

# GES 1500: Introduction to Environmental Studies and Sustainability

Fall 2022 | Remote Asynchronous | 4 Credits



Abandoned Fishing Village – Houtouwan, China

## Course Description

What is the relationship between COVID-19, climate change, and racial justice? How are these seemingly separate issues deeply intertwined in our environment? From mass extinction events to catastrophic extreme weather, the environment, broadly defined, seems to be discussed and debated everywhere. In fact, it is *everywhere*. However, the environment is different for different people (and non-people). The impacts of these large-scale events, such as climate change, are not distributed equally. Many of the threats posed by environmental problems will have profound effects that span generations into the future, and these events have systemic roots that reach millions of years into the past. In order to address these issues, one must first consider the multiple dimensions of what constitutes the environment. GES 1500 is meant to be an introduction in the diverse and interdisciplinary field of environmental studies. This course will provide a broad overview of many key concepts and ideas found within this discipline, as well as provide a platform from which to explore many of the most pressing environmental issues of our time.

This course will be offered as remote asynchronous, meeting entirely online throughout the semester. Though there will be no required weekly meetings, we will find alternative ways to share knowledge together throughout the semester. If you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas, please be in touch with me at [dharr14@uccs.edu](mailto:dharr14@uccs.edu).

**Professor:** Dylan M. Harris



- **Email:** [dharr14@uccs.edu](mailto:dharr14@uccs.edu) (checked 9am-5pm M-F)
- **Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 12:00 – 2:00 pm (or by appointment)
- **Office Location:** Zoom (for now)

### **Faculty Response Time**

I try to respond to emails within 24 hours (except for weekends), and I try to return grades within 72 hours. I will let write to let you know if my schedule changes otherwise!

### **Teaching Philosophy**

I think of the classroom as an experimental space in which I can learn alongside students, testing and pushing the limits of how knowledge is made, consumed, and carried forward outside of the university. With a background in organizing work, I also see the classroom as a site where knowledge production meets practical skills meant to encourage students in their research and writing, activism, and professional development. I focus on four main tenets in my teaching: critical thinking, deep listening, active engagement, and effective communication. I believe this four-part approach to teaching encourages students to slow down their thought processes, to sit with tension in their own ideologies and truly learn from others. Ultimately, I think this approach to teaching permits students to feel more comfortable expressing themselves in the classroom, which allows students—and myself—to learn just as much from one another as they do from me. Finally, and importantly, I draw from my personal and professional experiences as an educator (in both formal and informal spaces over the last decade), to center diversity and inclusion in the classroom. I am intentional about creating space for students to feel brave and confident in their own life experiences, bringing them to the fore in classroom conversations to help one another better understand how the ideas we discuss in class resonate in particular and significant ways in people’s lives.

### **Course Objectives**

Though often referred to as ‘the’ environment, it is actually composed of many environments. These relationships and understanding of the environment are mediated by webs of social, political, historical, ethical, and cultural contexts. In order to address many of the issues facing our planet, it is necessary to understand these dimensions. To look at this year alone in environmental crises: *historic flooding in China, the warmest year on record so far (especially in*

*the Arctic*), *wildfires across the Western U.S.*, etc. The list of questions and examples can unfortunately continue. However, when **thinking critically** about these events, it is possible to begin understanding the various physical and social elements of the environment.

Critical thinking is bolded here because it will be our most useful tool throughout this course. Take a quick look at a definition of critical thinking from the *Foundation for Critical Thinking*:

“Critical thinking can be seen as having two components: 1) a set of information and belief generating and processing skills, and 2) the habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behavior... It is thus to be contrasted with: 1) the mere acquisition and retention of information alone, because it involves a particular way in which information is sought and treated; 2) the mere possession of a set of skills, because it involves the continual use of them; and 3) the mere use of those skills (‘as an exercise’) without acceptance of their results.”

Building from a base of critical thinking, at the end of this course you will be able to:

- CO1 – identify and analyze proposed solutions to environmental problems creatively through sustained, multi-faceted investigation;
- CO2 – gain knowledge of key concepts and methods of inquiry in various areas of environmental thought (including *geography*, philosophy, science and policy, politics and power);
- CO3 – develop a basic understanding that connections between environmental disciplines exist, and that they can be integrated from and to multiple sources;
- CO4 – discuss the pros/cons of contemporary environmental policy (e.g., A Green New Deal, The Just Transition);
- CO5 – effectively communicate, through discussion and writing, about the complexities of the environment;
- CO6 – develop capacity in life-long learning.

