

## ENVS 203: Introduction to Environmental Studies: Humanities

MW 2:00 – 3:20, Lawrence 177

CRN: 13101 / 4.00 credits (Fall 2013)

Jason Schreiner, jschrein@uoregon.edu

Office: PLC 57, Tel: 541-346-3484

Office Hours: W 3:30-4:45, R 3:00-4:15  
(or by appt.)

### INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

Name & Email	Office Hours & Location	Sections& Locations
Alicia Kristen aliciar@uoregon.edu	W 12:00-2:00 Columbia 47A	F 2:00-2:50, Villard 201 F 3:00-3:50, Villard 201 F 4:00-4:50, Pacific 8
Taylor McHolm tmcholm@uoregon.edu	T 2:00-4:00 Columbia 47A	F 9:00-9:50, Allen 101 F 10:00-10:50, McKenzie 475 F 1:00-1:50, Pacific 11
Morgan Peach peach@uoregon.edu	M 12:00-2:00 Columbia 47A	F 8:00-8:50, Fenton 119 F 11:00-11:50, Fenton 119 F 12:00-12:50, Pacific 11

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a survey of the contribution of humanities disciplines (art history, cultural studies, intellectual history, literary analysis, religious studies, and philosophy) to understanding the relationship between human beings and natural environments, and an opportunity to reflect on the role of the humanities in how we learn, think, and engage the world. We will begin by posing fundamental questions and problems of inquiry characteristic of environmental humanities. Then we will examine a range of texts to explore the historical legacies of Christianity, North American Indigenous traditions, and Western philosophy and science, in order to assess how cultural assumptions and perceptions of nature inform environmental values, perspectives and practices, and shape structures of power and privilege. We will next consider some of the themes and controversies involved in environmental issues such as wilderness, population and development, place, knowledge and gender, agriculture and food, urban ecology, and climate justice. The course also includes a required community service learning exercise. *This course fulfills the Arts and Letters Group Requirement and is a core course requirement for Environmental Studies and Environmental Science majors. The course must be taken for a grade in order to satisfy ENVS/ESCI major requirements.*

### COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- Margaret Atwood, *The Year of the Flood* (Anchor, 2010) – available at UO Bookstore
- Articles available as URL links or PDF files on the course Blackboard site (<http://Blackboard.uoregon.edu>)

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help you learn key concepts in environmental humanities and apply basic methods of inquiry, interpretation, and reasoning used in the humanities so that you can engage environmental and cultural issues in a meaningful, transformative way. If you invest yourself fully, you should finish the course being able to:

- Identify ‘environmental’ texts and describe pertinent cultural perspectives and environmental themes animating them
- Converse with others in a respectful, inclusive, and productive manner
- Contemplate values and actions and reflect on how they shape, and are shaped by, one’s interactions with the world
- Cultivate and express a personal perspective on the world that is informed by environmental awareness
- Connect your learning in this course to your ongoing education journey at UO and in life

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Section Participation	10%
Reading Journal	10%
Classroom-Community Connections	10%
Reflection Exercises (3@5% each)	15%
Novel Essay	15%
Midterm & Final Examinations (20% each)	40%

• **Section Participation:** This course will be very interactive and will include many opportunities for active engagement. You are therefore expected to participate actively, which includes attending and participating in the lectures, reading all assigned material prior to class, completing assignments, using office hours when necessary, and contributing helpfully in discussion section. Discussion is crucial to this class, and your section leaders and I will do our best to make you feel at ease and welcome to contribute to our collective conversation. The best way to understand the sometimes difficult and controversial topics we will engage is to talk about them with each other, so please feel free to contribute any question, objection, or other thought about the topic at hand when such occurs to you. Although no relevant remark is out of bounds in this class, you will be expected to treat all members of the class with courtesy and respect. Your participation will be graded based on the consistency and thoughtfulness of your contributions in section, and on your alert and respectful interaction with others in the class. Absence from class will negatively affect your participation grade.

