



Detailed Course Syllabus

Academic Year	2025/2026	Semester	Winter
Study Program	University graduate study of sociology; University graduate study of communication sciences	Specialization / Major in	Sociology and communication science
Year of Study	1-2		

I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Name	Religion, Society, and the Climate Crisis: Values, Communication, and Public Engagement		
Abbreviation	IZBD283	Code	280684
Status	Elective	ECTS 6	
Prerequisites	None		
Total Course Workload			
Teaching Mode	Total Hours	Teaching Mode	Total Hours
Lectures	30	Seminars	15
Excirces	15		
Class Time and Place	CUC according to published timetable		

II. TEACHING STAFF

Course Holder

Name and Surname	Zoran Turza		
Academic Degree	PhD	Professional Title	Associate Professor
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Office Hours	According to published timetable Office		

Course Collaborator

Name and Surname	Ivana Belić		
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Office Hours	According to published timetable Office		

III. DETAILED COURSE INFORMATION

Teaching Language	English
Course Description	<p>This multidisciplinary elective course is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills to critically examine religion's role in environmental challenges and climate communication. Drawing on theological, sociological, and communicative perspectives, the course introduces key religious concepts such as creation, stewardship, and the sacred. It explores how these ideas shape ecological ethics across various religious traditions. Special attention is given to the Catholic concept of integral ecology as articulated in Pope Francis' documents <i>Laudato si'</i> and <i>Laudate Deum</i>. Students will analyze official environmental statements from Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist, and other communities and interpret them within their broader cultural and political contexts. By comparing these sources, students will develop the ability to identify tensions and convergences within and between religious traditions concerning environmental responsibility. The course also introduces key principles of climate communication, enabling students to evaluate how ecological messages are framed and received within religious communities and broader public discourse. Particular focus is placed on understanding how political orientation can influence environmental attitudes, often more than religious affiliation, and what this means for the effectiveness of religious messaging.</p> <p>Through close reading, discussion, and comparative analysis, students will develop the capacity to engage with theological and ethical discourses, assess the public role of religious actors in climate debates, and reflect on the societal implications of religious engagement with ecological sustainability. These competencies will prepare students to analyze the intersection of religion, communication, and sustainable development in academic and professional contexts.</p>
Expected Educational Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and explain key religious and ethical concepts related to the environment. 2. Analyze the role of religion as a cultural and social force in shaping environmental values and public engagement. 3. Compare how diverse religious communities frame environmental responsibility in their public communication. 4. Apply principles of climate communication to analyze how religious actors convey messages on ecological issues. 5. Evaluate the connection of political identity, media framing, and religious attitude towards the ecological crisis. 6. Reflect on tensions, conflicts, and ambivalences within and between religious communities regarding ecological engagement. 7. Develop a multidisciplinary understanding of how religious values contribute to or challenge sustainability goals. 8. Critically assess how religion functions as a social and communicative force in shaping responses to the climate crisis.
Textbooks and Materials	
Required	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christie, I., Gunton, R. M., & Hejnowicz, A. P. (2019). Sustainability and the common good: Catholic Social Teaching and 'integral ecology' as contributions to a framework of social values for sustainability transitions. <i>Sustainability Science</i>, 14, 1343–1354. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00691-y 2. Francis. (2015). <i>Laudato si': On care for our common home</i>. Vatican Publishing House. (chapter 3, 4 and 5)

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

3. Francis. (2023). *Laudate Deum: To all people of good will on the climate crisis*. Vatican Publishing House.

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/document_s/20231004-laudate-deum.html

4. Köhrsen, J., Blanc, J., & Huber, F. (Eds.). (2022). *Religious environmental activism: Emerging conflicts and tensions in Earth stewardship* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003017967> (p. 1-27; 112-132; 268-282; 303-322).

5. Taylor, B. (2011). The greening of religion hypothesis. *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, 5(3), 253-266.

6. White, L. (1967). The historical roots of our ecologic crisis. *Science*, 155(3767), 1203-1207.

Supplementary

1. Ejaz, W., Mukherjee, M., & Fletcher, R. (2023). *Climate Change News Audiences: Analysis of News Use and Attitudes in Eight Countries*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-dt2t-dm19>

2. Klein, N. (2015). *This changes everything: Capitalism vs. the climate*. Simon & Schuster.

3. Renger, A.-B., Stork, J., & Öhlmann, P. (Eds.). (2024). *Religion and ecology: Perspectives on environment and sustainability across religious traditions*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. <https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666500763>

4. Turza, Z., & Brgles, M. M. (Eds.). (2023). *Five years after Laudato Si'. Where are we now?* Catholic University of Croatia; Veritas - Glasnik sv. Antuna Padovanskoga.