With a broad scope of environmental issues in mind, **the course will be broken down into three sections**: i) ***environmental questions*** – this section will provide different ways of thinking about the environment; ii) ***environmental problems*** – this section will focus on specific issues, how they came about, and how they impacting society; and iii) ***environmental solutions*** – this section will be a survey of the various ways people address these complex issues.

## **Compass Curriculum – Sustainability & Inclusiveness**

In addition to the course objectives outlined above, this course fulfills learning objectives in line with two elements of the Compass Curriculum: Sustainability and Inclusiveness. Below, you will find these learning objectives as well as how they are connected to this course.

### ***Sustainability***

Sustainability courses help you learn about:

- The history of human-nature interaction
- The long-term consequences of human interaction with nature

*Essential Learning Outcomes:*

- Explain sustainable practices and impacts relative to the interaction between human development and the natural world.
- Gather, critically analyze and evaluate quantitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts.
- Gather, critically analyze and evaluate qualitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts.
- Apply and integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines, including interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary research.

Throughout the course, we will explore the core components of what constitutes sustainability, noting why and how the concept of sustainability has developed to date, what it means (what it can mean), and how to foster it with our actions. Each section of the course allows you to explore the interactions between humans and the environment through examinations of case studies, discussions based on applied knowledge, and practices utilizing various kinds of data sets (e.g., we will look at climate modeling data and discuss how this translates to socioecological realities).

***Inclusiveness***

Inclusiveness courses help you learn about:

- The dynamics and systemic and historical aspects of inclusion and exclusion
- Ways that inclusivity (and exclusivity) are generated at local, national, and global levels

*Essential Learning Outcomes:*

- Articulate origins, influences, and impacts of inclusion and exclusion within societies.
- Gather, critically analyze and evaluate quantitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts.
- Gather, critically analyze and evaluate qualitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts.
- Apply and integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines, including interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary research.
- Demonstrate the core ethical principles and responsible methods of your discipline.

So much of human-environment interactions is a history of inclusion and exclusion. We will explore how concept of uneven development (e.g., progress for some at the expense of others) has driven much of global economic development, and how these developments have fundamentally shaped the world we live in and how we interact with it. We will explore power differentials and matters of inequality throughout the course through our discussion of case studies, and, importantly, we will discuss ways to address these inequalities through looking at various forms of environmental solutions at the end of the course.

**Course Requirements**

- There are no prerequisites for this course.

## Required Texts and Other Readings

There is no required text, however, I will be drawing heavily from one book:

*Robbins, P., J. Hintz, and S. A. Moore. 2014. Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.*

It's a great book that covers a wide range of topics, including many we may not have time to cover in class. It's also relatively cheap, as far as textbooks go. There is no pressure to buy this book, but it may be a helpful text for you as you explore topics for your final projects or continue along in environmental studies. The textbook will be available through the library via Canvas.

This course will also use lots of supplementary materials – podcasts, music, interviews, popular articles, etc. – that will also be made available either as links or PDFs through Canvas.

## Course Expectations

In short, you will get out of this course what you put into it. There will be multiple opportunities to engage with material in ways that are meaningful to you, and it is my hope that this information will not be passively absorbed. Rather, it is my hope that this material resonates with you all in ways that extend beyond the classroom.

### Technology Requirements

This course will work best with the use of a personal computer system; either Mac or PC. It can potentially be completed with a mobile device or tablet, but it may prove to be more difficult in terms of technical capacity.

- Download and install Microsoft Office 365 on your personal computer
- To participate in a few discussions, you will need speakers or headphones/earbuds attached to your computer as well as a microphone. A webcam has a microphone built into it.
- Download and install the latest version of the Google Chrome.
- Download and install Acrobat Reader.

### Technology Competencies

- You are expected to begin this course with basic computing skills that include using Canvas, Microsoft Word to write papers, accessing online research databases, and corresponding by campus e-mail. We will also use Microsoft Excel occasionally to process and analyze climate data. Knowledge of technology-supported multimedia, such as Microsoft PowerPoint and other audio/video resources is a plus; Communication outside of class will be by campus e-mail. An idea: if your UCCS address is not your primary one, have emails from it rerouted to the one you check most often. You can find information on how to do this on the UCCS IT website.

