Environmental Studio – Ideas and Shapes in the Environment
ENV 101 – Environmental Literacy

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Office Hours:

"Have you reckoned a thousand acres much? Have you reckoned the earth much?"

--from "Song of Myself" by Walt Whitman

Goals and Outcomes:

The goal of this course is to help you reckon, to give you a critical understanding of the major arguments that inform contemporary understandings of our environment and our relationship with it. Specifically, we will consider such issues as energy and the environment, biodiversity, pollution, health, population, sustainability, and climate change. While we will not come close to exhausting this field of inquiry, we will open many of its most important doors as widely as we can, and we will step in.

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate

1) a basic understanding the major arguments that inform societies' relationship with their environments
2) the ability to think, write, and speak critically about environmental issues
3) the ability to research environmental issues effectively.

Perhaps more than most fields of inquiry, environmental studies is essentially interdisciplinary, relying on economics, political science, chemistry, biology, geology, art and many other disciplines for its substance and expression. Thus, it's fitting that this course in environmental literacy is clustered with an art course. Together, the courses provide a rarely afforded opportunity to give considerable attention simultaneously to both the literature in which environmental studies is grounded and the production of art that informs and is informed by that literature. As a cluster, these courses model one of the most important precepts of a liberal arts education: all fields of inquiry are connected.

Upon completion of this cluster, students will be able to

1) approach problems and enduring issues using methods and concepts of more than one discipline
2) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of disciplinary inquiry
3) communicate effectively, evaluate critically, and conduct thorough and efficient research.

Methods and Texts

Generally, this course will rely on discussion. We will discuss readings, lectures, field trips, past experiences, and whatever else presents itself to be useful to our pursuits. A good discussion course relies on your participation. Therefore, you must be prepared to participate

In addition to handouts and readings on the web, we will be reading from the following text:

Sources: Environmental Studies, edited by Thomas Easton

This text is an anthology of seminal works in the field. To make sure that you are critically engaged in the readings, you will have regular quizzes.

Finally, as part of the cluster, you will work on four projects that weave your understanding of the environment and sculpture together. Each of these projects will be accompanied by an essay.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments and percentages:

4 Projects (graded by both Instructors)	24%
4 Essays	48%
Quizzes	14%
Participation	14%

Policies

More than 2 unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final grade by one full grade. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in your failure of the course.

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Please review the college's policy on Academic Integrity, which will be enforced strictly.

All papers must be typed (double-spaced with a maximum 12 point font). All multiple page papers must be <u>stapled</u>. Papers that do not meet these requirements will not be accepted.

Work handed in late will be penalized 10% for each class day that it is late.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1-4

My Site

You are asked to establish a relationship with one site on or near campus. In addition to making careful observations about your site, you will make connections between your site and readings in our text from the following chapters: "Preservation vs. Conservation" and "Fundamental Causes of Environmental Problems." At the end of this unit, you will produce a short essay that will be directly related, if not integrated into a sculpture that you make about your site.

Reading Schedule:

Please prepare to discuss the following readings on the dates that they are assigned. Before we begin each of our discussions, you will take a short quiz.

1/19: Anthology selections pp. 1-9
from *Man and Nature* by George Perkins Marsh
from *The Mountains of California* by John Muir
from *The Fight for Conservation* by Gifford Pinchot

1/24: Anthology selections pp. 10-22
from *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold
from "Prehistoric Overkill" by Paul S. Martin
from "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis" by Lynn White Jr.)

1/31: Anthology selections pp. 23-32
from "The Tragedy of the Commons" by Garrett Hardin
from *Limits to Growth* by Donella Meadows et al.

Weeks 5-7 Our Site

Now, you will work in a small group to find the connections between the various sites that you worked with in weeks 2-4. Specifically, you are asked to make connections that draw on your understanding of readings from the following chapters: "Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services" and "Forests, Wilderness, and Wildlife." Again, at the end of this unit, you and your group will produce a sculpture about your sites. This sculpture will be accompanied by essays that each of you will write. In these essays, there will be a research component.

