

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 11

HUMANS AND NATURE IN AMERICA

WINTER TERM 2014

MWF 10
(X-hour: Th, noon-12:50pm)

202 Moore

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Office Hours:
T 10am-noon; W 2-3pm
or by appointment

“An increasing percentage of Americans know almost nothing about the natural world. As more and more of the population becomes urbanized in physical location and cultural perspective, more people are psychologically and spiritually distanced from intimate interaction with the environment.”

Stephanie Kaza, *The Attentive Heart*

“Our situation is tragic in another way. Often those who do comprehend our plight intellectually cannot feel it and hence are not moved to do much about it.”

David Orr, *Earth in Mind*

“I have seen students and others experience profound moments of awakening to global interdependence. As their minds open, they see that the environment is everything. It is not just where we live; it is the very reason we are alive.”

Stephanie Kaza, *The Attentive Heart*

Description

Using literary texts as the primary guides, this course will explore a variety of relationships between humans and the natural world in North America (primarily the USA) over the last 200 years. The literary texts will be supplemented by readings and contributions from other academic perspectives and disciplines; they all will highlight the myriad factors that influence any human's relationship with the natural world: from individual perceptions, thoughts and feelings to questions of gender, race, class and culture; from the political, economic and ethical ideas that guide people and their communities to the historical times and geographical places those communities inhabit. Intellectually, our goal will be to understand better the complexities and paradoxes inherent in humans' relationship with the natural world, and recognize ones that seem characteristically “American.” And with these in mind, we will work with the Office of Sustainability and conduct video interviews with Dartmouth students about their relationship with the natural world and their ideas about “sustainability.” Afterwards we will explore what the student perspectives have added to our classroom ideas.

Methodology

This course will offer three methodologies:

Much of the academic methodology will be familiar: there will be classes to attend and readings to do; quizzes to take and papers to write; there will be lectures and discussions and workshops. You will learn things in typical ways and your knowledge will be tested and evaluated. In this area of the course your challenge will be to analyze the divergent source materials and ideas you come across and then synthesize them—in other words, address the tensions they present.

The second methodology may not be as familiar, at least in an academic setting. It's an empirical/contemplative methodology, and it will require a skill I'll call “awareness.” As I'm using it here, awareness has a quality of alertness, of paying attention; it means waking up to the worlds that exist inside and outside of you at any given moment. It means being mindful, learning how to be “present,” in the moment, and without judgment. This can definitely be improved by academic learning, and that will happen this term. But it can't be accessed that way. To access it you first need to be able to stop what you're doing, notice where you are and what's around you—particularly the natural world around you. Along with that mindful awareness, you need to be able to consider what it is you know and why and how you know it. In doing this you will be opening up another way of investigating humans' relationship with the natural world, probably a more compelling and effective way, since it will feel more personally relevant.

The third methodology—an investigative, creative, and storytelling method that you will use in your group video projects—may be new as well, but it also may incorporate the first two. To encourage other students' stories about their relationship with the natural world and their ideas about sustainability, to listen openly to those stories and honor them, and to create a video from and about them, you'll want to understand ideas we've explored in class and the way those ideas pertain to your own relationship with the natural world. So, in conducting the project you may find the three methodologies interweaving.

Contemplative Place Assignments

One of the ways the “awareness” method will happen is through Contemplative Place Assignments (CPAs). No later than the second week of the term you will find a place nearby that you consider to be the “natural world,” where you can be alone and free from the distraction of other people. Twice this term, you will be asked to visit that place (you’re welcome to visit it more than that) and undertake particular assignments there. After each visit you will submit a write- up that will be evaluated.

There are many goals for the CPAs. Some have been alluded to in the “Methodology” section. Others I’ll mention in class. But the biggest one is:

- To become aware of what happens to your perceptions about the place, and perhaps even your attitudes about the natural world in general, when you visit it.

One of the benefits of an awareness practice like this is that once you become aware of your perceptions, attitudes and behaviors (in this course, toward the natural world), you can begin to change them if you want.

Readings

We will read the following book-length material:

John McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid* (1971)
The Journals of Lewis and Clark, ed. John Bakeless (1804-1806)
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)
Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge* (1991)

There are other required and optional readings; they will either be available on eReserves, which is accessible through the “Library Reserves” section on our Blackboard site, or as pdfs and accessible in the appropriate “Weekly Folder” on our Blackboard site. The syllabus or weekly assignment sheet will indicate where the reading may be found.

Written Work

Two CPAs (CPAs 1 and 3)	<i>approximately 15% of grade (7.5% apiece)</i>
One 3pp. Environmental Self/Perception essay (also known as CPA 2)	<i>approximately 10% of grade</i>
One 5-7 pp. Midterm Essay	<i>approximately 25% of grade</i>

Your work on the written assignments will be evaluated on its ability to address the assignment prompt directly and with depth and originality. It will also be evaluated relative to other students’ work submitted for that assignment. The best work is clear and focused and organized; it embraces the complexity of course ideas (and of your own ideas); and it is carefully written.

