

## **Environment and Human Values**

### **Course Overview**

This course offers an introduction to historical and modern attitudes toward nature, human use of nature's resources both in past and in contemporary societies, and the effects of changing science and technology on human uses of and attitudes toward the environment. We will delve into questions such as:

- What is nature? How have ideas about nature varied across time and across different cultures? How have those ideas about nature influenced how people interact with their environments?
- What is wilderness and are ideas about wilderness culturally and historically specific? Do we have an obligation to protect wilderness? What are the consequences of a choice to protect wilderness?
- How and why have patterns of consumption changed? What would sustainable use of resources look like, and is it possible to achieve sustainability?
- How are modern societies explaining and addressing the crisis of global warming? How does climate change compare to past environmental concerns?

We will seek to identify, explain, and critique narratives that both consciously and unconsciously shape our understandings of past uses of nature and contemporary environmental problems. This course introduces the humanities and social sciences component of environmental studies. Readings draw on environmental history, ethics, politics, anthropology, geography, and even literary and popular culture representations of nature and environmental issues. We will consider how we as scholars can bring together ideas and research from various disciplines to address concerns ranging from wilderness to sustainable resource use and climate change.

After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and summarize major issues, figures, and debates in environmental studies;
2. Evaluate the arguments and evidence used by scholars and popular writers addressing environmental issues;
3. Write papers developing their own arguments and supporting those arguments with textual, historical, and scientific evidence.

### **Required Books**

- Peter Dauvergne, *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010.

- Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, second edition, New York: Vintage Books, 2011.

These books can be purchased at the bookstore or through other booksellers. Other assigned readings will be available on the web, on Canvas, or through the library website.

### **Course Format**

This course will consist primarily of discussions of the readings supplemented with short lectures and in-class exercises. The topics covered seldom have clear right or wrong answers, and the best way to explore such questions is through open discussion and debate. The process of thinking critically and developing your own interpretations of the material will be central to this course, and the quality of discussions will be shaped not only by the professor but also by your preparation and willingness to engage with the material and with each other. When doing the reading, you should think about questions such as: What did you find most interesting, and why? What did you find confusing or surprising, and why? How does this material relate to readings from previous weeks? We will usually open class with an exercise called the “minute around” in which each student will have one minute to present her or his ideas for that day’s discussion. You should come to class with several ideas to present during the “minute around.” Please bring a paper or electronic copy of the day’s readings (both books and articles) to each class session so that we can make specific references during our discussions.

Obviously, a prerequisite to good discussions is a basic respect for others and their opinions. Disagreement is fine (even good), but please remember to be courteous and respectful toward your classmates at all times. Respect for the instructor and your classmates also demands that you: 1) be on time to class; 2) remain silent when others (including the professor) are speaking; 3) refrain from eating during class; 4) minimize disruptions by turning off your cell phone and using your laptop only to take notes or refer to articles. Please keep your cell phone put away at all times during class. If you wish to use a laptop or tablet either to access electronic copies of the readings or to take notes, you may do so with the caveat that this is a privilege that can and will be lost if abused. As college students, I expect you to behave like courteous adults and will treat you like adults in turn.

For any of you who are uncomfortable with participating in class because of shyness or other concerns, please come and speak to me. Because class participation is a major part of the course – and because the ability to articulate your ideas verbally is an important skill to develop in college – you will need to work to overcome your discomfort. However, I am happy to make accommodations to help you feel more comfortable with speaking up in class or to make arrangements for you to demonstrate that you are participating as a listener even if you are quiet in class.

Students with disabilities (visible or invisible) are encouraged to consult with me as soon as possible. If accommodations are needed, you should obtain a letter from the Disability Services Coordinator in the Office of the Dean of the College.

I encourage all students to take advantage of my office hours. If you are not available during office hours, I am happy to schedule another time to meet with you. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have questions about course material, assignments, your progress, or other topics related to the course or your studies.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. Excused absences (those cleared with me in advance AND resulting from illness, religious observances, or travel for other courses, athletics, or other activities) can be made up. Arrangements for make-up work should be made with me individually and will usually involve an additional writing assignment. Unexcused absences and absences that are not made up will have a significant impact on your grade. Because this is a discussion-based course, if you accumulate more than seven absences for any reason over the semester, you will fail the course.

### **Assignments**

#### **1. Three papers (70 percent total)**

You will be required to write three short essays for this course. Each will have a different prompt, but each will require you to engage in your own analysis and integrate course readings and outside material. I will provide a detailed prompt for each paper closer to the due date. For the first two papers, you will have the option to revise your paper to improve your grade, and if you choose to exercise that option, your final grade for the paper will be the average of the grades for each version. Revised papers will be due one week after I return the first version.

The first paper will be worth 20 percent of your final grade. The second paper will be worth 25 percent, and the final paper will be worth 25 percent.

The assignments for this class emphasize writing because writing assignments represent the best way for you to develop your skills in analysis, critical thinking and written expression. I am less interested in whether you can memorize material than in whether you can analyze and apply that material. Strong writing skills will also serve you well in your other classes and in whatever career you eventually pursue.

