

Swarthmore College

Environmental Studies Capstone Seminar, 1996: Environmental Visions and Environmentalism

Wednesday, 1:15-4:00 p.m. Pearson 210

Coordinator: Donald K. Swearer

Purpose: The purpose of the course is to integrate humanistic, social science, and science perspectives on the environment. In particular, the course will study examples of writings on nature and on the environment by humanists, and examine selected economic, political, and technical issues in the literature on environmentalism, namely, conservation, pollution, sustainability, and development. In a broad sense the seminar will expose students to different ways of seeing, constructing, and acting in relationship to the natural environment and its human and animal inhabitants. In the process you will be introduced to examples of the wide variety of literature in the broad field of environmental studies, e.g. the prose essay, the philosophical essay, poetry, analytical articles in the fields of political science, economics, and science.

A Collaborative Project: The seminar is the outcome of collaboration among several professors at Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr and Haverford as well as teachers in environmental studies at other institutions, in particular, John Elder, of the Environmental Studies Program At Middlebury College. In addition, funding from the Cooper Endowment will bring several speakers to the campus during the semester who will give public lectures in the series, "Earth in Mind: Humanistic Perspectives on the Environment." They will also meet with the class.

Fieldwork: The seminar will have a fieldwork requirement. The course is part of a five college and university experiment connected with the Environmental Studies Program at Middlebury College and the Orion Society funded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Students in the class will be divided among four elementary or middle school classrooms in the area to work on environmental awareness/action projects. A \$500 stipend will be allotted for each classroom which may be used to cover field trips, materials, and other expenses related to the project. The fieldwork portion of the class will be coordinated by Wes Shumar who teaches environmental education in the Program in Education at the College. This summer students will be invited to attend an expense paid conference on environmental education at the Breadloaf Conference Center, Middlebury, VT.

Requirements: (1) Attendance at all Wednesday seminar meetings unless excused by the instructor, (2) The fieldwork project, (3) Report on the fieldwork project the last day of class, (4) A term paper (approximately 10 double-space pages) on one of the weekly syllabus topics or an eco-philosophy paper based in the course readings. All readings are on reserve. Two copies of readings with an * are in E.S. 91 binders.

Books for Purchase:

- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*
- Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*
- Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*
- Lester R. Brown, Christopher Flavin, Sandra Postel, *Saving the Planet*
- Hans Oberdiek and Mary Tiles, *Living in a Technological Culture*
- E.O. Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*
- Joseph Bruchac, Dawn Land Lou Guzzo & Dixy L. Ray, *Trashing the Planet*
- Sandra Pastel, Christopher Flavin, Lester R. Brown, *Saving the Planet*
- Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*

Course Outline: The course will be divided into four sections primarily for the purpose of organizing diverse materials into a reasonably coherent structure.

I. Environmental Imagination and Environmentalism

An examination of the imaginative visions of selected American nature writers; specific attention to the issue of nature as "construction." Issues: pollution and environmental protection.

Wk. 1. 1/24. Thoreau and Beyond

Professor Donald K. Swearer, Department of Religion, Swarthmore College and Professor Lawrence Buell, Department of English Literature, Harvard University

Theory:

- D.W. Meinig, "The Beholding Eye," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*
- Barry Lopez, "Landscape and Narrative," in *Crossing Open Ground*, 61-71
- Yi-fu Tuan, "Ethnocentrism, Symmetry, and Space," *Topophilia*, rev. ed., 30-44

(Literary) Practice:

- Wendell Berry, "On the Hill Late at Night," *Collected Poems*, 13.
- William Least Heat Moon, "With the Grain of the Grid," *Prairyerth*, 279-287
- Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden*, (1) para. 10-12 of "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," (2) Para 14-17 of "Spring," (3) "The Bean-Field," (4) "The Ponds," para. 23-27

Wk. 2. 1/31. (De)constructing Nature

Professor Donald Swearer and Professor Greg Kershner, Dept. of German, Bryn Mawr College

- John Elder, *Imagining the Earth* (Illinois, 1985), ch. 1
- Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination* (Harvard, 1995), ch. 1
- Bill McKibben, *The Age of Missing Information*, (Plume, 1993), "Daybreak"
- Martin Heidegger, "The Turning" in Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (Garland, 1977)
- Jacques Lacan, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I," in *Lacan Ecrits. A Selection* (Norton, 1977)
- Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," in Baudrillard, *Selections* (Stanford, 1988)

Wk. 3. 2/7. Pollution and Environmental Protection

Professor Art McGarity, Dept. of Engineering, Swarthmore College

- Lester R. Brown, Christopher Flavin, & Sandra Postel, *Saving the Planet* (Norton, 1991), Chapt. 1-7 (pp. 17-109)
- Dixy Lee Ray with Lou Guzzo, *Trashing the Planet* (Harper, 1990) Preface, Chapt. 1-7 (pp. 3-91), Chapt. 12 (pp. 159-172)
- Martin W. Lewis, *Green Delusions: An Environmentalist Critique of Radical Environmentalism* (Duke, 1992), Intro. (pp. 1-29), Chapt. 4, "Technophobia & Its Discontents," (pp. 117-149), Chapt. 5, "The Capitalist Imperative (pp. 150- 190), Conclusion, (pp. 242-251)

II. Sustainability and Biodiversity

Mainstream nature writings and the issues of conservation and sustainability.

