Environmental Studies 282
Introduction to Environmental Studies
Fall 2013

TTH, 11:30-1:00, Kolf 159

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Course Description: ES 282 is an interdisciplinary humanities course that examines how social, religious, aesthetic, scientific, and philosophical ideas about nature have changed over time, and how these attitudes and values continue to inform our understanding of environmental issues. Students will critically analyze current and past environmental issues, movements, and leading thinkers by studying literature, personal essays, cultural critiques, and philosophical arguments. This class will focus on four periods of environmental thought: Progressive Era conservation; postwar environmentalism; critiques of environmentalism; and the emergence of sustainability. We will discuss the major currents of thought and key figures of each of these periods and discuss how and why ideas and attitudes about nature have changed over time.

The ability to identify core ideas, and the values and ethics that are associated with them, is a fundamental skill of the environmental humanities and environmental studies. Environmental issues are so controversial precisely because they often represent divergent attitudes and ideas about nature. A stand of trees that to one person looks like a source of income, for example, might for another person serve as a place of beauty or a site of ecological study. In addition, the social and scientific solutions that we devise to tackle the conflicts that arise from these divergent perspectives derive from their own historical contexts. Understanding and resolving environmental issues requires a sense of environmental history and the ability to identify the assumptions that underlie divergent ideas about nature.

The course has several additional objectives. One of these is to introduce you to the Environmental Studies program at UW Oshkosh, and to prepare you for a career dealing with environmental issues. To this end, we will be examining jobs in environmental fields, and students will be asked to prepare resumes and cover letters as if they were applying for these positions. We will also be participating in a resume and cover letter workshop. Writing is a critical skill, both in the workplace and for life in general. An additional goal of this class is to practice professional writing, to provide students with this important skill.

This class will also contribute to your liberal arts education. A liberal arts education focuses on general learning, intellectual ability, and critical thinking rather than technical or professional skills. The goal of this class is not just to convey specific information about environmental history & thought (although you will learn much about this) but to teach you how to interpret this information critically, and how to understand modern environmental issues in their social, historical, and political contexts.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completing this course, students will:

- understand how ideas and attitudes about nature and our perceptions of environmental problems have *changed over time*, and what have been the major periods of environmental thought (such as conservation, environmentalism, or sustainability).
- understand the significance of *key works* in the environmental humanities (such as the writings of John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson).
- understand the role of *values and ethics* in creating and resolving environmental issues and the role of the humanities in the discipline of Environmental Studies.
- will be able to apply *critical thinking* skills to environmental issues, including the ability to interpret, analyze, and evaluate evidence and to construct well-supported, clearly articulated, and sustained arguments.
- will be able to *effectively communicate* their own analytical conclusions about environmental issues in written form and be able to effectively use the writing process (organizing, drafting, editing, re-writing).

Attendance & Participation: Your participation in discussions and other class activities is required. Come to class each week prepared to discuss reading assignments. Your attendance is essential to the success of the course, and your grade will begin to drop if you miss more than two classes. There will be no opportunity to make up short assignments or missed class sections. If you have more than five unexcused absences, you will fail the course. An “unexcused absence” is any

absence for which you cannot provide a note from a doctor, another professor, or some other documented explanation. If you simply cannot make a class, please contact me before the class meets.

Peer Editing & the Writing Process: The improvement of written communication skills is a key learning outcome for this class. We will be spending extensive time in class discussing and workshopping thesis writing, the use of evidence, the communication of complicated ideas in written form, and other topics related to writing. Peer editing will be an important part of this process. For each of the four papers, students will edit each other's papers. Final versions of each paper are due on the assigned date. Time in-class will be provided for peer editing. To receive full credit on each assignment, students must fully participate in the peer editing process. This means bringing a finished product to class on the day that it is due and also effective and good-faith editing of the papers of your peers.

Readings: There are two required books, both available at the University Book Store and on reserve at Polk Library:

- Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (1949; Ballantine Books edition, publ. 1986). **Important: Please be sure to purchase the Ballantine books edition**
- Elizabeth D. Blum, *Love Canal Revisited: Race, Class, and Gender in Environmental Activism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010).
- David Stradling, *The Environmental Moment: 1968-1972* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).

The rest of the course readings will be available electronically through the Polk Library E-Reserve. These are REQUIRED readings; you are strongly urged bring them with you to class (in print or on a laptop, iPad, or e-reader) so that you make use them to aid in class discussion.

Course Policies and Conduct: All of us must do our best to be intellectually honest and tolerant of personal differences. Environmental topics are often controversial, and we all have our own beliefs. I hope that everyone will feel safe to express an idea, even if that idea is not a popular one. There are some university guidelines for behavior that I expect all of us to abide by as well. One of these has to do with plagiarism, or taking credit for the work of others. This is a serious offense and will be treated according to university guidelines; failure of the course is a potential outcome of academic dishonesty. This doesn't mean you shouldn't talk with other students about what you are thinking or writing; but when you write something on a paper or exam, it must be in your own words, not copied from someone else. We will discuss what plagiarism means more fully during the course of the semester. If you have any questions about academic honesty, and what might or might not be considered plagiarism, please ask, rather than taking a risk with grave consequences.

Please let me know what I can do to accommodate any disabilities that you might have.

