

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

PRLS 300 – 001 — **People and Nature**
Fall 2014

DAY/TIME:		LOCATION:	On-line
INSTRUCTOR:	Julie Kutruff	EMAIL ADDRESS:	jkutruff@gmu.edu
OFFICE LOCATION:	Virtual	PHONE NUMBER:	703-339-2126
OFFICE HOURS:	By Appointment	FAX NUMBER:	202-426-0880

PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES

PRLS 300

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.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This on-line course utilizes Blackboard to deliver course content. Bi-weekly, short on-line lectures will be held on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. These lectures will be recorded so that students who cannot join live can watch lectures at a time that is more convenient or them.

Student contributions are an important part of this course. Students will be expected to actively participate in class discussions/discussion boards and to complete all assignments on time. **Assignments will be due at 8:00 p.m.** on the specified date due. **Assignments received AFTER 8:00 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 the instructor **prior to the due date** to be considered for exception. It is also recommend that students make back-up copies of all 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.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION STANDARDS

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):

7.01	Students graduating from the program shall demonstrate the following entry-level knowledge: a) the nature and scope of the relevant park, recreation, tourism or related professions and their associated industries; techniques and processes used by professionals and workers in these industries; and c) the foundation of the profession in history, science and philosophy.
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NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

On-line

REQUIRED READINGS AND VIDEO

Bryson, B. (1998). *A Walk in the Woods*. New York: Broadway Books. Nash, R. F. (2001).

Wilderness and the American Mind (fourth edition). Yale Univ. Press.

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

Lewis, Michael (editor, 2007). *American Wilderness: A New History*. Oxford University Press.

Burns, Ken National Park Series (video)

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 summary of assignments we'll be completing:

A. Class Projects

1. **Environmental Issue** (10 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** (20 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. **Local Garden Park 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 local parks. 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** (20 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** (40 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

B. Midterm Exam (50 pts)

C. Class Participation: During the course of the semester you will have a short class introductory assignment and 9 Discussion Boards will be posted for class participation (5 points per discussion board). As with any good discussion, there is dialogue (conversation back and forth, supporting examples and sometimes disagreement) which requires multiple posts and responding back to classmates. Participation grades for these assignments are based on posting more than once during the week but also on the quality of dialogue that occurs.

There will be 5 on-line lectures (10 points per lecture). Please note lectures may be viewed “live” or by recording for full credit. Lectures are meant to summarize key points from what you are reading to prepare you for upcoming exams. In addition to lectures, live “on-line there will be voluntary exam review sessions held before each exam for anyone who would like to attend or to ask questions. Review sessions will also be recorded.

D. Final Exam (50 Points)

Requirements	Points
Class Assignments	100
Mid-term Exam	50
Class Participation	100
Final Exam	50
TOTAL	300

Grading Scale

[This section MUST be included and reflect the current GMU undergraduate or graduate +/- grading scale]

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

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE			TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
T	August	26	Introduction-	Post Pictures; Environmental Assignment & Intro Assignment Distributed
T	Sept.	2	Philosophical Foundations of American Environmental Thought 7:30 p.m. On-line Lecture #1	Chapter 2 & 4 in WW ; Chapter 4 & 4 in AW ; Volunteer Project Assigned ; Watch Ken Burns Episode 1 : <i>The Scripture of Nature</i>
T	Sept.	9	First Voices for Nature: Painters, Musicians, Poets, Writer...	Chapter 17 in WW ; Chapter 5 Nash ; Chapter 6 in AW
T	Sept.	16	Landscape Preservation & the Value of Parks 7:30 on-line lecture #2	READ: Chap 1 & 4 in Bryson, Watch Episode 2 – K. Burns: " The Last Refuge " (1890–1915) Environmental Project Due

DATE			TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
T	Sept.	23	National Parks	Watch Episode 3 – K. Burns: "The Empire of Grandeur" (1915–1919) READ: Chap 7 & 8 in Nash Park Assignment Distributed
T	Sept	30	Preservation as a Movement 7:30 p.m. On-line lecture #3	READ: Chap 7, 10 & 12 in Bryson Chap 11 in Nash Chap 8 in AW
T	October	7	USDA Forest Service Conservation is it new? Is it now? 7:30 p.m. Mid-term review	READ: Chap 10 in Nash Chap 3, 13 & 14 in Bryson Chap. 10 in AW Park Assignment DUE
T	October	14	Mid Term (Due by 8:00 p.m.)	Appalachian Trail Assignment Distributed READ: Chap 15 & 16 in Bryson
T	October	21	Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal	Readings Distributed before 10/22/12
T	October	28	Aldo Leopold & Land Ethic	READ: Chap 11 in Nash Leopold's Land Ethic (you can find the reading at http://home.btconnect.com/tipiglen/la)
T	Nov.	4	Rachel Carson's Silent Spring-1960's Environmental Movement	Watch Silent Spring – On reserve at Mercer Library at PW campus AT Assignment DUE Personal Philosophy Assignment Distributed
T	Nov.	11	Environment in the 1970's & '80's	Watch Episode 6 – K. Burns: "The Morning of Creation" (1946–1980); Chapters 13, 15 & 16 in WW; Chap 13 Nash; Chapter 11, AW
T	Nov.	18	Thanksgiving Break	No Formal Assignments
T	Nov.	25	Environment in 1980's & '90's	Chap 12 in WW; Chapter 14 in Nash; Chap 12 in AW
T	Dec.	2	Modern Environmentalism (2000 & beyond...where do we go from here?)	Chapter 18-21 in Bryson; Chapter 21 & Afterward in WW Chapter 15 in Nash; Epilogue in AW Personal Nature Philosophy Assignment DUE
T	Dec.	16	Final Exam Due by 8:00 p.m.	

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Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- 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/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- 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.

Campus Resources

- 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/>].

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT: The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

