

GEOGRAPHY 3800, SP2021: Environment and Society

TU/TH 11:10-12:30, in CBEC 130 (Synchronous online for first two weeks of the semester)
See the Carmen site for course material, assignments and drop-boxes, grades, and Zoom links
OSU Tech Help and Support: <https://ocio.osu.edu/help>, 614-688-HELP (4357)

CONTACT

Professor Becky Mansfield

Contact me through Carmen (best) or by email: mansfield.32@osu.edu

Office hours: informally after class (in-person) or by appointment (by Zoom)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is about how people relate to the natural environment. Are humans separate from nature, or are they a part of it? Can humans ultimately control the natural world, or does the natural world determine the course of human history? How are ideas about differences among people—for example, ideas about race and gender—related to ideas about nature, and vice versa? Are some groups of people “closer to nature” than others? Is the earth made for humans to use? Is nature socially constructed? Does solving environmental problems require us to change how we think about nature? What does social inequality have to do with human-environment interactions—and vice versa, what do human-environment interactions have to do with issues of social inequality, such as racism? This course grounds exploration of these questions in a geographical perspective, which emphasizes the *multiple ways that humans and nature are always entangled*. The course provides historical perspective and addresses how ideas about humans and nature have changed very recently, in what is now known as the Anthropocene. The course focuses especially on the entangled emergence of ideas about *nature* and *race* and the implications for a range of social and environmental issues today.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students can describe key concepts, recurring themes, and important authors and thinkers in enduring debates about human-nature relations in geography and beyond
2. Students can compare these ideas and approaches in terms of content and historical-geographical context
3. Students can identify implications of different ideas and approaches for real-world human-nature relations
4. Students can apply concepts to identify and understand human-nature relations in contemporary life

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

This course meets the requirements of the GE for *Social Sciences: Human, Natural, and Economic Resources*, for which there are three learning objectives:

1. Students understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as they are applied to the study of the use and distribution of human, natural, and economic resources and decisions and policies concerning such resources. [See Course Objectives 1 and 2]
2. Students understand the political, economic, and social trade-offs reflected in individual decisions and societal policymaking and enforcement and their similarities and differences across contexts. [See Course Objectives 2, 3, and 4]
3. Students comprehend and assess the physical, social, economic, and political sustainability of individual and societal decisions with respect to resource use. [See Course Objectives 3 and 4]

COURSE MATERIAL: READINGS AND VIDEOS

There is no single text for this course. The readings include a variety of articles, book chapters, and reports, drawn from multiple sources. We will watch several videos to supplement readings. Assigned materials serve as a textbook and a reader. Some provide facts and ideas to know (as a text), while others provide examples to think about and understand based on course ideas (as a reader).

Readings and videos—along with guidance and prompts—will be available in Carmen, posted in the appropriate module and with clear indication of due dates.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Read and post (30% of your final grade): About once *per week* (occasionally more or less) you will do a set of readings and provide a written response.

These assignments are for you to learn basic course material and to practice summarizing key concepts.

Activities (30% of your final grade): Once or twice *per module* you will do a short, related activity (e.g. watch a film, research a non-governmental organization) and provide a written analysis. You will view and comment online on other students' work.

These assignments are for you to identify the real-world implications of course concepts, and to practice applying them to interpret contemporary phenomena.

Summary and application (40% of your final grade): At the *end of each module* you will do a two-part assignment. First (in lieu of exams), you will respond to prompts about the core material for the module. Second, you will do a new activity that builds on the work you already did in that module's Activities, in which you apply course concepts to new material. We will dedicate in-class time to discuss these projects.

These assignments will ask you to synthesize material to compare key concepts, identify their implications, and apply them. You will also practice writing for different audiences.

Participation (0% of your grade: serves as extra credit). Everyone is expected to participate actively by attending class, joining small and large group discussions, doing in-class activities, and so forth.

I do not assign a separate participation grade but use it to bump your grade up if you are on the cusp of a higher grade at the end of the semester. For example, if you have 89.7 but were an active participant, you will get an A- in the course instead of B+. The bump can range from half to one full point, depending on your level of participation.

