

ENVR 370: Environmental Studies Seminar

*"I want to tell what the forests were like.
I will have to speak in a forgotten language."
W. S. Merwin*

| <u>Instructor</u> | <u>Phone</u> | <u>E-mail</u> | <u>Office</u> |
|----------------------|--------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Dr. Husic | 610-625-7100 | medwh03@moravian.edu | Collier Science – Room 311B |
| <u>Office Hours:</u> | Tuesdays | 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. | |
| | Wednesdays | 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. | |
| | Thursdays | 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. | |

Class Meeting Times:

Tu, Th 2:20 – 3:30 pm 301 PPHAC

Scheduled Final Period:

Monday, May 4th, 1:30 p.m.

Required books:

1. **Wilson, E. O.** (2002) The Future of Life, Vintage Books (New York, pbk.)
(We will read this entire book during the semester with specific reading assignments to correspond to some of the other assigned reading selections.)
2. **Weidensaul, S.** - One of the following (your choice):
 - (2005) Return to Wild America. A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul. North Point Press (New York, pbk.)
 - (2002) The Ghost with Trembling Wings. Science, Wishful Thinking, and the Search for Lost Species, North Point Press (New York, pbk.)
 - (1994) Mountains of the Heart. A Natural History of the Appalachians, Fulcrum Publishing (Golden, CO, pbk.)

Additional Required Reading:

You will have several readings from various sources throughout the semester. These reading assignments will be given in detailed biweekly course outlines.

Course objectives: (they are ambitious and not necessarily in any particular order!)

1. To become acquainted with classic and contemporary environmental writings.¹
2. To develop carefully considered personal reactions to some of these readings through journaling and more formal writing. Some questions to consider as you formulate your reactions include the following.²
 - How has the reading influenced/shaped my perspective on the issue and what is the result?
 - To what degree does my personal experience/bias/previous reading/major affect my reading of a particular piece?

¹ Ideas for reading selections came from my list of personal favorites, lists from syllabi for environmental studies courses found online, conversations with colleagues, and the Environmental Literacy Council Reading List (www.enviroliteracy.org).

² The ideas for many of these questions came from the reading of Dr. Rick Elderkin's syllabus for a course entitled "Classic Readings in Environmental Studies" at Pomona College.

- What is the relevance of this reading to society – at the time of publication? Now?
- Some of the ideas are more important to me, and some are less, because...
- If I had written this article, I would have...
- How is this important to my understanding of myself and/or to the environment?

3. To consider environmental history, the evolution of environmental ethics, and the cultures of environmentalism. For example:

- Has there been an evolution in the way that we (in the United States) view the environment? Conservation?
- What is “*environmentalism*”? What is meant by “*deep ecology*”?
- Does this differ in other parts of the world and between industrialized and less developed regions? If so, how and why?
- The ecofeminism movement suggests that there are different views of ecology and likely, many indigenous groups would agree. What are these different perspectives of the environment around us? In other words, how have different communities of people around the world defined the term environmentalism?
- What are the different ways of *valuing* nature? What is the role of culture in shaping how we value and treat the environment?

4. To consider the range of social causes and consequences of environmental problems, and to examine the decision making process in past key environmental decisions.

5. To identify the critical environmental issues facing humanity today and to work together in small groups to understand and develop potential solutions for some current environmental problems. This will involve research, an understanding of the scientific background, political processes, and the social and ethical implications of potential solutions and policy changes.

6. Through these readings, class discussions, and course assignments, to become familiar with the primary literature in a variety of disciplines important to environmental studies, to learn to work in teams and independently across disciplines, to improve written and oral communications, and effectively discuss these readings with your peers.

7. To thoroughly research a specific topic related to environmental studies using primary and secondary literature sources; concisely express a research topic in abstract form; and construct successful outlines and drafts of written work from peer and professor feedback.

8. To complete a research paper with appropriate citations and to present your comprehensive research before peers and instructor using Power Point software as well as address questions regarding their work.

9. To objectively critique peer abstract writing samples and ask questions during discussions and after student presentations.

10. To participate in a meaningful service learning project related to conservation and/or public education about key environmental issues.