Wk. 4. 2/14. Preservation and Conservation

Professor John Elder, Department of English Literature and Environmental Studies, Middlebury College

- John Muir, *Wilderness Essays* (Peregrine, 1980), "Yellowstone National Park," pp. 178-219
- Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac* (Oxford, 1949), esp. "Land Ethic," "Thinking Like a Mountain," "Conservation in America"
- United Nations, "UN World Charter for Nature" in *Spirit and Nature: Why the Environment is a Religious Issue*, ed. Steven Rockefeller and John Elder (Beacon, 1992).
- "Principles of Environmental Justice," (First Nation People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, 1991), in *Ecology*, ed. Carolyn Merchant

Wk. 5.2/21. E.O. Wilson and Biological Diversity

Professor Jacob Weiner, Dept. of Biology, Swarthmore College

- E.O. Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*, Chapt. 4 (The Fundamental Unit), 6 (The Forces of Evolution), 11, (The Life & Death of Species), 12 (Biodiversity Threatened)
- E.O. Wilson, *Biophilia* (Harvard)

Wk. 6. 2/28. The Economics and Politics of Conservation and Sustainability

Dr. Leah Smith, Economist and Consultant

- Thomas Tietenberg, *Environmental and Natural Resource Economics*, 3rd ed. (Harper, 1992) Chapt. 3, "Property Rights, Externalities, & Environmental Problems," (pp. 44-69), Chapt. 4, "Regulating the Market: Information & Uncertainty," Chapt. 22 "The Quest for Sustainable Development," (pp. 599-625)
- Michael A. Toman, "Economics and 'Sustainability': Balancing Trade-offs and Imperatives," *Land Economics*, vol. 79, no. 4, 399-413.
- Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Knopf, 1995), "Woods" (Skim for how people actually used the woods, not just as an imagined arcadia and poetic inspiration but for subsistence wood-gathering, pig farming & hunting, recreational hunting, lumbering.)
- Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science*, 162: 1243-1248
- Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science*, Vol 115: no. 3767 (March 10, 1967).

Optional:

- Herman E. Daly & Kenneth N. Townsend, eds, *Valuing the Earth: Economics, Ecology, Ethics*

- Thoms C. Rhodes and Paul N. Wilson, "Sky Islands, Squirrels and Scopes: The Political Economy of an Environmental Conflict," *Land Economics* 71:1: 106-121.
- Paul R. Portney, *Public Policies for Environmental Protection*, 1990
- Norman Cohen, *Cosmoc, Chaos, and the World to Come* (Yale, 1993)

III. Radical Ecology: Wilderness, Biocentrism, Feminism & Environmental Justice. Technology and the Environment.

Criticism of mainstream environmentalism and examination of more radical visions of nature and the environment. Technology and the Rights of Nature

Wk. 7.3/6. Ecofeminism

Professor Stephanie Kaza, Environmental Studies, University of Vermont

- Val Plumwood, *Feminism & the Mastery of Nature* (Routledge, 1993), Intro. & Chapt. 1-2, (pp. 1-68)
- Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive*, (Zed Books, 1989), Chapt. 2, "Science, Nature & Gender" (pp. 14-37)
- Barbara Epstein, "Ecofeminism & Grassroots Environmentalism in the United States," in *Toxic Struggles*, ed. Hofrichter (New Society Press, 1993), pp. 144-151
- Joni Saeger, "Creating a Culture of Destruction," in *Toxic Struggles*, pp. 58-66
- Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, "People or Population: Towards a New Ecology of Reproduction," in *Ecofeminism* (Zed Books, 1993), pp. 277-296

Mid-Semester Vacation

Wk. 8. 3/20. From Deep Ecology to Environmental Justice

Donald K. Swearer, Swarthmore College and Mark Wallace, Department of Religion, Swarthmore College

