

IDIS 110
Culture, Place, and Environment
Spring, 2012

Class Location

Tuesday/Thursday 8:55am-10:05am

Instructor: Elisabeth (Lisa) Stoddard, M.S.

Office:

Office Hours: Mondays 9:30am-11:30am

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Course Description and Objectives

Course Description

This course will provide students with an introduction to the myriad relationships between human societies and their physical environments, with an emphasis on the significance of place, space, culture, political-economics, and sustainability. The course will be global in scope and comparative in approach, using geographic concepts to understand transnational nature-society issues. Among the major themes considered are human adaptations to ‘natural’ environments, human use and transformation of the environment, questions of environmental limits and sustainability, the functions of culture, and the significance of culture-environment relations in both industrialized and less industrial societies.

This course meets Moravian College’s M5 Cultural Values and Global Issues general education requirement. It does so through an examination of the ways in which different cultural values and political dynamics which shape our environment and global physical landscapes. We will consider how different understandings and interpretations of “nature” shapes global issues, such as conservation, climate change, national identity, and hazards.

Course Objectives

- Students should be able to explain the role that culture and politics plays in shaping the environment and the physical landscape.
- Students should be able to explain the role that science and politics plays in shaping our understanding and conceptualization of nature.
- Students should be able to identify the role of culture and politics in current events and global policy issues surrounding nature-society relationships.
- Students should become more aware of their own cultural values and the common environmental issues we face, making them more prepared to contribute positively to our global future.

Required and Recommended Texts

Required Texts

Required reading assignments for this course are listed in the class schedule. We will not be using a textbook; instead, we will be using chapters from books, articles, and mixed media that will be made available through Blackboard. The assigned readings and exercises are key for a given day's lecture and discussion, as well as for assignments and exams. Therefore, it is *essential* that you do the reading or other assignments for a given class *before* coming to that class.

Recommended Texts

Many of the lectures will be informed by Robbins, P., Hintz, J., and Moore, S. (2010) *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction (Critical Introductions to Geography)*. This book can be found on Amazon for about \$35 or it can be rented digitally (and portions can be printed out) using <http://www.coursesmart.com/> for about \$22. Chapters I assign from this book will be made available on Blackboard.

Attendance, participation, exams, assignments, and grades

Attendance

Class lectures and discussions will cover material that is NOT detailed in the readings, such as key concepts that will be covered on exams. Therefore, it is critical for every student to attend class regularly. You have one unexcused absence for the semester. All other unexcused absences will be deducted from your attendance grade.

Attendance will be taken daily and will count towards 10% of your grade.

Participation and Praxis

Participation in class discussions about the readings assigned for class is key to understanding, and it makes class more interesting and enjoyable! In addition to daily participation through questions and comments, you will have 5 question sets and 2 praxis assignments. Praxis refers to putting theory or concepts into practice. For your praxis assignments, you will look for examples of the concepts we are discussing in class in the global news media. You will write one brief paragraph that summarizes the news article and one brief paragraph that explains how particular concepts from class help to explain ideas within the article. These goal of praxis and the question sets is to help you internalize what you are learning, making you more prepared for exams. They are also an easy way to get an A in 20% of the class.

Each praxis assignment is worth 5%, for a total of 10% of your grade. The five question sets are, together, worth 10% of your grade.

Global news media sources:

- NY Times World: <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/index.html>
- Public Radio International: <http://www.pri.org/>

- BBC News World: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/>
- CNN World: <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/>
- All Africa: <http://allafrica.com/>
- Asia News Network: <http://www.asianewsnet.net/home/>
- Europe News: <http://europenews.dk/>
- National Geographic international websites:
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/siteindex/international/>
- BBC News-Middle East: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/middle_east/
- Al Jazeera: <http://english.aljazeera.net/>
- World Press: <http://www.worldpress.org/>
- The Antarctic Sun: <http://antarcticsun.usap.gov/>
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/>
- National Public Radio (US and World): <http://www.npr.org/>

Exams

There will be two exams, which will each cover about 5 weeks of course material.

These exams are both worth 15%, for a total of 30% of your grade.

Make-up exams. No make-up exams will be given unless the absence is (1) *prearranged with and approved by me* or (2) *the result of a documented emergency* (such as a serious injury). **Documentation is necessary in any case.** *The exam will be a zero unless these conditions are met.* Any other excuses will not be accepted. In the case of flu or other illness, the make-up exam will be either an essay or a verbal exam with the instructor, at my discretion.