“I am pessimistic about the human race because it is too ingenious for its own good. Our approach to nature is to beat it into submission. We would stand a better chance of survival if we accommodated ourselves to this planet and viewed it appreciatively instead of skeptically and dictatorially.”

E. B. White

Assignments: (*Unforeseen events and opportunities may cause this to change slightly, especially since this is a new course being offered for the first time!*)

- 200 points: Keeping a journal for the semester. This will include entries on your personal reactions to the various readings and course discussions and activities. In addition, you should pay attention to and include in your journal, current events related to environmental issues. These will be important for class discussions and developing some of our case studies to help achieve objectives #2 to 6.
- 200 points: Overall class participation in discussions, engagement, & attendance. For example:
 - Assigned readings – to be listed in biweekly course outlines and contributions to discussions about these readings in class.
 - “Issues of the Week” –contributions to class discussions and finding materials related to a chosen topic.
 - Course assessment to improve the seminar for the future students!
- 100 points: Book review and oral report on selected Weidensaul reading (at end of semester).
- 300 points: Various assignments such as reaction papers to readings and guest speakers; case studies; peer reviews; etc. This will include a culminating assignment completed during the finals period.
- 500 points: Research paper (with drafts and abstract) and oral presentation (to be completed/presented in April; details will be provided).
- 200 points: Service learning projects (details to be worked out as a class).

Total: 1500 points

Grading: The grading system is as follows: (*+/- will be administered as professor deems appropriate*)

A = 90 – 100 %

B = 80 – 89 %

C = 70 – 79 %

D = 60 – 69 %

** The “class participation grade” is based on your participation and preparation for each class session.

Therefore, excessive absences will have a negative effect on your final grade for the course.

** Please note : it is within the instructor’s purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for assignments or the entire course

Expectations:

- a) **Attendance:** Regular class attendance is expected. **No** make-up presentations will be permitted unless you have an acceptable reason (family emergency, illness, etc) – with documentation. If an emergency should arise, you must notify the instructor prior to the presentation date and **not** after. Notification from the Moravian College Health Center, Learning Services or the Moravian College Dean of Students’ Office will be necessary if you miss more than two seminar classes. I will recognize legitimate excused absences such as when students are representing the university in an official capacity (e.g. for presentation at scientific meetings, intercollegiate athletic competition, **but not practice**, off-campus music performances, etc.). Such activities are scheduled ahead of time; thus, we

expect you to make arrangements with us ahead of time as well. Please note: Students who arrive late to class disrupt the flow of the session and distract their peers. Please be prompt!

- b) Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism may result in failure of the course. Students will be held to the highest standards as specified by the Moravian College Honor Code. Violations of this code will be handled in the most severe manner allowed by college policy. Please read the Academic Honesty Policy that is included in the student handbook *and* the policy that will be distributed in class. I have attached a cover sheet to the policy that each of you will sign and submit indicating that you have read and understand the policy and implications of violating it. If you have any questions about plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, please ask. Several assignments in this class will involve the use of internet resources, and it is my experience that students often do not realize that copyright violations and plagiarism policies still apply when using materials from these resources.
- c) Appropriate Literature Sources: All students will be required to understand the differences between primary and secondary literature sources. The college subscribes to many databases relevant to disciplines associated with environmental studies that you should be familiar with as they will be invaluable sources of information for your paper and seminar. Public-domain internet sources can be helpful but you must critically evaluate the information obtained from such sources – especially if they are not primary sources. You should not typically use “Wikipedia” as a reference for assignments and material from this source is NOT acceptable for the formal research paper.