5. Wallace-Wells, D. (2019). *The uninhabitable Earth: Life after warming*. Tim Duggan Books.

Examination and Grading

To Be Passed	Yes	Exclusively Continuous Assessment	No	Included in Average Grade	Yes
Prerequisites to Obtain Signature and Take Final Exam		1. Regular attendance – Active participation and presence in at least 70% of class sessions is required.			
		2. Analytical portfolio – Students will continuously develop an individual portfolio that includes short written reflections on selected readings, comments on religious environmental declarations, and responses to case studies and in-class discussions. At the end, the portfolio should have 20-30 pages. (20%)			
		3. Mini Research Project: Proposal and Protocol – Students will design a small-scale interdisciplinary research project related to the course themes. The proposal (2-3 pages) includes a clear research question,			

theoretical grounding, methodological framework, and ethical considerations. (10%)

4. Textual Analysis and Critical Commentary – Each student will complete a short academic paper (2 pages) based on the close reading and analysis of an official religious environmental document, focusing on its theological, ethical, and communicative aspects. (10%)

5. Video Reflection (Individual or in Pairs) – Students will simulate presenting a selected topic for a broader audience by preparing a short video segment, individually (2-4 minutes) or in pairs (6-8 minutes). (10%)

6. Design of a Faith-Based Climate Communication Strategy – In small groups (3-4 students), students will simulate developing a communication strategy for a faith-based or interfaith climate initiative, demonstrating their ability to apply course knowledge in a practical and context-sensitive way. (10%)

7. Final Reflective Essay – At the end of the course, each student submits a reflective essay (2-3 pages) in which they articulate how their understanding of the intersection between religion, society, and the climate crisis has evolved, and how they might apply this insight in their future academic or professional work. (10%)

8. 5. Acquiring at least 35% in-class activities – on a cumulative basis.

**Examination
Manner**

Final Exam (oral) (30%)

Grading Manner

**Detailed
Overview of
Grading within
ECTS**

ACTIVITY TYPE	ECTS Student Workload Coefficient	GRADE PERCENTAGE (%)
Class Attendance	2	0

Analytical Portfolio	0.8	20
Mini Research Project: Proposal and Protocol	0.4	10
Textual Analysis and Critical Commentary	0.4	10
Video Reflection (Individual or in Pairs)	0.4	10
Design of a Faith-Based Climate Communication Strategy	0.4	10
Final Reflective Essay	0.4	10
Total in Class		
Final Exam	1.2	30
TOTAL ECTS (Classes + Final Exam)	6	100

**Final Exam
Dates**

According to the published timetable

IV. WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Lectures

Week	Topic
1.	Religion and Ecology in Contemporary Society: An Interdisciplinary Introduction
2.	Religious Worldviews and Environmental Values: Between Belief and Action
3.	Religion and the Politics of Climate Denial
4.	Integral Ecology and the Catholic Social Teaching
5.	Faith Traditions and Sustainability: A Comparative Overview
6.	Religion and the Public Good: Stewardship, Justice, and Climate Responsibility
7.	Tensions and Conflicts: Environmental Engagement Within and Between Religions
8.	Political Identity, Media Exposure, and Environmental Attitudes
9.	Climate Communication and Religion: Frames, Audiences, and Cultural Meaning
10.	Public Theology and the Framing of Environmental Justice

11.	Religious Communication and the Challenges of Climate Policy
12.	Value Conflicts and Cultural Polarization in Climate Discourse
13.	Religious Environmentalism and Secular Climate Activism: Dialogues and Disconnections
14.	Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Integral Ecology: From Theology to Social Science I
15.	Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Integral Ecology: From Theology to Social Science II

Seminars

Week	Topic
1.	Division of the topics for textual analysis and critical commentary.
2.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
3.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
4.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
5.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
6.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
7.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
8.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
9.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
10.	Textual analysis and critical commentary of an official religious environmental document.
11.	Oral presentations and discussions.
12.	Presentations of the analytical portfolios.
13.	Presentations of the analytical portfolios.
14.	Discussion on final reflective essays.
15.	Discussion on final reflective essays.

Exercises

Week	Topic
1.	Division of the topics for in-class activities.
2.	How to prepare a mini research project and video reflection?
3.	How to prepare the design of a faith-based climate communication strategy?
4.	Analysis of different research projects and scientific papers.
5.	Analysis of different research projects and scientific papers.
6.	Analysis of different research projects and scientific papers.
7.	Presentations of mini research projects.
8.	Presentations of mini research projects.
9.	Presentations of mini research projects.

10.	Presentations of the designs of a faith-based climate communication strategy.
11.	Presentations of the designs of a faith-based climate communication strategy.
12.	Presentations of the designs of a faith-based climate communication strategy.
13.	Presentations of video reflections.
14.	Presentations of video reflections.
15.	Presentations of video reflections.