

Professor: Dr. Kathleen M. Ryan
APRD/JRNL 7021 Spring 2020
Class: Wednesdays noon-2:30p
Location: Armory 1B01

Environmental Journalism and Science Communication



In western societies, we tend to think of ourselves as somehow being separate from nature. Indeed, environmentalists continue efforts at preserving “wilderness,” places supposedly wholly apart from humanity. This course will use these ideas as a springboard for examining how we use media and communication to conceptualize nature and science, and what impacts that has for the way we live on this planet, through an interrogation of such concepts as “conceiving nature,” the anthropocene, and the rhetoric of “wilderness” itself.

This reading-intensive seminar also will turn on the idea of “conceiving nature,” meaning how we have, through our emissions of greenhouse gases, our killing off of countless species, etc., in some sense given birth physically to a wholly novel kind of nature, one completely dominated by *us*. With this in mind, the course also will investigate the ways that media and communication are being used to help humanity come to grips with this new reality of the Anthropocene, the proposed geological epoch in which we humans now are the primary agents of profound and permanent changes to the our planet’s life support systems.

“To think of ourselves capable of causing the ‘end of nature’ is an act of great hubris, for it means forgetting the wilderness that dwells everywhere within and around us.”

-William Cronon



Office Hours and Other Information

Office: Armory 1B35

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30-11:30am and by appointment

Email: kathleen.ryan@colorado.edu

Phone: 303-735-2940

Course Materials

Required Readings:

William Cronon (ed). *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*. New York: WW Norton and Co, 1995.

Debbie Lee and Kathryn Newfont (eds). *The Land Speaks: New Voices at the Intersection of Oral and Environmental History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Libby Lester and Brett Hutchins (eds). *Environmental Conflict and the Media*. New York: Peter Lang, 2013.

Leo Marx. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964 (PDF provided).

Rob Nixon. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011. (also available via the library online)

Janet Walker and Nicole Staroseielski (eds.) *Sustainable Media*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016.

Supplemental readings will be available as PDFs on the course Canvas site.

Course Assignments and Grading

Discussion Lead

Four times over the course of the term (weeks Two, Seven, Ten and Fourteen/Fifteen) you will take the lead presenting one of the readings for the week. These readings are each either chapters or journal articles related to the topic of the week. Be sure to skim the other readings for the week so you can be prepared for the discussion. Sign up for the readings on Canvas.

20% of final grade

Book Review

Select one of the books from the course required reading list to review in the format of a review for an academic journal (750-1000 words). This is due Tuesday before the class period when we will discuss the book and should be distributed to the class on the Canvas Discussion board. Only one student per book (Cronon review is due Week Five).

10% of final grade

Meeting with Instructor

Class during Week Four will be canceled and in lieu of class we will do one on one meetings to discuss your final paper or project.

5% of final grade

Extended Abstract with Annotated Bibliography

Your extended abstract outlines your research paper or creative project. The abstract should be 2-3 pages long, double spaced. The abstract should outline your theoretical framework or creative approach (with a research question) and adequately describe your object of analysis or project. Your annotated bibliography should include a minimum of 8 theoretical sources which you plan on using in your analysis to develop your theoretical framework. An annotated reading list includes a description of how the sources are relevant to the project, including a short summary of the key argument (eventually this would translate into a literature review). You should also identify a potential journal or creative outlet for your research, which will help to determine your reference citation style.

15% of final grade

In-class Presentations Final Project

During Week 16, students will present their preliminary findings from their analysis. You will have 12-14 minutes to summarize your research/creative project and your key findings (i.e. why what you're doing is important or original). At the end of each presentation, there will be a 10 minute time period for questions and answers from the class.

Your presentation should include:

- An introduction of your project/area of analysis
- A brief summary of your theoretical approach (or theoretical influence, for creative work)
- Your key findings (or what you did in your creative work)
- Video clips, photographs or other visuals to illustrate your project
- Why your work matters/your research is important

You can use a presentation program like PowerPoint or Keynote, bring in a rough edit of your professional project, or some combination thereof.

You should have preliminary findings, in other words you need to complete a rough draft of your project/paper before your presentation and know what you expect the audience to take away from it. In addition to questions/comments from your classmates, I will also provide you with written comments/feedback on your presentation, including potential areas for additional research/project development before your final paper/project is due.

10% of final grade.

Final Paper/Project

Your final project is due by 4:00pm Wednesday, May 6th (at the end of the final exam period for the course). If it is a research paper, it should follow the format of a traditional academic journal essay, depending upon discipline or it can be a chapter draft for your dissertation or thesis. The paper should be between 20-25 pages, not including references and illustrations.

