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**Environmentalism as Religion**by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, May 22, 2015, 10:59 AM

This forum thread is for Environmentalism as Religion posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the various questions. To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Environmentalism as Religion

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**my view**by [Brent Hill](#) - Monday, May 25, 2015, 12:24 PM

I think that this is very interesting. I have never thought of environmentalism as a religion until today. In my mind it kind of makes sense and I would have to agree with the authors on their views. It made sense in a lot of ways when Paul Rubin was making all of the comparisons between modern religions and environmentalism. I can see how it can be thought of as a religion but I think it is a different sort of religion. I think that there is a huge spectrum in how "green" someone can be. There are some people who take drastic measures into protecting the environment while there are a majority of people who take small steps in their daily lives to become greener. I think that there can be different degrees of religious people as well. There can be people who believe everything that the leaders tell them and there are people who believe only some of the things that their religious leaders tell them. I think most people can agree that taking steps to help the environment is generally a good thing while not everyone believes in a more traditional religion.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) 2

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**Re: my view**by [Yanshu Li](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 2:19 PM

I believe people would love to do more to protect the environment, because it is one of our responsibly and even become a duty nowadays. However, the situation here is different for different people, just as your mentioned in tour reply: different degrees of religious people. In this way, it is unnecessary to make environmentalism become a religion.

For other religion like Christian, people who joined in that association have the same faith and the degrees of religious of them is basically the same. Hence, if people who have the different degrees of religious joined in a same association, the argument over how to protect the environment is certain.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1) **Re: my view**by [Benjamin Bross](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 7:10 PM

While I agree with what you are saying, I don't think each person trying to protect the environment should be a duty. A duty would mean that it is a required act, and I don't think, besides littering and no more plastic bags, that there are too many laws that are strictly enforced for environmentalism at this point in time. I think giving environmentalist religious rights is going too far because it is a science that is ever-changing. A right given to them may not even be an issue in three years time. Where as religion, the basic principles have and will always be the same. The changing policies are too hard to protect with religious freedom.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**No logic need apply.**by [Stanley Cates](#) - Monday, May 25, 2015, 1:44 PM

Why yes; I do remember seeing that commercial during said super bowl. I remember see the jaw of a certain friend; who may or may not be a vegan; hit the floor at the idea that anything to do with diesel could be good for the environment. When I tried to explain to her why diesel wasn't so bad she became "whimsically irritated" and stole my beer.

Back to the issue at hand; I do think that environmental issues can be resolved. Unfortunately it's not nearly as simple as just convincing everyone to recycle and calling it good. I recall speaking out against Eugene adopting the Portland modeled plastic bag ban among my friends. Instead I proposed a ban on paper bags and a resourcing of plastic bags made with plastics produced from sources alternative to petroleum; like vegetable by products. Among my more die hard environmentalist friends the response was usually something along the lines of "plastic is bad". It was for that reason that I saw; and still see; that ban as nothing more than a feel good legislation publicity stunt. In order to solve the environmental issue with legislation we're going to have to put our preconceived notions aside and inject some logic in it's place.

I don't think I would put forth that environmentalism is an actual religion. But rather that anthropologically; as Crichton and Rubin illustrate beautifully; it acts like a religion. As such I don't think that the religious aspect of the first amendment applies to it. I will however put forth that environmentalism is still protected under the first amendment's right to protest. Although in order to be effective in the future these protests will need to employ the same logic as described above. Recently in Seattle there was a protest involving a flotilla of kayaks and an oil rig bound for the arctic owned by shell. The kayaks acted as a blockade and made life rather difficult for shell for a little while. Right, wrong, or indifferent as the protest may be I can't help but find it amusing that they would choose to use modern kayaks made from petroleum to protest an oil drilling operation.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**No way I say**by [Colt Eubank](#) - Monday, May 25, 2015, 8:29 PM

I think that the authors are correct in saying that environmentalism has become a religion. It has all the things a traditional religion would have. saying this i don't think these changes will be easily overcome. If it is treated as a religion then how can the government pass laws for or against these things when the Consitution forbids it? It will take much time and effort by many many people to convince government officials otherwise. In order to save the environment, environmentalism needs to be treated as a form of activism and not religion.

