

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism
PRLS 300 — People with Nature (3)
Fall 2010

DAY/TIME:	Internet	LOCATION:	Internet
PROFESSOR:	Dr. Laurie Harmon	EMAIL ADDRESS:	lharmon3@gmu.edu
OFFICE LOCATION:	204 Bull Run Hall	PHONE NUMBER:	703-993-4565
OFFICE HOURS:	Fridays 9-10:00 a.m. and by appointment	FAX NUMBER:	703-993-2025

PREREQUISITES None

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 OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course students should be able to:

1. Identify and articulate the artistic genres/methods influencing perceptions of and attitudes towards nature;
2. 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.

Further, upon completion of this course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standards:

National Recreation and Park Association Council on Accreditation standards met:

- 7B.03 Understanding the principles and practices of stewardship and use of natural resources and the ability to interpret them to the general public, particularly as related to the public's role in stewardship
- 9B.01 Understanding of the history and development of natural resources recreation policies and their implications for recreation resources management

COURSE OVERVIEW

Since your contributions are such an important part of this course, we'll all be expected to actively participate in class discussions, complete in-class exercises, and fulfill all assignments on time. **Assignments will be due at 5:00 p.m.** on the specified date due. **Assignments received AFTER 5:00 p.m. will be considered late and receive a 20% 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 me **prior to the due date** to be considered for exception. I also recommend you make back-up copies of your assignments since computers have been known to crash at the most inopportune moments.

Because we are engaging in an online course, communication is a critical component; therefore, I ask that you check our course website at **<http://courses.gmu.edu> each day for course communications**. Also, all communications regarding the course should come through our course website (i.e. we want to use the e-mail function on our course website). That allows us to share ideas and questions from/to one person.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see our University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Academic integrity means when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task and will submit your own, original work. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance

of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form (in our course, that means you'll need to cite & reference using the style put forth in the American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 6th Edition).

Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Critical discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions, i.e. **we all have the right to disagree without being disagreeable**. When in doubt, please feel free ask for guidance or clarification.

REQUIRED READINGS

Bryson, B. (1998). *A Walk in the Woods*. New York: Broadway Books.
 Nash, R. F. (1990). *American Environmentalism: Readings in Conservation History*. McGraw-Hill.
 LaBastille, A. (1980). *Women and Wilderness*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

EVALUATION

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 100 possible points.

Assignments	Percent of final grade
Personal Philosophy Project (20 pts)	20%
Class Assignments	
Environmental Issue (5 pts)	
Volunteering for Nature (5 pts)	30%
Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Exploration (10 pts)	
AT Hike (10 pts)	
Exams (Mid-term [15 pts] and Final [15 pts])	30%
Class Participation (10 Discussion Boards or online Chats – 2 pts each)	20%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale (percent)

A+ = 98 – 100	B+ = 88 – 89	C+ = 78 – 79	D = 60 – 69
A = 94 – 97	B = 84 – 87	C = 74 – 77	F = 0 – 59
A- = 90 – 93	B- = 80 – 83	C- = 70 – 73	



- ✚ All students are held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code [for details, see <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>].
- ✚ Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the Office of Disability Resources and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [for procedures & details, see <http://ods.gmu.edu>]
- ✚ For additional School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism information, please visit our website at <http://rht.gmu.edu>.

OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: “Ask a Librarian” <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>
 COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>
 UNIVERSITY POLICIES: The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

“Reading about nature is fine, but if a person walks in the woods and listens carefully, he can learn more than what is in books...” George Washington Carver

“One way to open your eyes is to ask yourself, 'What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?’” Rachel Carson

“We need wilderness whether or not we ever set foot in it. We need a refuge even though we may never need to go there. We need the possibility of escape as surely as we need hope.” Edward Abbey

