

Environmental Studies: The Humanistic Perspective
The University of Wisconsin-Madison
Summer 2017

Environmental Studies 113; Course #68431
Mon-Thurs 9:00-11:30
Grainger 2190

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Course Description

Environmental Studies 113 explores the interconnection between humans and the environment, focusing on cultural representations of people, nature, and non-humans (including animals and plants). Discourses, practices, and policies concerned with the natural environment are deeply informed by both scientific and social values. We will examine the environmental movement in the United States to uncover the complicated ways in which concepts of “Nature,” environment, wilderness, and wild-ness have been constructed, contested, and redefined over time, and the ways in which this legacy continues to influence the interrelationships between humans, wildlife and the environment.

Certainly, perceptions of the environment and its wild inhabitants are influenced by a far greater range of representations than those produced by the scientific community. It is also important to consider the ways in which representations in film, art, television, literature, and the popular media all contribute to the construction of knowledges and expectations regarding the environment and its conservation. These representations coalesce and collide in place and time, forming notions and counter-notions regarding the character, meaning, and value of human-environment and human-animal relationships. Throughout the course of the semester, we will

examine examples narratives and images to illustrate the ways in which issues of concern are characterized and debated within American society. The goal of this class is to explore these changing ideas about nature, in order to understand the roots of current environmental dilemmas

You will be exposed to a variety of perspectives and ways of looking at the world in this class. Some of these ideas you may agree with, others you may not. It is not my role to tell you what to think, but instead to offer you guidance on how to approach, examine, and begin to think critically about these complex issues. This will require effort on your part, including conscientious attendance, careful reading of assigned articles and constructive participation in class exercises and discussions. **Consistent attendance and participation in class is absolutely essential for success in this class.**

Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third day of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work directly with the student in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. Please refer to <https://mcburney.wisc.edu/> for more information.

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to students.wisc.edu/student-conduct/academic-integrity/.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty members have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity, and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions.

Please SILENCE your electronic devices before the start of class. If you are talking on your phone, texting, listening to music, surfing the web, Facebooking, Tweeting, etc. during class you will not receive credit for attendance that day and you may be asked to leave.

Contacting the Instructor

The best way to reach me is by email. Please give me 24 hours to respond to your emails (and 48 hours Friday to Sunday.) Please remember to sign your emails, first and last name.

Assignments

Late assignments are not accepted.

1. *Participation*: **Class attendance and participation are mandatory.** There will be unannounced exercises in class drawing from the readings of the week. Some of these exercises will be turned in for credit; others will be graded for content. **Come to class prepared!**

2. *Environmental Humanities in the News*: Students are asked to bring in an **average of one article** from a major news source **each week** where the environmental humanities figure prominently, for a total of **FOUR (4)** over the course of the semester. These should be one full page in length (double spaced). Students should write a response to the article, including **critical reflection** and drawing **connections between these current events and larger issues discussed in class.** Students are invited to present their articles in class in order to stimulate discussion.

3. *Reading Responses*: Students will write a **brief critical response** to assigned course readings (marked with a ¶ symbol on the course schedule). These should be **at least** one full page in length (double spaced). Students should turn in **FOUR (4)** of these over the course of the semester, and are **due the day that the reading is discussed in class.**

4. *Leading In-Class Discussion*: Each student will be assigned one class day where they will be responsible for **presenting a summary and critique** of an assigned reading.

6. *Final Essay*: The **final paper will be 3-5 double-spaced pages** that responds to a book from the “Reaktion” series, focusing on a less charismatic species. More detailed instructions will be given in class. Due in class on the last class day, **late papers are not accepted.**

7. *Presentation*: Students will present a **10 minute presentation** on their essay. These presentations should include the use of audio/visual aids to better engage the class with their topic.

Summer 2017 Assignments	1	2	3	4
EH in the News				
Reading Response				

Lead In-Class	Due Date:
Final Essay	Due Date: July 13
Presentation	Due Date:

Grading

Participation (Attendance, in-class activities)	300 points
News Articles	100 points
Reading Responses	200 points
Leading Class Discussion	50 points
Species Essay	300 points
Presentation	50 points
Total	1000 points

The following scale will be used to determine your final letter grade.