2/14: Anthology selections pp. 77-84
From *Sierra Club v. Morton* by William O. Douglas
From *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* by William Cronon

2/21: Anthology selections pp. 32-54
From "Human Domination of Earth's Ecosystems" by Peter Vitousek et al.
From *Life and Death of the Salt Marsh* by John and Mildred Teal
From "Will Hurricane Katrina Impact Shoreline Management" by Orrin H. Pilkey and Robert S. Young
From *Ecosystems and Human Well-being*

Weeks 8-10 Your Site

Working with another person in the class (not your partner from weeks 5-7), you will introduce each other to your sites. You will then be asked to consider the site to which you have been introduced by applying what you have learned from the "Biodiversity," "Population Control Controversies," and "Political and Economic Issues" chapters in our text. Each of you will construct a sculpture about your partner's site. Once you have seen your partner's sculpture, you will write a reaction to it. Your reaction will incorporate arguments and understandings from our readings.

Reading Schedule

3/13: Anthology selections pp. 86-101
From "The Current State of Biological Diversity" by E.O. Wilson
From "Impacts of Biodiversity Loss on Ocean Ecosystem Services" by Boris Worm et al.
From "Rethinking Rain Forests: Bio Diversity and Social Justice" by John Vandermeer and Ivette Perfecto

3/20: Anthology selections pp. 165-181
From "At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, or Why Political Questions Are Not All Economic" by Marc Sagoff
From "Environmental Justice for All" by Robert D. Bullard
From "Putting a Value on Nature's Free Services" by Janet N. Abramowitz

3/27: Anthology selections pp. 183-196
From "The Population Explosion: Why We Should Care and What We Should Do About It" by Paul and Ann Ehrlich
From *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control* by Betsy Hartman
From *How Many People Can the Earth Support* by Joel E. Cohen

Weeks 11-14 No One's Site

The entire class will work together to consider the concept of public space. Part of our understanding will come from our reading in the following chapters: "Pollution," "Chemicals," "Global Warming and Ozone Depletion," and "Environmental Ethics." As a class, we will sculpt something, somewhere. Each of you will write an essay that accompanies this sculpture.

Reading Schedule to be announced

Essay #1: Due February 9th

As you consider the assigned readings, keep notes that will help you answer the following broad questions:

1. With which ideas and arguments do you most agree? Why
2. With which ideas and arguments do you most disagree? Why
3. How can these ideas and arguments be applied to your relationship with your site?

As you reflect on your notes, begin to arrange them into a well-composed, interesting 4 page essay. Your essay must contain the following elements:

1. A clear thesis that is supported by logical argumentation and good evidence
2. Substantial reference to at least 3 of the readings that we have considered
3. Proper use of MLA parenthetical citation and a works cited page (not part of the 4 page minimum)

Grading Criteria

A- & A grades: The paper meets the above requirements, and it was submitted on time. It supports a well-crafted thesis in a logical manner. Consistently insightful, the paper contains well-organized, fluid body paragraphs. It incorporates sources meaningfully, carefully and accurately. Its prose is clear and grammatically correct. It is a pleasure to read.

B-, B, & B+ grades: The paper meets the above requirements, and it was submitted on time. It supports a well-crafted thesis in a logical manner. Often, the paper is insightful. It synthesizes source material throughout body paragraphs that are generally well-organized. For the most part, its prose is clear and grammatically proficient.

C-, C, & C+ grades: The paper meets the above requirements, and it was submitted on time. The paper has a thesis that it attempts to support in a logical manner. Its engagement with source material is insufficient, and its observations seem rushed, incomplete, and generalized. Its sentence structure and paragraph organization require substantial editing for clarity and grammatical correctness.

D grades: The paper does not meet the above requirements. It does not indicate the student's understanding of source material, nor does it synthesize that material in a meaningful way. Its sentence structure and paragraph organization require substantial editing for clarity and grammatical correctness.