

Geography 3800
Autumn 2016

Tu/Th 11:10-12:30
Jennings Hall 136

Geographical Perspectives on **Environment and Society**

Professor: Becky Mansfield

Email: mansfield.32@osu.edu

Phone: 247-7264 (on campus: 7-7264)

Office: 1054 Derby Hall

Office hours: Most days you can talk with me right after class, or you can make an appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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? Are some groups of people “closer to nature” than others? Is the earth made for humans to use? Is nature socially constructed? Must we change how we think about nature in order to solve environmental problems? How do ideas about nature reflect and influence our ideas about other people, including ideas about race and gender? Does social inequality have anything to do with human-environment interactions? These are longstanding questions not only in Geography and Environmental Studies but in a variety of other fields, from Philosophy to Ecology. This course will focus on how geographers have understood the relationship between humans and nature (or “environment” and “society”), and we will also examine how others—policy makers, historians, environmentalists—have thought about this relationship. We will look at how people have thought about nature in different times and circumstances (mainly in the US and Europe over the past 150 years), and how that influences people’s actions toward the environment and other people.

The overarching goals of the course are (1) to introduce you to key concepts, recurring themes, and important authors and thinkers in these enduring debates, and (2) to help you identify and understand the importance of human-nature relations in contemporary life.

GENERAL EDUCATION

This course meets the requirements of GE for *Social Sciences: Human, Natural, and Economic Resources*. The goal of the Social Science GE is that students understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact with communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources. There are three central 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.

This course meets these goals and objectives by examining the relationship between society, behavior, and the natural world. In so doing, we will explicitly examine human societies, culture, and institutions. We will stress the importance of different contexts for altering the environment-society relationship and how we perceive it, and we will be examining how perceptions of environment and society impact social and environmental problem solving. We will also be learning about different methodological approaches for understanding environment-society relations.

READINGS

- Assigned readings serve less as a textbook and more as a reader. While some readings provide facts and ideas to know (as would a text), more of them provide examples to think about and understand based on course ideas (as would a reader).
- There is no single text for this course. The readings include a variety of articles, book chapters, and reports, drawn from multiple sources. *Readings are all available through Carmen.*
- We will watch a variety of videos to supplement readings. For your reference I list the titles in the schedule (but note we mainly will watch clips rather than the entire thing.)

COURSE WEBSITE

On the Carmen website for this course you will find electronic readings, announcements, assignments, and your grades. Please check your grades regularly and inform me as soon as possible if you notice any irregularities or you have questions about how you are being graded.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICIES

Participation and attendance	10%
In-class assignments (unannounced)	10%
Essay 1	15%
Essay 2	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%

Attendance and participation are required and will be graded. Everyone is expected to be an active participant in class, taking part in discussions (small and/or large group) or talking with me outside of class about course content. If you are regularly absent, your participation grade will reflect your absences, even if you participate well on the days you do attend.

In-class activities are unannounced and you have to turn them in during that class. There are also an unspecified number of them (I will adjust the Carmen gradebook as needed). In-class activities cannot be made up. I recognize that people occasionally miss class for a variety of reasons; therefore your lowest grade will be dropped.

Essays require you to use course concepts to identify, interpret, and evaluate ideas about environment and society that are present in everyday life. Both are short (2-3 pages). I will provide detailed assignments.

- Late essays LOSE 5% for every day they are late, including Saturdays and Sundays.
- Avoid losing late points by making arrangements with me AHEAD OF TIME.
- You may talk with other students, but the analysis and writing must be yours. You must do your writing individually and you must not share your written essays with each other. I will question any essays that are very similar (i.e. they need not be identical for me to raise questions). *Failure to follow these guidelines will be considered academic misconduct.*

In-class exams cover your basic knowledge of key concepts (e.g. definitions, examples, authors); there is also an essay portion of each exam that will require you to *use* these concepts to identify and explain ideas about environment and society. Exam 2 is not comprehensive; it is on material we cover after Exam 1 (this means it does include material from the first part of semester if we also talk about it in the second part!). Talk to me AHEAD OF TIME if you have scheduling conflicts for the in-class exams: alternative arrangements MAY be possible but are NOT guaranteed.

For all course components:

- Standard OSU grading scheme (minimum percent): A 93%, A- 90, B+ 87, B 83, B- 80, C+ 77, C 73, C- 70, D+ 67, D 60, E 0
- **PLEASE SEE ME IF YOU ARE HAVING PROBLEMS THAT PREVENT YOU FROM MEETING ANY OF THE ABOVE 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.