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**interesting point**by [Brent Hill](#) - Friday, May 29, 2015, 10:38 PM

That is an interesting point you made about how if environmentalism is a form of religion then the government couldn't pass laws. What do you think the benefits of it being treated as a form of activism rather than religion are?

Sum of ratings: (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: No way I say**by [Mikaila Riddle](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 1:03 PM

I agree that this was a really good point you brought up about the government passing laws about environmentalism if it's a religion. I also agree that we can't treat it as a religion if activists want to keep passing laws or anything of the sort because its unconstitutional to pass laws based on religion and this would start many many arguments or riots. Many people would say that if its a religion and we can pass laws about it, then we should be able to pass laws based on other religions and I think that would make a mess out of the government. I'm glad you brought up that point though, I didn't think about that side of it.

Sum of ratings: (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Environmentalism as Religion**by [Cody Trimble](#) - Monday, May 25, 2015, 9:24 PM

After seeing these articles, I do not believe environmentalism to be able to be classified as a religion. Crichton said that the act of preserving the environment is an ever changing struggle and it is not something that can be set in stone; whereas the bases of a practiced religion are set in stone and haven't changed. In my opinion, Environmentalism should be see as more of a movement than a religion, I believe it to be a trend among people that will come and go with time. Although, I see the enforcement to be done in a more aggressive way. I think governments will start putting harsher restrictions on what products we can and cannot use.

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I completely agree with you. I think that the ever changing aspects of environmentalism stop it from being called a religion. Religions have been practicing the same things for hundreda of years. Environmentalists have a new belief every year. I think to some extent the environmentalists should get similar 1st amendment rights but not the exact same as religions. It's just to much of an ever changing activist group

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Environmentalism as Religion**by [Stanley Cates](#) - Wednesday, May 27, 2015, 12:23 PM

Set in stone? Not hardly. Martin Luther (not King) led the protestant revolution and changed the face of Christianity. Further smaller differences in practice led to all the different sects that exist today. Sihks branched from Hinduism and Islam. It's been a few years now but the Vatican has admitted the possibility of extra terrestrial life. The Vatican of course a few hundred years prior burned Giordano Bruno at the stake for suggesting that other worlds exist and that there may be "people" there. So, which part of religion is set in stone?

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Cody, I agree with you that Environmentalism is not a religion and should not be considered as one. The environment is everchanging and the group of people will probably come and go, like you said. If it were a religion, there would be a lot more that would go into it. And we wouldn't be able to pass laws revolving around it, beacuse obviously, we can't pass laws based off of religion. That woud turn our country upside down.

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Religion?

by [Mariah Turner-Macy](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 4:51 PM

It's interesting to me that this specific forum advocated environmentalism as a form of religion. I definitely agree that it shouldn't be classified as a religion, but as a movement towards a better society. I think environmentalism should be classified under other "isms" (like feminism) such as the views groups and individuals that advocate and align their morals and beliefs. However, "isms" do not have the same religious backgrounds. I think religion is more focused on a divine figure(s) instead of present concerns within a culture or society.

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Culture of Awareness

by [Emily Johnson](#) - Monday, May 25, 2015, 10:43 PM

In watching the Michael Crichton video on environmentalism, the word 'mental' seemed to stand out much more apparently than before. I found Crichton's comparisons to environmentalism and religion quite elusive to the point of environmentalism. He seemed to rather point out the wrong doer's- ei; the SUV drivers among us. He is stemming his beliefs from the anthropological definition for religion..."A collective set of beliefs, a leader or leaders who promote the beliefs among the followers, followers make some sort of contribution..." Environmentalism is absent of culture. Anthropology is the study of cultures. I think it's fair to say they have their parallels but "salvation through sustainability" is promoting pitting people against each other. Hopefully by giving environmentalism an identity, rather than calling it a religion we can shed some light on the more important issues and promote a culture of awareness.

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Voluntarily Dying

by [Jordan Bertak](#) - Monday, May 25, 2015, 10:52 PM

I think the problem with these type of issues is that many people won't voluntarily do it, however I don't know if forcing change is the right decision. For years people have ignored climate change and still do to this day. There is countless evidence of man-made climate change which 97% percent of scientists believe is happening, yet they choose to ignore it. You can see the same thing happening with Anti-Vaccinators and our current obesity epidemic. These are all issues that can be solved peacefully and voluntarily but aren't. This may be the selfish nature of people, only thinking about now and not the future, or maybe it really is an education problem. I really hope these problems can be solved voluntarily or I fear they will continue to be a problem for years to come.

