

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, Fall 2023
On-line

Faculty

Name: Julie Kutruff
Office Hours: By Appointment
Office Location: Krug Hall, Suite 213/ Virtual
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. These lectures will be recorded so that students who cannot join live can watch lectures at a time that is more convenient to 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 recommended 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 21st, 2023

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) may 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/>
 - Windows Media Player:
<https://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: 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 **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:**

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;
2. Describe how various subgroups of individuals have interacted with nature throughout history;
3. Articulate the various perspectives individuals have expressed toward the natural environment;
4. Verbally and visually illustrate their personal views of the natural environment; and
5. 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.
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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). Yale Univ. Press.
3. Taylor, Dorceta E. (2016). *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement*. Duke University Press

Links on Blackboard - Burns, Ken [National Park Series](#) (video) and others.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, 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 Issues:

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.

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.

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 via Blackboard Collaborate.

Course Performance Evaluation

This course is divided in to 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, VIA, etc...).

Students will be evaluated on the following:

1. Class Participation:
 - Student introductory assignment
 - **10 Discussion Boards** (2 per module).
 - There will be a course orientation session and 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:

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	40%
Class Participation	30%
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

DATE			TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
M	August	21	Module 1: An Evolving Idea of Wilderness	
W	August	24	Course Introduction Blackboard Collaborate	7 :45 p.m. or recording
T	August	29	Lecture Blackboard Collaborate	7 :45 pm or recording
F	September	8		Environnemental Issues Assignment/ Unit Test
M	September	11	Module 2: Preservation vs Conservation	
T	September	19	Lecture Blackboard Collaborate	7 :45 pm or recorded
F	September	29		Volunteer Assignment/ Unit Test
M	October	2	Module 3: Towards a National Park Service	
M	October	9	Break	
T	October	10	Lecture Blackboard Collaborate	7 :45 pm or recorded
F	October	20		Garden Park Assignment / Unit Test
M	October	23	Module 4: Evolution in Parks	
T	October	30	Lecture Blackboard Collaborate	7 :45 pm or recorded
F	November	10		AT Hike Assignment / Unit Test
M	November	13	Module 5: Protecting Wilderness & the Environment	
M	November	20	Lecture Blackboard Collaborate	7 :45 pm or recorded
M	December		Live Presentations Begin	Dates/ Times TBD
S	December	9		Unit Test Completed
S	December	10	All Make-up Work Submitted by This Date	

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students. See Blackboard for specific details on requirements and due dates for each module.

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 <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://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 <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- 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, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 or support measures 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/>.