COURSE SCHEDULE

Last updated: August 26, 2010

WEEK (date)	MODULE TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1 (Aug.30 – Sep.3)	Introduction & State of the Environment	Environmental Issues Assignment Distributed Chap 1 in WW Chap 1 in Nash Check out when you can watch the Ken Burn's special on National Parks (we'll watch several of the episodes) at http://www.weta.org/tv/programsatoz/program/70896 Environmental Issues Assignment DUE on Thursday
Week 2 (Sep.6 – Sep.10)	Philosophical Foundations of American Environmental Thought	Chap 2 & 4 in WW Chap 3 & 4 in Nash Watch Episode 1 – K.Burns: "The Scripture of Nature" (1851–1890) Volunteer Project Distributed
Week 3 (Sep.13 – Sep.17)	First Voices for Nature: Painters, Musicians, Poets, Writers,	Chap 17 in WW
Week 4 (Sep.29 – Sep.24)	Landscape Preservation & the value of parks	Chap 1 & 4 in Bryson Chap 5, 6 & 7 in Nash Watch Episode 2 – K. Burns: "The Last Refuge" (1890–1915)
Week 5 (Sep.27 – Oct.1)	National Parks	Watch Episode 3 – K. Burns: "The Empire of Grandeur" (1915–1919) Chap 11 in Nash Volunteer Project DUE
Week 6 (Oct.4 – Oct.8)	Preservation as a movement	Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Assignment Distributed – visit http://www.nvrpa.org/park/meadowlark_botanical_gardens for details on how to get there Chap 7, 10 & 12 in Bryson Chap 13 & 15 in Nash
Week 7 (Oct.11 – Oct.15)	USDA Forest Service Conservation – is it new? Is it now?	Chap 9 in Nash Chap 3, 13 & 14 in Bryson Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Assignment DUE
Week 8 (Oct.18 – Oct.22)	Mid-Term EXAM due Tuesday, October 19 at 5:00 p.m.	Appalachian Trail Assignment Distributed Note: Online office hours only this week Chap 15 & 16 in Bryson
Week 9 (Oct.25 – Oct.29)	Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal – Impact on natural resources	Chap 22, 23, 25, 27 & 28 in Nash
Week 10 (Nov.1 – Nov.5)	Aldo Leopold & Land Ethic	Chap 30 in Nash Leopold's Land Ethic (you can find the reading at http://home.btconnect.com/tipiglen/landethic.html)
Week 11 (Nov.8 – Nov.12)	Rachel Carson's Silent Spring – 1960s Environmental movement	Watch Silent Spring – On reserve at Mercer Library at PW campus Appalachian Trail Assignment DUE
Week 12 (Nov.15 – Nov.19)	Environment in the 1970s & 1980s	Chap. 13, 15 & 16 in WW Chap. 34, 35, 36 & 39 in Nash Watch Episode 6 – K. Burns: "The Morning of Creation" (1946–1980)
Week 13 (Nov.22 – Nov.26)	THANKSGIVING BREAK	No formal class assignments this week, but it's a great time to work on your Personal Nature Philosophy Assignment ☺
Week 14 (Nov.29 – Dec.3)	Environment in the 1980s (continued) & 1990s	Chap 12 in WW Chap 40, 41, 46 & 47 in Nash
Week 15 (Dec.6 –	Modern Environmentalism (2000 &	Chap. 18-21 in Bryson

Dec.10)	beyond...where do we go from here?)	Chap.21 & Afterward in WW Chap 49, 59 & 51 in Nash Personal Nature Philosophy Assignment DUE
FINAL WEEK (Dec.13 – Dec.17)	Final EXAM due Tuesday, Dec.14 at 5:00 p.m.	

Note: The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.

Assignment Descriptions:

State of the Environment – State of Minds Assign #1 - Current Environmental Issues (5 points)

For this assignment, I would like you to write a 500-800 word summary describing and 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.

Please include the following five components in your written presentation:

- A description of the issue (e.g. pollution, hazardous waste, climate change, or any environmental issue you've recently encountered);
- The specific source from where you found out about the issue and where you gathered information about it (e.g. name of newspaper & date, television news show and date);
- How your issue impacts our environment;
- How you think this issue evolved as an "issue"; and,
- What you think the future holds for this issue.

PRLS 300 – People with Nature – Fall 2010 Assign #2 – Volunteering for Nature (5 points)

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.

For the first part of your assignment, you are to find a volunteer opportunity that will allow you to contribute a minimum of 2 hours of your personal time. The volunteer opportunity should be directly related to natural resource based recreation. Once you find your opportunity, be sure to confirm it's an acceptable option with your instructor.

Then, please do the following:

1. Write a one-page response to the following questions at least one day BEFORE you participate in your volunteer opportunity:
 - a. How do you perceive nature?
 - b. How do you feel when you spend time in nature?
 - c. How frequently do you spend time in nature (try to quantify it as much as you can)?
 - d. What do you think volunteering time to support natural resource based recreation will do for you?
 - e. What do you think volunteering time to support natural resource based recreation will do for the associated community?
2. Save that Word Document at "yourname_PART1".
3. Participate in your volunteer opportunity for a minimum of two (2) hours. More is fine, but not less ☺
4. Have the leader of your volunteer opportunity complete the form attached to this assignment and submit along with your written assignment
5. Respond to the following questions no later than one day AFTER you participate in your volunteer opportunity (please try not to look back at how you originally responded to these questions):
 - a. How do you perceive nature?
 - b. How do you feel when you spend time in nature?
 - c. How frequently do you spend time in nature (try to quantify it as much as you can)?
 - d. What do you think volunteering time to support natural resource based recreation will do for you?
 - e. What do you think volunteering time to support natural resource based recreation will do for the associated community?
6. Save that Word Document as "yourname_PART2"
7. Post your two Word Documents on our Discussion Board for this assignment.

