

Cultures of Environmentalism

ES203 / Jay Turner
Wellesley College
Fall 2008

Course Description & Goals

What is environmentalism? This course explores how different communities of people have answered that question in the United States and abroad. The course takes as its starting point the mainstream environmental movement in the United States, but it focuses on alternative visions and approaches to environmental advocacy, such as environmental justice, deep ecology and radical environmentalism, animal rights, and indigenous peoples' concerns for the environment. This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to examining the variety of approaches to environmentalism: What are the ethical and philosophical foundations of environmental movements? How are approaches to environmentalism historically specific and shaped by particular social constructions of race, gender, and nature? What role do the arts, literature, and popular culture play in environmental activism? The goal of this course is to develop a comparative framework which will allow you to critically assess various approaches to environmentalism in their historical and cultural contexts and take inspiration from the variety of ways in which people have understood their relationship to the environment and organized to protect it.

Course Meetings

This course meets once a week on Thursday evenings from 6:30pm to 9:00pm.

Contacting Me...

I look forward to working with you outside of class. I am happy to meet with you anytime my office door is open, during my regular office hours (Wednesdays, 11.00am-12:20pm), and other times if we make an appointment in advance. My office is in Pendleton Hall East 133. You can call me at x2820 in my office and at home at 508-655-1832 (before 9pm).

Readings

All readings for the course are available on electronic reserves through First Class, with one exception. Please purchase Michael Bess's *The Light-Green Society* from the bookstore or plan to read the copies on reserve in the library.

Course Requirements

My expectation is that you will actively engage in the readings, class discussions, and assignments, and that the combination of those will make this a productive course for you.

Participation (10%). Your active involvement is important to the success of this course. Participation during class or on the First Class conference both represent equally important ways

in which you can engage the course material, other students, and me. I will give you feedback on your participation mid-way through the semester.

Presentation (5%). Each student will contribute a presentation to the class (usually working as part of a team). Each presentation will be allocated 15 minutes. These presentations should meet the following goals:

- * draw on independent research (and provide sources as appropriate)
- * succinctly and effectively communicate the material to the class
- * effectively use supporting materials (photographs, props, hand-outs)
- * be deliberately organized to engage the class
- * succeed in sparking questions and discussion

Pit-falls to watch out for: reading off of Power Points, overwhelming the class with detail, and failing to make connections to course material. You should rehearse your presentation in advance. Please draw on me for help in developing your presentation.

Short Paper (25%). The first paper will be a 5-7 page essay assessing recent criticism of the American environmental movement by considering the mainstream environmental movement's historical and cultural context. This paper will draw on course materials, not outside research.

Long Paper (35%). Students will each choose an environmental thinker (broadly defined) from any time period or place, and focus on a statement (speech, article, book, etc.) representative of that individual's approach to environmentalism. The final paper will situate the environmental thinker and their work in the broader context of environmentalism important to the course. An ungraded final paper proposal is due October 5. An initial, close analysis of the individual's statement (4-6 pages) is due on November 9 (worth 10% of the grade). A final paper providing a full analysis of the individual, their statement, and their place in environmentalism is due on 12/9 (worth 25% of the grade). The final paper should be 10-12 pages, 1-1/2 spaced, and include proper citations and bibliography. It is assumed that the close analysis will form an important part of the revised, final paper.

Final Exam (25%). A final test which will test your knowledge of the course readings will be administered as a self-scheduled exam during the exam period. If you read consistently during the term and review the readings prior to the test you will be well prepared for this test.

Participation

- A-range Comments are thoughtful, draw upon the readings, and enhance discussion. Comments, including ideas, observations, and questions, engage other students in substantive discussion (not just directed toward the instructor).
- B-range Comments generally enhance discussion and draw upon the readings. Comments generally engage other students in substantive discussion (not just directed toward the instructor).
- C-range Comments fail to reflect familiarity with readings.
- D-range Participates infrequently in class discussion.

Late Work

Reading responses must be turned in on time, for obvious reasons. My expectation is that you will turn in other assignments on time too. I realize that circumstances may arise which make this difficult. If this is the case, please discuss this with me ahead of time. If you are judicious in requesting extensions, I'll be reasonable in granting them.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: An environmental movement or environmental movements?

