

CSUS 265
Exploring Environmental Policy and Issues Using Film

Spring 2017
Monday 3:00-5:50 p.m.
136 Brody Hall

[Final Exam: May 3, 2017, 5:45pm – 7:45pm, 136 Brody Hall]

OVERVIEW

This course presents students with multi-media opportunities for learning about and considering aspects of environmental, natural resource, and sustainability policy, perception, and culture.

INSTRUCTORS

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TARGET AUDIENCE

This course is intended for undergraduate students interested in sustainability, environmental issues, and public policy. The course uses feature films, documentaries, books, and select scholarly articles among other materials. There are no required, prerequisite courses.

DESCRIPTION

The course will expose students to, as well as further their understanding of, 1) conceptions of nature and people's interaction with nature, 2) how people's conceptions shape environmental policy and behaviors, and 3) how political, economic, and social systems mediate competing interests related to the environment and natural resources. A goal is to promote critical thinking concerning the scope, complexity, and interdisciplinary nature of environmental issues.

Each year, the course focuses on different aspects of complex historical social conflicts with environmental resources and human health. The course uses the films and readings to explore human understandings of nature, the environment, and sustainability. Course foci have included, asking such questions as:

“Are humans separate or linked with nature?”

“What is the role of nature in influencing our political and economic systems?”

“How does the nature of society impact the environment and our sustainability?”

It is hoped that by gaining a vocabulary, working knowledge, and understanding of alternative frames of “environmental thinking,” political and legal systems, and views of environmentalism, conservation, and sustainability, students will become better consumers, generators, constituents, and practitioners.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students in this course will advance their knowledge, skill, and ability associated with the core competencies and associated learning outcomes for the Department of Community Sustainability's undergraduate program. These competencies and associated learning outcomes include: Critical thinking, Systems thinking, Economic literacy, Ecological literacy, Boundary-crossing, Community, Equity, Civic engagement, Leadership, Ethics, and Initiative and practical skills.

It is expected that by the end of the course students in CSUS 265 will be able to:

- Articulate personal worldviews regarding sustainability and related issues.
- Identify, analyze and evaluate arguments as they offer in their own and others' work.
- Apply systems thinking to explain this interconnectedness of human and natural systems.
- Articulate the rights and responsibilities of citizenship with an understanding of the tensions between individual rights and responsibilities for the common good.
- Prepare and deliver concise presentations that are designed to increase knowledge, foster understanding or promote change in the audience's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors.
- Include skillful choice of visual representations and text that express the desired content and enhanced meaning.
- Describe ways in which inequality is manifested (e.g., income inequality, injustice, social marginalization, voicelessness, etc.).

COURSE CALENDAR

A draft calendar of course topics, films, required readings, and assignments is attached. This calendar will change. It, like the syllabus and other course materials, will be posted on the course instructional website (D2L).

MATERIALS

Books

There are two books that you will read in this course, in addition to other materials that will be assigned. They can be purchased new or used. Copies of these books are on reserve at MSU Main Library. Students are expected to read the posted required readings BEFORE the class for which they are assigned. The two books featured in the course are:

Thomas L. Friedman (2008). *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution--and How It Can Renew America*. Macmillan, 2008. ISBN 0374166854, 9780374166854

Oreskes, Naomi; Conway, Erik M. (2010). *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. Bloomsbury Press. p. 6. ISBN 978-1-59691-610-4.

As mentioned, there will be assigned readings for the course. They will be periodically posted on the course website and appear in the course calendar. The readings include chapters from books, scholarly journal articles, articles in leading magazines and newspapers, etc.

Films and Documentaries

Some films and documentaries are required viewing as homework and others will be shown during regular class time for enrolled students and instructors.

To facilitate students' legal access to films as well as to help keep out-of-pocket costs down for students, most, if not all, of the films assigned as homework as well as those used in class are available on reserve in MSU's Multimedia Centre at MSU Main Library.

Students are expected to use a legal means to view the assigned films for homework. They can be viewed legally by paying a small, nominal fee. You can also subscribe to a service such as Amazon Prime/Amazon Student, Netflix, Xfinity on Demand, pay-for-view on YouTube, etc. Students are free to watch the assigned films in any legal way that they wish and they may watch together with other students/friends/family.

COPYRIGHT, FAIR USE, AND DIGITAL MILLENNIUM ACT

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (title 17, U.S. Code) to the authors of "original works of authorship," including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works. Civil and criminal remedies may be imposed for violations of an author's copyright interests. Michigan State University is committed to obeying copyright law. The TEACH Act (Title 17, Section 110(2) of the US Code) gives faculty the ability to use materials in a classroom for face-to-face teaching. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) is a United States copyright law that implements two 1996 treaties of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The films, documentaries, and other teaching materials will be part of mediated instruction. The films, etc. are to be used in educational settings by the university professor/students and in compliance with U.S. copyright law.