• **Reading Journal:** You will be encouraged to keep a journal of your notes and thoughts about the assigned readings each week. To receive credit for keeping a journal, you will need to bring it to section so that your GTF can verify your work. Each weekly submission should be at least a half page, though your entries can be as extensive as you wish. This is an opportunity to write down key points in the reading, confusions, or other notes that will help you make sense of and retain what you are reading, prepare for discussion section, and later serve as a study resource for exams (questions about readings will certainly be on the exams). It is also an opportunity to voice your opinions – to critique, get mad, cheer, contemplate, question, etc. what you are reading. Although only five weekly journal entries will be counted in calculating your final grade (2% each for a total of 10%), you are encouraged to keep entries every week (*note:* journals will not be checked during weeks one or nine). Strategies for how to maximize the effectiveness of your journaling will be discussed in class and available on Blackboard.

• **Classroom-Community Connections:** You will participate with your section in a three-hour community-based, service learning exercise at one of FOOD for Lane County's gardens on one Saturday during the term. This exercise will provide you with a concrete opportunity to engage with others in community service and to reflect, in practice and in writing, on the central course theme – the garden – and other key course themes, including stewardship, environmental justice, livelihood, reinhabitation, food politics, and urban ecology. Further details about the learning exercise and written reflection will be announced in class and in your discussion section. If you have a schedule conflict on the date your section will be engaged in the exercise, you must notify your GTF as soon as possible and choose another date on which to participate. Missing the day you are scheduled to participate for any reason other than a documented emergency will automatically reduce your Classroom-Community Connections grade by one full letter grade; you will still need to participate on another date or complete an alternative assignment to receive credit. Those who are unable to participate in events scheduled outside of class or section time will have the option of an alternative assignment. Please notify your GTF as soon as possible if this is the case. Your participation and written reflection for Classroom-Community Connections will be the basis for 10% of your final course grade.

• **Reflection Exercises:** You will complete three short written reflection exercises. The first two exercises will involve experiential encounters with "nature" – one at a particular outdoor place on campus, and one in a particular work of art in Knight Library. For these two assignments, you will complete observation sheets and turn these in along with short written responses to specific prompts and reflection questions about your experiences. The first exercise will be due in section at the end of week two, and the second exercise will be due in section at the end of week four. Your GTF will grade these exercises. The third exercise will involve short written responses to reflection questions about your learning experience in this course and will be due on the last day of section during week ten. Instructor Schreiner will grade this exercise. Further details will be discussed in class, and specific instructions and observation sheets will be posted on Blackboard. These exercises will be worth 15% of your final course grade (three @ 5% each)

• **Novel Essay:** One essay of 900-1200 words (about 3-4 pages) about the novel, *The Year of the Flood*, will be required. You will be provided with essay questions on Blackboard and can choose one to which you will respond, or you can propose your own essay topic, which must be approved by your GTF and Instructor Schreiner. Your essay will be graded by the GTF for your discussion section. Essays must be submitted through SafeAssign on Blackboard and

will be due on Monday, November 25 (week nine). SafeAssign is a software tool designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper citation. It encourages original writing and proper citation by cross-referencing submitted materials with an archived database of websites, essays, journal articles, and other published work. The instructor may in some cases also submit your work to SafeAssign or some other plagiarism analysis and detection program. By enrolling in this course you grant your GTF or the course Instructor permission to do so. More information about this assignment and a grading rubric for the essay will be provided in class.

• **Midterm and Final Exams:** Exams will draw from all material assigned as readings or discussed in class, including films viewed in class. A list of review terms and concepts will be posted on Blackboard prior to the exam dates. Exams may include any of the following formats: true/false, matching, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer questions. Additional formats may be used and will be announced in class. The final exam will include only material engaged after the midterm. Each exam will be worth 20% of the final course grade.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF YOU**

A syllabus is a kind of contract between students and faculty. It reflects our commitment to create significant learning opportunities for you and to facilitate a productive learning environment that works for all students. It also reflects your commitment to participate fully in the course, to contribute the best of your abilities, and to conduct yourself with integrity throughout the term. The specific expectations of you are as follows:

- Attend lecture and section
- Devote several hours each week to reading, studying, completing assignments, and preparing for class
- Abide by policies that your GTF outlines for attendance, participation, office hours, and email
- Treat yourself, fellow students, the GTFs, and Instructor Schreiner with respect
- Let us know if there are any barriers in the course format to your learning
- Raise questions, test out ideas, and listen actively to others
- Turn off electronic devices in class that are not related to your academic work in the course

## **COURSE POLICIES** – *please read carefully!*

**Attendance in Section:** Section attendance is required. Your GTF will take attendance each week in section. You can miss one section without penalty; each additional absence will result in a full-grade reduction of your participation grade. If you must miss a section for an extracurricular obligation, serious illness, or family emergency, you will need to arrange to attend another section, if possible, by contacting your GTF in advance of the absence.

