

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

PRLS 300 – 001 — **People and Nature**
Spring 2015

DAY/TIME:		LOCATION:	On-line
INSTRUCTOR:	Julie Kutruff	EMAIL ADDRESS:	jkutruff@gmu.edu
OFFICE LOCATION:	Virtual	PHONE NUMBER:	703-339-2126
OFFICE HOURS:	By Appointment	FAX NUMBER:	202-426-0880

PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES

PRLS 300

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.

DELIVERY METHOD:

This course will be delivered online using an **asynchronous** format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before “@masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on Monday, August 31, 2015.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard;
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course
- Microsoft PowerPoint software for creating final presentations
- The following software plug-ins for Pcs and Macs respectively, available for free downloading by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows media player: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>
 - Apple QuickTime Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
- A headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool

EXPECTATIONS:

- **Course Week:**
 - Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will **start** on Monday, and **finish** on Friday.
 - There will be a couple of live lectures and exam review sessions over the course of the semester but it is not mandatory that you attend live. All sessions will be recorded so that you can watch when it is best for you that week.
- **Log-in Frequency:**
 - Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, at a minimum this should be 3 times per week.
- **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which include viewing of 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 are expected to seek assistance if they are struggling with technical components of the course.
- **Technical Issues:** Students should expect that they could experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues. Technical issues should be addressed to GMU technical support staff.
- **Workload:** Expect to log in to this course **at least 3 times a week** to read announcements, participate in the discussions, and work on course materials. Remember, this course is **not** self-paced. There are **specific deadlines and due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of this syllabus to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- **Advising:** If you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues, we can meet via telephone or web conference or I may be able to meet you on campus. Send me an email to schedule your one-on-one session and include your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- **Netiquette:** Our goal is to be **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. I suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to encourage others from taking them as personal attacks. **Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.** I will do the same. Remember, you are not competing with each other but sharing information and learning from one another as well as from the instructor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

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.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This on-line course utilizes Blackboard to deliver course content. Bi-weekly, short on-line lectures will be held on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. 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 8:00 p.m.** on the specified date due unless otherwise specified. **Assignments received AFTER 8:00 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 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.

COMMUNICATION:

Effective communication is an important part of our lives and this course. Therefore, we will all be asked to treat our colleagues with respect in all types of communications (such as e-mail, class conversations, etc...). Since we are meeting online, it will also be critical to check our e-mail daily. This will be the primary method of communication used outside of our class meeting time. However, since I hope we can all consider outdoor recreation as another important part of our life, I wouldn't expect you check e-mails as on the weekend. And, I will likely not access e-mails on the weekend since I hope to be engaging in outdoor recreation activities during those times.

Please use Blackboard 9.1 for all communications. To access Blackboard, go to "MyMason" (found at the top of the gmue.edu webpage), log in with your username & password, click on the "Courses" tab along the top right of the page, and go to the "9.1 Course List" to find our course.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION STANDARDS

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

Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT):

7.03	Students graduating from the program shall demonstrate the following entry-level knowledge about operations and strategic management/administration in parks, recreation, tourism and/or related professions.
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REQUIRED READINGS AND VIDEO

1. Bryson, B. (1998). *A Walk in the Woods*. New York: Broadway Books.
2. Nash, R. F. (2001). *Wilderness and the American Mind* (fourth edition). Yale Univ. Press.
3. LaBastille, A. (1980). *Women and Wilderness*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books
4. Lewis, Michael (editor, 2007). *American Wilderness: A New History*. Oxford University Press.
Burns, Ken National Park Series (video) and others

EVALUATION

You will be assessed for this course on your completion of a series of assignments designed to assess the breadth and depth of your knowledge at a variety of stages throughout the course. Following is the summary of assignments we'll be completing:

A. Class Projects

1. **Environmental Issue** (10 pts): 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.
2. **Volunteering for Nature** (20 pts): 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.
3. **Local Garden Park Exploration** (20 pts): 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 local parks. And, it's further designed to engage you the way artists may have engaged with natural resource-based parks in the 1900s
4. **Appalachian Trail Hike** (20 pts): At this point in the semester, you have started (or maybe even finished?) 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 any section of the AT. It can be any section you prefer, but you must do the hike within the timeframe of this assignment (even if you've already hiked parts of the trail).
5. **Personal Philosophy Project** (30 pts): 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

B. Midterm Exam (50 pts)

C. Class Participation: During the course of the semester you will have a short class introductory assignment and 10 Discussion Boards will be posted for class participation (5 points per discussion board). As with any good discussion, there is dialogue (conversation back and forth, supporting examples and sometimes disagreement) which requires multiple posts and responding back to classmates. Participation grades for these assignments are based on posting more than once during the week but also on the quality of dialogue that occurs.