## Course Structure

- This course will be delivered entirely online through Canvas. The course will be offered as 'remote asynchronous,' meaning that there will be no required weekly meetings.
- Information will be uploaded at least a month at a time, allowing you to work on course materials at your own pace.
- The units/weeks/modules start on Monday at midnight (12am) and end on Sundays at 11:59pm.
  - Most assignments will be due on Sundays at 11:59pm, after which it will be marked as late. However, there will be a couple assignments due midweek (e.g., seminar discussions), and the final assignment will be due on Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.
- The weekly course material will consist of video lectures, readings, links to internet resources (e.g., podcasts and news articles), and discussion assignments.
- Interactivity among the class members is through discussions (both asking and answering questions).

## Assignments & Grading Summary

1. Participation – 10% / 10pts

2. Initial Response – 5% / 5 pts

- Answer the question in a paragraph: *What is the relationship between COVID-19, climate change, and racial justice?*

2. Discussion Question Responses – 40%

- 4 pts per week (2 pts per question; 2 pts per answer) x 10 weeks = 40 pts

3. 4 Short Papers (1000 words each) – 20%

- 5 pts per paper x 4 = 20 pts.

4. Final Projects – 25%

- Project Proposal – 5pts / 5%
- Final Submission – 20 pts / 20%

***Total – 100 points***

Grading Breakdown –

- A+ = 97 + points
- A = 94-96 points
- A- = 90-93 points
  
- B+ = 87-89 point
- B = 84-86 points

- B- = 80-83 points
- C+ = 77-79 points
- C = 74-76 points
- C- = 70-73 point
- D+ = 67-69 points
- D = 64-66 points
- D- = 60-63 points
- F = >60 points

### ***Participation***

This course is offered as a ‘remote asynchronous,’ meaning that this course is offered entirely online (due to COVID-19) and there will be no required weekly meetings. Instead, course material – lectures, readings, assignments, etc. – will be uploaded to Canvas. There will be a few suggested online meetings throughout the semester, but you will have plenty of time to prepare, plan for, and schedule these meetings.

While traditional ‘class participation’ (e.g., attendance in class, responding to/asking questions in class, visiting office hours (in person), and group work) is not possible, there are other kinds of participation that will be taken into account in this course –

- Accessing and utilizing course materials on Canvas (required)
- Completing assignments (required)
- Engaging with other students’ discussion questions/answers (required)
- Attending online office hours (suggested)

### ***Initial Response – due by Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm***

In a paragraph (~150-250 words), answer the following question –

*In your own words, what is the relationship between COVID-19, climate change, and racial justice?*

There are no right or wrong answers here. I want you all to think deeply and broadly about this question as a way of at least speculating about how pressing contemporary issues that may seem disconnected are in fact intertwined. In doing so, I hope that you all are able to begin thinking about how ‘the environment’ is central to these issues. If you do not know, that is ok! If you have strong feelings, also ok! If you have some feelings that are still forming, those are also welcome. This response gives me a sense of where you all are at when thinking broadly about the environment.

These responses will only be read by me and not shared with your peers. I will not be ‘grading’ this so much as I will be reading it to see how you think about these issues. Again, no right or

wrong answers! You will receive full credit as long as you write a paragraph and attempt to answer the question.

### ***Discussion Question Responses – 10 in total due by Friday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> by 5pm***

Each week, I will post 2 or more discussion questions to Canvas. These questions will be based on the ‘required materials,’ and I expect your responses to also be based on these materials (though, feel free to include the additional materials if you feel inclined!).

Responses to the questions can range in style and length. If you feel compelled to write a personal story, or if you want to write a mini-manifesto or research-based response, feel free to do so. I only ask that you answer the question fully and thoughtfully (e.g., engaging with each part of the question). **Your responses only need to be a few sentences, but feel free to write as much as you like. Again, I only ask that you answer the question fully, addressing each part of the question.** These responses will be public so that your peers can read and engage with them as well. In addition to answering **2 questions** (1 point each), you are expected to engage with at least **one** of your peers’ answers (2 points) My intention is twofold –

- i) to create as much of a ‘discussion’ as I can outside of a formal classroom, and
- ii) to make sure that you are engaging with the course material throughout the class (rather than all at once at the end).