OFFICE HOURS

Professor Kaplowitz will generally be available to meet with students before class and after class. Students may sign up for appointments during "office hours" with the instructor in person before/after class or via email (kaplowit@msu.edu). Professor Kaplowitz's office hours will typically be on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 2-3:30 pm. Professor Kaplowitz will try to keep this time available for student appointments. Please let him know in advance if you would like to meet. Other times can be arranged to meet on a case-by-case basis subject to availability.

RESERVATION

The instructors reserve the right to alter or amend this syllabus at any time.

CLASS ROOM LOGISTICS

The class will be held in 136 Brody Hall. Seating will be not be initially assigned. However, a seating chart may be distributed so that students can 'select' and document their seat assignment.

Classroom Discussion and Participation

Classes will include lecture and discussion as well as work on student papers. In addition to submitting their homework (e.g., questions based on reading/film assignment) to the appropriate homework folder on D2L PRIOR to noon on Sundays (the day before of class), students should bring a copy of their homework submissions to class for their use in class.

There will be small group discussion during some classes. Students will be assigned to those groups and their participation in those groups will count towards their final grade.

HOMEWORK

There are several types of “homework” such as: i) watching a film or films(s) before class, ii) doing the assigned reading, and iii) doing the assigned written “Homework,” [HW]. There is also a type of ‘homework’ that is due after each class. This is called a Reflection Paper [RP] (see below).

Assigned Readings/Films

Students are expected to have completed all of the week’s assigned readings and watched the assigned film(s) prior to the class for which they are assigned. That means completing the readings in advance of Monday’s class.

Homework Assignment (HW)

(based on weekly at-home reading/film/documentary).

Students will find each week’s homework posted on the class website. *These written assignments are due at noon (12:00 pm) on the Sunday before the class for which they are assigned.* The homework answers should reflect the student’s understanding of the week’s reading and homework film/documentary. They should be posted in the appropriate D2L folder.

Reflection/Synthesis Paper (RP)

(based on readings, homework film, classroom film, and discussions).

Each week the students are required to submit a brief (< 1-page) reflection/synthesis paper that is responsive to one of several paper topics/prompts assigned by the instructor. The goal is for students to incorporate their understanding and synthesis of the readings and film/documentaries. These papers are due in the appropriate D2L folder on the Thursday morning following class at/before 9:00 am.

FINAL PAPER

Final Paper

There will be a final paper due on May 4th at 5:45 p.m. The content of this 5-page paper will be finalized during the course. There will be a peer-review assignment of students’ draft papers.

This year the paper will focus on an environmental or sustainability issue of your choosing.

INSTRUCTION AND GRADING-COMPONENTS

A. Attendance (50 points, 5% of Final Grade; 2 or more absences lower your final grade)

Discussion is an important part of this course, attendance is mandatory. Because the class is large, a sign in sheet will be passed around each class, perhaps more than once each class. Missing more than two classes without an approved absence will most likely adversely impact the student's final grade.

B. Small Group Discussion (100 points, 10%)

Discussion will be an important part of this class, but you do not need to feel obliged to agree with what is being said – even by the instructors. However, to have a truly safe classroom we must respect each other, listen closely to what is being said, develop your own ideas about it, and then present your views in a respectful manner. If something is said that you did not understand, or need clarified, do not hesitate to ask for such clarification. Always feel free to raise your hand and ask a question or make a comment. Together we can create a exceptional learning environment.

C. Participation (50 points, 5%)

There is an expectation that each student will be fully prepared and will be able to participate in class. Participation means:

- 1) answering questions in class,
- 2) positive collaboration in class exercises
- 3) asking appropriate questions during class, and
- 4) contributing to the discussions in class in a positive manner

Students should **expect to be called on** to answer questions in every class. If a student is called on during class for a contribution pertaining to class and that student is unable to participate because he or she is unprepared, the instructor will record this and it will be factored into a student's course grade (i.e., may result in the students grade being lower than test scores, etc.). Poor participation as evidenced by poor preparation, evidence of not having read the material, not turning in on time and/or complete assignments etc. will be taken into consideration in a student's final grade. Significant poor or disruptive participation will result in student's final grade being lowered relative to his/her scores on exams, papers, etc. (e.g., 3.5 down to 3.0 or 2.5).