- George Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* (Shambala, 1995), Chapt. 2 (Fritjof Capra, "Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm"), Chapt. 7, (Dave Foreman, "The New Conservation Movement"), Chapt. 16 (Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary"), Chapt. 32 (George Sessions, "Ecocentrism, Wilderness, and Global Ecosystem Protection"), Chapt. 34 (Arne Ne Naess, "The Third World, Wilderness, & Deep Ecology"), Chapt. 35 (Donald Worster)
- Carolyn Merchant, ed. *Ecology* (Routledge, 1993), Peter Wenz, "The Importance of Environmental Justice," (pp. 248-253), Robert Bullard, "Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement," (pp. 254-265), Ramchandra Guha, "Radical Environmentalism: A Third-World Critique," (281 -291), James Lovelock, "Gaia," (pp. 351 -359), & Conclusion
- Mark L. Wallace, "Environmental Justice, Neopreservationism, and Sustainable Spirituality" (manuscript)

Wk. 9. 3/27. Technology, Nature, and Society

Professor Hans Oberdiek, Dept. of Philosophy, Swarthmore College

- Hans Oberdiek and Mary Tiles, *Living in a Technological Culture* (Routledge, 1995) esp. Chapt. 1, 2, 8

IV. Other Visions, Other Voices. Development and the "Third World"

Cross-cultural perspectives on the environment focusing on Native Americans, Thailand, and the biology and economics of the Green Revolution.

Wk 10. 4/3. Thailand and Peru Culture and the Environment

Donald K. Swearer, Dept. of Religion, Swarthmore College, and Pedro Valdiviezo agricultural consultant to University of Cajamarca, FAO and EEC.

- *Culture and Environment in Thailand* (The Siam Society, 1989), Chapt. 3, "Forests and Deforestation in Thailand: A Pandisciplinary Approach," Chapt. 4, "Wildlife in Thai Culture," Chapt. 5, "Patterns of Land Use As Influenced by Forestry," Chapt. 19, "Changes in a Village's Relations With Its Environment," "From 'Fertility' to 'Order', Paternalism to Profits: the Thai City's Impact on the Culture-Environment Interface."
- *Man and Nature: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Chulalongkorn University, 1993), Chalardchai Ramittanond, "Notes on the Role and Future of Thailand's Environmental Movement,"
- Sippanondha Ketudat, *The Middle Path for the Future of Thailand: Technology in Harmony with Culture and the Environment*, ch. 5.
- Miguel Altieri, "Why Study Traditional Agriculture?" and Judy Soule, Daniel Carre and Jackson West, "Ecological Impact of Modern Agricultural," in *Agroecology*, ed. C.Carrol, et. al. (McGraw-Hill, 1990), 551-564, 165-188
- Clark Erickson, "Prehistoric Landscape Management in the Andean Highlands: Raised Field Agriculture and Its Environmental Impact," *Population and Environment. A Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol 13: no. 4 (Summer, 1992), 285-313

- Masanobu Fukuoka, *The One Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming*, Introduction (Rodale, 1978)
- Pimentel David, "Conserving Biological Diversity in Agricultural/Forestry Systems," *Bioscience*, vol. 42 (May, 1982), 354-366

Wk. 11. 4/10. Development and the Green Revolution

Professor Lois Banta, Dept. of Biology, Haverford College

Professor Richard Ball, Dept. of Economics, Haverford College

- Carl Pray, "The Green Revolution as a Case Study in Transfer of Technology," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 458 (Nov., 1981)
- Kevin Cleaver and Gotz Schreiber, *Reversing the Spiral* (World Bank, 1994), Chapt. 4, "The Nexus of Population Growth, Agriculture, Stagnation, and Environmental Degradation,"
- Carl Eicher, "Zimbabwe's Maize-Based Green Revolution: Preconditions for Replication", *World Development*, vol. 23, no. 5
- Abe Goldman and Joyotee Smith, "Agricultural Transformations in India and Northern Nigeria: Exploring the Nature of Green Revolutions," *World Development*, Vol. 23, no. 2
- Francesca Bray, "Agriculture for Developing Nations," *Scientific American* July, 1994
- D. Pimentel, et. al., 1989, "Benefits and Risks of Genetic Engineering in Agriculture," *Bioscience*, vol. 39, no. 9
- Robert Walgate, *Miracle or Menace: Biotechnology and the Third World* (The Panos Institute, 1990), Chapt. 5, "Three Crops: Cocoa, Cassava Trees"

Wk. 12. 4/17. The American Plains: Cultural Constructions of An Environment

Professor James Ransom, Department of English Literature, Haverford College

- Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*
- N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*
- N. Scott Momaday, "The Man Made of Words," in *Indian Voices: The First Convocation of Indian Scholars*, pp 48-84
- N. Scott Momaday, "An American Land Ethic," in *Sierra Club Bulletin*, vol. 55 no. 1, pp. 8-11

Wk. 13. 4/24. Native American Visions of the Environment

Joseph Bruchac. Abenaki Native American Writer, Poet, and Story teller

- Joseph Bruchac, *Dawn Land*

Wk. 14. 5/1. Reports on student projects

Professor Wes Shumar. Program in Education, Swarthmore College and seminar students