**Completion of Assignments:** An assignment must be completed in order to receive credit for it, and you must complete the novel essay and both exams in order to pass the course. Late assignments may be accepted up to 24 hours after being due but will be marked down one full letter grade; assignments submitted later than 24 hours after being due will not be accepted. Incompletes or extensions will be given only in the event of documented emergencies and must be requested as soon as possible.

**Copies of Assignments:** Please retain the original copy of all work returned to you during the term until the final course grade has been posted. In the event of any question concerning whether grades have been accurately recorded, it is your responsibility to provide these original copies as documentation.

**Computers and other Electronic Devices:** Please respect our collective learning environment by turning off electronic devices during lecture class, including laptops, cell phones, MP3 players, etc. You will be notified in class if use of electronic devices is needed for particular activities. If you wish to take notes on a laptop during lecture, please let Instructor Schreiner know, and please sit in the front of the room. Use of laptops for note-taking will be monitored, and you may be asked to leave if you are using your laptop for other, non-academic purposes. In all cases, non-academic use of computers and electronic devices that disrupts class will result in your being asked to leave class for the rest of the day. Please notify your instructor prior to class if you need to have a cell phone on in case of emergency, e.g. an ill family member or pregnant spouse / partner. Your discussion section may have a different policy regarding computers and other electronic devices; please consult your section syllabus for information.

**Academic Integrity:** The University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student's obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Please contact me with any questions you have about academic conduct. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html> Academic misconduct will be met with disciplinary action (the usual punishment is an "F" for the course).

**Inclusive Access:** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to contact me. It is especially important that you notify me within the first two weeks of the term if aspects of the instruction or course design present obstacles to your active participation or prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities. Such obstacles may include, but are not limited to issues concerning physical access and mobility, physical or mental health and well-being, and academic learning. I need to know about such issues so that we can discuss necessary approaches to ensure your full participation and facilitate your learning process. The university offers a wide range of services to support students in their efforts to learn and meet course requirements, including the following:

- *Accessible Education Center (AEC):* The AEC is dedicated to facilitating and supporting accessible education through active collaboration with students, faculty, staff, and the community. The AEC works to create and sustain physical, curricular, and informational environments that are informed by and responsive to the diverse characteristics and experiences of students with disabilities and variations of ability. Web: <http://aec.uoregon.edu/> - Phone: 541-346-1155
- *University Counseling and Testing Center (UCTC):* The UCTC provides comprehensive mental health care and testing services to the University of Oregon campus. The primary mission of the UCTC is to provide quality clinical/therapeutic services, psychological testing and assessment, psychoeducational workshops, and outreach as well as emergency services. Web: <http://counseling.uoregon.edu/dnn/> - Phone: 541-346-3227
- *Teaching and Learning Center (TLC):* TLC provides numerous resources (including courses, workshop, tutoring, and math and writing labs) to help UO students succeed. They work with a diverse student body with a wide range of needs. If you are unsure which resources would work best, they are happy to answer questions and share suggestions. Web: <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/> - Phone: 541-346-3226

**Diversity:** The University of Oregon is dedicated to the principles of equal opportunity in education and an acceptance of diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community. Open inquiry, freedom of expression, and respect for difference are therefore fundamental to a comprehensive and dynamic education. This course is committed to upholding these ideals by encouraging the exploration, engagement, and expression of divergent perspectives and diverse identities. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you feel aspects of the instruction or course design, or classroom activities, undermine these principles in any way. You may also notify the ENVS Program at 541-346-5000. For additional assistance and resources, I encourage you to contact the following campus services, as appropriate for your concerns:

