

History of Environmental Thought and Sustainability
CSUS 310, section 001
Spring 2021 – Online

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Crystal L. Eustice
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OFFICE HOURS: By appointment; Email me for a Zoom meeting Link

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course takes an historical look at concepts of sustainability, resilience, resource use, development, and the human relationship with ‘nature’ and ‘wilderness’. We examine the roots of modern environmental problems in the United States, and learn from global civilizations that have grappled with the challenge of sustainability – some successfully, and others less so.

This course is designed to foster a better understanding of how human attitudes and behaviors can promote or hinder a society’s progress towards sustainability. Environmental action, be it political, financial or social, requires knowledge of how environmental problems evolve over time (decades to centuries, in some cases), and the challenges associated with the range of possible solutions. This course will survey historical environmental perspectives and present-day environmental problems in the context of the human quest for progress. Concepts of ‘wilderness’ and ‘nature’ as used historically will be interrogated and discussed in relation to more modern concepts of ‘resilience’ and ‘sustainability’. The course will cut across a number of settings, from urban to rural, wilderness to the planned landscape.

MATERIALS: **Required Text:** *Down to Earth: Nature’s Role in American History* (DE), Ted Steinberg, Oxford University Press, 2012, 3rd edition, ISBN: 9780199797394

Required Text: *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Jared Diamond, Penguin Group, ISBN: 0670033375

*Other readings will be assigned throughout the course of the semester and will be posted on D2L.

COURSE OUTCOMES: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand historical roots of modern day attitudes and behaviors toward the environment;
- Understand how these attitudes and the actions associated with them have contributed to current environmental problems in the U.S. and globally;
- Relate the concept of ‘wilderness’ to current environmental issues;

- Assess and critique current environmental problems, and contemporary perceptions about them, from a systems perspective;
- Differentiate between various worldviews regarding the environment as well as the movements and organizations that represent these worldviews;
- Understand the factors and determinates that influence environmental attitudes and behavior;
- Understand sustainability from individual, societal, and global perspectives;
- Describe individual, social, and institutional actions and changes necessary for planetary health and the transition to sustainability.

EXPECTATIONS: Online course

Some of you know me, (some do not) and know that you can expect me to be approachable, willing to listen, respectful of your ideas, and open to suggestions. Since we are learning online, its critical to engage with me and your peers to be successful in this course. We do rely heavily on readings (LOTS) and work/projects.

Quality of Written Work: I expect high quality writing in all of your assignments, and I hope that you will take pride in your written work. Your written assignments should be well planned and coherent, following standard, written English language and grammar, with proper citations of all references. Submitting comments online is no excuse for using ‘text-speak’ or overly casual language. All of your writing for this course, including your comments on D2L, should be of the same quality as the written assignments you turn in.

Online Behavior: We have all experienced appalling behavior online, often driven by the anonymity that the internet affords, and I’m sure we can all agree that this is not conducive to learning or to the free exchange of ideas. I expect all of you to operate from a position of respect for your fellow students, for the instructor, and for the course material. Disagreement is natural, and vigorous discussion and debate are welcome, but trust and respect should permeate this class. As the instructor, I will be monitoring the discussions in D2L very closely. Any comment that contains derogatory or inflammatory language or constitutes a personal attack against a student or the instructor, will be taken down and the commenter will receive no credit for that participation. Any student who persists in making these types of comments despite a warning may fail the course or be otherwise disciplined.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Quizzes:

There will be 10 quizzes throughout the course session, ranging 5-15 points each with a total semester value of 150 points. These quizzes are designed to test whether you have completed and absorbed the readings. Quizzes are located in their respective Module folder on D2L and will become available at the beginning of each Module (Mondays). The quiz is due by the end of the respective module (Sundays).

Two Individual Assignments - Oral History (due March 28) & Photo Essay (due April 11)

Two individual assignments will be due throughout the semester. They are designed to stimulate creative thinking and to help reinforce the concepts presented in class. Detailed Assignment instructions for each are located in the ‘Assignments’ folder on the D2L course website. After you complete each assignment, upload each one to their appropriate Dropbox.

Systems Thinking GROUP Assignment – Due March 7 by 11:00 p.m.

At the beginning of class I will assign you to a 4-5 person group (see who your grouped with under ‘Group Assignment’ tab on D2L). You will work together within your group to complete a collaborative project focused on systems thinking. After the assignment is turned in you will rate the contributions of your fellow group members (confidentially) so that I can get a sense of how much effort each person put into the assignment. Each group will have a Zoom meeting session with me to discuss the project and group roles. Based on my experience, you will learn as much (or more) from your classmates as you will learn from me and from the course materials, so I expect you to take the obligations to your group seriously. The assignment details are located in the ‘Assignment’ folder on D2L.

Exit Essay:

During the final week of the semester, you will be provided an Exit Essay assignment that contains writing prompts for you to complete ***no later than April 28 by 11:00 p.m.*** The Exit Essay will become available April 26 and will be located in the ‘Assignments’ folder on D2L. After you complete the Exit Essay, upload it to the appropriate Dropbox.