Th 9/4 Toward a history and taxonomy of environmentalism(s). (12 pages)

Origins of American environmentalism and the paths not taken

- Muir, Selection from "Our National Parks" in *Our National Parks* (1901), 1-5
- Pinchot, Selection from "The Birth of a Movement" in *Breaking New Ground* (1947), 322-325
- Klinge and Taylor, "Caste from the Past" in *Grist Magazine* (grist.org) (2006)

Unit 2: Mainstream American Environmentalism and its Critics

Th 9/11 The readings for this week are drawn from lesser known representatives of early American environmental thought. (58 pages)

- George Perkins Marsh, selection from "Introductory" in *Man and Nature* (1864), 28-40
- Alice Hamilton, "Illinois Survey," in *Exploring the Dangerous Trades: The Autobiography of Alice Hamilton, M.D.* (1943), 114-26
- Lewis Mumford, "The Regional Framework of Civilization," in *The Lewis Mumford Reader* (~1925 originally), 207-216
- Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), 201-226

Optional readings:

- Frederick Law Olmsted, selections from “Notes on Franklin Park” (1886), 90-109

Potential student presentations: Aldo Leopold. Alice Hamilton.

Th 9/18 These readings address the rise of the modern environmental movement in the 1970s, as a phenomenon distinct from the earlier conservation movement. (63 pages)

- Cover of Autumn 1969 Edition of *The Living Wilderness* (1969).
- Rachel Carson, “Fable for Tomorrow,” “Obligation to Endure,” “Needless Havoc,” and excerpt from conclusion in *Silent Spring* (1962), 29 pages
- Selections from *Earth Day Reader* (1971), 25 pages
- Wendell Berry, “The Ecological Crisis as a Crisis of Character” in *The Unsettling of America* (1977), 17-26
- Public Law 88-577, “The Wilderness Act” (1964)
- Public Law 91-190, “National Environmental Policy Act of 1969” (1970)
- Public Law 93-205, “Endangered Species Act of 1973” (1973)

Optional readings and useful references:

- Sale, *The Green Revolution: The American Environmental Movement, 1960-1992* (1993).
- Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (1993).
- Mark Lytle, *The Gentle Subversive: Rachel Carson, Silent Spring, and the Rise of the Environmental Movement* (2007).

Potential student presentations: Earth Day. Ansel Adams.

Th 9/25 The rise of the mainstream environmental movement and its critics. (99 pages + annual report)

- Examine one of the Annual Reports for Environmental Defense, Natural Resources Defense Council, or the Sierra Club.
- *Washington Post* 3-part series on The Nature Conservancy (2003), 28 pages.
- The Nature Conservancy’s Response (2003), 23 pages.

Two critiques of mainstream environmentalism:

- Dowie, “A Movement Courting Irrelevance,” *World Policy Journal* (1991), 67-92.
- Shellenberger and Nordhaus, “Death of Environmentalism,” (2004), Part 1, 4-25.

Optional readings and useful references:

- Dowie, *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the twentieth century* (1995).

Potential student presentations: Responses to *Death of Environmentalism*.

Unit 3: A Taxonomy of Environmentalisms

Th 10/2 Arguments for Animal Rights and Animal Welfare (25 pages)

- Kristof, "A Farm Boy Reflects," *New York Times*, July 31, 2008
- Rinella, "Locavore, Get Your Gun," *New York Times*, December 14, 2007
- Singer, "A utilitarian defense of animal liberation"
- Regan, "The radical egalitarian case for animal rights"

Potential student presentations: Profile of PETA. Profile of Singer.

Su 10/5 Short Paper is Due by 11.59pm

Th 10/9 Deep Ecology and Radical Environmentalism (53 pages + additional readings)

- Devall and Sessions, "Deep ecology," *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (1985), 63-77.

From Earth First! to ELF

- Abbey, Selections from "The Monkeywrench Gang" (1976)
- Foreman, "Foreward," "Strategic Monkeywrenching," and "Road Spiking" from *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*, i-ii, 5-11, 89-95
- Bruce Barcott, "From Tree-Hugger to Terrorist" in *New York Times Sunday Magazine* (2002), 8 pages.

Deep Ecology and Wilderness Activism (tentative readings)

- Foreman, "The New Conservation Movement"
- Noss, "Wildlands Project"

Critiques of Deep Ecology:

- Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation" (1989), 231-245.

Optional reading:

- Naess, "The shallow and deep, long-range ecological movement" (1972).
- Taylor, "Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front" in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (2005).
- Bookchin, "Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology"

Potential student presentations: Dave Foreman and Earth First!. Earth Liberation Front. Greenpeace.