**There are 15 weeks of material, but I am only asking you to answer questions for 10 of them.** This means that you can pick and choose which weeks to engage with more deeply. However, you should be reading/engaging with each week. **Your discussion question responses will be due by the Sunday, at 11:59 pm, of the week about which you are writing.** *Keep in mind that some weeks can have multiple things due, so plan accordingly!*

Again, quick breakdown of points –

1 point per question x 2 (2 points)  
2 points per engagement with peers’ answer (2 points)  
10 weeks x 4 points = **40 points total**

### ***4 Short Papers –***

- ***#1 due by Sunday, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm***
- ***#2 due by Sunday, Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59 pm***
- ***#3 due by Sunday, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm***
- ***#4 due by Sunday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm***

Writing is a critical piece of environmental communication. Further, writing helps to bring ideas into focus and to synthesize new understanding and knowledge. These short papers provide a way for you to engage more deeply with the topics raised in this course and – ideally – will be a compass for how you approach your final projects and future studies.

There will be a short paper due at the end of each course section. The idea is to help you all both summarize these ideas and to also begin to choose which ones resonate with you and the work



you'd like to do. You will find prompts for these short papers below in the course outline. *The final and fourth short paper will be discussed later in the course.*

Each paper should be no less than 1000 words (and not more than 1500 words – learning to write short papers is a virtue!). All normal formatting (1-inch margins, 12 pt. font, relatively normal font style) apply for these and the final projects.

### ***Final Projects –***

- ***Project Proposal due Friday, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>***
- ***Final Submission due Friday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>***

The final project is your opportunity to pursue a topic of your interest and to engage it through a medium of your choice. The beauty and promise of environmental studies is its interdisciplinarity, meaning that there is no one right way to think about or deal with environmental issues. To this end, I encourage you all to think creatively about your final projects.

If you are a dancer and would like to choreograph and perform a dance about climate change, please do! If you are a soil scientist and would like to do an experiment on pollution remediation in soil, please do! If you are a social science researcher and would like to know more about how certain communities are dealing with the impacts of water shortages, please do! If you're a podcaster interested in doing an episode on invasive species, please do! If you're a creative writer and want to write a short story about energy utopias, please do (and let me know because I may be able to publish it)! You get the idea. In short, there is a lot of freedom with these projects. My only requirement is that you engage with the course material and have a clearly articulated sense of which materials you are engaging with and why.

**Your project proposal – worth 5 pts – is due Nov. 11th.** This gives me an opportunity to review and talk about your projects with you well enough ahead of time to make sure they are doable in a limited time frame and in line with the course objectives (which, again, are broad). This will also give us a chance to be on the same page and to make sure we can work out resources if need be.

**Your final submission will be due at the end of finals week (Friday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>).** Please do not wait until the last minute to finish these. It is my intention that these projects are genuinely useful and meaningful for you.

## **Grading Policy**

- Grades will be posted in Canvas within 4 days after the assignment due date.
- Assignments should be uploaded using the assignment link in Canvas; please do not email them to the instructor.

## Late Assignments Policy

*Discussion Responses* – **Because you have the option to choose which weeks you respond to discussion questions, there will be no late days.** These discussion board will close at midnight on the Friday of each week to help me keep track of who responds and when.

*Initial Discussion, Written Reflections (x4), Project Proposal*– **You each are allowed to use 3 late days throughout the semester however you choose.** If you are three days late on one assignment, your grade will not be affected. If you miss one day on each assignment, your grade will not be affected. However, if you use all of your late days and submit an assignment late, I will not be able to accept the late assignment, and you will receive 0 pts. I will keep up with these, but I encourage you to keep up with them yourself as well.

*Final Projects*– Because these are due at the very end of class, there will be no room for late days.

## Assignment / Grading Review

Assignments and points	Points total	Final Weighted Percentage
Participation	10 pts	10%
Initial Discussion	5 pts	5%
Discussion Question Responses	4 pts x 10 weeks = 40 pts	40%
4 Short Papers	4 x 5 pts = 20 pts	20%
Final Project Proposal	5 pts	5%
Final Project	20 pts	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Communication and Interaction Policies

- Participate in all online activities in the course as listed in the syllabus unless they make prior arrangements.
- Commit to spending a minimum of 2-4 hours per week to complete the requirements for the course.
- Check UCCS email daily for updated messages sent via Canvas by the professor, and reply to these messages when appropriate
- Practice “Netiquette” and civility for online discussions, written work, email, and all forms of communication (see below)
- Submit all assignments through Canvas by the stated deadline.
- Know the policies and procedures for late work or missed assignments.