A creative project must demonstrate evidence of an equivalent amount of work and research. It will need to illustrate an understanding of the theories discussed in class and should include a short "artist's statement" where you spend 4-6 pages discussing the theoretical grounding for your creative approach. Any creative project must be discussed with and approved by the professor. Keep in mind that while creative projects are welcomed, the class is not designed to provide the technical support found in typical production, studio or technology courses. In other words, if you choose a project, please make sure you have the chops to do it (or know someone who can help you out).

Electronic submissions are encouraged, if appropriate.

35% of final grade

Class Participation (5% of final grade)

This is not a lecture class. Students are expected to have completed the readings each week and participate in course discussions. This will help us to have a diverse perspective on visual communication issues.

Since class only meets once per week, students are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. If you are sick or have a family emergency, notify the Professor via e-mail or telephone in advance of class that you will not be attending; when you return to class provide a doctor's note or another verification of your absence. If you are sick you must email any assignments due before class begins.

Scheduled activities will be considered on a case by case basis, but must be discussed with the professor a minimum of two weeks before the activity date. All other unexcused absences will impact the class participation grade.

Any student who misses three classes (excused or not) will drop one full grade. Any student who misses five or more classes (excused or not) will fail the course. If you have a temporary disability that prevents course attendance, see the section on "Disability" below for accommodation policies.

5% of final grade

Grade Distribution

Grades will be weighted to reflect the above percentages. Individual grades will be available on the course Blackboard site.

95-100%	A
90-94.99%	A-
87-89.99%	B+
84-86.99%	B
80-83.99%	B-
77-79.99%	C+
74-76.99%	C
70-73.99%	C-
67-69.99%	D+
64-66.99%	D
60-63.99%	D-
Below 60%	F

Late Assignments

Unless you have a temporary medical condition verified by disability services (see section on “Disability” below), late assignments are not accepted. No exceptions.

Course Schedule

Week One: January 15. Foundations

Readings:

Max Brosig, Parker Frawley, Andrew Hill, Molly Jahn, Michael Marsicek, Aubrey Paris, Matthew Rose, Amar Shambaljamts, and Nicole Thomas. “Implications of Climate Change for the U.S. Army.” Carlisle, PA: United States Army War College, 2019. (skim)

Rachel Carson. *Silent Spring*. Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1962. 63-82.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature,” 1849, from Emerson Central <https://emersoncentral.com/texts/nature-addresses-lectures/nature2/chapter1-nature/>

Winona LaDuke. *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1999. 96-114, 138-166.

Wangari Maathai. “Learning from Trees.” In *Wild Foresting: Practising Nature’s Wisdom*. Alan Drengson & Duncan Taylor (eds.). Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2009. 102-104.

John Muir. “The Yosemite.” In *My first Summer in the Sierra*. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1911. https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/my_first_summer_in_the_sierra/chapter_5.aspx

Marjory Stoneham Douglas. *The Everglades: River of Grass*. Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, Inc. 5-25

Henry David Thoreau. "Sounds." In *Walden, Or a Life in the Woods*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854. <https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/90/walden-or-life-in-the-woods/1542/sounds/>

Week Two: January 22. The Anthropocene

Readings:

Donna Haraway. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin." *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015), 159-165.

Eva Horn and Hannes Bergthaller. *The Anthropocene*. New York: Routledge, 2020. 19-32.

Bruno Latour. "Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene." *New Literary History* 45 (2014). 1-18.

Simon L. Lewis and Mark A. Maslin. "Defining the Anthropocene." *Nature* 519 (12 March 2015), 171-180.

Will Steffen, Jacques Grinevald, Pauk Crutzen, John McNeill. "The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*. 369 (2011): 842-867.

Due: Discussion Lead I

Week Three: January 29. The Pastoral Ideal

Readings:

Marx. *The Machine in the Garden*.

Due: Marx Book Review

Week Four: February 5. No Class

Due: Meeting with Professor

Week Five: February 12. Nature, Constructed

Readings:

Cronon. *Uncommon Ground*. Introduction, Parts I-III (Beginnings. Paradise Lost and Found, and At Work and Play). 23-229.

Due: Cronon Book Review

Week Six: February 19. Slow Violence

Readings:

Nixon. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*.

Miyase Christensen. "Slow Violence in the Anthropocene: An Interview with Rob Nixon on Communication, Media, and the Environmental Humanities." *Environmental Communication* 12:1 (2018), 7-14.

Due: Nixon Book Review

Week Seven: February 26. Representation

Readings:

Natalia Cecire. "Environmental Innocence and Slow Violence." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 43-1/2 (2015), 164-180.

Juliana Chow. "Partial Readings: Thoreau's Studies as Natural History Casualties." In *Anthropocene Reading: Literary History in Geologic Times*. Tobias Meneley and Jesse Oak Taylor (eds). College Station, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017. 117-131.