D. Homework (250 points, 25%)

Students are required to complete weekly written homework assignments. Homework assignments will include the following types of assignments: 1) short answer questions, 2) reading summaries, 3) questions for the instructor, and 4) other assignments. Completed and on-time homework assignments will receive full credit. Work that is timely but poor quality will receive less than full credit. Late homework will be penalized 10% per day late.

E. Reflection Papers (250 points, 25%)

There will be weekly, short reflection papers expected from each student. The due dates are specified in the course outline but will typically be Thursday morning. Typically these papers will be about 150 words. These papers must be well written, proofread, and properly sourced/referenced. Please use, 12-pt Times Roman font, 1" margins, and good organization.

F. Peer Review of Draft Papers (50 points, 5%)

Students will be expected to review their peers' draft paper and provide critical feedback to improve the quality of the paper. Each student will review two papers of others in the class using a review form (to be provided). The draft paper is due on April 14, with papers distributed on April 15. The completed review forms are due into D2L on April 21st.

G. Final Paper (250 points, 5%)

There will be a final paper due on May 4th. See above. This paper should be approximately 5-1 pages not including references/bibliography. Submission to be made via course website. Detailed instruction will be posted after discussion in class.

H. Turning in Homework and Papers

Students MUST submit their homework and papers electronically to the course website (i.e., D2L) in a timely manner (before deadline) for credit to be received. With the instructor's approval, an electronic copy may be emailed to the instructor.

I. Retain (hard) Copies !!

Students MUST retain a copy of all homework and papers submitted. Failure to do so may be used against the student, in the event that there is any question with the instructor over submission of work and or sufficiency/grade of the said item.

J. Final Grades—"The Curve" and "Penalties"

Students' final grades will be initially based on the results of their homework (25%), reflection papers (25%), their final paper (25%), and "participation" (attendance, small group discussions, peer-review, and participation) (25%). Then penalties and bonuses will be applied. The aggregate score for each student will typically fall in the range from 750 to 950. However, the assignment grades are a function of the instructor's human frailties and the particular composition of each year's course content. As a result, the instructor MAY 'curve' students' exam and other course grades. For illustrative purposes, the instructor has assigned MSU GPA grades for a typical distribution of final scores as follows:

Points	Grade	
920-1000	4.0	A
851-919	3.5	A-/B+
800-850	3.0	B
750-799	2.5	B-/C+
660-749	2.0	C
600-659	1.5	C-/D+
500-599	1.0	D
<500	0.0	F

NOTE: The actual grade range for your class may vary and as a result, the MSU GPA final grade assignment may vary too. The instructor explicitly reserves the right to change the grading scale but will strive to apply it uniformly and equitably.

Bonuses and Penalties. As discussed above under Attendance and Participation, a student's final grade for the course may be downgraded if they are excessively absent (two or more unexcused absences) and/ or if they are frequently unprepared. Likewise, students who exhibit extra effort, contributions that bring added value to the course, etc. will be eligible for consideration for some bonus points in the final assignment of course grades.

POLICY ON EXCUSES

Students are expected to attend each class, submit assignments on time, and take exams at the regularly scheduled time unless an acceptable reason as per MSU policy is offered. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious observances, family emergency, or conflicts with other final exams (if verified or validated). Students are expected to notify the instructors ahead of time whenever possible and in all cases as soon as possible, in writing (e.g., e-mail) or in person, if they cannot attend class, submit written assignments, or take an exam. If legitimate reasons are presented in a timely and reasonable manner, arrangements can be made to acquire class notes, submit work, take exams, etc.

INCOMPLETE WORK AND DEFERRED GRADES

Unexpected circumstances may cause a student to request a final grade of Incomplete (I) or Deferred (DF). Requests must be made in writing before the date of the final exam stating the reason(s) for the request and a plan for removal of the I or DF grade. University policy requires that work to remove an I be completed by the 5th week of the next semester in attendance or the grade automatically becomes an F. A DF grade (available only to graduate students) must be removed within two calendar years.

