistance movements; not always deep but if deep, religious: reply to Devall." *The Trumpeter* 13 (2):98-103.
- _____. 1997. "Earth First! Fights Back." *Terra Nova* 2 (2 [Spring]):29-43.
- _____. 1997. "Earthen spirituality or cultural genocide?: Radical environmentalism's appropriation of Native American spirituality." *Religion* 17 (2):183-215.
- _____. 1998. "Religion, Violence, and Radical Environmentalism: From Earth First! to the Unabomber to the Earth Liberation Front." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10 (4):10-42.
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- _____. 2003. "Earth First!: From primal spirituality to ecological resistance." In *Worldviews, religion, and the Environment*, edited by Richard C. Foltz, 447-455. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.
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[Schedule ~ Details](#)