OSU COUNSELING AND CONSULTATION SERVICES

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises are encouraged to contact the OSU Counseling and Consultation Services (292-5766; <http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu>) for assistance, support, and advocacy. This service is free to students and is confidential.

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).

SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

PART 1: WHAT IS NATURE?	
TOPICS and VIDEOS	READINGS and DUE DATES
Tu Aug 23 Introduction	
Th Aug 25 What is nature? In-class video: <i>The Lorax</i> (v. 1972)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollan 2015, Why 'natural' doesn't mean anything... <p>Pollan asks you to think about what the words <i>nature</i> and <i>natural</i> mean. This is a major theme of this course.</p>
Tu Aug 30 Geographical approaches In-class video: <i>Sweet Crude</i> excerpts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh 1965 [orig. 1864], <i>Man and Nature</i> (excerpts) • Robbins 2012a, <i>Political Ecology</i> (excerpts) <p>Marsh, a geographer, was one of the very first to state that humans impact nature. Robbins introduces political ecology, a contemporary approach geographers use to understand human-environment relationships, including degradation. Political ecology is the central approach of this course.</p>
Th Sep 1 Political ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> Robbins from Aug 30
Tu Sep 6 Human-Nature dualism/domination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchant 1992, <i>Science and worldviews</i> <p>Merchant introduces and explores the idea of dualism (separation) between humans and nature, contrasting it to older, organic views. She explores the European origins and implications of this idea.</p>
Th Sep 8 Histories of dualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soper 1995, <i>What is Nature</i> (excerpts) • Benton and Short 2000a, <i>The invented Indian</i> • <i>Review</i> Merchant from Sep 6 <p>These authors explore the power dynamics of dualism, including how lines were drawn between humans and nature during colonialism.</p>
Tu Sep 13 Drawing lines between humans and nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gregory 2001, <i>Culture, nature, and colonial modernity</i> • <i>Review</i> Soper, Benton and Short from Sep 8 <p>Gregory provides additional insight on the power dynamics of dualism, particularly during colonialism.</p>
Th Sep 15 <i>Assignment for Essay 1 distributed and practiced.</i>	

PART 2: ENVIRONMENTALISM	
<p>Tu Sep 20 Environmentalism In-class video: footage on Rachel Carson/Pollutants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dowie 1996, <i>Earth days</i> • Carson 1962, <i>Silent Spring</i> (excerpts) • Benton and Short 2000b, <i>No holier temple</i> <p>Dowie introduces American environmentalism. Carson is an excerpt of the famous <i>Silent Spring</i>, publication of which Dowie marks as the beginning of the environmental movement. Benton and Short introduce key ideas in environmentalism dating to the late 1800s: preservation and conservation.</p>
<p>Th Sep 22 Preservation and Conservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runte 1979, <i>National Parks</i> (excerpts) • Muir 1981 [orig. 1901], <i>Our National Parks</i> (excerpts) • Pinchot 1910, <i>Fight for Conservation</i> (excerpts) • <i>Review</i> Benton and Short from Sep 20 <p>Runte interprets the themes of preservation. Muir and Pinchot provide famous historical examples of preservation and conservation, respectively.</p>
<p>Tu Sep 27 Case study 100 years later In-class video: <i>Ancient Forests, Rage over Trees</i></p>	<p>Essay 1 assignment due to Carmen</p>
<p>Th Sep 29 Population debates In-class video: NYT on the Population Bomb</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ehrlich 1969, <i>Population Bomb</i> (excerpts) • Castree 2005, <i>Ideologies of nature</i> <p>Ehrlich is an excerpt of the famous <i>Population Bomb</i>, mentioned by Dowie (see Sep 20). Castree summarizes a 1970s critique of Ehrlich, by geographer David Harvey.</p>
<p>Tu Oct 4 Legacies of preservation, conservation, <i>and</i> population: Sustainability and Wilderness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCED 1987, <i>Our Common Future</i> (excerpts) • Devall and Sessions 1985, <i>Deep Ecology</i> (excerpts) <p>WCED is the first statement on Sustainable Development, a form of managerial environmentalism. Devall and Sessions is an excerpt of <i>Deep Ecology</i>, a form of holistic environmentalism. As you read, ask not just about the key ideas of each article, but how these ideas compare with each other and with ideas from throughout this section of the course.</p>