- Papers and CPAs are due to our Blackboard site by 5 PM on their respective due dates.

Group Video Project

As mentioned briefly in the “Description” and “Methodology” sections above, you will be part of a group that will interview a Dartmouth student about his/her relationship with the natural world and his/her ideas about “sustainability.” From that interview (or those interviews, if you decide to conduct more than one session), your group will produce two videos: a 2-3 minute video about that person’s relationship with the natural world; and a 45 second – 1-minute video about that person’s definition of “sustainability” and, based on that definition, what on the Dartmouth campus sustains him/her. The goal of these videos will be to help the Office of Sustainability better understand student attitudes toward sustainability; some videos may be used on their website.

The Final Video Project will account for approximately 35% of your final grade.

Quizzes

Because the term goes by so fast, and it is important to keep up with the reading in order to stay on top of the various written assignments, I give a quiz during each section of the course to give you some (more?) motivation to keep up with the reading. The quizzes will cover relevant course ideas, and sometimes offer practice for the longer writing assignments. The quiz format will either be short answer or timed essay, or a combination of the two. If you miss a quiz because of an “unexcused absence” (see explanation below), you will not be able to make it up. If you are unable to take a quiz because of an “excused absence,” you should contact me to schedule a time to make it up.

The quizzes will account for approximately 5% of your final grade.

Attendance

I expect you to attend every class. However, there may be situations, including sickness or College commitments that prevent you from attending a class; in those cases, I expect that you will let me know about them ahead of time. If you’re not in class and I haven’t heard from you by class time, it counts as an “unexcused absence.” If you have more than one unexcused absence during the term, your final grade will be affected.

Intangibles

Though most of your final grade will depend on the work you do on the written assignments and the video project, I also like to give credit for what I call “intangibles”—things like your investment in the course, participation in class discussions, your effort on assignments, etc. This helps to give a more “rounded” quality to your final grade.

Intangibles will account for up to 10% of your final grade.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (205 Collis Student Center, 646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Dartmouth Honor Principle

Be sure to think about the [Dartmouth Academic Honor Principle](#) as it relates to this class, particularly with respect to independent work on quizzes, and original work and properly and accurately referenced sources on papers and videos. Be sure to ask me if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism on course assignments.

The Research Center for Writing and Information Technology (RWIT)

The Student Center for Research, Writing and Information Technology (RWIT) is a place where you can meet with an undergraduate tutor to discuss a paper, research project, or multi-media assignment. The RWIT tutors are trained to help you at any phase of your process. Whether you are brainstorming or planning, drafting or structuring, tweaking or polishing, the RWIT tutors can provide feedback that will help you. RWIT is located at 183 Berry Library. You can try their walk-in hours, or you can schedule an appointment by going to <http://dartmouth.edu/writing-speech/learning/support-writing-research-and-composing-technology/rwit>.

ENVS 11 '14 W Tentative Schedule

Jan.	6	M	Introduction to the Course; Orr, "The Problem of Disciplines . . ." (Blackboard)
	8	W	Creation Stories
		Read	<p>"Genesis I-III" (eReserves)</p> <p>Bruchac, Preface, Foreword, and "The Coming of Gluskabi," from <i>The Wind Eagle</i> (Blackboard)</p> <p>Introduction, "Telling Stories," "Gluskabi Makes the People," "Gluskabi Changes the Animals," "The Faithful Hunter," "The Deer Wife," and "How Indian Summer Came to Be," from <i>The Faithful Hunter</i> (Blackboard)</p> <p>Silko, "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination" (eReserves)</p> <p>CPA #1 available on Blackboard</p> <p>Discussion of CPA #1</p>
	9	Th (x-hour)	Creation Stories
		Read	Gleiser, "Creation Myths" (Blackboard)
		Watch	Marcelo Gleiser on "Creation Myths" (eReserves)
	10	F	<p>GUEST SPEAKER: JESSE BRUCHAC ON ABENAKI CREATION STORIES, LANGUAGE AND MUSIC</p> <p>Review Abenaki stories from Wednesday's assignments.</p> <p>Read White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis" (Blackboard)</p> <p>Mann, selection from "A View from Above," from <i>1491</i> (Blackboard)</p> <p>Paul, "The Neuroscience of Your Brain on Fiction," <i>New York Times</i> (Blackboard)</p> <p>Suggested Reading: Gottschall, "The Witchery of Story," from <i>The Storytelling Animal</i> (Blackboard)</p>
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	13	M	<p>Taking Baselines; American Mythos</p> <p>Read Glotfelty, "Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis" (eReserves)</p> <p><i>Encounters with the Archdruid</i> Part I</p> <p><u>Quiz:</u> Short answer on Genesis, Abenaki stories, Bruchac, Silko, Gleiser, White, Mann and Paul</p>
	14	T	<p>CPA #1 Due to Blackboard by 5pm</p> <p>Environment/Self Perception Essay Assignment (also known as CPA #2) available on Blackboard</p>
	15	W	<i>Encounters with the Archdruid</i> Parts I and II;
	16	Th (x-hour)	<i>Encounters with the Archdruid</i> Part II
			5-minute essay Quiz on Part II; Bring Reading Question into Class