#### **2. Short writing assignments and in-class exercises (10 percent)**

Over the course of the semester, you will write several short “low stakes” papers and engage in other short assignments in class. These will help me evaluate where you are at in the learning process and will be graded less closely than the longer, more formal papers.

### 3. Class participation (20 percent)

Your participation will be evaluated each class based on your participation in discussion and activities such as the “minute around” and small group exercises. (The “minute around” is an exercise in which each student has one minute to orally present her or his reactions to the day’s reading to the class. We will usually begin class discussions with the “minute around.”) Your final grade for participation will reflect the average of your grades throughout the semester.

Participation encompasses not just the quantity but also the quality of your comments, and it incorporates listening as well as talking. Your grade will be based less on the frequency of your comments than on how well they advance the class discussion – by raising relevant questions, advancing or challenging the group’s line of thought on a particular issue, providing original insights into the material, etc. Your comments should demonstrate that you are listening to and engaging with your classmates’ comments.

The course website on Canvas includes an area for discussion, and posts of questions, comments, or material of interest to the class will also be evaluated as contributions to your participation grade.

### Grading

My intention with graded work is to challenge you and provide you with an honest evaluation of your performance and your progress. Grades in the A-range represent excellent work, those in the B-range reflect good work, and those in the C-range represent satisfactory work. Written work that is submitted late will lose 1/3 of a grade for each day it is late (for example, from a B+ to a B), unless I have granted an extension in advance. Extensions will be granted in exceptional circumstances only.

I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic integrity lies at the foundation of the learning process and is central to the mission of critical inquiry within higher education. It is also, of course, a matter of personal ethics. Cases of plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the assignment and will be reported to the Dean of Students. The Writing Center offers a helpful guide to the correct use and citation of sources: [“Using Outside Sources”](#)

### Week 1

9/3 Introduction

Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow, “Endgame?” *The Nation* (July 21/28, 2014)  
<http://www.thenation.com/article/180490/endgame>

## Unit 1: Past Natures and Environmental Narratives

## Week 2

9/8 *Narratives of Nature*

William Cronon, "Introduction: In Search of Nature," *Uncommon Ground*, 23-56. (Canvas)

Album: Unnatural Nature, *Uncommon Ground*, 57-66. (Canvas)

9/10 *Disease and Population*

Charles Mann, *1491*, ch. 1-4 (pp. 127-140 are optional)

## Week 3

9/15 *Agriculture and Technology*

Mann, *1491*, ch. 5-6 (chapter 7 is optional).

Short essay (1-2 pages): *Reading for Argument* – Choose one of the chapters assigned for today's reading. What is Mann's argument in this chapter? Identify a key piece of evidence that Mann uses to support that argument. What are the strengths of this piece of evidence and what are its limitations?

9/17 *The Pristine Myth*

Mann, *1491*, ch. 8-10.

## **Unit 2: Biodiversity, Extinction, and Science**

## Week 4

9/22 *Biological Globalization*

Writing workshop

Mann, "Prologue" and "Chapter 1," *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*. (Canvas)

9/24 *Gender, Nature, and Science*

Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*, introduction and ch. 1. (Canvas)

First paper due Friday 9/25 at noon

## **Week 5**

9/29 *Invasions and Pesticides*

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, pp. 1-23, 155-172. (Canvas)

Joshua Blu Buhs, "The Fire Ant Wars: Nature and Science in the Pesticide Controversies of the Late Twentieth Century," *Isis* 93, no. 3 (September 2002): 377-400.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3080525>

10/1 *The Sixth Great Extinction*

Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin, *The Sixth Extinction: Patterns of Life and the Future of Humankind* (New York: Doubleday, 1995): 38-71, 149-170, 195-217. (Canvas)

## **Week 6**

10/6 *Visions of the Future*

Caroline Fraser, "The Predicta Moth" and "Resurrection Ecology," *Rewilding the World: Dispatches from the Conservation Revolution* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009): 1-14, 281-299. (Canvas)

Carl Zimmer, "Bringing Them Back to Life," *National Geographic* (April 2013).  
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/04/125-species-revival/zimmer-text> (and associated photo gallery)

Moises Velasquez-Manoff, "Should You Fear the Pizzly Bear?" *The New York Times*, August 14, 2014.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/17/magazine/should-you-fear-the-pizzly-bear.html?ref=earth&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/17/magazine/should-you-fear-the-pizzly-bear.html?ref=earth&_r=0)

## **Unit 3: Environmentalisms**

10/8 *The History of Wilderness*

Henry David Thoreau, "Walking" (1862), *The Great New Wilderness Debate*: 31-41. (Canvas)

Aldo Leopold, "Wilderness" and "The Land Ethic," *The Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (1949): 188-226. (Canvas)

## **Week 7**

10/13 No class – Fall break

10/15 *The Ethics of Wilderness*

Bill Devall and George Sessions, "On Cultivating Ecological Consciousness" (1985), *U.S. Environmentalism since 1985: A Brief History with Documents*, 89-92. (Canvas)

Dave Foreman, "Putting the Earth First," *Debating the Earth*, 358-364. (Canvas)

James D. Proctor, "Whose Nature? The Contested Moral Terrain of Ancient Forests," *Uncommon Ground*, 269-297. (Canvas)

### **Week 8**

10/20 *Critiques of Wilderness*

William Cronon, "The Trouble With Wilderness," *Uncommon Ground*, 69-90. (Canvas)

Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, 231-245. (Canvas)

10/22 *Beyond Wilderness: Pollution and Environmental Consciousness*

Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities*, 1-76.