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Quizzes	150	End of Module by 11:00 p.m.
Systems Thinking GROUP Assignment	300	March 7 by 11:00 p.m.
Oral History (written assignment)	300	March 28 by 11:00 p.m.
Photo Essay (video assignment)	150	April 11 by 11:00 p.m.
Exit Essay	100	April 28 by 11:00 p.m.

GRADING SCALE

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
4.0	1000 – 920
3.5	919 – 860
3.0	859 – 820
2.5	819 – 750
2.0	749 – 700
1.5	699 – 650
1.0	649 – 600
0	< 600

CLASS SCHEDULE

Module 1 – Course Introduction; Societal Collapse (1/19 – 1/24)
<u>Read</u> – Collapse: Prologue, Chapter 1
<u>Watch</u> – Class Intro Video; Jared Diamond TED talk, ‘Why do Societies Collapse?’
Due – n/a
Module 2 – Energy, Resources & History; Civilization & the Environment (1/25 – 1/31)
<u>Read</u> – Collapse: Chapter 2; D2L: Burke – The Big Story; D2L: McAnany & Yoffee – Ch 2; D2L: Easter Island’s Demise
<u>Watch</u> - Lecture
Due – Reading Quiz #1 (Due 1/31)
Module 3 – Climate Change & Collapse; Civilization & Limits to Growth (2/1 – 2/7)
<u>Read</u> – Collapse: Chapters 5 & 14; D2L: Climate and the Collapse of Maya Civilization
<u>Watch</u> – Lecture
Due – Reading Quiz #2 (Due 2/7)
Module 4 – Resilience: An Alternative to Collapse?; Systems Thinking (2/8 – 2/14)
<u>Read</u> – Collapse: Chapter 16; D2L: Chapter 6 Creating space in a shrinking world; D2L: The Iceberg Systems thinking model
<u>Watch</u> – Lecture
Due – Reading Quiz #3 (Due 2/14); Schedule Group Consultation with Dr. Eustice
Module 5 – Historical Origins of Wilderness (2/15 – 2/21)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapters 1 & 2; RACM Chapter 1
<u>Watch</u> - Lecture
Due – Reading Quiz #4 (Due 2/21)
Module 6 – Transcendentalism & Commodification of Nature (2/22 – 2/28)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapters 3 & 4; D2L: Nash Prologue
<u>Watch</u> – Lecture
Due – Reading Quiz #5 (Due 2/28);
Module 7 – Agrarianism & Industrialism (3/1 – 3/7)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapters 5, 6, & 7
<u>Watch</u> – Lecture
Due – Systems Thinking Group Project Due (3/7)

Module 8 – Preservation & Utilitarianism (3/8 – 3/14)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapters 8 & 9
<u>Watch</u> – National Parks Video
Due – Reading Quiz #6 (Due 3/7)
Module 9 – Urbanism (3/15 – 3/21)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapter 10; D2L: Carson from Silent Spring; D2L: RACM Chapter 2
<u>Watch</u> – Lecture
Due – Reading Quiz #7 (Due 3/21)
Module 10 – Food & Sustainability (3/22 – 3/28)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapters 11 & 12; D2L: Cooking Gene
<u>Watch</u> – Lecture; Mark Bittman TED Talk
Due – Reading Quiz #8 (Due 3/28); Oral History Due (3/28)
Module 11 – Transportation & Sustainability (3/29 – 4/4)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapter 13
<u>Watch</u> – ‘Segregated by Design’ Film
Due – Reading Quiz #9 (Due 3/21)
Module 12 – Consumerism & Environment (4/5 – 4/11)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapter 14
<u>Watch</u> – The Story of Stuff, Annie Leonard
Due – Photo Essay Due 4/11
Module 13 – Environmental Justice (4/12 – 4/18)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapter 15; D2L: Gibbs Love Canal; D2L: Robert Bullard’s ‘Environmental Racism; D2L: Jennifer Bernstein’s ‘On Mother Earth and Earth Mothers’
Due – Reading Quiz #10
Module 14 – The Shift to Sustainability & Environmental Action (4/19 – 4/21)
<u>Read</u> – DE: Chapter 16; D2L: RACM Conclusion; D2L: Mary Heglar’s ‘But the greatest of these is love’
<u>Watch</u> – Interview with Robby Richardson
Due – Reading Quiz #10
Final Exam Week: Exit Essay (4/26 – 4/28)

E-LEARNING POLICIES

Information technologies such as D2L and email are widely used in this class. As a result, there are some additional policies that need to be understood.