- 17 F Perceptions and the Environment
 Read Dillard, "Seeing" (eReserves)
 Louv, "Singing for Bears," from *The Nature Principle*. (Blackboard)
- Suggested Reading: Simons and Chabris, "Gorillas in our Midst . . ." (Blackboard)
Encounters with the Archdruid Part III

VISIT TO CLASS BY ROSI KERR AND JENNA MUSCO, OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

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- 20 M MLK Jr. Day NO CLASS TODAY
- 22 W CLASS MEETS IN STARR INSTRUCTIONAL CENTER, JONES MEDIA CENTER
 Video and iMovie Introduction by Susan Simon

- 23 Th (x-hour) Read Shepard, "Introduction" to *Nature and Madness* (eReserves)
- Watch "A Stroke of Insight" by Jill Bolte Taylor
http://video.ted.com/talks/podcast/JillBolteTaylor_2008_480.mp4
- Suggested Viewing: Paul Whalen, TEDx Darmouth talk about emotions and the brain
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeAMRUUnrgBA>

- 24 F Lewis and Clark: Preparation for the Journey and Scholarly Imagination
- Read Jefferson, "Letter to Meriwether Lewis" (Blackboard)
Journals of Lewis & Clark (Bakeless ed.) through p. 115
- Suggested Reading: Wilson "The Enlightenment" (Blackboard)

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- 27 M Read *Journals of Lewis & Clark* through p. 115
 Isenberg, "The Genesis of the Nomads" (eReserves)
- Watch Colin Calloway, on "Lewis & Clark and Native Americans" (eReserves)

- 28 T **Environment/Self Perception Assignment (CPA #2) Due to Blackboard by 5pm**
CPA #3 available on Blackboard

- 29 W The Case of Demon Hill/Spirit Mound
- Read Selected entries from online journals (see separate assignment sheet)
 Martin and Szuter, "War Zones and Game Sinks" (Blackboard)

Quiz on Lewis & Clark and Martin & Szuter

- 30 Th (x-hour) Read Morrison, *Beloved* through p. 158 (Vintage edition), p. 134 (Plume)
- Watch video lecture: Professor Bill Cook, "The Kicking Antelope: An Introduction to *Beloved*" (eReserves)

Midterm Essay Assignment Available on Blackboard

- 31 F Read *Beloved* through p. 257 (Vintage), p. 218 (Plume)
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Feb	3	M	Read	<i>Beloved</i> through end Merchant, “Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History” (Blackboard)
	4	T		CPA #3 Due to Blackboard by 5pm
	5	W		Race, Culture and the Natural World; Environmental Justice Read DiChiro, “Nature as Community” (Blackboard) Mohai, “Dispelling Old Myths: African American Concern for the Environment” (Blackboard) Look at the “Pickup and Go!” website: http://www.pickupandgo.net/index.html Look at the “Growing Power” website: http://www.growingpower.org/Index.htm Look at the “Outdoor Afro” website: http://www.outdoorafro.com Look at the “Clean Greens Farm” website: http://www.cleangreensfarm.com Suggested Reading: Cole and Foster, “History of the Environmental Justice Movement” (Blackboard)
	6	Th		Video Check-In Session, Jones Media Center
	7	F		CARNIVAL HOLIDAY—NO CLASS TODAY

	10	M	Read	Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness” (eReserves) Mann, “Artificial Wilderness,” from <i>1491</i> (Blackboard)
	11	T		Midterm Essay Due to Blackboard by 5pm.
	12	W	Read	Leopold, “The Land Ethic” (eReserves) Parker, “Pragmatism and Environmental Thought” (Blackboard) Suggested Viewing: <i>Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for our Time</i> (eReserves) Quiz on Leopold, Parker, Cronon, Mann, Kahn, Louv
	13	Th		Video Check-In Session, Jones Media Center
	14	F	Read	Louv, from <i>The Nature Principle</i> Video Rough Cuts Due by 5pm

17	M	Read	<i>Refuge</i> through p. 166 Manes, “Nature and Silence” (Blackboard)
			Video Rough Cut Meetings with Office of Sustainability
18	T		Video Rough Cut Meetings with Office of Sustainability
19	W	Read	<i>Refuge</i> through end Abram, “In the Landscape of Language” (eReserves)
20	Th (x-hour)		<i>Refuge</i>
21	F	Read	<i>Refuge</i> Abbey, “Deadman at Grandview Point” (eReserves)
			Quiz on Refuge, Abram, Manes, Abbey
			Videos Project Due by 5pm

24	M	Read	Kahn, “Generational Environmental Amnesia,” from <i>Technological Nature</i> (Blackboard) “Adaptation and the Future of Human Life” from <i>Technological Nature</i> (Blackboard) Rifkin, from <i>The Empathic Civilization</i>
26	W		VIDEO PRESENTATIONS
27	Th		VIDEO PRESENTATIONS
28	F		VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

March	3	M	VIDEO PRESENTATIONS
	5	W	NO CLASS
	7	F	NO CLASS
