

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism**

PRLS 300 (001) – People and Nature  
3 Credits, Fall 2017  
On-line

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

PRLS 300: None

**University Catalog 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 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 Midnight** on the specified date due unless otherwise specified. **Assignments received AFTER Midnight will be considered late and receive a 10% 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.

## Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup>..

**Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.**

### *Technical Requirements*

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox is required (note: Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard).
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool. [Delete this sentence if not applicable.]
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desire.]
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <https://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/>
  - Apple Quick Time Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

## *Expectations*

- Course Week:  
Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Friday.
- Log-in Frequency:  
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week. In addition, students can log-in for all scheduled online lectures or review sessions but these sessions will also be available as recordings.]
- Participation:  
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:  
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:  
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:  
Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:  
Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette:  
The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- Accommodations:  
Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

## Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

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.

## Professional Standards

**Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards: Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT):**

<b>7.01</b>	<b>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; b) techniques and processes used by professionals and workers in these industries; and c) the foundation of the profession in history, science and philosophy.</b>
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## Required Texts & Videos

1. Bryson, B. (1998). *A Walk in the Woods*. New York: Broadway Books.
  2. Nash, R. F. (2001). *Wilderness and the American Mind* (fourth edition). Yale Univ. Press.
  3. Lewis, Michael (editor, 2007). *American Wilderness: A New History*. Oxford University Press.
- Burns, Ken National Park Series (video) and others. Links on Blackboard.

## Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

### Assignments and/or Examinations

1. Environmental Issue:  
For this assignment, students will write a 500-800 word paper 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:

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. Art in Nature Assignment:

Many readings in this course explore the relationship of art and nature. This assignment gives you the opportunity to experience a garden park while engaging in the resource the way artists may have engaged with grand areas of scenic beauty from the early days of the country up to today. This assignment involves creating your own art project.

4. Appalachian Trail Hike:

After reading Bill Bryson's adventures hiking on the Appalachian Trail (AT), students will participate in their own AT hike. The goal is to give students a more personal perspective on hiking some of the AT so students can relate to Bryson. The assignment requires a minimum hike of 2 hours on any section of the AT. The hike must be done within the timeframe of this assignment (students cannot recall a previous hike or experience on the trail). Following the hike, students will be writing a short paper. Paper outline can be found of the assignment sheet.

5. Personal Nature Philosophy Project

This course explores the philosophies of nature held by several different historical figures that helped to shape American's views of nature and wilderness. Over the semester, the course should have inspired students to think about their own ideas or philosophies about nature and wilderness. This project asks students to outline their own nature philosophies in a Powerpoint presentation that will be presented live in a small group setting, live on Blackboard Collaborate.

Exams:

The course has both a mid-term and a final exam. The final is not cumulative from the start of the course.

- **Other Requirements**

**Class Participation:**

Class participation grades will be based on the following:

- Student introductions

- 10 Discussion Boards will be posted for class participation. 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. 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.

- **Grading**

Grading Scale

A+	97 – 100	B+	87 – 89	C+	77 – 79	D	60 – 69
A	94 – 96	B	84 – 86	C	74 – 76	F	0 – 59
A-	90 - 93	B-	80 – 83	C-	70 – 73		

**Course Performance Evaluation Weighting**

Assignments	30%
Exams	25%
Class Participation	30%
Final Project	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Professional Dispositions**

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times

## Class Schedule

DATE			TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
M	August	28	Introduction-	<b>Post Pictures;</b> Environmental Assignment & Intro Assignment Distributed
T	September	5	Philosophical Foundations of American Environmental Thought (week 1)	Chapter 3 & 4 in AW ; Volunteer Project Assigned ; Watch Ken Burns Episode 1 : <i>The Scripture of Nature</i> (links in Blackboard)
T H	September	5	7:30 p.m. On-line Lecture #1	Introduction & Expectations for Class
M	September	11	First Voices for Nature: Painters, Musicians, Poets, Writer... (week 2)	Chapter 5 Nash ; Chapter 6 in AW
M	September	18	Landscape Preservation & the Value of Parks (week 3)	READ: Chap 1 - 4 in Bryson, Watch Episode 2 – K. Burns: <b>"The Last Refuge" (1890–1915)</b> <b>Environmental Project Due</b>
T	September	25	7:30 on-line lecture #2	
M	October	2	National Parks (week 4)	Watch Episode 3 – K. Burns: <b>"The Empire of Grandeur" (1915–1919)</b> READ: Chap 7 & 8 in Nash
T	October	9	Preservation as a Movement (week 5)	READ: Chap 7, 10 thru 12 in Bryson Chap 11 in Nash Chap 8 in AW
T	October	10	7:30 p.m. On-line lecture #3	
M	October	16	USDA Forest Service Conservation is it new? Is it now? (week 6)	READ: Chap 10 in Nash Chap , 13 & 14 in Bryson Chap. 10 in AW
T	October	17	7:30 p.m. Mid-term review	
M	October	23	Mid-term (week 7)	READ: Chap 15 & 16 in Bryson
M	October	30	Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal (week 8)	Readings Distributed before on Blackboard <b>Garden Park Assignment Due</b>
M	November	6	Aldo Leopold & Land Ethic (week 9)	READ: Chap 11 in Nash Leopold's Land Ethic (you can find the reading at <a href="http://home.btconnect.com/tipiglen/landethic.html">http://home.btconnect.com/tipiglen/landethic.html</a> )

DATE			TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
T	November	7	On-Line Lecture #4	
M	November	13	Rachel Carson's Silent Spring- 1960's Environmental Movement (week 10)	Watch Silent Spring – see link in Assigned film section of Blackboard, Chapter 13 Nash; Personal Philosophy Assignment Distributed
M	November	21	Environment in the 1970's & s'80's (week 11)	Watch Episode 6 – K. Burns: <b>"The Morning of Creation" (1946–1980);</b> Chapter 11, AW
T	November	22	On-line Lecture #5	
M	November	27	Environment in 1980's & '90's (week 12)	<b>Chapter 14 in Nash; Chapter 12 in AW</b> <b>Due Volunteer Assignment Due</b>
M	December	4	Modern Environmentalism (2000 & beyond...where do we go from here?) Personal Nature Philosophy (week 13)	Chapter 18-21 in Bryson; Chapt 15 in Nash; Epilogue in AW <b>Personal Nature Philosophy Presentations DUE this week</b>
T	December	11	Final Exam Review 7:30 p.m.	
S	December	17	Final Exam Due by Midnight.	

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

## 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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

## GMU Policies and Resources for Students

### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).



- 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 Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.**