- Students should visit the course's D2L site on a regular basis.
- Students should check their email frequently (all class email is sent to the student's official MSU email account).
- All assignments submitted electronically, either on disk or via email, should be free of any viruses and/or worms. Any infected file or media that is submitted will receive a zero (0) for that assignment.
- **Late assignments are NOT accepted** unless prior approval has been given by the professor.
- This course recognizes the students' right to privacy and adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Students need to review the university policy "Acceptable Use of Computing Systems, Software, and the University Digital Network" at <http://lct.msu.edu/guidelines-policies/aup/>.
- Excessive emails make an unreasonable time demand on both sender and recipient. Please ensure you have a legitimate need before you write.
- Dr. Eustice **WILL** answer email about:
 - Questions arising from difficulty in understanding course content.
 - Requests for feedback about graded assignments.
 - Private issues appropriate for discussion within the teacher-student relationship.
- Dr. Eustice **will NOT** answer email which:
 - Poses questions answered within the course D2L site
 - Poses questions answered in the course syllabus.
 - Lacks subject line clearly stating the purpose of the email and course number (**CSUS 310**).
 - Raises an inappropriate subject.
- Dr. Eustice will make every effort to answer email received on a given [week]day no later than 48 hours after received.
- The Web site tech.msu.edu provides a number of information technology resources for students.
- You are responsible for the operation of any personally owned computers you use on or off campus. A malfunctioning computer system is **NOT** a valid excuse for submitting late work.
- **Students are expected to have a high degree of self-motivation and self-direction** in this class and develop the needed technology skills to excel in this class and in life.

Academic Misconduct

Article 2.III.B.2 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Department of Community Sustainability adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.)

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 CSUS 310. Students who violate MSU

academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/dishonestyFAQ.html>). **There will be no warnings – the maximum sanction allowed under University policy will occur on the first offense.**

Turnitin.com will be used for all written assignments. This tool will compare each paper you submit to an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a 'similarity score.' Using this tool, I will make a complete assessment and judge the originality of your work. **You should submit papers to Dropboxes enabled with Turnitin without identifying information included in the paper (e.g., name or student number).**

Accommodations

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation ("VISA") form. **Present this form to Dr. Eustice at the START of the semester and/or TWO WEEKS prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.).** Requests received after this date may not be honored.

Bereavement

Students seeking a grief absence should be directed to the Grief Absence Request Form found on the RO home page (<https://reg.msu.edu/>) under 'Student Services – Grief Absence Request Form' OR to StuInfo (<https://stuinfo.msu.edu/>) under 'Academics - Enrollment Information and Services – Grief Absence Request Form.' Per policy, graduate students who should see their major professor and notify course instructors are directed to do so when they access the form.

Inclusion and Diversity

Inclusion and diversity are core values of MSU and the College of Natural Resources. As Spartans, we are dedicated to respecting people of all backgrounds, beliefs, identity status, and political beliefs. The college is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment where all students, faculty, and staff can pursue academic and professional success. **All members of the MSU community deserve each other's respect, support, recognition, and protection.** It is essential that we all work together to foster an inclusive community where Spartans of all backgrounds can study, work, and thrive. (See the full CANR statement: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/canr-statement-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>)

Drops and Adds

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is **February 12 (8:00 p.m.)**. The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is **March 10 (8:00 p.m.)**. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

Commercialized Lecture Notes

Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.

Social Media

As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials presented to students are the copyrighted property of the course instructor. Students may not post course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in the

class without the advance written permission of the course instructor and, if applicable, any students voice or image included in materials or recordings of course sessions. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions.

Attendance

Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course. This course follows the General University Attendance Policy. If you miss a class due to a Special Consideration Absence as defined by University Policy, your class participation grade for those excused absences days will be the average of your earned participation grades.

Disruptive Behavior

Article 2.III.B.4 of the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the AFR states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." General Student Regulation 5.02 states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Faculty Judiciary process.

Mandatory Reporting

Michigan State University is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and to ensuring that all affected individuals have access to services. For information on reporting options, confidential advocacy support resources, university policies and procedures, or how to make a difference on campus, visit Title IX website at www.titleix.msu.edu.

Campus Emergencies

In the event of an emergency arising within the class, the Professor will notify you of what actions that may be required to ensure your safety. It is the responsibility of each student to understand the evacuation, "shelter-in-place," and "secure-in-place" guidelines posted in each facility and to act in a safe manner. You are allowed to maintain cellular devices in a silent mode during this course, in order to receive emergency SMS text, phone or email messages distributed by the university. When anyone receives such a notification or observes an emergency situation, they should immediately bring it to the attention of the Professor in a way that causes the least disruption. If an evacuation is ordered, please ensure that you do it in a safe manner and facilitate those around you that may not otherwise be able to safely leave. When these orders are given, you do have the right as a member of this community to follow that order. Also, if a shelter-in-place or secure-in-place is ordered, please seek areas of refuge that are safe depending on the emergency encountered and provide assistance if it is advisable to do so.

Syllabus Disclaimer

All syllabi are subject to minor changes to meet the needs of the instructor, school, or class. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any syllabus changes through the course site announcements. Please remember to check your MSU email and the course site announcements often.