Grading Breakdown and Course Requirements: Students will be evaluated on the following components, each of which will be discussed in more detail during class:

• Attendance and participation: 25% • Response Papers, Quizzes, short assignments: 5% • Paper 1—Conservation: 15% • Paper 2—Environmentalism: 15%	• Paper 3— Critiques of Environmentalism: 15% • Final Paper—Emergence of Sustainability 25% • Resume & Cover Letter Assignment: P/F

Grading Scale

A 93-100	B- 80-82	D+ 67-69
A- 90-92	C+ 77-79	D 63-66
B+ 87-89	C 73-76	D- 60-62
B 83-86	C- 70-72	F 59 and below

Course Calendar

Wk 1: Thursday, September 5 – Introduction, Course Themes, & Environmental Ethics

Wk 2: Tuesday, September 10 – Defining Conservation

Reading: Stradling, *Conservation in the Progressive Era*, ER
Pinchot, "The Fight for Conservation," ER
Roosevelt, "Special Message from the President," ER

Reading Response (1-2 pgs.): What is the relationship between "Conservation" and "Progress"? Be sure to underline your thesis.

Thursday, September 12 – Conservation Debated

Reading: Knapp, "The Other Side of Conservation," ER
Mattes, "Another National Blunder, ER
Muir, "The Revolt Against Utilitarianism," ER
Olney, "Water Supply for the Cities About the Bay of San Francisco," ER

Familiarize yourself with the ES Jobs & Careers website, http://www.uwosh.edu/es/internships-jobs, identify one job that interests you, and be prepared to discuss what skills you would need to get this job and how you might be able to acquire these skills.

Wk 3: Tuesday, September 17 – Conservation Applied

Reading: "Johnson, Conservation, Subsistence, & Class," ER

Thursday, September 19 – The Gender of Conservation

Reading: Merchant, "Women and Conservation," ER
Mrs. Marion Crocker Argues for the Conservation Imperative, ER
Wright, *The Friendship of Nature*, ER

Wk 4: Tuesday, September 24 – **Paper 1 Due;** Peer editing in class

No Reading

Thursday, September 26 – Green Jobs Panel; details TBA

No Reading; **Paper 1 Revisions Due**

Wk 5: Tuesday, October 1 – Towards Environmentalism

Reading: Worster, "Grass to Dust," ER
Hays, "From Conservation to Environmentalism," ER

Thursday, October 3 - Rachel Carson & the Emergence of Ecology

Reading: Stradling, *The Environmental Moment*, pp. xi-34
Brower, "The Place No One Knew," ER
Lear, "Rachel Carson's Ecological Vision," (skim) ER

Wk 6: Tuesday, October 8 – Issues of Environmentalism 1

Reading: Stradling *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 35-105, as discussed in class

Reading response (1-2 pgs.): How do the different issues discussed in these documents relate to each other? What makes them documents of "environmentalism"? Refer to at least four documents, quote specific evidence, and underline your thesis.

Thursday, October 10 – Issues of Environmentalism 2

Reading: Stradling *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 106-138

Reading response (1 paragraph): Why did environmentalism provoke such different responses? Refer to at least 2 of today's readings in your answer.

Wk 7: Tuesday, October 15 – Aldo Leopold & the Land Ethic 1

Reading: Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, preface, pp. 1-24, 40-47, 72-82, 101-146

Thursday, October 17 – Aldo Leopold & the Land Ethic 2; Cover Letter & Resume Workshop

Reading: Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, pp. 177-236

Wk 8: Tuesday, October 22 – Aldo Leopold & the Land Ethic 3
Reading: Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, pp. 237-295
Thursday, October 24 – **Paper 2 due;** peer editing in class
No Reading

Wk 9: Tuesday, October 29 – Love Canal and Environmental Activism; **Paper 2 revisions due**
Reading: Blum, *Love Canal Revisited*, pp. 1-63
Thursday, October 31 – Race, Class, and Environmentalism at Love Canal
Reading: Blum, *Love Canal Revisited*, pp. 63-150 (skim 120-150)
Reading Response: 1) Craft a 1-paragraph argument (underline your thesis statement) explaining how race, class, and gender help us to better understand Love Canal; 2) Using Blum's terms and arguments, briefly (1 paragraph) analyze the class, race, or gender dynamics of a local and/or modern environmental issue (Fox River cleanup, Rosendale Dairy, etc.)

Wk 10: Tuesday, November 5 – Environmental Justice in Theory and Practice
Reading: McGurty, "From NIMBY to Civil Rights," ER
"The Letter that Shook a Movement," ER
Thursday, November 7 – Deep Ecology & Radical Environmentalism
Reading: Peterson del Mar, "Radical Departures," ER
Sessions & Devall, "Deep Ecology," ER
Abbey and Foreman, "Monkeywrenching," ER
Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*, ER

Wk 11: Tuesday, November 12 – Anti-Environmentalism
Reading: Turner, "The Specter of Environmentalism," ER
Singer, "The Costs of Environmental Overregulation," ER
Thursday, November 14 – The Death of Environmentalism
Reading: Shellenberger and Nordhaus, "The Death of Environmentalism." ER

Wk 12: Tuesday, November 19 – **Paper 3 due; Peer editing in class**
No Reading
Thursday, November 21 – The Rise of Sustainability 1; **Paper 3 revisions due**
Reading: Edwards, *Sustainability Revolution*, ER

Wk 13: Tuesday, November 26 – The Rise of Sustainability 2
Reading: Daly, *Beyond Growth*, ER
Agyeman, "Where Justice and Sustainability Meet," ER
Thursday, November 28 – Thanksgiving Break

Wk 14: Tuesday, December 3 – Paths to Sustainability 1
Reading: Fricker, "Measuring Up to Sustainability," ER
Reading Response (1 pg.): What is Fricker's main argument? Why is sustainability so hard to measure, and how does Fricker suggest that we deal with this challenge?
Thursday, December 5 – Paths to Sustainability 2
Reading: Orr, "Four Challenges of Sustainability," ER
Jensen, "Forget Shorter Showers," ER
Jensen, "Resistance Resisters," ER

Wk 15: Tuesday, December 10 – **Final Paper due**; peer editing in class
Thursday, December 12 – Final Class Discussion
No Reading; Final Papers due at start of class