There will be 5 on-line lectures (10 points per lecture). 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 exams. In addition to lectures, live "on-line there will be voluntary exam review sessions held before each exam for anyone who would like to attend or to ask questions. Review sessions will also be recorded.

D. Final Exam (50 Points)

Requirements

Points

Class Assignments	100
Mid-term Exam	50
Class Participation	100
Final Exam	50
TOTAL	300

Grading Scale

[This section MUST be included and reflect the current GMU undergraduate or graduate +/- grading scale]

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

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE			TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
M	August	31	Introduction-	Post Pictures; Environmental Assignment & Intro Assignment Distributed
M	September	7	Philosophical Foundations of American Environmental Thought	Chapter 2 & 4 in WW ; Chapter 4 & 4 in AW ; Volunteer Project Assigned ; Watch Ken Burns Episode 1 : <i>The Scripture of Nature</i>
T	September	8	7:30 p.m. On-line Lecture #1	
M	September	14	First Voices for Nature: Painters, Musicians, Poets, Writer...	Chapter 17 in WW ; Chapter 5 Nash ; Chapter 6 in AW Discussion Board #1 Due
M	September	21	Landscape Preservation & the Value of Parks	READ: Chap 1 & 4 in Bryson, Watch Episode 2 – K. Burns: " The Last Refuge " (1890–1915) Environmental Project Due Discussion Board #2 Due
T	September	22	7:30 on-line lecture #2	

DATE			TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
M	September	28	National Parks	Watch Episode 3 – K. Burns: "The Empire of Grandeur" (1915–1919) READ: Chap 7 & 8 in Nash AT Assignment Discussion #3 Due
M	October	5	Preservation as a Movement	READ: Chap 7, 10 & 12 in Bryson Chap 11 in Nash Chap 8 in AW Discussion Board #4 Due
T	October	6	7:30 p.m. On-line lecture #3	
M	October	12	USDA Forest Service Conservation is it new? Is it now?	READ: Chap 10 in Nash Chap 3, 13 & 14 in Bryson Chap. 10 in AW Discussion Board #5 Due
T	October	13	7:30 p.m. Mid-term review	
M	October	19	Mid-term	Garden Project Distributed READ: Chap 15 & 16 in Bryson
M	October	26	Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal	Readings Distributed before 10/22/12 AT Assignment DUE
M	November	2	Aldo Leopold & Land Ethic	READ: Chap 11 in Nash Leopold's Land Ethic (you can find the reading at http://home.bctconnect.com/tipiglen/landethic.html) Discussion Board #7 Due
T	November	3	On-Line Lecture #4	
M	November	9	Rachel Carson's Silent Spring- 1960's Environmental Movement	Watch Silent Spring – On reserve at Mercer Library at PW campus Garden Project Due Personal Philosophy Assignment Distributed Discussion Board #8

DATE			TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE
M	November	16	Environment in the 1970's & s'80's	Watch Episode 6 – K. Burns: "The Morning of Creation" (1946–1980); Chapters 13, 15 & 16 in WW; Chapter 13 Nash; Chapter 11, AW Discussion Board #9
T	November	17	On-line Lecture #5	
M	November	23	Thanksgiving Break	
M	November	30	Environment in 1980's & '90's	Chapter 12 in WW; Chapter 14 in Nash; Chapter 12 in AW Discussion Board #10 Due Volunteer Assignment Due
M	December	7	Modern Environmentalism (2000 & beyond...where do we go from here?) Personal Nature Philosophy	Chapter 18-21 in Bryson; Chap.21 & Afterward in WW Chapt 15 in Nash; Epilogue in AW Personal Nature Philosophy
T	December	8	Final Exam Review 7:30 p.m.	
F	December	18	Final Exam Due by 8:00 p.m.	

H

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- 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 George Mason

University 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 must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu/>].

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

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.