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Re: Voluntarily Dying

by [Emily Johnson](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 11:27 PM

It is quite sad that when can't seem to get our act together to solve problems that are inevitably going to kill us off. I'm not sure which is worse, the obesity epidemic or global warming. It just depends on the rate of deterioration, I suppose. The human body is a very intelligent and an intricate masterpiece, but it cannot withstand the poisonous substances going into it on a regular basis; Just like the earth cannot withstand the amount of pressure we put on it to continually

"heal itself" as it were, in order for us to reap the benefits of its many resources. I think that by changing what we put into our bodies will inevitably effect the output of extra waste and hopefully will slow down the rate that the landfills are filling up. Tiny tweaks can lead to big changes.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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The "good and bad" spectrum

by [Kai Seltman](#) - Monday, May 25, 2015, 11:15 PM

This reminds me of the spectrum concerning "good" and "bad" that was addressed in both the History 201 and 202 course. Are humans intrinsically good or bad? I for one believe that humans are not necessarily bad, but that they are biologically selfish and that most will not do what is good for the common good at the expense of inconvenience oneself. I also believe that punitive laws regarding environmental concerns are like laws concerning wearing a seatbelt while driving. Of course, both laws restrict your freedom, but they do so in order to protect your wellbeing. I use plastic often, so I hope that this doesn't come down to discrimination against those who 'abuse the environment' but I do believe that 'environmentalism' is more beneficial than it is harmful.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Environmentalism

by [Mariah Turner-Macy](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 9:12 PM

That's interesting that you brought up the spectrum of "good" and "bad" from earlier history classes. I haven't taken any other than this one, but psychology addresses this spectrum, too. I also can appreciate you incorporating that theory with environmentalism. It's interesting that a simple act of banning plastic bags in Oregon will contribute positively towards environmentalists, but it doesn't make sense why stores would still continue to sell drinks and packaged food that are also stored in plastic containers. There are positive steps towards changing a society, but bigger measures should be established if change is the desire environmentalists wish to see.

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Re: Environmentalism

by [Emily Johnson](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 11:28 PM

I think it's great the stores in Eugene have stopped using plastic bags. I hope it is a jumping off point to bigger changes once we see what an impact that tiny tweak made.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Religion and Philosophy

by [Kyle Quinoveva](#) - Monday, May 25, 2015, 11:53 PM

Let's talk about philosophy. Philosophies are simply ideas that people believe hold significance, often very complex and made corporeal in some way, but beliefs none the less. Obviously, it's nice to draw lines separating these ideas into categories; economic beliefs, moral beliefs, political beliefs, existential beliefs, et cetera.

Now, drawing lines between these philosophies isn't in its self a bad thing: it helps us categorize things which, whether you're aware of it or not, humans like to do. The thing is; we hold one particular category of philosophy in higher regard than others, and that's religion. I mean, it's obvious why; religion is very much an existential and moral philosophy. It tells us why we're here, what is right and wrong, what happens after death and so forth. Religion is, indeed, sacred to us.

Even it being sacred isn't necessarily a problematic thing but our laws differentiate religion from other philosophies which becomes problematic. Because, honestly, what does it matter whether Environmentalism is a religion rather than a political belief or moral one? They're all beliefs that people adhere to and each person has a lightly different interpretation of all areas of philosophy. However our laws and culture have drawn a line between the rest of philosophy and "Religion" which make

things problematic when something doesn't clearly fall on one side or another.

It's a philosophical belief, practiced through recycling, like how religion is practiced through prayer or democracy is practiced through voting or consumerism is practiced through buying or abstinence through chastity. They all have their own followers with their own interpretations of the beliefs and who's beliefs have a very real effect on the corporeal world, whether they intend to or not.

Trying to fit Environmentalism into one or another side of an arbitrary 'religion or not' line is pointless. The only way that this issue is resolved is if people stop legally treating one category of philosophy as superior to others, but that's unlikely.

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Environmentalism: Peaceful or Punitive?

by [Hannah Donner](#) - Wednesday, May 27, 2015, 10:26 PM

Religion is defined as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe. By this definition, environmentalism would be considered a religion. Environmentalists believe that it is their responsibility to help conserve the earth. Furthermore, some environmentalists could conclude that this is their purpose in life. Michael Crichton observed that environmentalists believe that there is "salvation through sustainability" (video clip).