Film showing: 7:00pm, room to be announced

### **Week 9**

10/27 *Environmental Justice and Diverse Environmentalisms*

Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities*, 77-135.

10/29 *Pollution, Regulation, and Inequality*

Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities*, 136-182.

Danya Al-Saleh and Mohammed Rafi Arefin, "Doing Environmental Studies During Times of Racialized Violence," *Edge Effects* (December 9, 2014).

<http://edgeeffects.net/environmental-justice-race-violence/>

## **Unit 4: Population, Consumption, and Sustainability**

### **Week 10**

11/3 *Population Growth and Resource Limits*

Thomas Malthus, "An Essay on the Principle of Population" (1798), excerpt and commentary in *The Future of Nature: Documents of Global Change*, eds. Libby Robin, Sverker Sorlin, and Paul Warde, 19-30. (Canvas)

Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*, and Donella H. Meadows and Dennis L. Meadows, *The Limits to Growth* (1972), excerpts, *U.S. Environmentalism since 1945*, 58-66. (Canvas)

Second paper due at the beginning of class

11/5 *Models of the Commons*

Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science*, December 13, 1968.  
<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243.full>

Arthur F. McEvoy, "Toward an Interactive Theory of Nature and Culture: Ecology, Production, and Cognition in the California Fishing Industry," *The Ends of the Earth*, ed. Donald Worster (Cambridge University Press, 1988): 211-229. (Canvas)

**Week 11**

11/10 *Automobiles and Oil*

Peter Dauvergne, *The Shadows of Consumption*, preface, ch. 1, 3-10 (chapter 2 optional)

Brian Black, "Oil for Living: Petroleum and American Conspicuous Consumption," *Journal of American History* 99 (June 2012): 40-50.  
<http://jah.oxfordjournals.org/content/99/1/40.full>

11/12 *What Do We Eat?*

Dauvergne, *The Shadows of Consumption*, ch. 11-18.

**Week 12**

11/17 *Environmental Mobilization and Its Limits*

Dauvergne, *The Shadows of Consumption*, ch. 19-24.

11/19 *Green Capitalism and Sustainability*

Herman E. Daly, "Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem," *Debating the Earth*, 285-289. (Canvas)

Hawken, Paul, Lovins, Amory et al, "The Next Industrial Revolution," *Natural Capitalism* (1999): 1-21. (Canvas)



Michael Maniates, "Going Green? Easy Doesn't Do It," *Washington Post* (November 22, 2007)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/21/AR2007112101856.html>

## **Unit 5: Climate Change and the Anthropocene**

### **Week 13**

11/24 *Climate and History*

Geoffrey Parker, "Crisis and Catastrophe: The Global Crisis of the Seventeenth Century Reconsidered," *American Historical Review* 113 (October 2008): 1053-1079.

<http://ahr.oxfordjournals.org/content/113/4/1053.full.pdf+html>

Paul Sabin, "'The Ultimate Environmental Dilemma': Making a Place for Historians in the Climate Change and Energy Debates," *Environmental History* 15 (January 2010): 76-93.

<http://envhis.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/1/76.full.pdf+html>

11/26 No class – Thanksgiving break

### **Week 14**

12/1 *Climate Narratives*

Mark Carey, "The History of Ice: How Glaciers Became an Endangered Species," *Environmental History* 12, no. 3 (July 2007): 497-527.

<http://envhis.oxfordjournals.org/content/12/3/497.full.pdf+html>

Preparation for World Climate Exercise

12/2 Recommended event: film showing and discussion with Prof. Strick, *Merchants of Doubt*, 7pm, Stahr Auditorium, Stager Hall

12/3 *Climate Solutions?*

World Climate Exercise (in-class role play)

### **Week 15**

12/8 *The Anthropocene?*

Debrief from exercise

“The Anthropocene: A Man-Made World,” *The Economist* (May 26, 2011)  
<http://www.economist.com/node/18741749>

Rob Nixon, “The Anthropocene: The Promise and Pitfalls of an Epochal Idea,” *Edge Effects* (November 6, 2014).  
<http://edgeeffects.net/anthropocene-promise-and-pitfalls/>

Short essay (1-2 pages): *Reflection on World Climate Exercise* – What did you learn from the role play? Has the exercise affected your motivation to take action to combat climate change?

12/10 *Climate Futures*

Paolo Bacigalupi, “The Tamarisk Hunter,” *Pump Six and Other Stories*, 123-135.  
(Canvas)

Kim Stanley Robinson, “Venice Drowned,” *The Best of Kim Stanley Robinson*, 1-18.  
(Canvas)

Naomi Klein, “Introduction” and “Conclusion,” *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, 1-28, 449-466. (Canvas)

*Final paper due 12/17 at 4:00pm*