GRADING POLICIES

Grading: I grade all assignments on a 5-point scale (with half points possible):

5 (100%) is excellent

4 (80%) is satisfactory

3 (60%) is relevant but has significant problems

<3 is for assignments more significantly off the mark

Late policy:

- You can have extra time on assignments *if you communicate with me before the due date.*
- If you do not communicate before the due date, your grade will *lose one half point (out of 5) for every day it is late.*

Final grade cut-offs: A 93%, A- 90, B+ 87, B 83, B- 80, C+ 77, C 73, C- 70, D+ 67, D 60, E <60

PLEASE SEE ME IF YOU ARE HAVING PROBLEMS THAT PREVENT YOU FROM MEETING COURSE REQUIREMENTS. WE MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

DISABILITY SERVICES

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Day	Date	Topic	To do before class
MODULE 1: Nature, race, and environmental justice			
Tu	Jan 12	Introduction	
Th	Jan 14	Nature and Race	Read and post Pollan 2015 (New York Times Opinion) Miles 2019 (New York Times Opinion)
Tu	Jan 19	Continued	Activity Personal narrative and place
Th	Jan 21	Coronavirus as environmental	Read and post Jin 2020 (Politico cartoon) Gardiner 2020 (National Geographic) Carrington 2020 (The Guardian) Lerner and Bullard 2020 (The Intercept)
Tu	Jan 26	Environmental Justice	Read and post Goldman Prize on Margie Richard (website) Choose one from a list of 2020 media articles
Th	Jan 28	Continued	Summary and Application Landscape analysis
MODULE 2: Colonial views of nature and humans			
Tu	Feb 2	Beyond exposure: race and nature	Read and post Purdy 2015 (The New Yorker) Staples 2018 (New York Times Opinion)
Th	Feb 4	Worldviews: Nature and Humans	Read and post Merchant 1992 (book excerpt) Soper 1995 (book excerpt)
Tu	Feb 9	Continued	Activity Dr. Seuss's The Lorax 1972 (film)
Th	Feb 11	Colonial context	Read and post Voyles 2015 (book excerpt)
Tu	Feb 16	Continued	Activity Taylor Swift's Wildest Dreams 2014 (video)
Th	Feb 18	Continued	Summary and Application: Representations in Advertisements
Tu	Feb 23	NO CLASS: Break	
MODULE 3: Environmental awakening (1850-1950s) and traces today			
Th	Feb 25	19C environmental awakening	Read and post Benton and Short 2000 (book excerpt) Marsh 1864 (book excerpt)
Tu	Mar 2	Preservation and Conservation	Read and post Leopold 1949 (book excerpt) Robbins 2004 (book excerpt)
Th	Mar 4	20C Ecology and Culture	Activity Ancient Forests: Rage over Trees 1989 (documentary)
Tu	Mar 9	Traces today	Summary and Application: Goddess and the Computer 1988 (documentary) and compare with Ancient Forests

MODULE 4: Modern Environmentalism (1960s-2010s)			
Th	Mar 11	1960s Industrialization and Population	Read and post Dowie 1996 (book excerpt) Carson 1962 (book excerpt) Ehrlich 1969 (book excerpt)
Tu	Mar 16	1980s Sustainable Development and Deep Ecology	Read and post Adams 2020 (book excerpt) Devall and Sessions 1986 (book excerpt)
Th	Mar 18	Continued	Activity Environmental Organization 1
Tu	Mar 23	21 st C Anthropocene	Read and post Monastersky 2015 (Nature) Hecht 2015 (Aeon) Cronon 1994 (book excerpt)
Th	Mar 25	The trouble with wilderness	Activity Environmental Organization 2
Tu	Mar 30	Continued	Summary and Application: Characterize and compare ENGOs
Th	Apr 1	NO CLASS: Break	
MODULE 5: Contemporary debates of the Anthropocene			
Tu	Apr 6	Shifting baselines, de-extinction, ecomodernization, and/or the Half-Earth debate	Read and post TBD, based on student interest
Th	Apr 8	Continued	Activity TBD
Tu	Apr 13	New ontologies and Black and Indigenous environmental movements	Read and post TBD
Th	Apr 15	Continued	Read and post TBD
Tu	Apr 20	Summing up	Summary and Application Issues and movements today
Th	Apr 22	Continued	Continued

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT)

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's [Code of Student Conduct](#) (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism (see more below), collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me. Other sources of information on academic misconduct and academic integrity to which you can refer include:

- [The OSU Committee on Academic Misconduct](#) and its [Resources page](#)
- [Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity](#)
- [Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity](#)

Plagiarism: Plagiarism encompasses all activities in which you use another person's ideas without acknowledging that you are doing so. Plagiarism ranges from direct copying of someone else's words to using someone else's ideas without being clear the ideas are not yours. Please use citations to differentiate between your ideas and those you got from other sources (such as books, articles, and webpages).

Talking with other students on assignments: You may talk with other students when doing assignments, but the analysis and writing must be yours. I will question any assignments that are very similar. *Failure to follow these guidelines will be considered academic misconduct.*

OSU COUNSELING AND CONSULTATION SERVICES

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of these conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766). CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766) and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

DIVERSITY

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

HARASSMENT

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu.