

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism
PRLS 300 — People with Nature (3)
Fall 2011

DAY/TIME:	Internet	LOCATION:	Internet
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OFFICE HOURS:	Fridays 9-10:00 a.m. and by appointment	FAX NUMBER:	703-993-2025

PREREQUISITES None

COURSE DESCRIPTION Traces philosophical evolution of perceptions of and attitudes toward nature. Examines role of philosophers, scientists, nature-writers, and artists in the shaping of environmental thought. Includes extensive reading of Emerson, Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Carson, Wilson, and others.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course students should be able to:

1. Identify and articulate the philosophical, historical, and cultural context within which perceptions of and attitudes towards nature have evolved;
3. Describe how various subgroups of individuals have interacted with nature throughout history;
4. Articulate the various perspectives individuals have expressed toward the natural environment;
5. Verbally and visually illustrate their personal views of the natural environment; and
6. Discuss key events contributing to current views of the natural environment.

Further, upon completion of this course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standards:

[Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions \(COAPRT\):](#)

- 7B.03 Understanding the principles and practices of stewardship and use of natural resources and the ability to interpret them to the general public, particularly as related to the public's role in stewardship
- 9B.01 Understanding of the history and development of natural resources recreation policies and their implications for recreation resources management

COURSE OVERVIEW

Since your contributions are such an important part of this course, we'll all be expected to actively participate in class discussions, complete in-class exercises, and fulfill all assignments on time. **Assignments will be due at 5:00 p.m.** on the specified date due. **Assignments received AFTER 5:00 p.m. will be considered late and receive a 20% deduction in points per 24 hour period.** If you have an extreme emergency there may be some exceptions; however, you'll need to discuss these issues with me **prior to the due date** to be considered for exception. I also recommend you make back-up copies of your assignments since computers have been known to crash at the most inopportune moments.

COMMUNICATION: Effective communication is an important part of our lives and this course. Therefore, we will all be asked to treat our colleagues with respect in all types of communications (such as e-mail, class conversations, etc). Since we are meeting online, it will also be critical to check our e-mail daily. This will be the primary method of communication used outside of our class meeting time. However, since I hope we can all consider outdoor recreation as another important part of our life, I wouldn't expect you check e-mails as on the weekend. And, I will likely not access e-mails on the weekend since I hope to be engaging in outdoor recreation activities during those times.

Please use Blackboard 9.1 for all communications. To access Blackboard, go to "MyMason" (found at the top of the gmu.edu webpage), log in with your username & password, click on the "Courses" tab along the top right of the page, and go to the "9.1 Course List" to find our course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see our University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Academic integrity means when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task and will submit your own, original work. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form (in our course, that means you'll need to cite & reference using the style put forth in the American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 6th Edition). What is "someone else's work"? That's work that someone else already wrote in a book, published on the internet, said on a television show, or in some way communicated as information coming from him/her or his/her organization.

Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Critical discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions, i.e. **we all have the right to disagree without being disagreeable**. When in doubt, please feel free ask for guidance or clarification.

REQUIRED READINGS

Bryson, B. (1998). *A Walk in the Woods*. New York: Broadway Books.

Nash, R. F. (1990). *American Environmentalism: Readings in Conservation History*. McGraw-Hill.

LaBastille, A. (1980). *Women and Wilderness*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

REQUIRED VIDEO

Check out when you can watch the Ken Burn's special on National Parks (we'll watch several of the episodes) at <http://www.weta.org/tv/programsatoz/program/70896> or we also have the videos on reserve at the Prince William Campus library.

EVALUATION

You will be assessed for this course on your completion of a series of assignments designed to assess the breadth and depth of your knowledge at a variety of stages throughout the course. Following is the summer of assignments we'll be completing:

1. Environmental Issue (5 pts): For this assignment, I would like you to write a 500-800 word summary describing and discussing your perspective regarding one current environmental issue that is being reported in the news. You can research your topic using any news source medium, including newspapers, magazines, television, radio, or the world wide web. Your issue can be local, regional, national or global in nature.
2. Volunteering for Nature (5 pts): One of the ways we connect to the natural world is through volunteering our time to complete outdoor projects, provide outdoor programs, or become advocates for public lands. There are many other ways, of course, but for this assignment, we'll have the opportunity to directly identify how volunteerism influences our connection to and understanding of nature.
3. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Exploration (10 pts): Since we're doing so many readings in this course, I'd like for you to have the opportunity to experience some of the kinds of activities, spaces, and places to which some of your authors refer. This assignment is designed to get you out into and exploring the myriad of spaces within one of your regional parks, specifically, to the Meadowlark Botanical Gardens. And, it's further designed to engage you the way artists may have engaged with natural resource-based parks in the 1900s
4. Appalachian Trail Hike (10 pts): At this point in the semester, you have started (or maybe even finished?) reading about Bill Bryson's adventures while he attempted to hike the Appalachian Trail (AT). In order to give you a more personal perspective of this experience, you are to hike for a minimum of 2 hours on any section of the AT. It can be any section you prefer, but you must do the hike within the timeframe of this assignment (even if you've already hiked parts of the trail).
5. Personal Philosophy Project (20 pts): Over the course of the semester, you will have participated in most of the classes, viewed several videos, and read various readings dealing with the overriding theme of people and nature. As a result of your own interactions with the natural world, you are refining your perception of how you believe it is most appropriate to interact with "nature". So, for this final project, you are asked to share **your** refined **philosophy** with the rest of the class by developing a presentation
6. Open Book Exam (20 pts)
7. Discussion Boards/Online Chats (3 pts each x 10 = 30 pts). Throughout the semester we will engage in a total of 10 Discussion Boards and/or online chats.