- *Ask for help if you need it!*

## **Student Services and Support**

### **Accommodations**

“If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to register with Disability Services and provide them with documentation of your disability. They will work with you to determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. To avoid any delay, you should contact Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and disability accommodations cannot be provided until a Faculty Accommodation Letter has been given to me. Please contact [Disability Services](#) for more information at Main Hall room 105, 719-255-3354 or [dservice@uccs.edu](mailto:dservice@uccs.edu).

### **Military and Veteran Students**

[Office of Veteran and Military Student Affairs](#) provides the following syllabus statement: "Military students who have the potential to participate in military activities including training and deployment should consult with faculty prior to registration for any course, but no later than the end of the first week of classes."

At this time, the student should provide the instructor with a schedule of planned absences, preferably signed by the student's commander, in order to allow the instructor to evaluate and advise the student on the possible impact of the absences. In this course, the instructor will consider absences due to participation in verified military activities to be excused absences, on par with those due to other unavoidable circumstances such as illness. If, however, it appears that military obligations will prevent adequate attendance or performance in the course, the instructor may advise the student to register for the course at another time, when she/he is more likely to be successful.

### **Technology Support**

There is a pre-course setup that can be added to your course shell with instructions for students for setting up your computer and student tutorial videos for Canvas. More help is available through the Help link at the bottom of the global navigation in the Canvas course (black nav bar at the far left of the window).

- For 24/7 Canvas Student Support, 844-802-9230
- For issues with logging in or your UCCS e-mail account or campus wireless, contact the UCCS Help Desk 719-255-3536 or [Contact the Help Desk online](#).
- [Canvas Support Live Chat](#) - you do not have to be logged in to Canvas to access the hotline or chat.

## **UCCS Academic Support Services**

Access to a range of University academic support services is available via the Canvas user interface (UCCS Resources > Resources, Policies, Etc).

## **UCCS Student Services & Resources**

Access to a range of University student support services is available via the Canvas user interface (UCCS Resources > SU18-FA18 > Resources, Policies, Etc.). If you need access to these services, please contact the [Student Success Center](#).

## **The Excel Centers**

The UCCS Excel Centers include the Language and Social Sciences Center, the Mathematics Center, the Communication Center, the Science Center, and the Writing Center. These five academic centers are designed to provide critical academic and individual support to all students in the University in all major academic areas, both within and beyond the classroom. All Excel Centers offer [online services by appointment](#).

## **Kraemer Family Library**

Library skills are essential to your success as a college student. Librarians are available to help students select and locate appropriate books, articles, and other resources needed to complete course assignments. Research help is available in person at the Reference Desk, by phone at 719.255.3295, and through email or chat via the Library's website, [www.uccs.edu/library](http://www.uccs.edu/library).

## **Course and Institutional Policies**

In addition to the course policies, all UCCS students are also expected to know and comply with policies set by the campus and the Regents of the University of Colorado. The most important include:

### **Attendance, Preparation, and Participation**

Students are expected to maintain high standards of ethical and professional conduct. This includes being adequately prepared, contributing to class discussions, submitting high caliber work, and representing your own work fairly and honestly. You must actively engage in class and group work to maximize your learning in this course.

### **Professional Behavior**

Professional behavior is necessary for you to be a successful member of a learning community. Please monitor your participation in class discussions and group work and find ways to contribute intelligently to the discussion without silencing others. All written assignments must be computer generated unless otherwise indicated by the professor. Professional behavior will be expected in your future teaching/counseling career and is often the hallmark of career success.

## **UCCS Student Code of Conduct**

The purpose of the [Student Code of Conduct](#) is to maintain the general welfare of the university community. The university strives to make the campus community a place of study, work, and residence where people are treated, and treat one another, with respect and courtesy.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

If you are unsure of what plagiarism and cheating consists of, please contact me before submitting an assignment that may include plagiarism and cheating. You may also want to read the [UCCS Policies on Academic Honesty and Civility](#) if you are uncertain as to what plagiarism and cheating are. University regulations will be followed to the letter.

