

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.

GEOGRAPHY 3800, AU2018: Environment and Society

Professor: Becky Mansfield

Contact: through the Carmen site for this course

Office hours: After class or by appointment, 1054 Derby Hall

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 Ecology to Engineering. 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

- 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 in Carmen.*
- 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). The syllabus provides guidance on how to approach each reading.
- We will watch a variety of videos to supplement readings. For your reference, I list the titles in the schedule (but note mainly we 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

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| Quizzes (in-class) (6@5%) | 30% |
| Homework (2@10%) | 20% |
| In-class activities | 10% |
| Take-home exams (2@20%) | 40% |
| Participation and attendance | Extra credit |

Quizzes (in-class) cover your basic knowledge of key concepts (e.g. definitions, examples, authors). They are short, each covering just a couple of weeks of material.

Homework. Twice during the semester I ask you to apply the ideas we are discussing to contemporary issues. I will provide detailed assignments.

In-class activities are unannounced and you have to turn them in during that class. There are an unspecified number of them. They are graded on a pass/no-pass basis. They cannot be made up. I recognize that people occasionally miss class for a variety of reasons; therefore your lowest score will be dropped.

Take-home exams require you to synthesize course themes and use course concepts to identify, interpret, and evaluate ideas about environment and society that are present in everyday life. I will provide detailed assignments.

Participation and attendance. Everyone is expected to participate actively. Participation is graded as informal extra credit, providing a bump to students on the cusp of a higher grade (e.g. a student with a semester grade of 89.4%). *Satisfactory participation* (.25% bump) means attending class daily (I do take attendance) and paying attention (not texting, surfing, chatting, etc.). *Good participation* (.5% bump) means sometimes contributing meaningfully to discussion. *Excellent participation* (1% bump) means regularly contributing to discussion (but not dominating it!). (I will use my judgement for in-between cases.)

POLICIES

In-class activities CANNOT be made-up.

Late homework or exams 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.*

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.

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).

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.

SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

Note that I provide guidance for each reading:

- Reading for *information* means learning from the author, e.g. a set of ideas, historical facts, scientific information, etc. (though feel free still to question this material!). Compare different ideas and approaches as you are introduced to them.
- Reading for *interpretation* means looking at themes, style, historical context, your reaction, etc. I present these readings not as true (I think some entirely wrong) but as influential. Ask yourself: What does this author bring and how does it compare to other authors and ideas? What ideas from the course help me understand (interpret!) what this author is doing? What do I think?

| DATE | TOPIC | GRADED | READINGS |
|-----------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Tu Aug 21 | Introduction | | |
| Th Aug 23 | What is nature? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollan 2015, Why 'natural' doesn't mean anything... 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. There will be class discussion on this article: what do you think? |
| Tu Aug 28 | Human domination of nature? In-class video: <i>The Lorax</i> (v. 1972) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh 1965 [orig. 1864], <i>Man and Nature</i> (excerpts) Marsh, a geographer, was one of the very first to state that humans impact nature. Read for interpretation: in class, we will identify the major themes of Marsh's work and what was new about it. (And we will cover other perspectives.) |
| Th Aug 30 | Geographical approaches: Political Ecology In-class video: <i>Sweet Crude</i> excerpts | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robbins 2012a, <i>Political Ecology</i> (excerpts) 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. Read for information (though you may want to interpret the examples). |
| Tu Sep 4 | Political Ecology, continued | Homework 1 due at 10am | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> Robbins from last class |
| Th Sep 6 | Human-Nature dualism | Quiz 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchant 1992, <i>Science and worldviews</i> 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. Read for information. |

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| Tu Sep 11 | Histories of dualism | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review Merchant</i> from last class • Soper 1995, <i>What is Nature</i> (excerpts) Soper explores the power dynamics of dualism, including how lines were drawn between humans and nature during colonialism. Read for information, including how ideas changed over time. • Benton and Short 2000a, <i>The invented Indian</i> Benton and Short also explore the power dynamics of dualism and how lines were drawn, focusing on changing American ideas about Native Americans. Read for information. |
| Th Sep 13 | Drawing lines between humans and nature | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review Soper, Benton and Short</i> from last class (if we haven't already discussed it) • Gregory 2001, <i>Culture, nature, and colonial modernity</i> Gregory provides additional insight on the power dynamics of dualism, particularly during colonialism. Read for information (though you may want to interpret his examples.) |
| Tu Sep 18 | <i>Take-Home Exam 1 distributed and practiced</i> | | None |
| Th Sep 20 | Preservation and Conservation | Quiz 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dowie 1996, <i>Earth days</i> Dowie introduces American environmentalism; read this for background information. • Benton and Short 2000b, <i>No holier temple</i> Benton and Short introduce key ideas in environmentalism dating to the late 1800s: preservation and conservation; read for information and refer back as a reference. • Muir 1981 [orig. 1901], <i>Our National Parks</i> (excerpts) Muir provides a famous historical example of preservation; we will use this reading in class. Read for interpretation. |

