The Environmental Vision:


Course Description

• This course examines the relationships between humans and environments through art, film, and writings of all kinds. We will investigate the implications of using the phrase “environmental vision” to characterize certain literary works or activist movements and consider the roles of art and narrative in contemporary environmental studies, ethics, and policy. Our primary question will be: How are the “artistic” or “literary” activities of creating, seeing, reading, and writing relevant to current environmental crises?

• The Fall 2019 version of ENST 335 focuses on 20th and 21st century artists and writers who challenge how we define environments at all – whether elemental, vegetal, animal, or technological – to untangle the complex ties between ecology, narrative, community, politics, and responsibility.

Course Information

Meets: TTH 12:10-1:40, Library 302
Professor: Tom Nurmi
Email: thomas.nurmi@msubillings.edu
Office Hours: W 2-5, LA 425, or by appt.

By enrolling in this class, you agree to all terms, assignments, and responsibilities. You agree to treat the course as professional work, including all email exchanges, and attendance is mandatory. You should not be late, and you should not miss classes. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late or leave more than 10 minutes early, you are counted absent. Missing any more than two classes will result in a two percent (2%) deduction from your final grade, per absence.

If you have a legitimate conflict, please discuss it with me ahead of time. Any work missed as a result of tardiness or absence is your responsibility to make up.

The Academic Support Center in the Student Union Building (http://www.msubillings.edu/asc/) offers a variety of services, and you should also be familiar with the MSUB Student Policies & Procedures Handbook (http://www.msubillings.edu/VCSA/PDF/Studenthandbook.pdf) for information on appropriate behavior and academic integrity.

MSU Billings is committed to providing equal access. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please contact Disability Support Services (657-2283; located in the College of Education, Room 135). We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

If you need help for health or counseling, there is a mental health counselor on campus at Student Health Counseling Services, 2nd floor Petro (657-2153). If you feel overwhelmed, angry, depressed, or need help or support, please contact Student Health Service in the SUB (657-2153) or after hours: Billings Clinic Emergency Department (657-4150), Billings Clinic Hospital Emergency Room (2800 10th Ave N), or Community Crisis Center (259-8800), 704 N 30th.

Assignments and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Field Note</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Website</td>
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<td>Vision Briefs (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project &amp; Presentation</td>
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Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing ENST 335, students will have the ability to:

- Articulate the historical, cultural and political concerns raised by environmental writing across genres and periods.
- Identify the major themes, writing techniques, subgenres, and philosophical influences in the environmental humanities, with specific authors and works to support your claims.
- Produce a final project on some environmental issue using primary and secondary sources.
Daily Syllabus

* Note: Assignments are subject to changes. It is your responsibility to stay current. Any readings not included in the required texts will be available on the D2L course website.

9/5 – Introductions

Read for Class:
* “Nature,” “Environment,” & “Environmental Humanities” from The Routledge Companion to Environmental Studies (2018) [D2L]

Unit 1: Mineral

9/10 – Foundations

* Create your own course website [see D2L]. Email site address to thomas.nurmi@msubillings.edu
* “The Anthropocene,” “Environmental Philosophy” & “Environmental Ethics” [D2L]

9/12 – Foundations

* “Anthropocentrism,” & “Environmental Metaphor” [D2L]

9/17 – Value, Labor, Property [Post 1]

* “Representation and Reality” [D2L]
* John Locke, selection from Second Treatise on Civil Government (1689) [D2L]
* Karl Marx, selection from “Estranged Labor” (1844) [D2L]

9/19 – Photography [Highlights: Kaitlin, Luke & Mike]

* “Environmental Art” & “Environmental Image Analysis” [D2L]
* Solnit, “Poison Pictures” (2003), pp. 135-39
* Wallace Stevens, “The Man on the Dump” (1923) [D2L]
* Edward Burtynsky, selected photographs [D2L]
* Watch: Manufactured Landscapes, dir. Jennifer Baichwal (2006) [D2L: Kanopy Streaming]

9/24 – Photography [Post 2]

* Eliot Porter, selected images [D2L]
* Chris Jordan, selected images [D2L]

9/26 – Toxicity / Security [Highlights: Brie, Michelle & Mandi]

* Rob Nixon, excerpt from Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor (2011) [D2L]
Unit 2: Vegetable

10/1 – Botany [Post 3]
* “Ecocriticism” & “Environmentalism and Creative Writing” [D2L]
* Michael Pollan, selections from The Botany of Desire (2001) [D2L]
* Watch: Annihilation, dir. Alex Garland (2018) [Library Reserves]

10/3 – Ecopoetics [Highlights: Morgan, Bronte & Kyra]
* “Ecopoetry” [D2L]
* C.D. Wright, Casting Deep Shade, pp. 1-69

10/8 – Ecopoetics [Post 4]
* “Ecofeminism” [D2L]
* Casting Deep Shade, pp. 70-150

10/10 – Ecopoetics [Highlights: Delaney, Haley & Rusty]
* Casting Deep Shade, pp. 151-243

10/15 – Environment/Novel [Post 5]
* “Environmental Fiction” [D2L]

10/17 – No Class

10/22 – No Class [Post 6]

10/24 – Environment/Novel [Highlights: Rebecca, Destinee & Brianna]
* The Overstory, pp. 90-352

10/29 – Environment/Novel [Post 7]
* The Overstory, pp. 352-423

10/31 – Environment/Novel [Highlights: Leanne, Hannah & Sahara]
* The Overstory, pp. 423-502

Unit 3: Animal

11/5 – Animal Selves [Post 8]
* “Animal Studies” & “Queer Ecology” [D2L]
* Pollan, “Some of My Best Friends Are Germs” (2013) [D2L]
* Rob Dunn, selections from The Wild Life of Our Bodies (2011) [D2L]

11/7 – Animals & Others [Highlights: Maria, Demi & Sterling]
* “Biopolitics” & “Biosecurity” [D2L]
* Franz Kafka, “Report to the Academy” (1917) and “The Burrow” (1931) [D2L]
* Watch: Contagion, dir. Steven Soderberg (2011)
11/12 – Animal Others [Post 9] [Final Project Pitches in Office Hours: 11/13, 2-5 PM, LA 425]

11/14 – Animal Others [Highlights: Emma, Eva & Quinn]
* “Reflections” on *The Lives of Animals*: Marjorie Garber, (pp. 73-84), Peter Singer (pp. 85-91), Wendy Doniger (pp. 93-106) & Barbara Smuts (pp. 107-20)

11/19 – Indigenous Visions [Final Project Proposals Due]
* “Foreword,” “Introduction,” and “A Call to Action” in *Salmon Is Everything* (pp. xi-22)

11/21 – Indigenous Visions
* *Salmon Is Everything* (2014) (pp. 23-92)

11/26 – Field Trip to Yellowstone Art Museum [Class meets at the YAM, 12:30-1:30 PM] [Post 10]
* Essays in *Salmon Is Everything* (pp. 93-148)

11/28 – No Class, Thanksgiving

12/2 – Final Project Workshop I [Final Project Draft Due]

12/4 – Final Project Workshop II

12/10 – Final Project Presentations, 10 AM: LI 302 [Final Projects Due on D2L, 10 AM]