Following is the breakdown for our course evaluation:

Assignments	Percent of final grade
Class Assignments	
Environmental Issue (5 pts)	
Volunteering for Nature (5 pts)	30%
Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Exploration (10 pts)	
AT Hike (10 pts)	
Personal Philosophy Project (20 pts)	20%
Exam (20 pts)	20%
Class Participation (10 Discussion Boards or online Chats – 3 pts each)	30%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale (percent)

A+ = 98 – 100	B+ = 88 – 89	C+ = 78 – 79	D = 60 – 69
A = 94 – 97	B = 84 – 87	C = 74 – 77	F = 0 – 59
A- = 90 – 93	B- = 80 – 83	C- = 70 – 73	



- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.
- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu>].

“Reading about nature is fine, but if a person walks in the woods and listens carefully, he can learn more than what is in books...” George Washington Carver

“One way to open your eyes is to ask yourself, 'What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?’” Rachel Carson

“We need wilderness whether or not we ever set foot in it. We need a refuge even though we may never need to go there. We need the possibility of escape as surely as we need hope.” Edward Abbey

COURSE SCHEDULE

Last updated: August 15, 2011

WEEK (date)	MODULE TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1 (Aug.29 – Sep.2)	Introduction Overview of “where to find stuff” State of the Environment	POST your photo & quote Environmental Issues Assignment Distributed READ: Chap 1 in WW Chap 1 in Nash Environmental Issues Assignment DUE on Thursday
Week 2 (Sep.5 – Sep.9)	Philosophical Foundations of American Environmental Thought	READ: Chap 2 & 4 in WW Chap 3 & 4 in Nash Watch Episode 1 – K.Burns: "The Scripture of Nature" (1851–1890) Volunteer Project Distributed
Week 3 (Sep.12 – Sep.16)	First Voices for Nature: Painters, Musicians, Poets, Writers,	READ: Chap 17 in WW
Week 4 (Sep.19 – Sep.23)	Landscape Preservation & the value of parks	READ: Chap 1 & 4 in Bryson, Chap 5, 6 & 7 in Nash Watch Episode 2 – K. Burns: "The Last Refuge" (1890–1915)
Week 5 (Sep.26 – Sep.30)	National Parks	Watch Episode 3 – K. Burns: "The Empire of Grandeur" (1915–1919) READ: Chap 11 in Nash Volunteer Project DUE
Week 6 (Oct.3 – Oct.7)	Preservation as a movement	Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Assignment Distributed – visit http://www.nvrpa.org/park/meadowlark_botanical_gardens for details on how to get there READ: Chap 7, 10 & 12 in Bryson Chap 13 & 15 in Nash
Week 7 (Oct.10 – Oct.14)	USDA Forest Service Conservation – is it new? Is it now?	READ: Chap 9 in Nash Chap 3, 13 & 14 in Bryson Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Assignment DUE
Week 8 (Oct.17 – Oct.21)	Mid-Term EXAM due Tuesday, October 18 at 5:00 p.m.	Appalachian Trail Assignment Distributed READ: Chap 15 & 16 in Bryson
Week 9 (Oct.24 – Oct.28)	Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal – Impact on natural resources	READ: Chap 22, 23, 25, 27 & 28 in Nash
Week 10 (Oct.31 – Nov.4)	Aldo Leopold & Land Ethic	READ: Chap 30 in Nash Leopold’s Land Ethic (you can find the reading at http://home.btconnect.com/tipiglen/landethic.html)
Week 11 (Nov.7 – Nov.11)	Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring – 1960s Environmental movement	Watch Silent Spring – On reserve at Mercer Library at PW campus Appalachian Trail Assignment DUE Personal Philosophy Assignment Distributed
Week 12 (Nov.14 – Nov.18)	Environment in the 1970s & 1980s	READ: Chap. 13, 15 & 16 in WW Chap. 34, 35, 36 & 39 in Nash Watch Episode 6 – K. Burns: "The Morning of Creation" (1946–1980)
Week 13 (Nov.21 – Nov.25)	THANKSGIVING BREAK	No formal class assignments this week, but it’s a great time to work on your Personal Nature Philosophy Assignment ☺
Week 14 (Nov.28 – Dec.2)	Environment in the 1980s (continued) & 1990s	READ: Chap 12 in WW Chap 40, 41, 46 & 47 in Nash
Week 15 (Dec.5 – Dec.9)	Modern Environmentalism (2000 & beyond...where do we go from here?)	READ: Chap. 18-21 in Bryson Chap.21 & Afterward in WW Chap 49, 59 & 51 in Nash Personal Nature Philosophy Assignment DUE
FINAL WEEK (Dec.12 – Dec.16)	Final EXAM due Tuesday, Dec.13 at 5:00 p.m.	

Note: The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.