### **UCCS Student Rights & Responsibilities**

The Colorado General Assembly implemented the [Student Bill of Rights](#) (C.R.S. 23-1-125) to assure that students enrolled in public institutions of higher education have rights.

### **UCCS Academic Honor Code**

UCCS has an ongoing commitment to maintain and encourage academic integrity. Therefore, the university has created a set of [standards of academic honesty](#) and procedures governing violations of these principles.

### **Confidentiality**

Under no circumstances will students disclose individual student or teachers' names during whole class discussions. Please remember to respect the confidentiality of all participants, schools, and/or organizations.

### **Recording of classroom lectures and/or re-distribution of classroom materials**

The materials, classroom lectures, discussions, and assignments for this course have been developed for educational purposes at UCCS and constitute intellectual property. Any student who wants to record or videotape classroom lectures and discussions or re-distribute classroom materials must discuss this issue with the professor and obtain written permission.

*Recording a class with student participation to be used within the same class*

Making recordings available to students enrolled in the class in which the recording was made is allowed because enrolled students would have: (1) been in the class and the recording would not disclose anything to the student that they didn't already know, or (2) missed the class, but the information in the recording is something that the student had a right to access had the student been in attendance. Instructors should consider the following when making classroom recordings to be shared with students enrolled in the same class:

- Provide notice to students of the recording in the syllabus and through a verbal announcement at the beginning of each recorded session.
- Ensure storage and access to the recording is secure and limited to students enrolled in the same class, for example by utilizing Canvas.
- Instructors should delete the recording within a reasonable time after the class ends to prevent inadvertent disclosure or use.
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*Recording a class with student participation to be used outside of the class*

The portion of these recordings containing student participation are education records protected by FERPA. Instructors should consider the following when sharing these recordings to anyone that is not a student enrolled in the class:

- Provide notice to students of the recording in the syllabus and through a verbal announcement at the beginning of each recorded session.
- Avoid recording students, if the recording includes only the instructor, it is not a student education record and not subject to FERPA.
- Edit the recording to remove any portion in which a student appears or blur the student's image and distort the student's voice.
- Plan class participation sessions so that it is easy to edit student participation out.
- For recordings where de-identification is not possible, obtain individual written FERPA consents from each student that can be identified in the recording.
- If students participating are not de-identified, or participating students do not provide a FERPA consent, then the recording cannot be shared outside of the class.

## **Withdrawal from Course**

You may choose to withdraw from your class. Please note the last date for withdrawal without instructor/dean's approval is **October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022**. Please email prior to your withdrawal as I am concerned about your progress in this course.

## Course Schedule (subject to change)

### Module 1: 8/22 – 8/28

#### *Course Introduction –*

- Syllabus Review, Class Overview – Q&As
- Required Materials
  - Read Course Syllabus
  - Watch Film – [Anthropocene: The Human Epoch](#) (2019)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Introductions (upload yours + respond to one other)
  - **Initial Discussion Assignment (~150-250 words) – Due Sunday, 8/28 by 11:59pm**
    - *In your own words, what is the relationship between COVID-19, climate change, and racial justice?*

## I. Environmental Questions

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### Module 2: 8/29 – 9/4

#### *The Social Construction of Nature*

- Required Materials
  - Read chapter – Robbins et al. (2014) – The Social Construction of Nature, pgs. 119-135
- Additional Materials
  - Listen to podcast – [Hunting While Black](#) with Dr. Carolyn Finney (the actual interview starts at 36:34).
  - Read article – Cronon (1996) – The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting back to the Wrong Nature
  - Read short article – [Liberal, progressive — and racist? The Sierra Club faces its white-supremacist history](#)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

### Module 3: 9/5 – 9/11

#### *The Political Economy of Nature*

- Required Materials
  - Read chapter – Robbins et al. (2014), Political Economy, pgs. 98-116
- Additional Materials
  - Watch short film: [The Digital Dump, Illegal Electronics Waste Trade Documentary in Nigeria](#)
  - Watch film: [The End of Meat](#) (2018)
  - Watch short film: [Frontline: Flint's Deadly Water](#) (2019)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

