

Spring 2011
ENVR 110: Introduction to Environmental Studies
T TH 11:00 – 12:15, 120 MacVicar Hall
Instructor: Dr. Stacy Rosenberg

This course is an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of environmental issues. It incorporates the social, political, economic, cultural, and biophysical dimensions of a diversity of environmental problems and solutions, and it includes a special focus on the Adirondacks. Human-environmental relations are complex and this course aims to provide students with the tools to critically analyze environmental issues from a variety of perspectives. The course will briefly review human impacts on the environment, look at historical and contemporary views of the environment, and explore potential solutions to current environmental problems. Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions, small group projects, and practical exercises. A group project on the Adirondacks will provide students with the opportunity to research current environmental issues in this region. A required field trip will also take place during the term.

Course Goals & Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ❖ Understand the interdisciplinary dimensions of environmental issues.
- ❖ Analyze complex environmental problems and solutions.
- ❖ Demonstrate knowledge of the history of conservation in the U.S.
- ❖ Critique media coverage of environmental issues.
- ❖ Demonstrate and apply effective critical thinking skills.
- ❖ Apply knowledge of the Adirondacks as a particular place.

Course Readings

Required Text: Terrie, Philip. G. 2008. *Contested Terrain: A New History of Nature and People in the Adirondacks*, 2nd ed. New York: Adirondack Museum/Syracuse University Press.

Required Text: Weston, Anthony. 2008. *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 4th ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.

All other readings are available on Blackboard.

Course Outline

Part I: INTRODUCTION

1/25 Introduction

1/27 Human Impacts on the Environment
Speth & Haas “Introduction: Toward Planetary Stewardship”
Vitousek et al. “Human Domination of Earth’s Ecosystems”

2/1 Human-Environment Interactions – Newspaper Activity #1
Harris “Human-Environment Interactions”

- 2/3 Global Environmental Issues – Newspaper Activity #2**
Speth & Haas “Global-Scale Environmental Challenges” pp.12-51
- 2/8 Global Climate Change – Newspaper Activity #3**
Henson “Climate Change: A Primer”
- 2/10 Global Climate Change #2 & Quiz #1**
“Stabilization Wedges” at http://cmi.princeton.edu/wedges/pdfs/teachers_guide.pdf
pp. 1-13

Part II: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY VIEWS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- 2/15 Henry David Thoreau – Response Paper #1**
Thoreau “Walking”
- 2/17 John Muir**
Muir “A Wind-Storm in the Forests”
Muir “Hetch Hetchy Valley”
- 2/22 Gifford Pinchot – Response Paper #2**
Pinchot “Principles of Conservation”
Nash “Hetch Hetchy”
- 2/24 Aldo Leopold – Response Paper #3**
Leopold “The Land Ethic”
Leopold “Thinking Like a Mountain”
- 3/1 Rachael Carson**
Carson “A Fable for Tomorrow”
Carson “And No Birds Sing”
- 3/3 Extinction of the Passenger Pigeon – Response Paper #4**
Price “Missed Connections: The Passenger Pigeon Extinction”
- 3/8 & 3/10 Spring Recess**
- 3/15 **Draft Essay Due** – Bring 3 copies to class**
Work in small groups to go over essay
- 3/17 Ideas of Wilderness – Response Paper #5**
Cronon “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature”
- 3/22 **Short Essay Due** & Library Session**
- 3/24 Environmental Justice**
Di Chiro “Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice”
- 3/29 Midterm**

Part III: THE ADIRONDACKS

3/31 Adirondacks

Terrie: Introduction & Chapter 1
Weston: Introduction & Chapter 1

4/5 Adirondacks

Terrie: Chapter 2 & 3
Weston: Chapter 2, 3, & 4

4/7 Adirondacks

Terrie: Chapter 4 & 5
Weston: Chapter 5, 6, & 7

4/12 Adirondacks

Terrie: Chapter 6 & 7
Weston: Chapter 8, 9, & 10

4/14 Adirondacks

Terrie: Chapter 8 & 9

4/19 Adirondacks & Quiz #2

Weber and Vedder “The Adirondack Park in Global Perspective”
McKibben “Afterword”

4/21 April Recess

Part IV: MULTIDIMENSIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

4/26 Economic Dimensions of Environmental Issues – Newspaper Activity #4

Daly “Economics in a Full World”
Lovins “More Profit with Less Carbon”

4/28 Group Presentations

5/3 Group Presentations

5/5 Group Presentations

5/10 Sustainability – Newspaper Activity #5

National Research Council “Executive Summary - Our Common Journey: A Transition Toward Sustainability”
Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Board “Living Beyond Our Means”
at <http://www.maweb.org/documents/document.429.aspx.pdf>

5/12 Sustainable Communities

Platt “Urban Watershed Management: Sustainability, One Step at a Time”

5/20 Final Exam: 8:00 – 10:00 AM

Contact Information

Office Hours: Dr. Stacy Rosenberg, 104 Morey Hall, rosenbsr@potsdam.edu
Tuesday 1:00 – 1:45 pm
Wednesday 1:00 – 1:45 pm, or by appointment

Course Requirements

Class Conduct: It is important that we create an atmosphere conducive to learning. Therefore, while I encourage debate and discussion, you should be respectful of others and maintain a professional tone at all times. Plagiarism, cheating, and other conduct contrary to SUNY Potsdam policies will not be tolerated. Use of cell phones, laptops, & other electronic devices is not permitted in class.