POLICY ON PHONES/LAPTOPS/PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY IN CLASS

Students are expected to pay attention and participate in class. We all are creatures of habit and many of us, including the instructor, like to check email, Facebook, do Google searches, etc. In a class of this size there is the potential for abuse of any of these items. A study done by UM's CRLT found that more than 40% of students felt distracted by other students surfing the net, or otherwise using their computers for something other than taking notes. Therefore, **NO USE OF YOUR "SCREENS" DURING CLASS IS PERMISSIBLE.** Needless to say, tuition is not cheap, and engaging in these sorts of activities is not so much disrespecting to the instructor as it might be disrespecting to your own, and other students' abilities and opportunities. Of course, during breaks you may check your various accounts, surf the web, etc.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

[Article 2.III.B.2](#) of the Academic Freedom Report states: "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Department of Sustainability adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, [Protection of Scholarship and Grades](#); the all-University Policy on [Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#); and [Ordinance 17.00](#), Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any

course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course. This course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

It is imperative that students avoid academic impropriety and even the appearance of academic impropriety. Students must be able to demonstrate that their homework, reflection papers, final paper, and other work products are their own work, that they are derived from their own thought, use of resources, and effort. Simply put, cheating, plagiarism, and otherwise trying to use someone else's work as your own without proper attribution will result in disciplinary action that may include: receiving zero credit for the suspect assignment, receiving a failing grade for the course, and being brought before the appropriate academic hearing officer/board.

TURNITIN.COM

Consistent with MSU's efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student's work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a 'similarity score'. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

Students should submit all of their assignments and papers to D2L dropboxes (that will be enabled to use Turnitin) **without identifying information included in the paper** (e.g. name or student number). The system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.

COURSE OUTCOME

These course outcomes support the Department of Community Sustainability undergraduate program competencies of critical thinking, systems thinking, and ethics. Successful completion of this course provides students with the background needed to frame complex problems and address them systemically in order to successfully complete additional courses in the major. Students can learn more about the Department of Community Sustainability undergraduate program competencies at http://www.csus.msu.edu/undergraduate/sustainability_core. In addition, this course supports Michigan State University's Undergraduate Learning Goals of analytical thinking and integrated reasoning. More information about MSU's Undergraduate Learning Goals is available at <http://undergrad.msu.edu/msu-goals>.

CLASS CALENDAR

Week	Date	Readings Before Class	Film Before Class	Film in Class	Due Sun noon b/f class	Due Th. 9:00am after class
1	Jan 9	Plater-Dumb and Dumber	n/a	WALL-E	n/a	RP 0
2	Jan 23	Friedman. 2009. <i>Hot, Flat & Crowded</i> [HFC], Ch. 4, 5 & 7.	An Inconvenient Truth	Before the Flood	HW1	RP 1
3	Jan 30	Oreskes & Conway. 2010. <i>Merchants of Doubt</i> [MOD], Intro., Ch.1, and Ch. 6	Merchants of Doubt	This Changes Everything	HW2	RP 2
4	Feb 6	Friedman. 2009. <i>HFC</i> , Ch 9 and 10	The Cross of the Moment	A Fierce Green Fire	HW3	RP 3
5	Feb 13	Oreskes & Conway. 2010. <i>MOD</i> , Ch. 2, 4, and 5	Chevron v. Amazon	Big Boys Gone Bananas	HW4	RP 4
6	Feb 20	Raske. 2000. <i>The Killing of Karen Silkwood</i> . pp 1-17. Friedman <i>HFC</i> 11 & 12.	Silkwood	Pandora's Promise	HW5	RP 5
7	Feb 27	Houck. 2010. <i>Taking Back Eden</i> . pp 1-21, 61-87	A Civil Action	Erin Brockovich	HW6	RP 6
MSU SPRING BREAK						
8	Mar 13	t/b/d	Not Safe to Drink (audio)	Undrinkable: Flint Water & Here's to Flint	HW7	RP 7
9	Mar 20	t/b/d	Return of the Navajo Boy	[t/b/d tentatively <i>Standing Rock</i>]	HW8	RP 8
10	Mar 27	Sovacool. 2009. <i>Cornucopia or curse?</i>	Dirt! The Movie	More Than Honey	HW9	RP 9
11	Apr 3	Pollan. 2006. <i>Omnivore's Dilemma</i> pp 1-11,15-31,85-99	Food Inc.	Fed Up	HW10	RP 10
12	Apr 10	Friedman. 2009. <i>HFC</i> Ch 13 & 14	Gasland	The Last Mountain	HW11	RP 11
	Apr 14	Draft paper due on Friday, 4/14/17 at 9 am. Drafts shared with 'student' reviewers on Saturday, 4/15/17.				
13	Apr 18	t/b/d	Great Lakes Bad Lines	The Great Invisible	HW12	RP 12
	Apr 22	Peer-reviews of draft papers due in dropbox on Friday, 4/21/17 at 5 pm. Peer-reviews shared with authors of paper by Saturday, 4/22/17.				
14	Apr 24	Oreskes & Conway. 2010. <i>MOD</i> , Conclusion.	Koko	Force of Nature	HW13	RP 13
15	May 4	Final papers due in class dropbox on 5/4/17 at 5:45 pm				