Concerning environmentalism, I believe the best way to resolve these "green" issues is to educate people. In my opinion, people challenge environmentalism because they aren't educated enough about it. This method of educating people would help resolve this issue voluntarily. If effort is not put into educating people about why we need to help the environment, then most likely environmentalism will be accomplished coercively. This concept reminds me of the Progressive era – if people don't choose to adopt a certain way of life then forcing someone to change their lifestyle is the next step. For instance, I can imagine that in the future one will be refused service at a café unless they bring their reusable cup. Hopefully, through education people will voluntarily adapt to a different way of life, instead of being coerced.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: Environmentalism: Peaceful or Punitive?

by [Stanley Cates](#) - Friday, May 29, 2015, 3:15 PM

You make a couple good points; but I'll add a few that I think you might find relevant. Education is one thing, but it has to be truthful education. Simply shoving it down the throats of people that things like nuclear energy and diesel engines are bad isn't education; it's propaganda. Professor Rubin even pointed it out; nuclear energy is the best solution for climate change; yet it's one of the most combated institutions by environmentalists. I've yet to hear a single logical argument against nuclear energy. Diesel and; to a lesser degree; bio diesel has always been safer and more economic than gasoline. Diesel has more potential energy per gallon than gasoline; therefore you can make more energy with it. Most of the time the big hit that diesel takes is soot emissions. This soot is no different than the carbon deposits you see on fireplaces, and while that's not terribly great it isn't the noxious chemical soup that most people believe it is. And even at that the use of a DPF (diesel particulate filter) in the exhaust system cleans up before it enters the atmosphere. Under certain conditions; typically at idle; a modern Cummins ISX engine's exhaust is cleaner than the air it pulled in. Diesel produces almost no carbon monoxide emissions. This is because diesel engines run in a state of excess air; that is to say that the amount of fuel used is far less than a stoichiometric ratio requirement.

That kind of black and white education needs to go away and some logic needs to be inserted in order for your education ideas to actually work.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Education is Key

by [Carissa Lara](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 1:45 PM

Religion is defined as the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods. By this definition, environmentalism can not be classified as a religion. I found many of the images displayed to be absolutely

absurd. One image in particular, the swastika with the green background, is ridiculous. To compare environmentalists to nazis would be like comparing night and day. Environmentalists do not harm anyone and work towards a better life for all people and the planet as a whole. Nazis, needless to say, did not.

As much as I wish environmental issues could be solved voluntarily, I do not believe they can be. People as a whole reject change that they deem unnecessary and it is hard for many people to commit to something if they do not immediately see results. The harm that has been done to the earth was done over a long period of time and restoring the earth will take even longer. So, recycling one plastic bottle seems futile. But in the long run, recycling, not on its own, but in addition to other environmental practices will make a positive change.

Neither legislation nor prosecution would be the best way to resolve our planets issues. People would not want their everyday lives being so drastically affected for a reason they do not fully understand. For this reason, education is the best solution. There are countless ideas left for environmentalists to learn, such as possible pros and cons of plastic, nuclear power, and diesel. There are also many things that non-environmentalists have to learn. If people can be provided with a well-rounded, full education that encouraged open minded thinking, then I believe environmentalism can be a successful movement with little controversy and benefits to all.

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it is unnecessary

by [Yanshu Li](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 2:10 PM

I were never thought about environmentalism is a kind of religion. I know it is human's responsibility to protect the environment but it is interesting to read it as "religion". As NSA study concludes, the sustainability movement become the master narrative of whet "liberal education" should seek to accomplish.

I think the "religion" here is more like a belief, and it is people's confidence to make our home country become a better place. I think it is unnecessary to legalize environmentalism religion by the congress, or become a formal religion as Christian, although it was already become a religion, and had everything that a traditional religion should have.

However, if environmentalism formally become religion, what is the requirement of people who what to joined into this association? and what is the primary goal of this association?

Protecting environment is human's responsibility, but it is unnecessary to pass a law to legalize it, and make it become a formal religion. We could do tiny little thing to protect our earth, like walk more and drive less, like stop burning paper or planting more trees.