<p>Th Oct 6 Wilderness: who belongs? Race and environmentalism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purdy 2015, Environmentalism’s racist history • Finney 2014, <i>Black Faces, White Spaces</i> (excerpts) <p>Purdy explores how racist ideas have infused environmentalism since the 19th century, covering several forms of environmentalism we have already discussed. Finney reflects on African American experiences of the environment/environmentalism, which are largely missing in mainstream environmentalism.</p>
<p>Tu Oct 11 Synthesis: dualism and its legacies</p>	
<p>Th Oct 13 NO CLASS: AUTUMN BREAK</p>	
<p>Tu Oct 18 EXAM 1</p>	<p>EXAM 1</p>
<p>PART 3: SOCIAL NATURE/ POST-WILD ENVIRONMENTALISM</p>	
<p>Th Oct 20 Social nature: denaturalizing nature <i>Assignment for Essay 2 distributed</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cronon 1995, The trouble with wilderness • Robbins 2012b, <i>Political Ecology</i> (excerpts) • Wisner et al. 2005, The challenge of disasters... <p><i>This is a slightly longer set of readings than usual. Please plan ahead.</i> Cronon provides a critique of wilderness and offers a different basis for environmentalism. What is his critique, and what is the form of environmentalism he offers instead? Cronon is one of the examples offered by Robbins, who provides an overview of the “social construction” of nature—which should seem familiar to you by now. Another of Robbins’s examples is hazards/natural disasters, represented in the Wisner reading. How is it possible to think of disasters as social natures?</p>
<p>Tu Oct 25 Environmental Determinism and Cultural Ecology In class-video: <i>The Goddess and the Computer</i> excerpts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robbins 2004, Cultural ecology <p>Social Natures had many predecessors. Robbins provides an overview of Cultural Ecology, a geographical approach to studying human-environment relations that emerged in the 1950s. Robbins also describes the ideas cultural ecologists were challenging; chief among them was “environmental determinism,” which is the idea that environmental conditions explain differences among human societies.</p>
<p>Th Oct 27 Environmental Justice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullard 2002, Anatomy of environmental racism • 2004 Goldman Prize: Margie Richard (website) <p>Environmental justice (EJ) is another precursor to social nature as it emerged in the 1990s. Bullard, famous in the environmental justice movement, provides information about environmental racism as a problem and environmental justice as a form of environmentalism. Margie Richard is an EJ activist, known for her work in her town of Norco, LA. How does EJ differ from other forms of environmentalism? How is it a “social nature”?</p>

Tu Nov 1 Environmental Justice, cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> readings from Oct 27
Th Nov 3 Green living In-class video: <i>Fresh</i> excerpts and <i>The Story of Change</i>	<p>Essay 2 due to Carmen <u>We will discuss them in class</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Szasz 2007, Inverted quarantine <p>Your research and reflection for your essay provides the material for a discussion on green living: how to define it, what sort of environmentalism it is, how it fits into the themes of the course, and what you think. Szasz contrasts the environmentalism of consumerism with that based on citizenship and the political arena.</p>
Tu Nov 8 Green living, cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> readings from Nov 3
Th Nov 10 Novel ecosystems In-class video: <i>Second Nature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marris 2011, Weeding the jungle • Mansfield et al. 2015, Environmental politics after... • Braverman 2015, <i>Wild Life</i> (excerpts) <p>Marris write about post-wild conservation and caring for socionatural landscapes. Mansfield et al. (me, with OSU colleagues) looks at socionatural landscapes of Ohio. Braverman presents examples in species conservation.</p>
Tu Nov 15 Novel ecosystems, cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> readings from Nov 10
Th Nov 17 Nature of the body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guthman and Mansfield 2015, Plastic people... • Race – The Power of an Illusion: Ten things... 2003 • Krieger 2006, If “race” is the answer... • Hammonds 2006, The return of biological race <p>Together, these readings ask you to think about the social nature of the biological body. The article by me (with my colleague) introduces you to science on the ways environmental factors influence genetic expression (i.e. epigenetics) and some of the issues raised by this new science. The other three articles explore the idea that race is not a natural, biological category but a social one. <i>What does it mean to apply the idea of social nature to humans: is it different than when applying it to external nature?</i></p>
Tu Nov 22 NO CLASS: Prepare for final exam	
Th Nov 24 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING	
Tu Nov 29 Nature of the body, cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> readings from Nov 17
Th Dec 1 Synthesis: social natures	
Tu Dec 6 EXAM 2	EXAM 2