Assignments

- *Environmental Racism/Environmental Justice Presentation*
Environmental racism is the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on the poor, people of color, and other minorities. Environmental justice is the movement's response to environmental racism-- to not only address the unequal distribution of environmental hazards, but to also abolish them. We will spend a couple of weeks learning about the concepts of environmental racism and environmental justice. Then, in pairs, you will give a short presentation (about 6 minutes) to the class that details an example of environmental racism using presentation software (e.g. PowerPoint). You will be graded by me, your partner, and your classmates. Grades from your partner and classmates will be kept confidential. These grades will be averaged and will count for 20% of your final grade.
- *Final Paper*

You will research and write an approximately 5 page paper about a current or hypothetical future policy issue focused on relationships between culture and the environment. The first page should give an overview of the issue. The second page should summarize arguments in favor of the policy. The third page should summarize arguments against the policy. In the last two pages, you should defend your view on the topic--using at least two ideas or concepts that we discussed in class. These concepts must be highlighted in bold and briefly defined. I will provide multiple suggestions for topics, but you should feel free to propose your own as well. This paper will count as your final exam, and will be due during our assigned exam time (to be announced). You will be asked to hand in a one paragraph final paper idea description on April 24. I will comment on your idea and return it to you during the next class period.

Grades

Your grade for the course will be based on the following components:

- Exam 1: 15%
- Exam 2: 15%
- Environmental Justice Presentations: 20%
- Final Paper: 20%
- Attendance: 8%
- Participation Question Sets/Praxis Assignments: 20%

Grading scale

A: 94-100

A-: 90-93

B+: 87-89

B: 83-86

B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79

C: 70-76

D: 60-69

F: <60

Academic Integrity

Please act with personal integrity and be respectful of other students. Do not engage in, or tolerate, acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Your written work, including on exams, must be your own. A first infraction will lead to a grade of zero on the assignment or exam in question; a second incident will result in course failure. If you have any questions about how to use or cite sources, please talk with me before turning in the assignment in question. For more details on Moravian College's Academic Honesty Policy, see:

<http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic/academic2.html>

Accommodations and Educational Support

Accommodations

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support. Mr. Kempfer's office is located at 1307 Main Street. He can be contacted by phone at (610) 861-1510 and by email at: mejek02@moravian.edu. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services. For more information on Moravian College's Disability Support Services, see: <http://www.moravian.edu/default.aspx?pageid=3618>

Educational Support

The Writing Center is a free resource for improving your writing. At the Writing Center, trained Moravian students can help you figure out assignments and improve your writing. They can help at any stage of the writing process, whether you haven't started the assignment and need help picking a topic, or you're near the end and want to check that everything is in order. The Writing Center is on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall and the extension is 1592. Their hours vary each semester, but they are generally open Monday-Thursday afternoons and evenings, and Sunday evening. For more information on educational support (e.g. tutoring), see:

<http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/learning/index.htm>

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
WEEK ONE: Introduction and Environmental Determinism		
Tues 1/17	The environment as material, cultural, and political	None
Thurs 1/19	Environments determining culture: environmental determinism	Mitchell, D. 2000. "Environmental Determinism" in: <i>Cultural Geography: a Critical Introduction</i> , pp. 17-20. Huntington, E. 1924. "Civilization and Climate" AND "Race and Place" in <i>Civilization and Climate</i> , Ch. 1 & 2.
WEEK TWO: Culture and the Environment		
Tues 1/24	The impact of human culture on the landscape	Mitchell, D. 2000. <i>Cultural Geography: a Critical Introduction</i> , pp. 20-36. Rappaport, Roy A., 1967, Ritual regulation of environmental relations among a New Guinea people, <i>Ethnology</i> , 6:1: 17-30.

Thurs 1/26	"New" cultural geography	<p>Mitchell, D. 2000. <i>Cultural Geography: a Critical Introduction</i>, selections from Ch. 2.</p> <p>Anderson, et al. 2003. <i>Handbook of Cultural Geography</i>, selections.</p>
WEEK THREE: Population and the Environment: Perspectives on Limits		
Tues 1/31	Population and Scarcity	<p>Robbins et al., 2010. "Population and Scarcity" in <i>Environment and Society: a Critical Introduction</i>, Ch. 2.</p> <p>Hartmann, B. 1995. "The Malthusian Orthodoxy" <i>Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control</i>, selections from Ch. 2.</p>
Thurs 2/2	<p>Uneven Access to Resources</p> <p>Praxis Example (praxis due next class):</p> <p>http://www.thelocal.de/national/20110728-36607.html</p>	<p>Daniel, S. 2011. "Land Grabbing and Potential Implications for Food Security" in <i>Sustainable Agricultural Development</i>, Ch. 2.</p> <p>Exam review sheet will be given out at the end of class.</p>
WEEK FOUR: The environment, markets, and the economy		
Tues 2/7	Markets and Commodities	<p>Robbins et al, 2010. "Markets and Commodities" in <i>Environment and Society: a Critical Introduction</i>, Ch. 2.</p> <p>Praxis assignment #1: environmental limits</p> <p>Post on Blackboard by Mon. 2/6 by 7pm.</p>
Thurs 2/9	<p>The Story of Stuff</p> <p>http://www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-stuff/</p> <p>Review for Exam</p>	<p>Question set #1: Post answers (about 5 sentences each question) to "Questions for Review" on page 44 in Robbins et al, 2010, Ch. 2 "Markets and Commodities" on Blackboard by Wed 2/8 9pm.</p> <p>Come in with at least one question generated by looking over the review sheet.</p>
WEEK FIVE: Exam I and <i>Wasteland</i>		
Tues 2/14	Exam 1 in class	Exam 1 in class
Thurs 2/16	<p><i>Wasteland</i></p> <p>http://www.wastelandmovie.com/</p> <p>Questions to think about and take notes on while watching <i>Wasteland</i>:</p> <p>1) How do we through our economy</p>	<p>Calculate your footprint at:</p> <p>http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/</p> <p>Question Set #2: Post your footprint calculation and a paragraph reflecting on the experience on Blackboard by Wed 2/15 9pm.</p>