### Module 4: 9/12 – 9/18

#### *Environmental & Earth System Science(s)*

- Required Materials
  - Read article – Steffen et al. (2020) The emergence and evolution of Earth System Science
- Additional Materials
  - Read article – Rockström et al. (2009) A safe operating space for humanity
  - Read article/website – [Ten Years of Nine Planetary Boundaries](#) (2019) (link to Stockholm Resilience Center)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer
  - **First Short Paper Due by Sunday, Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> at 11: 59 pm (1000 words)**
    - Which of these frameworks do you find the most helpful or compelling?
    - How do at least two of these frameworks work together? Write about their similarities and differences.
    - If you were to choose one or more framework for an environmental issue, which would you choose and why?

## **II. Environmental Problems**

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### Module 5: 9/19 – 9/25

#### *Resource Scarcity, Curses, and Potentials*

- Required Materials
  - Read short article – [What is the resource curse?](#)
  - Read short article – Patrick (2012) [Why natural resources are a curse to developing countries and how to fix it](#)
  - Watch Video – [Nigerian Oil Catastrophe](#)
  - Explore Website – [Niger Delta Negligence](#)
  - Read short article – Martin (2020) [The People Killed the Pipelines](#)
- Additional Materials
  - What about so-called ‘developed countries? A Quick Look at West Virginia
    - Read article – Gabriel (2014), [50 years into the war on poverty, Hardship hits back](#)
    - Read article – Pilkington (2017), [What Happened When Walmart Left](#)
- Module Activity:
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

### Module 6: 9/26 – 10/2

#### *Energy*

- Required Materials
  - Option 1 – Listen to podcast: Cara New Dagget’s overview of her book [The Birth of Energy](#) (2019)
  - Option 2 – Read article – Mitchell (2009) Carbon Democracy
- Additional Materials
  - Listen to podcast – [The Midnight Oil](#) (explores Alaska’s history with oil and its current crossroads with either more oil development or a turn towards



renewables). The whole show is great, but you should at least check out [Episode 1](#).

- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

### Module 7: 10/3 – 10/9

#### *Extreme Events*

- Required Materials
  - Read short article – Stott (2016) How climate change affects extreme weather events
  - Read short article – Batterbury (2020) [Political ecology in, and of, the Australian Bushfires](#)
- Additional Materials
  - Read article – Smith (2006) [There's No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster](#)
  - Read article – Coumou & Rahmstorf (2012) A decade of weather extremes
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

### Module 8: 10/10 – 10/16

#### *Environmental Justice / Pollution*

- Required Materials
  - Read chapter – Nixon (2011) Introduction from *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*
  - Read/listen to interview – (2018) Robert Bullard: [‘Environmental justice isn’t just slang, it’s real’](#)
  - Read/listen to interview – (2020) Robert Bullard: [The Father of Environmental Justice](#)
- Additional Materials
  - Read chapter – Bell (2013) How they can expect me as a mother to look over that? Maria Gunnoe's Fight for her Children's Health and Safety
  - Read article – Pulido (2015) Geographies of Race and Ethnicity 1: White Privilege vs White Supremacy in Environmental Racism Research
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

### Module 9: 10/17 – 10/23

#### *Climate Change*

- Required Materials
  - Read policy summary – IPCC (2018) [Summary for Policymakers](#). In: *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty*
  - Read article – Liverman (2009) Conventions of climate change: constructions of danger and the dispossession of the atmosphere
- Additional Materials

- Watch film – [Secrets Beneath the Ice](#) (2010)
- Read short article – IPCC (2013) [Summary for Policymakers](#) (AR5)
- Read short article – Wayne (2013) [The Beginner’s Guide to Representative Concentration Pathways](#)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

#### Module 10: 10/24 – 10/30

##### *Extinction & The Anthropocene*

- Required Materials
  - Read article – Barnosky et. al. (2011) Has the earth’s sixth mass extinction already arrived?
  - Listen to podcast – Kolbert (2015) [Habitations, Ep. 4](#) – On the Sixth Great Extinction
- Additional Materials
  - Read chapter – Svenning (2017) Future Megafaunas: A Historical Perspective on the Potential for a Wilder Anthropocene
  - Read chapter – Funch (2017) Synchronies at Risk: The Intertwined Lives of Horseshoe Crabs and Red Knot Birds
  - Explore Pleistocene Park Project:
    - [Kickstarter](#) (watch the video)
    - [Website](#)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer
  - **Second Short Paper Due by Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm 1000 words**
    - Which issue do you consider most pressing and why?
    - How are at least two issues interconnected? In what ways are they interconnected?
    - If you were to study one specific issue further, which framework from the first part of the course do you find most helpful? What types of questions would you ask?

