George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School of Sport, Recreation and Tourism Management (SRTM)

PRLS 300 (001) – People and Nature
3 Credits, Spring 2020
On-line

Faculty
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Office Phone: (703) 303-3273
Email Address: JKutruff@gmu.edu

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. Five, short on-line lectures will be held during the semester. Dates TBD based on a class poll. 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 Tuesday, January 21st.

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 video camera and headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool.
- 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.
- In this course Respondus Lockdown software (available from the University) will be required for taking the mid-term and final exams. See www.coursesupport.gmu.edu and go to the students sections and look up the information under Blackboard Assessments for Respondus Monitor and Lockdown Browser.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: https://get.adobe.com/reader/
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 every Monday morning with a recommended frequency of 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:**
  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 [https://ds.gmu.edu](https://ds.gmu.edu)).
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
(Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT):)

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional 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; b) techniques and processes used by professionals and workers in these industries; and c) the foundation of the profession in history, science and philosophy. |

Required Texts & Videos

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

More detailed assignment directions will be shared when the assignments are posted on Blackboard as well as the grading rubrics.

1. Environmental Issue:
   For this assignment, students will write a 500-800 word paper or 2 page 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. 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.

3. 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. Students cannot use previous volunteer experiences like an Eagle Scout Project for this assignment. Volunteer hours must be completed this semester.

   Alternate Assignment will be available for students who are reluctant or unable to volunteer work during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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. If a student is unable to hike the AT because they are taking the course from an area that does not have access to the AT or the student does not have transportation to access the AT, another location for a hike can be substituted after discussing with the instructor.

   Or an alternate assignment will be provided to students who cannot physically complete a 2 hour hike and/or are reluctant to do an extended hike due to COVID-19.
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.

**Course Performance Evaluation**

This course is divided into 5 Modules that are organized roughly in chronologic order
moving in time from the early 1800’s to the present. As part of each module there will be
reading assignments, videos, a recorded lecture and background materials related to each
module. Additionally, students will have assignments for each module, weekly discussion
boards, etc… Students will be expected to submit all work on time in the manner outlined
by the instructor. (i.e. Blackboard, email, Tk20, etc…)

Students will be evaluated on the following:

1. Class Participation:
   Class participation grades will be based on the following:
   - Student introductions
   - 10 Discussion Boards (2 per module).
   - 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 module tests

2. Assignments (see 5 assignments outlined above)
3. Module Assessments

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 – 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 59</td>
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**Course Performance Evaluation Weighting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 100%
Professional Dispositions

See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times

Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>August 24</td>
<td>Module 1: An Evolving Idea of Wilderness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>Course Introduction Blackboard Collaborate 7:45 p.m. or recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>Lecture 7:45 pm or recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>Environmental Issues Assignment/ Unit Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Sept. 14</td>
<td>Module 2: Preservation vs Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>Lecture 7:45 pm or recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Art Assignment/ Unit Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>Module 3: Towards a National Park Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Oct. 13</td>
<td>Lecture 7:45 pm or recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td>Volunteer Assignment/ Unit Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td>Module 4: Evolution in Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>Lecture 7:45 pm or recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>AT Assignment/ Unit Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Module 5: Protecting Wilderness &amp; the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>Lecture 7:45 pm or recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>Powerpoint Due/ Unit Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Live Presentations</td>
<td>Dates/Times TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dec. 11</td>
<td>All Make-up Work Completed by This Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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/ or you may contact Disabilities services directly at (703) 993-2474 or by email at 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 or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

- Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services
(CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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