PRLS 300 – People with Nature – Fall 2010 Assignment #3 – Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Exploration (10 points)

Since we're doing so many readings in this course, I'd like for you to have the opportunity to experience some of the kinds of activities, spaces, and places to which some of your authors refer. This assignment is designed to get you out into and exploring the myriad of spaces within one of your regional parks, specifically, to the Meadowlark Botanical Gardens. And, it's further designed to engage you the way artists may have engaged with natural resource-based parks in the 1900s.

So – now that you have a sense of what is going to be expected, it's time to prepare yourself for a jaunt to the Meadowlark Botanical Garden! Oh – before, I forget, I do encourage you all to carpool – perhaps, contact one another and see if you can rideshare to reduce the overall impact on the environment (sustainability is always in vogue ☺).

Once you arrive at the park, you should go to the front desk and let them know that you're visiting for your PRLS 300 (People with Nature) assigned visit. I've spoken with Patricia Dietly at the park, and she has very graciously offered to provide you each with a complimentary visit. AND – she even more graciously indicated that if you'd like to bring a friend, that person would also be able to visit at no charge. Please be sure to thank the very kind folks at the park as you come and as you leave.

Once you are set with visiting, I'd like for you to do the following:

- Spend about 10 minutes in the main Visitor Center. While there, pick up a park map so can become oriented to the Botanical Gardens.
- Using the following map, please visit each of the EIGHT “starred” locations during your exploration of Meadowlark Botanical Gardens.
- At each location, I'd like you to take a photograph, sketch an image, or in some way “capture” the moment that seems to resonate with you (in other words, you want to try and express artistically something about an object in that place or just something about that place with which you really feel like you connect). If you just don't connect right away, wait a bit and listen, or close your eyes and smell...find something that offers you some connection.
- Put your images together in some kind of portfolio. If you have photos, you can insert them into a Word document. If you have sketches, you may have to scan your sketches and do the same thing as with photos. If you chose to write a poem or song or narrative, you can retype it into Word. Or you can combine these into a PowerPoint, or even create a video podcast. It's really up to you. But, it must be something that you can ultimately post as a single document.
- Be sure that each “capture” has a caption – that, at least, tells us where you were when you captured that moment (though you can certainly add more if you like).

PRLS 300 – People with Nature – Fall 2010
Assign #4 – Appalachian Trail Hike (10 points)

At this point in the semester, you have started reading about Bill Bryson's adventures while he attempted to hike the Appalachian Trail (AT). In order to give you a more personal perspective of this experience, you are to hike for a minimum of 2 hours on a section of the AT. It can be any section you prefer, but you must do the hike within the timeframe of this class (even if you've already hiked parts of the trail).

After you have completed your AT hike, write a 2-3 page (1” margins, 12-point font, double spaced) perspective of your experience. Share with us the following:

- A description (including location information) of the section of the AT you hiked;
- The length of time it took for you to hike that section;
- An approximate distance you think you hiked;
- Encounters you had (or didn't have) with other people during your hike;
- Encounters you had (or didn't have) with any flora or fauna (i.e. critters) during your hike;
- How your experience was similar to or different from Bryson's hiking experience;
- What you thought about while you hiked; and,
- What you learned about yourself.

PRLS 300 – People with Nature – Fall 2010
Personal Philosophy Project (20 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to evaluate, assess, and articulate your personal “Philosophy of Nature”.

Over the course of the semester, you will have participated in most of the classes, viewed several videos, and read various readings dealing with the overriding theme of people and nature. As a result of your own interactions with the natural world, you are refining your perception of how you believe it is most appropriate to interact with “nature”. So, for this final project, you are asked to share **your** refined **philosophy** with the rest of the class by developing a presentation that answers each of the following questions:

1. What does nature mean to you? (think of this as a broad question – it's sort of an introduction to your philosophical perspective regarding nature)

2. How has nature affect you throughout your life? (provide examples of the activities in which you engaged when you were young and over the course of your life that affected you, either negatively or positively)
3. How has your perspective toward nature changed over time? (in this section you want to think about your attitudes towards the natural world – did you like, dislike, feel comfortable/uncomfortable, what were your beliefs about the way things should be, what are your beliefs now, how do people fit in?)
4. How do you interact with nature? (in this section we're wanting to share what our behaviors are now – what kinds of activities to we engage in that involve the natural context, what actions do we take that impact nature either positively or negatively)
5. What is your own “quote” regarding people and nature?