Grading Criteria: The final grade will be based on the following:

Short essay (15%)
Midterm (15%)
Group Presentation (15%)
Final (15%)
Attendance & Participation (15%)
Quizzes (10%)
Newspaper Activities & Practical Exercises (5%)
Response Papers (5%)
Earth Week Project (5%)

Short Essay (15%): The essay will provide students with the opportunity to critically analyze their own personal views of the human role in the natural world. It will require analysis of at least two of the course readings.

Midterm (15%): The midterm will take place on **March 29, 2011**.

Group Presentations (15%): Students will research a local environmental issue in the Adirondacks and present their findings to the class. The presentation should incorporate an interdisciplinary framework and include the biophysical, social, political, cultural, and economic dimensions of the issue.

Final (15%): The comprehensive final will take place on **May 20, 2011, 8:00 – 10:00 AM**.

Class Attendance and Participation (15%): Students are expected to attend all classes and read course materials *prior* to each class. Participation in class discussions and practical exercises is a critical component of the course. A student's grade will be lowered for each absence after 2 unexcused absences. Excused absences require a physician's report or other documentation.

Quizzes (10%): There will be two quizzes. Each quiz is worth 5% of your final grade.

Newspaper Activities & Practical Exercises (5%): There will be 5 newspaper activities and a variety of practical exercises throughout the term. Students are expected to bring 2 newspaper articles to class for each newspaper activity (1 U.S./1 international) and a 1-page written critique

on each article. Practical in-class exercises will be conducted without prior notification and it is necessary to have completed the readings for class in order to participate in these exercises.

Response Papers (5%): Students will write five response papers during the term. Each 1-page paper will provide a synopsis of the readings and the student's response.

Earth Week Project (5%): Students will coordinate and participate in public awareness activities during Earth Week.

Note: This syllabus may be updated during the term.

Blackboard Readings (in order)

Speth, James Gustave and Peter M. Haas. 2006. Introduction: Toward Planetary Stewardship. In *Global Environmental Governance*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.

Vitousek, Peter M., Harold A. Mooney, Jane Lubchenco, and Jerry M. Melillo. 1997. Human Domination of Earth's Ecosystems. *Science* 277:494-499.

Harris, Frances. 2004. Human-Environment Interactions. In *Global Environmental Issues*, edited by F. Harris. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Speth, James Gustave and Peter M. Haas. 2006. Global-Scale Environmental Challenges. In *Global Environmental Governance*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.

Henson, Robert. 2008. Climate Change: A Primer. In *The Rough Guide to Climate Change*, 2nd edition. London: Rough Guides.

Thoreau, Henry David. 1980. Walking. In *The Norton Book of Nature Writing, College Ed.*, edited by R. Finch and J. Elder. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Originally published in *Excursions*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863.

Muir, John. 2002. A Wind-Storm in the Forests. In *The Norton Book of Nature Writing, College Ed.*, edited by R. Finch and J. Elder. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Originally published in *The Mountains of California*. New York: Century, 1894.

Muir, John. 1962. Hetch Hetchy Valley. In *The Yosemite*, Notes and Intro. by F.R. Gunsby, Garden City, NY: Natural History Library/Anchor/Doubleday. Originally published by The Century Co., 1912.

Pinchot, Gifford. 1967. Principles of Conservation. In *The Fight for Conservation*, Intro. by G.D. Nash. Seattle: University of Washington Press. Originally published by Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1910.

Nash, Roderick. 1973. Hetch Hetchy. In *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Revised Ed., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Leopold, Aldo. 1987. The Land Ethic. In *A Sand County Almanac And Sketches Here and There*, Intro. by R. Finch. New York: Oxford University Press. Originally published in 1949.

- Leopold, Aldo. 1987. Thinking Like a Mountain. In *A Sand County Almanac And Sketches Here and There*, Intro. by R. Finch. New York: Oxford University Press. Originally published in 1949.
- Carson, Rachel. 1987. A Fable for Tomorrow. In *Silent Spring*, 25th Anniversary Ed., Forward by P. Brooks. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Originally published in 1962.
- Carson, Rachel. 1987. And No Birds Sing. In *Silent Spring*, 25th Anniversary Ed., Forward by P. Brooks. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Originally published in 1962.
- Price, Jennifer. 1999. Missed Connections: The Passenger Pigeon Extinction. In *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Cronon, William. 1996. The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature. In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, edited by William Cronon. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Di Choro, Giovanna. 1996. Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice. In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, edited by William Cronon. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Daly, Herman E. 2005. Economics in a Full World. *Scientific American* 293 (3):100-107.
- Lovins, Amory B. 2005. More Profit with Less Carbon. *Scientific American* 293 (3):74-83.
- National Research Council. 1999. Executive Summary. In *Our Common Journey: A Transition Toward Sustainability*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Platt, Rutherford H. 2006. Urban Watershed Management: Sustainability, One Step at a Time. *Environment* 48 (4):26-42.