### **III. Environmental ‘Solutions’& Interventions**

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#### Module 11: 10/31 – 11/6

##### *Science & Science Communication, Politics & Policy*

- Required Materials
  - Read article – Fleur (2017) [Scientists, Feeling Under Siege, March Against Trump Policies](#)
  - Read article – Young (2017) [A Scientists’ March on Washington Is a Bad Idea](#)
  - Watch short video – Hayhoe (2015) [Climate Change Elevator Pitch](#)
  - Read short article – McGowan (2011) [Amid Cheers, NASA Chief Is Arrested at Oil Sands Pipeline Protests](#)
- Additional Materials
  - Listen to Ted Talk – Hayhoe (2018) [The most important thing you can do to fight climate change: talk about it](#)

- Explore website – [Global Warming’s Six Americas](#)
- Explore website – [Yale Climate Opinion Maps: 2019](#)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

### Module 12: 11/7 – 11/13

#### *Engineering & The Environment*

- Required Materials
  - Read article – Keith et. al. (2017) [Solar geoengineering reduces atmospheric carbon burden](#)
  - Read chapter – Buck (2019) Introduction. Desperation Point.
    - **OR** – Watch video: Buck (2019) [After Geoengineering](#)
  - Explore Website – [Virgin Earth Challenge](#)
- Additional Materials
  - Read article – Bellamy et. al. (2017) Public perceptions of geoengineering research governance: an experimental deliberative approach
  - Read article – Specter (2014) [Seeds of Doubt](#)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer
  - **Projects Proposal Due by Friday Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm**

### Module 13: 11/14 – 11/20

#### *Social & Environmental Justice, Social Movements & Change*

- Required Materials
  - Read article – [People's Climate March: thousands demand action around the world - as it happened](#)
  - Listen to Video / Read Speech – (2019) [“This Is Our Time. This Is Our Future.” Voices from the Historic Youth Climate Strike in NYC](#)
  - Explore Website: [Sunrise Movement](#)
  - Explore Website: [Extinction Rebellion](#)
- Additional Materials
  - Watch short film – [Water Warriors](#) (2017)
  - Read article – Finnegan (2002) [Leasing the Rain](#)
- Course Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer

### ***Thanksgiving Break: 11/21 – 11/28 (Break Extends into Monday)***

### Module 14: (Tuesday) 11/29 – 12/4

#### *Arts & Humanities and the Environment*

- Required Materials
  - Renssen (2017) The visceral climate experience
  - [Uncivilisation: Dark Mountain Project Manifesto](#) (2017)
  - Wanak (2019) Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Memphis Minnie Sing the Stumps Down Good
- Additional Materials

- Hawkins & Kanngieser (2017) Artful climate change communication: overcoming abstractions, insensibilities, and distances
- Watch Videos – [Art Not Oil](#)
  - [25 Portraits in Oil](#)
  - [Parts Per Million](#)
  - [Birthmark](#)
- Module Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer
  - **Third Short Paper Due by Sunday, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm (1000 words)**
    - Which of these interventions did you find most compelling or useful and why? Which ones do you find to be problematic and why?
    - How might two or more interventions work together and in what ways?
    - If you were to choose an environmental issue, how would you address it? Would you use some of these interventions, or what might be another way to address the issue of your choice?

#### **IV. Synthesizing / Wrapping Up**

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##### Module 15: 12/5 – 12/11

##### *Course Summary – Future Directions & Ideas*

- Required material
  - Read short article – [‘Hope is an embrace of the unknown’: Rebecca Solnit on living in dark times](#)
  - Read short article – Kirksey (2014) [Hope](#)
- Additional Material
  - Le Guin’s Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction (and life)
- Course Activity
  - Discussion Board – Answer 2 Questions, Respond to 1 Answer
  - **Fourth Short Paper Due by Sunday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm (1000 words)**
    - Topic to be discussed

##### Finals Week: 12/12 – 12/16

***Final Projects due Friday, December 16th by 5pm***