- *Office of the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion:* This Office promotes inclusive excellence by working to ensure equitable access to opportunities, benefits, and resources for all faculty, administrators, students, and community members. Web: <http://diversity.uoregon.edu/> - Phone: 541-346-3175
- *Bias Response Team (BRT):* The BRT works to gather information about bias incidents and to support those who have witnessed, or have become a target, of an act of bias. The BRT provides targets of bias a safe space to have their voices heard, to promote civility and respect, to effect change around these important issues in a quick and effective manner, and to ensure a comprehensive response to bias incidents. Web: [http://bias.uoregon.edu](http://bias.uoregon.edu/) - Phone: 541-346-1134

**TENTATIVE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE** (Subject to revision as we proceed. Changes will be announced in class.)

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**Week One**

- M 9.30 **Course Introduction**
- W 10.2 **Environmental Humanities**  
Readings: Soper, from *What is Nature?*  
de Zengotita, from *Mediated*  
Carson, "The Marginal World"
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**Week Two**

- M 10.7 **Historical Legacy: Christianity**  
Readings: Genesis, "The Origin of the World and Mankind"  
Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of Brother Sun"
- W 10.9 **Historical Legacy: Christianity**  
Readings: White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"  
Ruether, "The Biblical Vision of the Ecological Crisis"
- F 10.11 **Due:** **Reflection Exercise - Nature on Campus, due in Section**
- S 10.12\*\* **CCC:** Check Section syllabus for details
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**Week Three**

- M 10.14 **Historical Legacy: North American Indigenous Traditions**  
Readings: Cherokee Creation Story  
Deloria, "Power and Place Equal Personality"  
Nabhan, "Cultural Parallax in Viewing North American Habitats"
- W 10.16 **Historical Legacy: North American Indigenous Traditions**  
Readings: Hughes and Swann, "How Much of the Earth is Sacred Space?"  
LaDuke, "Voices from White Earth"
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**Week Four**

- M 10.21 **Historical Legacy: Western Philosophy and Science**  
Readings: Selections by Plato, Aristotle, Lucretius
- W 10.23 **Historical Legacy: Western Philosophy and Science**  
Readings: Selections by Descartes  
Merchant, "The Death of Nature"
- F 10.25 **Due:** **Reflection Exercise - Nature in Art, due in Section**
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**Week Five**

- M 10.28 **Midterm Exam, 177 Lawrence**
- W 10.30 **Wilderness**  
Readings: Selections by Bradford, Thoreau, Marshall, Nash, Cronon, Waller, Plumwood
- S 11.2\*\* **CCC:** Check Section syllabus for details
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**Week Six**

- M 11.4 **Population and Development**  
Readings: Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics"  
Mies, "The Myth of Catching-Up Development"
- W 11.6 **Place, Knowledge, and Gender**  
Readings: Snyder, "The Place, the Region, the Commons"  
Curtin, "Recognizing Women's Environmental Expertise"
- S 11.9\*\* **CCC:** Check Section syllabus for details
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**Week Seven**

- M 11.11 Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, pp. xi-156  
W 11.13 Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, pp. 159-271

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**Week Eight**

- M 11.18 Finish Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, pp. 275-434  
W 11.20 **Food Politics**  
Film Screening: view *The Garden* in class

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**Week Nine**

- M 11.25 **Urban Ecology**  
Readings: Davis, from *Ecology of Fear*  
Hugo, from *Les Misérables*  
**DUE: Novel Essay, due through SafeAssign on Blackboard**  
W 11.27 **Optional Class**: special topic to be announced  
F 11.29 No Sections - Thanksgiving Holiday

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**Week Ten**

- M 12.2 **Climate Justice**  
Readings: Klein, "Climate Rage"  
Selections to be announced  
W 12.4 **Environmental Imagination and Liberal Education**  
Readings: Cronon, "'Only Connect...': The Goals of a Liberal Education"  
F 12.6 **DUE: Reflection Exercise - Learning Journey, due in section**

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**Finals Week**

- R 12.12 **Final Exam at 3:15pm, 177 Lawrence**
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**\*\*Note:** CCC reflection papers are due the Friday after your service learning exercise.  
See your Section syllabus for more details.

**Other Note:** Reading journals will be due and checked in Sections every Friday except during weeks one and nine.  
Five entries will count towards your course grade.