

Global Environment

Summer 2012

Instructor: Nate Gabriel

Location: LSH B-117

Time: M, W 6:00-9:40 PM

Office: LSH B-119

Email: nategabriel@gmail.com

Office Hours: By appointment

Note: *When emailing the instructor, please write "GEOGRAPHY 102" in the subject field of the message to ensure a prompt reply.*

Course Description and Goals

The purpose of this course is to engage students in a critical examination of environmental transformation, focusing especially on the human dimensions of these transformations. The critical approach applied here will encourage students to develop an appreciation of environmental conditions in historical and political context. The course assumes that students possess a basic familiarity with a variety of environmental concepts and themes. However, students who do not possess this understanding will develop it over the course of the semester. All students will develop a set of critical analytical skills which can be applied to the careful evaluation of other fields of knowledge.

Required Materials

Two texts are required for this course. The first is entitled *Changes in the Land*, by William Cronon. The second is entitled *An Unnatural Metropolis*, by Craig Colten. Used copies of each are available through Amazon at very low cost.

Organization of Class Time

There will be very little lecture in this course. Instead, students are expected to participate fully in class discussions. The readings for each class will be paired with a film, which will be shown in class.

Each meeting, one or two students will lead a discussion on that day's theme and reading selection. Students who are not leading a discussion should come to class prepared to discuss, having identified and understood key ideas found therein.

Student Evaluation (Grading)

Grades will be determined according to students' class participation in the activities described above. Class participation is worth 50 percent of the final grade; reaction papers (see below) account for the other 50 percent.

Students will also write self-evaluations at the end of the semester, which will include an honest assessment of what the student has learned in the course. These will be seriously taken into account when final grades are determined.

Leading Discussions

At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up to lead the discussion for each class session. Each day, one or two students will guide the rest of the students in an exploration of the themes found in the reading and the film it is paired with (shown at the end of the previous class).

Successful discussion leaders will draw on a variety of materials, including the film and readings, but also student reaction papers (see below), and other sources the student(s) wish to include. However, students should be very careful not to simply summarize the readings, or simply lecture to the other students. Their role is to develop strategies to encourage others students to share their ideas. In doing so, students may make use of small-group exercises, in-class reading, PowerPoint, and so on.

Reaction Papers

Students who are not presenting must write short essays in reaction to the film and reading shown for that class period. These reaction papers will be posted online at the course's public website (geog102sum2012.wordpress.com). Reaction papers can be written in a variety of styles: they can explore debates related to the material, highlight questions the student has about the reading or film, or dispute ideas or claims made by authors or other students. Reaction papers should always properly cite outside sources when referring to them. Papers should always be written carefully and conducted professionally.

Mechanics and guidelines: reaction papers should be at least 250 words long but not longer than 750. They must be posted no later than 10 P.M. on the night before class, so that other students will have time to read them before class. Papers that do not adhere to these guidelines will count for no credit.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class period. Classes during the summer session are fewer in number but longer; missing one class period is roughly equivalent to missing an entire week during a regular semester. Therefore, attendance is taken very seriously, and missed classes will automatically lower a student's grade for the course. **Each missed class after the first will cause the student's final score to drop one letter grade, or 10%.** Only absences accompanied by a doctor's note or a letter from an academic dean will be excused. Missed work is expected to be made up by the next class period.

Special Needs

Every effort will be made to accommodate students with special needs. However, students are responsible for making their needs known to me and for seeking assistance in a timely manner.

Plagiarism or other academically inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated

Schedule of Classes			
	Date	Reading	Film
1	Mon, 7/9		Ken Burns' <i>National Parks</i>
2	Wed, 7/11	Cronon, Intro, Ch 1,2	<i>Second Nature</i> or <i>Clear Cut</i>
3	Mon, 7/16	Cronon, Ch 3,4	(NO CLASS)
4	Wed, 7/18	Cronon, Ch 5,6	<i>If a Tree Falls</i>
5	Mon, 7/23	Cronon, Ch 7,8	<i>The Last Mountain</i>
6	Wed, 7/25	Colten, Intro	<i>Journey to planet earth - urban explosion</i>
7	Mon, 7/30	Colten, 1	<i>Flow</i>
8	Wed, 8/1	Colten, 2	<i>Six Degrees Could Change the World</i>
9	Mon, 8/6	Colten, 3	<i>T-Shirt Travels</i>
10	Wed, 8/8	Colten, 4	<i>Climate of Change</i>
11	Mon, 8/13	Colten, 5	<i>King Corn</i>
12	Wed, 8/15	Colten, 6, Epilogue	