

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY, GEOG 3800, SP 2024 (#29232)

BASIC INFORMATION

This in-person class meets Tuesday and Thursday 11:10AM - 12:30PM, in Derby Hall 1080.

Instructor: Professor Becky Mansfield, faculty member in the Department of Geography

Teaching Assistant: Rojika Sharma, graduate student in the Department of Geography

See the course Carmen for all information and course materials. If you need assistance with Carmen, please contact **OSU Tech Help and Support:** <https://ocio.osu.edu/help>, 614-688-HELP (4357)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Reasons you might want to contact us:

- You have questions about course material, assignments, or grades or you need an extension. *Please contact the Teaching Assistant before contacting Professor Mansfield.*
- You are having difficulties that prevent you from engaging fully in the course, whether those are related to health (including mental health), work, family, or anything else. *Please contact Professor Mansfield.*
- You want to learn more about course material or about opportunities beyond the course, e.g., research, internships, careers, other courses. *You can contact either of us.*

Contact Professor Becky Mansfield:

Talk to me directly. I am available after class (12:30-1:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays) or we can arrange an in-person or zoom meeting for another time. My office is 1054 Derby Hall. Or send a message via Carmen (best) or by email (mansfield.32@osu.edu). I will get back to you within 24 hours on weekdays (but I am unlikely to get back to you at all over the weekend).

Contact Teaching Assistant Rojika Sharma:

Talk to me directly. I am available 1:00-2:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays or we can arrange an in-person or zoom meeting for another time. My office is 1155 Derby Hall. Or send a message via Carmen or by email (sharma.1214@buckeyemail.osu.edu).

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is about how people relate to the natural environment, asking a series of questions that help us think about both social and environmental issues. Are humans separate from nature, or are they a part of it? Can humans ultimately control the natural world? 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? 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? Does solving environmental problems require us to change how we think about nature?

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.

The course format includes lectures, small group discussions, and large group discussions. There is an outside assignment associated most class meetings. There are no exams.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students can *recognize and 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 and contrast* these ideas and approaches in terms of their content, historical-geographical context, and implications for real-world human-nature relations
3. Students can *synthesize* across ideas to understand their interconnections and *apply* them to identify and understand human-nature relations in contemporary life

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

“New” GE Lived Environments Theme: Goals and learning objectives

1. Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.
 - a. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.
 - b. Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.
2. Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.
 - a. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.
 - b. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.
3. Successful students will explore a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment (e.g. agricultural, built, cultural, economic, intellectual, natural) in which humans live.

- a. Engage with the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions.
 - b. Describe examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space.
4. Successful students will analyze a variety of perceptions, representations and/or discourses about environments and humans within them.
- a. Analyze how humans' interactions with their environments shape or have shaped attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors
 - b. Describe how humans perceive and represent the environments with which they interact.
 - c. Analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around environments

“Legacy” GE Social Sciences: Human, Natural, and Economic Resources: 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.
- 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.
- 3. Students comprehend and assess the physical, social, economic, and political sustainability of individual and societal decisions with respect to resource use.

How the course meets these objectives

The course meets this range of objectives by teaching you about key concepts, recurring themes, and important authors and thinkers in enduring debates about how people relate to the natural environment. This course is grounded in a geographical perspective, which emphasizes the multiple ways that humans and nature are always entangled, and it focuses especially on the interrelationship between ideas about and actions toward nature and race. You will learn to describe and compare diverse ideas and approaches to human-nature relations, as well as to identify the implications and trade-offs of different human-nature relationships and representations of them. You will learn to assess environmental decisions through a series of assignments in which you will apply course concepts to real-world human-environment issues.

The course readings contribute to this variety of course goals and encourage advanced, scholarly exploration by providing overview of key concepts (serving as a text) and examples (serving as a reader and requiring critical reading skills). Contemporary readings are primarily by academic authors, whether chapters written for an academic audience or essays written for wider audiences. Readings also include excerpts of primary texts from their historical era, and you will learn scholarly methods for engaging these texts.

The fundamental skill you are learning in this course is to interpret everyday examples of human-nature interactions by putting them in historical and geographical context and understanding implicit as well as explicit aspects of them. The goal is to help you recognize that circumstances in the here-and-now are not isolated but are part of geographically and temporally extensive patterns and processes. Recognizing these patterns and processes is especially important in foundational concepts such as race and nature, which are at the heart of multiple present day big challenges, from climate change to racial justice.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required course material

All materials are provided at no cost in Carmen, either directly or through a link. Your free subscription to the *New York Times* will be helpful; follow directions on the [USG site](#) for access.

Assignment overview

Category	Item percent	Category percent
Read-and-post	<2%	30
In-class activities	1-2%	15
Guide-posts	5%	20
Assignments	8.5%	30
General Participation		5

Read and post (30% of your final grade)

Approximately once per week you will do a set of readings and provide a written response. Detailed assignments will be provided in Carmen. You will be graded on evidence of engagement with the reading and how it relates to the course. Your lowest score will be dropped.

Readings and responses are for you to learn basic course material, practice summarizing and synthesizing key concepts, and reflect on your reactions.

In-class activities (15% of your final grade)

Throughout the semester you will do in-class written activities. The written activities will be graded; they are unannounced and your lowest score will be dropped.

In-class activities deepen your knowledge of basic course material and give you practice applying what you are learning. These skills are necessary for the Assignments.

