

San José State University
College of Social Sciences / Environmental Studies Department
ENVS 150, Introduction to US Environmental Thought, Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Will Russell
Office Location: Washington Square Hall
115E
Email: will.russell@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Mon 1:00-3:30 pm
Wed 1:00-2:00 pm
Class Days/Time: Wednesday 3:00-5:45
Library Liaison: Peggy Cabrera
peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu
Prerequisites Passing WST score



Catalog Description

An introduction to significant works in the field of environmental studies in the United States. Topics covered include preservation, conservation, biocentrism, environmental justice, eco-feminism, deep ecology, and environmental activism.

Course Overview

This course is designed to provide upper division students with the opportunity to investigate their personal environmental philosophy within a cultural and historic context. The evolution of our society has a direct and profound influence on our attitudes toward Nature. Similarly, dysfunction in our relationship with Nature, as a society, is tied to inequities in our interactions with each other (sexism, racism, and economic stratification). The purpose of this course is to create a framework for a dialog on these topics that will help students to develop tools for addressing the social structures and inequalities that have led us to the brink of environmental collapse.

Required Text

McKibben, Bill (Editor). 2008. American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau. Library of America, New York, NY. *Available at SJSU Spartan Bookshop.*
Garcia, Camille Rose. 2006. The Magic Bottle. Fantagraphics Publishing, Los Angeles, CA. *Available on Amazon, etc.*

Supplemental Materials (*available on Canvas*)

- Bari, J. 1994. Timber Wars. Common Courage Press, Monroe, ME. *Available on Canvas*.
- Elk, Black. 1972. Black Elk Speaks. Pocket Books, New York, NY. *Available on Canvas*.
- Homeland [videorecording] : Four Portraits of Native Action / Katahdin Foundation presents; produced and directed by Roberta Grossman. 2005. Bullfrog Films. *Available from IRC, Room 112*
- Naess, Arne and George Sessions. 1984. Basic Principles of Deep Ecology. *Available on Canvas*
- Schultz, A. and S. Sichley. 2011. Urban Agriculture Policy in San Jose. Urban Planning Department, SJSU. *Available on Canvas*
- Shiva, Vandana. 2002. Staying alive: Women, ecology, and development. Zed Books, London. *Available on Canvas*
- Smith, Henry. 1887. Chief Seattle's 1884 Oration. Seattle Sunday Star on Oct. 29, 1887. *Available on Canvas*
- Thoreau, Henry David. Resistance to Civil Government. Search at: <https://sniggle.net/TPL/index5.php?entry=rtcg#p07>

Classroom Protocol

All use of cell phones and smart phones during class time is strictly prohibited. Computers may be used during class time at the instructors discretion exclusively for tasks directly related to class activities. Students should be in class prepared to work at the beginning of each class session. Disruption of the class by students arriving late will not be tolerated. Failure to meet the expectations of classroom protocol will result in a loss of participation points.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops are available at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html>. Late drop information is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/policies/latedrops>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Please read the following assignment descriptions carefully. Failing to comply with the specific directions given below will result in a loss of credit points for each assignment.

Reactions

Submit a 500-600 word written 'reaction' to the day's readings and instructor created modules on Canvas. Be sure to address all "discussion questions" posted by the instructor for the reading.

Personal Environmental Philosophy

A 2000-2500 word personal environmental philosophy will be required from each student. The philosophy should describe your personal environmental perspective in direct reference to the philosophies described in the course readings. Also include how your personal journey - cultural identity, gender, and family history influence your philosophy. Be sure to answer the question “How do I as an individual relate to the natural world – am I a part of it, or apart from it?” Include **at least ten literature references** cited and references **in APA style**. You may use one or two references from the texts, but the remainder should be independent (non-website) sources.

Selected Reading Essay

For this assignment, you will choose one of the readings from American Earth that was not assigned by the instructor and write a 1000-1200 word essay on the topic of the reading, the life and influence of the author, and how the ideas presented by the author relate to the topics discussed in class.

In-class Assignments

In class activities will be conducted throughout the semester. In most cases an assignment (written or otherwise) will accompany this activity. Participation in these activities is essential, and successful completion of them will constitute a significant portion of the total class grade.

Class Participation

- 1) Attendance – Please come to class. If you are ill or have an emergency, e-mail me as promptly as possible.
- 2) Participation in discussions – Participation does not mean being verbose. In many cases allowing or encouraging others to speak is more valuable to the group dynamic. Providing the group your insights in an engaging and respectful manner. Statements are always more interesting if they are backed up by logic and evidence.
- 3) Presentations – As a presenter it is your job to make your subject informative and entertaining. Please be professional and creative!
- 4) **Respect and decorum** – **All class participants will behave in a manner that provides a positive and comfortable learning environment for everybody.**

Midterm Exam

A written exam will cover all course content up until the time of the exam.

Grading

Grading Rubric for Writing Assignments: An “A” paper will include all of the elements listed in the assignment in an integrated, compelling, and readable format with minimal grammatical and stylistic errors. A “B” paper will include all of the elements listed in the assignment, but may lack some integration and can include a few grammatical and stylistic errors. A “C” paper will include the essential elements listed in the assignment but might include significant stylistic and grammatical errors. A “D” paper may include some of the elements listed in the assignment but will may have serious issues with regard to style, organization, and grammar. “F” papers will be those where the basic elements of the assignment were not met.

Course Grade: Your grade in this course will be based on your written work, presentations, and your participation in online as well as in-class discussions.

Assignment	Percent of Grade
Reaction and Response	20%
In-class Assignments	20%
Selected Reading Essay	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Environmental Philosophy	30%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Points Acquired	Letter Grade
980-100	A+
900-979	A
880-899	B+
800-879	B
780-799	C+
700-779	C
680-699	D+
600-679	D
0-600	F

Penalty for Late Work

All assignments will be turned in during class time by the due. Assignments turned in after the due date will be dropped a full letter grade for each class meeting that they are late.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The policy on academic integrity can be found at http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

ENVS 150, Fall Spring 2015 Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1/28	Introductions		
2/4	Traditional Ecological Knowledge	Chief Seattle, 1884 Oration Black Elk (preface + ch 1-5)	Reaction 1
2/11	Roots of Environmentalism	McKibben (Thoreau 1-2 & 26-36; Marsh 71-80)	Reaction 2
2/18	Preservation v. Conservation	McKibben (Muir 84-85 & 104-112; Pinchot 172-180)	Reaction 3
2/25	The Role of Women in the Early Environmental Movement	McKibben (Carson 365-376) Shiva (chap. 3)	Reaction 4
3/4	Environmental Justice	McKibben (Chavez 690-695)	Reaction 5
3/11	EcoFeminism	Bari (219-225) http://www.thegreenfuse.org/ecofem.htm	Reaction 6
3/18	Deep Ecology <i>Midterm exam review</i>	Naess and Sessions Merchant (chap. 4)	Reaction 7
3/25	Spring Recess --- No Class		
4/1	Midterm Exam		
4/8	Dark Dreams and Environmental Fiction	McKibben (White 327-336; Dick 451-453) Camille Rose Garcia	Reaction 8
4/15	Direct Action and Civil Disobedience	McKibben (Hill 907-919) Thoreau "Civil Disobedience"	Reaction 9
4/22	Urban Agriculture Revolution	McKibben (Pollan 948-969) Urban Agriculture in San Jose	Reaction 10
4/29	Environmental Philosophy Presentations		
5/6	Environmental Philosophy Presentations		
5/13	Environmental Philosophy Presentations		<i>Environmental Philosophy Due</i>