A (925+); AB (875-924); B (825-874); BC (775-824); C (695-774); D (600-694); F (Below 600)

Course Materials

All course readings will be distributed electronically, you can access them the Learn@UW page for this course. You should also check Learn@UW with some frequency for discussion questions, extra readings, and general announcements.

You are only required to purchase one book for this class. **You will pick ONE from the following volumes on the Reaktion Animal Series (choose ONLY from these volumes.)**

These books are widely available, new and used, and Amazon.com. (Learn more about the series <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/series/RB-A.html>)

Ant. Sleight, C. 2004.

Bee. Preston, C. 2006.

Beetle. Dodd, A. 2016.

Chicken. Potts, A. 2012.

Cockroach. Copeland, M. 2003.

Crow. Sax, B. 2004.

Badger. Justice, D. 2015.

Eel. Schweid, R. 2009.

Fly. Conner, S. 2006.

Guinea Pig. Yamamoto, D. 2015.

Leech. Kirk, R. 2013.

Lizard. Sax, B. 2017.

Lobster. King, 2011.

Moth. Gandy, M. 2016.

Pigeon. Allen, B. 2009.

Ostrich. Williams, E. 2013.

Oyster. Stott, R. 2004.

Salmon. Coates, P. 2006.

Scorpion. Pryke, L. 2016.

Skunk. Miller, A. 2015.

Snail. Williams, P. 2009.

Spider. Michalski, K. 2010.

Trout. Owen, J. 2011.

Vulture. Van Dooren, T. 2011.

Wild Boar. Yamamoto, D. 2017.

Week 1: Nature-Cultures		
Mon 06/19	Intro to Environmental Humanities	Introduction to Course: What are the Environmental Humanities?
Tues 06/20	Nature-Cultures: Conceptualizing Nature and Wilderness	What is Nature? Representing Nature
Wed 06/21	Nature-Cultures: Conceptualizing Nature and Wilderness	♣ Cronon, <i>The Trouble with Wilderness</i>
Thurs 06/22	Nature-Cultures: Domestication and Domination	♣ Tuan, <i>Animal Pets: Cruelty and Affection</i> ♣ Haraway, <i>Chicken for shock and awe: war on words</i>
Week 2: Humanities and the Environment		
Mon 06/26	Ethics and Conservation	□ Leopold, <i>Thinking Like a Mountain</i> □ Sorlin, <i>Environmental Humanities: Why Should Biologists Interested in the Environment Take the Humanities Seriously?</i>
Tues 06/27	Envi Humanities and Climate Change	♣ Rutherford, <i>Science and Storytelling</i> ♣ North, <i>What Happens to Fiction When Our Worst Climate Nightmares Start Coming True?</i>
Wed 06/28	City/Nature: Urban Environmental Humanities	♣ Rich, <i>Jungleland</i>
Thurs 06/29	Environmental Humanities, Toxicity, and Environmental Justice	♣ Nixon, <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i> ♣ Hohn, <i>Flint's Water Crisis and the 'Troublemaker' Scientist</i> ♣ Eligon, <i>A Question of Environmental Racism in Flint</i>

Week 3: Representing Wildlife		
Mon 07/03		Holiday
Tues 07/04		Holiday
Wed 07/05	Species Conservation, Charisma, and Celebrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Besel & Besel, <i>Whale Wars and the Public Screen</i> ♣ Maris, <i>Charismatic Mammals Can Help Guide Conservation</i> ♣ Glas, <i>Uninteresting, Strange, or Ugly: Protecting non-charismatic species</i>
Thurs 07/06	Representing Predatory Nature	♣ Plumwood, <i>Being Prey</i>
Week 4: Animating Nature		
Mon 07/10	New Species Geographies; Contact, Nativity, Invasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Cram, <i>Wild and Scenic Wasteland: Conservation Politics in the Nuclear Wilderness</i> ♣ Ritvo, <i>Invasion/Invasive</i>
Tues 07/11	Species Extinction and De-extinction	♣ Rich, <i>The Mammoth Cometh</i>
Wed 07/12	Presentations	Attendance Mandatory
Thurs 07/13	Presentations	Attendance Mandatory