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Forced into the right choice

by [Tamara Berge](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 7:17 PM

I had never before watched the commercial of the "Green Police." I thought it was quite funny and was surprised at how differently I saw it after reading through the material. I have made personal comments in the past about how there should be laws to make people recycle and to be conscience of their waste, it's actually the thought that kept going through my head when we were learning about progressivism, "force them to do the right thing," but I never thought about where the line in the sand would be. Obviously, the commercial was an extreme case scenario, though forced recycling has already begun in San Francisco; "Fines for almost all residential customers and many small businesses - anyone who generates less than a cubic yard of refuse a week - are initially capped at \$100. Businesses that don't have proper bins face escalating fines up to \$500 (John Cote, SFGate)." Something about the lack of choice in the matter feels wrong, even if it seems right.

<http://www.sfgate.com/green/article/S-F-OKs-toughest-recycling-law-in-U-S-3295664.php>

How to sort your garbage in S.F.

Blue cart (*recycling*)

Paper	Glass, aluminum	Plastic
Cardboard, cereal boxes (without lining), computer paper, paper egg cartons, envelopes (windows OK), junk mail, brochures, magazines, newspapers, phone books.	Aluminum cans, aluminum foil, glass bottles and jars, including metal caps and lids.	All plastic bottles, all plastic tubs and lids, plastic containers and clamshells, plastic cups and plates.

Green cart (*compost*)

Paper	Food	Plants
Waxed cardboard, napkins, paper towels, paper, plates, paper milk cartons, tea bags, coffee grounds and filters.	Fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, seafood, bones, rice, beans, pasta, bread, cheese, eggshells.	Flower trimmings, tree trimmings, leaves, grass, brush and weeds.

Black cart (*landfill*)

Ceramic dishes and cups, coat hangers, lightbulbs (no fluorescents), mirrors, plastic bags, plastic straws, plastic wrap, potato chip bags, Styrofoam packaging, window glass.

Source: San Francisco Department of the Environment

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Recycling

by [Mariah Turner-Macy](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 9:25 PM

I agree, I use to think a steady push to recycle was the most probable scenario in America. However, after I came into contact with a man who owns the city dump in Bend, Oregon, my opinion changed. While comparing how much trash my roommate and I accumulate throughout the course of a couple of days, I can't imagine the amount the entire country accumulates at the same time. Of course, recycling is ideal! Last summer I was camping with the man who owns the city dump in Bend. While sitting around the fire, he proceeded to throw a couple of plastic water bottles into the flames. I looked at him shocked and asked, "what about recycling?". He proceeded to laugh and assured me that if it wasn't burned, than it'd be buried instead. So, I don't believe that tremendous fines should be established, especially if the cities aren't taking the necessary steps to dispose of everything properly.

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Perspective

by [Tamara Berge](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 11:32 PM

I had never before contemplated whether or not environmentalism should be in a religious category. I have never

considered myself a religious person, but I do consider myself an advocate for environment preservation. I am the person at a party pulling bottles and cans out of the garbage and putting them aside for recycling, but never thought of it as part of my religious following. I think that environmentalism resembles religion, but it differs in the same sense that spirituality differs from religion.

"Today it is said we live in a secular society in which many people---the best people, the most enlightened people---do not believe in any religion. But I think that you cannot eliminate religion from the psyche of mankind. If you suppress it in one form, it merely re-emerges in another form. You can not believe in God, but you still have to believe in something that gives meaning to your life, and shapes your sense of the world. Such a belief is religious. (Michael Crichton, Hawaii Free Press) This is a quote from an article that I found, which is what I assume the young woman asking him questions was referring to. This article gives me a better understanding of his view on this topic and puts it into a different perspective.

<http://www.hawaiiifreepress.com/ArticlesMain/tabid/56/ID/2818/Crichton-Environmentalism-is-a-religion.aspx>

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Starbucks Recycling

by [Emily Johnson](#) - Saturday, May 30, 2015, 11:35 PM

For such a large corporation you would think they would use more "for here" cups and less plastic ones. I used to work for Starbucks and it shocked me how little they recycle or care about things like, the environment and really bring awareness to this big issue. Big changes start with big companies like Starbucks.

I think environmentalism needs to be like a religion. It is for a good cause, and it's for everyone. No religious affiliation necessary, however; taken seriously as with one. It is a ritual and a cause worthy for everyone on this planet to be passionate about.

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