	<p>(production and use of goods) and through our consumption and disposal of goods, do we <i>CREATE</i> our environment and ecosystems?</p> <p>2) What are the meanings and significance given to the landscape or the environment in <i>Wasteland</i>? What meaning do people give to this environment (e.g. dump, home, resource for cooking, beautiful, fun, hazard, etc.)?</p>	
WEEK SIX: The Production of Nature		
Tues 2/21	The Production of Nature	<p>Robbins et al, 2010. "Political Economy" in <i>Environment and Society: a Critical Introduction</i>, Ch. 7.</p> <p>Question Set #3: Post Answers to <i>Wasteland</i> Questions on Blackboard (one paragraph for each question) by Mon 2/20 by 9pm.</p>
Thurs 2/23	The Production of Nature	<p>Question Set #4: Post answers (about 5 sentences each question) to "Questions for Review" on page 114 in Robbins et al, 2010, Ch. 7 "Political Economy" on Blackboard by Wed. 2/22 by 9pm.</p>
WEEK SEVEN: The Social Construction of Nature		
Tues 2/28	The Social Construction of Nature	<p>Robbins et al, 2010. "Social Construction of Nature" in <i>Environment and Society: a Critical Introduction</i>, Ch. 8.</p>
Thurs 3/1	The Social Construction of Nature	<p>Question Set #5: Post answers (about 5 sentences each question) to "Questions for Review" on page 132-133 in Robbins et al, 2010, Ch. 8 "Social Construction of Nature" on Blackboard by Wed 2/29 by 9pm.</p>
WEEK EIGHT: No Class; Spring Break!!!		
Tues 3/6 and Thurs 3/8	No class; spring break	No class; spring break
WEEK NINE: Colonialism and the Environment		
Tues 3/13	Environmental Knowledges	<p>Cronon, W. 1996. Introduction: "In Search of Nature" in <i>Uncommon Ground</i>, pp. 23-56.</p>
Thurs	(Post) Colonial Politics and the Environment	<p>Nelson, R. 2003. Environmental Colonialism: 'Saving'</p>

3/15		Africa from Africans.
WEEK TEN: Consequences of Environmental Knowledge and Discourse		
Tues 3/20	Discourses and Data	Fairhead, J., and M. Leach. 1995. False forest history, complicit social analysis: rethinking some West African environmental narratives. <i>World Development</i> 23:1023-1035. Praxis #2: the politics of conservation
Thurs 3/22	Exam Review	
WEEK ELEVEN: Exam and Introducing Environmental Racism/Environmental Justice		
Tues 3/27	Exam 2 in class	Exam 2 in class
Thurs 3/29	Environmental Justice (EJ)	Shrader-Frechette, 2002, "Introduction" in <i>Environmental Justice: Creating Equality, Reclaiming Democracy</i> , pp. 3-18.
WEEK TWELVE: Environmental Justice Presentations		
Tues 4/3	EJ	Cole and Foster, 2001, "A History of the Environmental Justice Movement" in: <i>From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement</i> , Ch. 2 pp. 19-33.
Thurs 4/5	Review Environmental Justice Work on EJ presentations with partners in class	Shrader-Frechette, 2002, "Distributive Justice, Participative Justice, and the Principle of Prima Facie Political Equality" in <i>Environmental Justice: Creating Equality, Reclaiming Democracy</i> , pp. 3-18.
WEEK THIRTEEN: Environmental Justice Presentations		
Tues 4/10	EJ presentations	Prepare for your EJ presentation Start thinking about final paper idea
Thurs 4/12	EJ presentations	Prepare for your EJ presentation Start thinking about final paper idea
WEEK FOURTEEN: EJ Presentations and Nature and Identity		
Tues 4/17	EJ presentations	Prepare for your EJ presentation Start thinking about final paper idea

Thurs 4/19	The environment and gender	Emel, J. 1996. "Are you man enough, big and bad enough? Wolf Eradication in the US" in <i>Animal Geographies</i> , pp. 91-113.
WEEK FIFTEEN: Nature and identity continued and final paper review		
Tues 4/24	Nature, culture, and sexuality	Sturgeon, N. 2010, Penguin Family Values: The Nature of Planetary Environmental Reproductive Justice, in <i>Queer Ecologies</i> , Ch. 3. Final Paper Idea Due: One Paragraph
Thurs 4/26	Review final paper	No reading or homework Final paper idea will be returned to you
FINALS WEEK		
Final Exam Date	Final Paper Due	Final Paper Due