**** Throughout the semester, I would like for you to pay attention to media and popular press coverage of topics related to this course and use these for entries in your journal and to contribute to class discussions. Your informed contributions to these discussions will be viewed favorably when assigning final grades! ****

- d) Reading Assignments : should be completed prior to each class session
- e) Writing Assignments : A rough draft of your final research paper is due to the instructor **two weeks** prior to your presentation date. **Ten points will be deducted from your grade for every day it is late.** It will be evaluated and returned to you within one week of submission – usually sooner. An abstract of your presentation as well as 2 of your primary research articles are to be submitted to me 1 week prior to your presentation date. These will be placed in the student reading room (311 Collier) or on Blackboard. Your final research paper (8 - 10 pages – excluding the title page and references) is due to the instructor **on the day you are scheduled to present your research topic. If it is not submitted on that day, 20 points will be deducted from the “research paper” grade for every day it is late.** You are each responsible for knowing the timeline for your assignments.
- f) Extra Help : If any difficulties arise during this course in any area, including selecting a research topic to designing your presentation, please see me. *I will be happy to help!* The reference librarians in Reeves Library are also willing to assist you with reference materials. Please contact the Moravian College Writing Center for further assistance in writing and revising your abstracts and research papers

Best wishes for a great semester!

- D. Husic

Timeline and Important Suggestions for Writing Your Research Papers

Timeline:

- Topic due to Dr. Husic on February 17th at the beginning of class.
- The focus of your paper and talk should be on some area related to environmental studies, and preferably, some aspect that relates to your major field of study or focus of personal interest. At least three primary resources must be used and the paper and your talk should include commentary on the impact of this research (its significance) on the field of environmental studies and the broader impact (e.g. on society, the future of the planet, or whatever).
- Outline for seminar and paper due to Dr. Husic on Tuesday, March 10th by 5:00 pm.
- Rough draft of your paper due two weeks prior to presentation date.
- Abstract and copy of one of your primary articles due to professor to be placed in student room in Collier (311) by 5:00pm one week prior to presentation date.
- All class members are to review speakers abstract and articles and draft 1 to 2 questions for speaker – in writing and in advance of the presentation. These will be collected on the day of each seminar along with any questions that you think of during the talk.
- Final paper due on day of your presentation!

Expectations:

- Your research paper and oral presentation are to be **a review and analysis** of primary scholarship reported by various experts on your chosen topic – do not give a summary of only one primary source. As noted above, include discussion on the broader impact of the work. The nature of the scholarship will vary with each discipline represented, and we will explore these differences (and the similarities) of the different fields that are encompassed in environmental studies. Similarly, writing formats for the paper may vary depending on your major. You should use the professional style most commonly associated with your chosen discipline/major.
- You are expected to cite a minimum of **three primary sources** and **two secondary references**.
- You may be asked to submit copies of all primary literature *sources* with the rough draft of your paper.
- Your primary article to be shared with the class should not be from work published prior to 1999.
- Any figures or images should be attached at the end of the 8 - 10 page paper (as an appendix) – do not place in the body of your paper. The figures should be numbered and have titles and, if taken from some source, this should be noted. Technically, you should have permission to use figures from published sources (including the internet).
- Please visit me and/or the Writing Center if you are having difficulties in composing your final draft.

Grading Criteria for Research Paper:

- Clarity of writing
- Quality of writing (grammar, punctuation, organization of information, style, etc)
- Ability to identify and summarize critical research information
- Ability to correctly interpret the data/information
- Appropriate detail/content
- Correct use of key terms
- Appropriate references

Timeline and Important Suggestions for Oral Presentations

Timeline:

- Same as for paper (see previous page).

Expectations:

- Oral presentations must include a Power Point slide show which will be submitted to Dr. Husic on the day of your presentation.
- Oral presentations should be from 25 to 30 minutes. Plan on approximately 10 minutes of questioning from your audience.
- The emphasis of your oral presentation might vary from that of your research paper.
- Practice, practice, practice! This is the way to gain familiarity with your presentation content, to gain confidence and to diminish the dependence on reading your notes during your actual talk. When you practice – do so with your Power Point presentation projected so you can also practice pointing out key information on your slides.
- Remember the importance of appearance, poise, etc. during a professional presentation. Developing confidence and presenting yourself in a professional manner will go far in helping you during interviews, future presentations for your career, etc.

Seminar Dates:

April 14 (#1)

April 21 (#2)

April 23 (#3)

April 28 (#4)

April 30 (#5)

May 4th (#6 & 7; two presentations will be done during the scheduled finals period)