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| Tu Sep 25 | Preservation and Conservation, continued and updated | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> Benton and Short from last class • Runte 1979, <i>National Parks</i> (excerpts) Runte interprets the themes of preservation; read for information (broad overview). • Pinchot 1910, <i>Fight for Conservation</i> (excerpts) Pinchot provides a famous historical example of conservation. Read for interpretation. • Leopold 1949, <i>The land ethic</i> Leopold's essay also is famous; he updated preservation and conservation in the middle of the 20th century. Read for interpretation. |
| Th Sep 27 | Preservation and Conservation 100 years later: Case study In-class video: <i>Ancient Forests, Rage over Trees</i> | Take-Home Exam 1 due at 10am | None |
| Tu Oct 2 | The environmental movement: Fear of pollution and population In-class video: footage on Rachel Carson/ Pollutants | Quiz 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> Dowie from Sept 26 • Carson 1962, <i>Silent Spring</i> (excerpts) Carson is an excerpt of the famous <i>Silent Spring</i>, publication of which Dowie marks as the beginning of the environmental movement. Read for interpretation. |

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| Th Oct 4 | Pollution and environmental regulation today | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBD |
| Tu Oct 9 | Population debates In-class video: NYT on the Population Bomb | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castree 2005, <i>Ideologies of nature</i> Castree provides an overview of population debates, and summarizes a 1970s critique of Ehrlich, by geographer David Harvey. Read for information. • Ehrlich 1969, <i>Population Bomb</i> (excerpts) Ehrlich is an excerpt of the famous <i>Population Bomb</i>, mentioned by Dowie and Castree. Read for interpretation. |
| Th Oct 11 | NO CLASS | | |
| Tu Oct 16 | Population debates continued, and carried forward into Sustainability | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> Castree from last class • WCED 1987, <i>Our Common Future</i> (excerpts) WCED is the first statement on Sustainable Development, a form of managerial environmentalism. Sustainable Development updated ideas about population while still focusing on it as a central issue. Read for interpretation. |
| Th Oct 18 | Race and environmentalism | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purdy 2015, Environmentalism's racist history Purdy explores how racist ideas have infused environmentalism since the 19th century, covering several forms of environmentalism we have already discussed. Read for information <i>and</i> interpretation. |
| Tu Oct 23 | Wilderness and the Trouble with Wilderness | Quiz 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devall and Sessions 1985, <i>Deep Ecology</i> (excerpts) Devall and Sessions is an excerpt of <i>Deep Ecology</i>, a form of holistic environmentalism (prominent in the 1970s-1980s) that advocates for wilderness. Read for interpretation. • Finney 2016 Finney challenges our ideas of wilderness, reflecting on African American experiences of the "great outdoors," which are largely missing in environmentalism. Read for information <i>and</i> interpretation. |
| Th Oct 25 | Trouble with wilderness, continued | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cronon 1995, <i>The trouble with wilderness</i> Cronon's famous essay provides a critique of wilderness and offers a different basis for environmentalism. Read for information <i>and</i> interpretation. What do you think? |

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| Tu Oct 30 | Anthropocene/ the new wild/ conservation | Homework 2 due at 10am | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York Times 2016: Signs of the 'Human Age' This short article introduces the idea and presents, in brief, some of the “colossal changes humans have made” • Marris 2011, <i>Weeding the Jungle</i> Marris write about post-wild conservation and caring for socionatural landscapes. • Braverman 2015, <i>Wild Life</i> (excerpts) Braverman presents examples in species conservation. |
| Th Nov 1 | Political ecology perspectives/Social Natures | Quiz 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robbins 2012b, <i>Political Ecology</i> (excerpts) Robbins provides an overview of the “social construction” of nature—which should seem familiar to you by now. Read for information; we will use some of his examples in class. • O'Connor 2016 This recent news article provides a case study, in Haiti. Note that several geographers, including Robbins, are quoted. |
| Tu Nov 6 | Political ecology/Social natures, continued In-class video: <i>Second Nature</i> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review</i> readings from last class |
| Th Nov 8 | NO CLASS | | |
| Tu Nov 13 | Environmental Determinism and Cultural Ecology In class-video: <i>The Goddess and the Computer</i> | | Robbins 2004, <i>Cultural ecology</i> Robbins provides an overview of Cultural Ecology, a precursor to the social nature approach 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. Read for information. |
| Th Nov 15 | Environmental Justice In-class video: Margie Richard: 2004 Goldman Prize Winner | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullard 2002, <i>Anatomy of environmental racism</i> Bullard, famous in the environmental justice movement, provides an overview of Environmental Justice (EJ), another precursor to social nature as it emerged in the 1990s. Read for information <i>and</i> interpretation. • 2004 Goldman Prize: Margie Richard (website) Margie Richard is an EJ activist, known for her work in her town of Norco, LA. Read for information. |
| Tu Nov 20 | NO CLASS | | |

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| Th Nov 22 | NO CLASS | | |
| Tu Nov 27 | TBD | | TBD |
| Th Nov 29 | TBD | Quiz 6 | TBD |
| Tu Dec 4 | Synthesis/Conclusions | Take-Home Exam 2 due at 5pm | |