Giovanna Di Chiro, "Welcome to the White (M)Anthropocene? A Feminist-Environmental Critique." In *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*. Sherilyn MacGregor (ed). New York: Routledge, 2017. 487-505.

Chelsea M. Frazier. "Troubling Ecology: Wangechi Mutu, Octavia Butler, and Black Feminist Interventions in Environmentalism." *Critical Ethnic Studies* 2-1 (2016), 40-72.

Stephanie LaMenager. "Climate Change and the Struggle for Genre." In *Anthropocene Reading: Literary History in Geologic Times*. Tobias Meneley and Jesse Oak Taylor (eds). College Station, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017. 220-238.

Due: Discussion Lead II

Week Eight: March 4. Contested Terrains

Readings:

Cronon. *Uncommon Ground*. Parts IV-VI (Contested Terrains. Common Places, Partings), 233-460

Week Nine: March 11. Contested Claims

Readings:

Lester and Hutchins. *Environmental Conflict and the Media*.

Due: Lester and Hutchins Book Review

Week Ten: March 18. Aesthetics

Readings:

Finis Dunaway. "Beyond Wilderness: Robert Adams, *New Topographics*, and the Aesthetics of Ecological Citizenship." In *Reframing the New Topographics*. Greg Foster-Rice and John Rohrbach, eds. Chicago: Center for the American Place at Columbia College Chicago, 2013. 13-44.

John A. Duvall. *The Environmental Documentary*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. 7-48.

Eva Horn and Hannes Bergthaller. *The Anthropocene*. New York: Routledge, 2020. 96-109.

Kathleen M. Ryan. "The Myth of the American Landscape: Photography and the Semiotics of Nature." In *Handbook of Visual Communication*, 2nd Edition. Sheree Josephson and James D. Kelly (eds.). New York: Routledge (in press).

Christine L. Marran. *Ecologies Without Culture: Aesthetics for a Toxic World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. 55-89

Due: Discussion Lead III, Extended Abstract and Annotated Bibliography

Week Eleven: Spring Break

Week Twelve: April 1. Narrations

Readings:

Lee and Newfont. *The Land Speaks*.

Week Thirteen: April 8. Sustainability & Media

Readings:

Roy Bendor. *Interactive Media for Sustainability*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave, 2018. 93-127.

Walker and Staroseilski. *Sustainable Media*.

Due: Walker and Staroseilski Book Review

Week Fourteen: April 15. Decentering

Readings:

Stacy Alaimo. *Exposed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016. 111-142

Rosi Braidotti. "Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism." In *Anthropocene Feminism*. Richard Grusin, Ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, 21-48.

Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey. *Allegories of the Anthropocene*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019. 63-97, 165-196.

Due: Discussion Lead IVa

Week Fifteen: April 22. Interactions

Readings:

Dehliah Hannah in Conversation with Natalie Jeremijenko. "Natalie Jeremijenko's New Experimentalism." In *Anthropocene Feminism*. Richard Grusin, Ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. 19-219.

Tiara R. Na'puti. "Floating Island Reflections: Relationalities from Oceania and Manna-hata." *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 10-1 (2019), 169-174

Lauran Whitworth. "Goodbye Gauley Mountain, Hello Eco-camp: Queer Environmentalism in the Anthropocene." *Feminist Theory* 20-1 (2019), 73-92.

Due: Discussion Lead IVb

Week Sixteen: April 29. Wrapping Things Up.

Due: Paper/Project Presentations

Final Paper/Project Due: Wednesday, May 6, 4pm.

A Commitment and Invitation From Our College

CMCI strives to be a community whose excellence depends on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We aim to understand and challenge systems of privilege and disadvantage in higher education, such as those based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and dis/ability. We seek to reach across social and political divides and to make space for voices historically underrepresented in higher education and marginalized in society. In other words, diversity is not just a future reality for which we try to prepare students. It is a priority we want to put into practice here, now, and together, in order to foster places of learning where all members can thrive.

Our question for you is, *how are we doing?* Please contact the CMCI diversity team (email [Karen Ashcraft](#) or visit the [CMCI Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Staff](#) page):

- if you need support or other resources but don't know where to turn
- if any aspect of your educational experience with CMCI does not reflect the commitment expressed here, or if you want to share a positive instance of this commitment in action
- if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas related to diversity

We want to hear from you so that we can do better, and to support you however we can!

University of Colorado Policies

For full details of the University policies, [click here](#).

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office Website](#).

Sexual misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Observance

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. You are allowed four absences in this class for any reason without penalty. This is designed to accommodate any religious holidays that happen during the term (as well as short term illnesses). If a temporary disability due to illness or accident means that you will go over your allotted absences and prevent you from using your allotted absences for religious observances, you should consult the [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.