

Professor Rob Krueger, Assistant Professor of Geography and Director, Environmental Studies Program at WPI to present a talk entitled: *Environmental Sustainability: It's not just for bears, birds and bunnies anymore* at the:

First Unitarian Church
90 Main Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609
12-1pm, Sunday, February 22nd

Abstract for Professor Krueger's talk:

Environmental Sustainability: It's not just for bears, birds and bunnies anymore

Ever wonder what happened to quintessential environmental problems of yesteryear? Remember rivers catching fire (1960s)? Poor air quality, from factories and leaded petroleum (1970s). Weekly, or what seemed like weekly, discoveries of pernicious industrial hazardous waste sites (1980s)? It seems like ages ago; so long that my 18-20 year old college students know of global climate change and their parents' hybrid—not the Cuyahoga River, or Denora, Pennsylvania, or Love Canal.

With our hybrid cars, fluorescent/LED light bulbs, and our "organic" lawn fertilizers, can we finally allow ourselves to take a collective sigh of relief and say, "everything's OK?" Sure, we have to do something about polar bears, but we've brought back wolves to the point where it's fine to shoot them again. The spotted owl is saved. Recycling has become second nature to the point that we grunt with disapproval if we visit a place that doesn't. The proliferation of green products—not tested on animals—are now available, in bulk, at the "local" Wal-Mart. Have we fulfilled the prophecy of industrial progress by growing, though "growing green?" With apologies to Kermit the Frog, it is easy being "green." We only have to do what we have been told to do since the end of World War Two: to consume.

This presentation seeks to help us visualize the implications of the current "green" revolution in American popular culture. Has the "environmental" movement lost its edge? What are the implications for people from around the world who are out of our site? In this talk, I will attempt to reposition environmentalism to show how we must be both environmentalists and responsible humanists.