

ENVS 203

Professor Stephanie LeMenager
457 PLC

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Office Hours: TR 2:30-4pm

Introduction to Environmental Studies: Humanities

In this course we will learn about what the Humanities are, as an interdisciplinary field, and how Humanities methods and research contribute to environmental thought and action. The class involves reading and research but also creativity and innovation. It is a lab in which we will think together about the possible futures of our stressed planet and how to harness imagination in the service of sustainability.

Texts

J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (1999)

Jay Hosler, *Clan Apis* (2013)

Patricia Smith, *Blood Dazzler* (2008)

Other Readings in Schedule Are Posted on Blackboard

Requirements

Participation (15%): Includes regular attendance **in lecture and section**, informed discussion by students, completion of **four very short quizzes in lecture** offered throughout the quarter. **Your GTF will inform you of the attendance policy and penalty system for your section.**

Midterm Exam (25%): An in-class exam that asks students to demonstrate understanding of course readings and basic concepts. Students should study by reviewing readings and notes from class discussion. **Date: 4/23.**

Creative Projects (30%): Students complete three creative projects to enhance imaginative experience over the course of the term. The first involves creating an **Instagram series (5-7 images)** from the perspective of a non-human animal; the second asks you to write a **diary recounting your use of plastics in a single day**; the third involves a **very short (750 word) story about our future** as a species. With each project, you will turn in a **short, annotated bibliography** with 3-5 relevant works cited. Details given in lecture and section. **Lab days throughout the term indicate days when you will work on your projects instead of coming to lecture.**

Final Exam (30%): This exam asks students to demonstrate understanding of course readings, close reading skills, and flexible use of theoretical concepts that we have learned throughout the quarter. Study should include reviewing all readings and class notes. **Date: 6/11.**

Incompletes will be given for documented medical emergencies only.

Accessible Education

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon and request that the Accessible Education Center send a letter explaining what accommodations may be helpful to you in this course.

Inclement Weather

If inclement weather makes traveling to campus difficult, I will notify you by email and/or voice mail about whether we are holding class. If the weather is bad, check your email for a message from me. Whether or not I decide to hold class, you should use your own judgment about the safety of traveling to campus.

Course Schedule

Week 1

3/31

Introduction

What Are the Humanities, and Who Are We?

Charles C. Mann, "The State of the Species" (2013)

4/2

Charles Darwin, excerpts from *The Descent of Man* (1871)

Tim Ingold, "Humanity and Animality" (1994)

Humans/Animals/Others

Week 2

4/7

J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (1999)

René Descartes, *From the Letters of 1646 and 1649*

4/9

Lab Day: Animal Instagram Series

Week 3

4/14

The Lives of Animals

Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" (1974)

Animal Instagram Series due to your GTF

4/16

Jay Hosler, *Clan Apis* (2013)

Week 4

4/21

Clan Apis

Thomas D. Seeley, "Swarm as Cognitive Entity" (2010)

4/23

In-Class Midterm Exam

Worlds We Make

Week 5

4/28

Henry David Thoreau, "Walking" (1862)

4/30

Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" (1954)

Anthony Giddens, "Risk and Responsibility" (1999)

Week 6

Plastic

5/5

Chris Jordan, Photographic Series: "Midway: Message from the Gyre" (2009-present)

Jenny Price, "A Brief Natural History of the Plastic Pink Flamingo" (1999)

Roland Barthes, "Plastic" (1957)

5/7

Lab Day: Plastics Diary

Week 7

City

5/12

Mike Davis, "The Dialectic of Ordinary Disaster" (2006)

Patricia Smith, *Blood Dazzler* (2008)

Plastics Diary due to your GTF

5/14

Blood Dazzler (2008)

Film excerpts, *Trouble the Water* (dir. Tia Lessin, Carl Deal, 2008)

Week 8

Nature

5/19

Richard White, "Knowing Nature through Labor," "Salmon" (1995)

Sherman Alexie, "The Powwow at the End of the World," "Sonnet, without Salmon"

5/21

Gary Snyder, "Ancient Forests of the Far West" (1990)

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, "Blasted Landscapes (and the Gentle Arts of Mushroom Picking)" (2014)

Matsutake Worlds Project

Week 9

Climate

5/26

Paolo Bacigalupi, "The Tamarisk Hunter" (2012)

Slow Ride Stories at slowridestories.com

FutureCoast at futurecoast.org

5/28

Lab Day: Future Scenario

Week 10

6/2

People's Agreement of Cochabamba (2010)

Naomi Klein, "Blockadia" (2014)

Future Scenario due to your GTF

6/4

Into Eternity: A Film for the Future (dir. Michael Madsen, 2010)