- Th 10/16 Gardening and a Restoration Ethic (64 pages)
- Andrew Light, "Ecological Citizenship: The Democratic Promise of Restoration," *The Humane Metropolis: People and Nature in the 21st Century City*
 - Michael Pollan, Selections from *Second Nature* (1992)
 - Barbara Kingsolver, "Lily's Chickens" in *Small Wonder* (2002)
- Potential student presentations:* Profile of Kingsolver. Profile of The Nature Conservancy's Restoration Programs.
- Su 10/19 1-page proposal for Final Paper due by 11.59pm
- We 10/22 Lunch with Ramachandra Guha at 12:30pm to 2pm for ES203 students. Potential student presentation: Introducing and posing question to Dr. Guha.
- Th 10/23 Environmental Justice (77 pages)
- "Principles of Environmental Justice" (1991)
 - "Testimonies" of Doris Bradshaw, Sterling Gologergen, Edgar Mouton, and Alberto Saldamando in *The Environmental Justice Reader*, 29-43.
 - Bullard, "Environmental Justice for All" in *Unequal Protection* (1994), 3-25, 321-325.
 - Christopher Foreman, "Prospects," in *The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice* (1998), 109-136.
 - Erik Reece, "Death of a Mountain," *Harpers* (2005), 41-60.
- Optional:
- Martin Melosi, "Environmental justice, political agenda setting, and the myths of history," *Journal of Policy History* (2000), 43-71.
- Potential student presentations:* Analysis of Martin Melosi's argument. Love Canal and Lois Gibbs.
- Th 10/30 Europe and the Light-Green Society (skim 15 pages, read 113 pages)
- Skim "Ecological Sustainability," from the *2004 Platform of the Green Party of the United States*, 41-56.
 - Michael Bess, "Introduction" and "The Rise of Ecology" from *The Light-Green Society: Ecology and Technological Modernity in France, 1960-2000* (2004), 3-11, 57-160.
- Potential student presentations:* German Green Movement.
- Th 11/6 Ecofeminism (45 pages)

- Vandana Shiva, "Let Us Survive: Women, Ecology, and Development" from *Women Healing Earth* (1996), 65-73
- Carolyn Merchant, "Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory" in *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (1990), 100-105
- 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Announcement (2004).
- Wangari Maathai, "A History of the Green Belt Movement" in *The Green Belt Movement* (1985), 6-32.
- "Portrait of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate," *Nobel Foundation* (2004).
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-docu.html

Optional reading:

- Carolyn Merchant, "Nature as Female," in *The Death of Nature* (1980), 1-41.

Potential student presentations: Vandana Shiva.

Su 11/9 Final Paper Part #1 — Statement Analysis — due by 11.59pm

Th 11/13 (Green) Imperialism and Ecological Resistance (85 pages)

- Guha, "The Environmentalism of the Poor," from *Varieties of Environmentalism* (1997), 3-16.

Conservation

- Guha, "Chipko: Social History of an 'Environmental Movement'" in *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* (1989), 152-184.

Preservation

- Guha, "Authoritarianism in the Wild" from *How much should a person consume? Environmentalism in India and the United States* (2006), 125-151.
- Statement by Coordinating Body for the Indigenous People's Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA, 1991)
- Jon Christensen, "Win-win illusions," *Conservation in Practice* (2004)

Optional reading:

- Harvey Locke and Philip Dearden, "Rethinking protected area categories and the new paradigm," in *Environmental Conservation* (2005)

Potential student presentations: Kaa-lyá del Gran Chaco National Park in Paraguay. The case for strict protected areas.

Th 11/20 Violence, the Environment, and Ecological Resistance (~ 65 pages)

- Harper and Rajan, "International environmental justice: building the natural assets of the world's poor," Working Paper from the Political Economy

Research Institute, U. Mass.-Amherst (2004), 10 pages.

Industrialization

- Excerpts from *The Bhopal Reader* (2004), 32 pages.
- The Bhopal Memory Project, Resource | Photographs, Films, Visuals
<http://bhopal.bard.edu/resources/visual.shtml>
- Text and video profile of Rashida Bee & Champa Devi Shukla, winners of Goldman Environmental Prize (2004).
<http://goldmanprize.org/node/83>

Extraction

- Profile and speech of Ken Saro-Wiwa in *Speaking of Earth: Environmental Speeches that Moved the World* (2006), 180-188
- Selection from *Environmentalists Under Fire: 10 Urgent Cases of Human Rights Abuses* (2000), 3 pages.
- Tom Knudson, “Staining the Amazon” from the series *State of Denial, Sacramento Bee* (2003).

Optional reading:

- Michael Watts, “Petro-Violence: Community, Extraction and Political Ecology of a Mythic Commodity,” in *Violent Environments* (2001), 189-212.

Th 11/27 Thanksgiving — No Class

Unit 4: Looking Forward

Th 12/4 Environmental Studies and Environmentalism (27 pages)

- Andrew Light, “Taking Environmental Ethics Public” in, *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works* (2001), 556-566.
- “The American Environmental Values Survey,” SRI Consulting (2006).

Tu 12/9 Final Paper Part #2 — Complete Final Paper Due by 11.59pm.