Guide-posts (20% of your final grade)

These take the place quizzes and exams. Instead, four times in the semester you will work collaboratively with your classmates to summarize key ideas from the previous few weeks of the semester. Each student will post key ideas (concepts, historical figures, examples, etc.) to a Carmen discussion; posting means providing the idea and its definition or relevance to the course. (You will not see the posts of everyone, but will be divided into smaller, more manageable groups.) Details will be provided in Carmen.

Guide-posts are to help you remember, summarize, and synthesize the material we are covering. The collective knowledge in these posts can also serve as a “study guide” to help you with your Assignments.

Assignments (30% of your final grade)

Four times in the semester you will do a short, related activity (e.g., watch a film, research a non-governmental organization) and use course concepts to provide a written analysis (1-2 pages). You will view and comment 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.

General Participation (5% of your final grade)

You are expected to attend class, pay attention in class, and participate in small and large group discussions.

GRADING POLICIES

If you are having problems, see us!

Please see one of us if you are having problems that prevent you from meeting course requirements. We may be able to make alternative arrangements.

Grading

Assignments are graded on a 10-point scale. **Remember that even though all assignments are graded on the same scale, they contribute different amounts to your final grade, based on how they are weighted.** The specific things on which you will be graded will be indicated in each Carmen assignment.

10 (A+) = outstanding

9.5 (A) = excellent

8.5 (B) = very good

7.5 (C) = good

6.5 (D) = passable

Final grade cut-offs

A 93%, A- 90, B+ 87, B 83, B- 80, C+ 77, C 73, C- 70, D+ 67, D 55

Late policy

I am not a stickler about late assignments, especially if you turn in an assignment later the same day. If you need more than that, you should communicate about new deadlines. The key is that you take responsibility for communicating so that we can come up with workable solutions. And see above: see us if you are having larger problems and we may be able to work something out.

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.

Generative AI Policy

The assignments in this course exist not just for you to demonstrate that you have done something (e.g., a reading) but are part of the learning process: you will deepen your understanding of course material and your ability to apply this material through doing these assignments. AI cannot replace your own engagement with the material and the assignments.

Given this, I prefer that you not use AI. I am more interested in your unique ideas and engagement, even if imperfect, than in what ChatGPT or Bard (for example) have to say.

Some of you may choose to use AI anyway, as part of producing your own unique ideas and engagement. But just as with an internet search, **you may not simply cut and paste from what AI generates without proper care and attribution. Doing so will be considered academic misconduct. If you use AI for an assignment, you must:**

1. Say you have done so
2. Include the prompts you used
3. Indicate with quotation marks what parts of the written product you turn in were generated by AI rather than directly by you.

SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Listed assignments are due before class: see Carmen for full instructions for each.

Week 1: Environment and Society: Introduction

1/9 *no assignment*

1/11 Read and Post: Syllabus

Week 2: Nature and Race

1/16 Read and Post: Pollan (2015) and Miles (2019)

1/18 *no assignment*

Week 3: Environmental Justice

1/23 Read and Post: Choice of provided articles

1/25 Activity 1

Week 4: Race and origins of Human-Nature dualism

1/30 Read and Post: Purdy (2015) and Staples (2018)

2/1 Read and Post: Merchant (1992)

Guide-posts 1 (weeks 1-3)

Week 5: Colonial views: Environmental determinism

2/6 Read and post: Miriti et al. (2022)

2/8 *no assignment*

Week 6: Colonial views: Wastelanding

2/13 Read and post: Voyles (2015)

2/15 *no assignment*

Week 7: Early environmentalism: romantic and managerial human-nature relationships

2/20 Read and post: Benton (2000)

Guide-posts 2 (weeks 4-6)

2/22 Activity 2

Week 8: Race in early environmentalism; Echoes of early ideas in modern environmentalism

2/27 Read and post: Stern (2005)

2/29 Read (or rather, watch) and post: Rage Over Trees (documentary)

Week 9: Modern environmentalism: the managerial impulse

3/5 Read and post: Castree (2004)

3/7 *no assignment*

Week 10: SPRING BREAK (March 12 and 14)

Week 11: Modern environmentalism: the romantic impulse

3/19 Read and post: TBD

3/21 TBD

Week 12: Beyond dualism: Cultural Ecology and Indigenous knowledge

3/26 Read and post: Robbins (2004), Kimmerer (2013)

3/28 Guide-posts 3 (weeks 7-11)

Week 13: Critique of industrialization and Political Ecology

4/2 Read and post: TBD

4/4 Activity 3

Week 14: Inclusive Black Environmentalisms

4/9 Read and post: TBD

4/11 TBD

Week 15: Conclusions

4/16 Guide-posts 4 (weeks 12-14)

4/18 Activity 4

DISABILITY SERVICES

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. 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. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are isolating while waiting for a COVID-19 test result, please let me know immediately. Those testing positive for COVID-19 should refer to the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes site](#) for resources. Beyond five days of the required COVID-19 isolation period, I may rely on Student Life Disability Services to establish further reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

It is Ohio State's policy to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of all students. The policy permits a student to be absent for up to three days each academic semester for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief.

Students planning to use religious beliefs or practices accommodations for course requirements must inform the instructor in writing no later than 14 days after the course begins. The instructor is then responsible for scheduling an alternative time and date for the course requirement, which may be before or after the original time and date of the course requirement. These alternative accommodations will remain confidential. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all course assignments are completed.

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 at titleix@osu.edu.