**PHIL 2500: INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

University of North Texas Summer 5W2 –Online Sections 001/002 7/5/21 – 8/6/21

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OFFICE HOURS via zoom M/W 4-5 p.m or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is an introductory undergraduate course in environmental philosophy to explore philosophical questions concerning the ethical, ecological, economic, political, and cultural dimensions of global contemporary environmental issues, i.e., public land management, water, energy, biodiversity, and global climate change. This course focuses on developing fundamental understanding of the systems of the natural world and the relationships and interactions between the living and non-living environment to think creatively in moving towards more sustainable futures.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

**This course takes place fully 100% online.** Your interaction with me, your TA, and with your fellow students will primarily takes place in CANVAS. This is an asynchronous class.

**COURSE MATERIALS REQUIRED /TEXTS**

There are no required physical texts for this course. Everything one will need will be scanned and uploaded to Canvas under “Materials” or are available via the UNT library course reserves. Links for documentaries will be provided.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

● Analyze key concepts and underlying assumptions associated with contemporary environmental issues.

● Connect environmental issues with social and political concerns.

● Encourage active participation, philosophical discussion, and mindful reflection in order to enable us to engage with not only the scientific, but also, ethical, ecological, economic, political, and cultural concepts and principles governing major environmental issues and problems.

● Critically analyze the ways in which values, worldviews, and systems influence how one perceives and interacts with the world, and possible actions and solutions for addressing environmental issues.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

● Identify and explain relationships and disconnects between humans and “the environment”.

● Analyze major environmental problems and political dynamics, including causes and consequences.

● Evaluate possible remedies to environmental problems, including their pros and cons.

● Develop an appreciation and skill for critical thinking, philosophical discussion, and debate.

● Develop respectful dialogue in the presence of individuals who may hold differing worldviews.

**Final Grades will be based on the A-F scale,**

A =90-100%

B =80-89%

C =70-79%,

D =60-69%,

F =59% and below.

**Assignments**

Participation in the following exercises must be on time, as I will be reporting the results back to the class.

**Quizzes**  **30%**

There are **6** short quizzes. These consist of multiple choice and true/false questions directly related to the readings. They are designed to keep you engaged and on track, not to trick you. You are welcome to consult the readings and other course materials as you take the quizzes, however, there is a 20 minute time limit so be prepared.

**Discussions 30%**

There are **5** discussion forums. These are designed to get you thinking and chatting with one another about issues pertaining to the material in each module. For each discussion, participation requires a minimum of an original post and three responses. You will find the prompts and more details about each discussion’s requirements in Canvas.

**Final Paper**   **40%**

Details will be provided in Canvas.

**LATE POLICY**

Each assignment has a clearly marked due date. Late work will only be accepted with prior permission from the instructor. If you are going to miss a deadline for reasons beyond your control, please email me as soon as possible.

**COVID-19 IMPACT ON DUE DATES/DEADLINES**

I recognize that we are all working in less-than-ideal circumstances and often with intensified non-academic responsibilities. Please contact me if you are unable to make assignment deadlines due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me prior to missing deadlines so that we can work out the best path forward. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

Please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus.

UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or [COVID@unt.edu](mailto:COVID@unt.edu) for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While completing work on time is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

**NETIQUETTE**

You are expected to maintain reasonable etiquette in your online interactions. Please remember to remain respectful of your instructor, TAs and fellow classmates. More info here: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with UNT’s policy on Academic Integrity: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in academic penalties or sanctions ranging from failing an assignment to expulsion from the University.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. If you require accommodations for disabilities, please register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and communicate with the instructor as soon as possible. For additional information see the ODA website at [www.disability.unt.edu](http://www.disability.unt.edu)

**EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS & PROCEDURES**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to CANVAS for contingency plans for covering course materials.

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES:**

**WEEK 1** Start Here,

**SELF INTRODUCTION & THREE RESPONSES TO PEERS**

**Due Dates**

**Readings** “The Yellowstone Model,” pp.17-36 in Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World. Bloomsbury.

07/05/21 **LOCAL ENVIRONMENT**

**WATCH** Film: KERA          Living with the Trinity  [https://www.pbs.org/video/living-with-the-trinity-qkw8v3/](%20https://www.pbs.org/video/living-with-the-trinity-qkw8v3/)

Denton’s Green Tree Neighborhood drinking water problems.

[Water Crisis Looming For Residents of Denton Neighborhood – NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth (nbcdfw.com)](https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/water-crisis-looming-for-residents-of-denton-neighborhood/2129947/)

[Water woes at Green Tree Estates | Denton | dentonrc.com](https://dentonrc.com/news/denton/water-woes-at-green-tree-estates/collection_7b5ed231-2ddc-5064-b463-7754d392a780.html)

**QUIZ 1 Local Environment, Yellowstone Model**

07/07/21Discussion 3 Replies to peers

**WEEK 2 ENVIRONMENT, NATURE & WILDERNESS**

**Readings** Finney, Carolyn. 2014. *“Bamboozled,”* Pp. 21-31 in Black Faces, White Spaces: Rethinking the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors. UNC Press.

Oreskes, Naomi and Erik M. Conway. 2013. *"The Collapse of Western Civilization:* A View from the Future." Daedalus 142(1): 40-58.

**WATCH**

BERTA DIDN’T DIE, SHE MULTIPLIED! (10 Min)

<https://vimeo.com/242900355>

In 2014 the hydroelectric Company D.E.S.A. tried to damn the Qualarque River, Honduras. Honduras, one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a land defender, Berta Cáceres' death (March 2016 assassinated) has not silenced the many campesinxs fighting for justice and Indigenous Sovereignty. They mourn Berta's assassination with powerful chants of 'Berta Didn't Die, She Multiplied!' (10 min)

**Out of Deepwood https://vimeo.com/102130995**

“Out of Deepwood” Environmental justice documentary: illegal dumping in an African-American neighborhood, reclaimed for Audubon Center in Trinity Forest (23 min)

**QUIZ 2 Environment, Nature, Wilderness**

**Due Dates**

07/12/21 Post your Discussion

07/14/21 Discussion 3 Replies

**WEEK 3 WATER & ENVIRONMENT**

**Readings** Klaver, Irene J. 2015. *“Accidental Wildness on a Detention Pond,”* Antennae, The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture, #33, Autumn 2015, 45-58.

Yazzie, Melanie K, and Cutcha Risling Baldy. 2018. “Introduction: Indigenous peoples and the politics of water.” *Decolonization: Indigeneity,* Education & Society 7, no. 1: 1-18.

**WATCH REVOLT IN ANATOLIA**

Film: Revolt in Anatolia <https://vimeo.com/21679494>

In order to build a vast hydroelectric power network Turkey is rerouting countless rivers, devastating ways of life in the rural regions of Anatolia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMzRa0dxbxA>

CNN’s Richard Quest looks into the 50-year project that the city of Los Angeles has committed to, to restore its river.

**QUIZ 3 Revolt in Anatolia**

07/19/21 Post your Discussion

07/21/21 Discussion 3 Replies

**WEEK 4 CLIMATE JUSTICE**

**Readings** Shiva, Vandana. 2015. *"Soil, Not Oil,"* Pp. 91-126 in Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis. North Atlantic Books.

Johnston, Barbara Rose. 2011. “Water, Culture, Power: Hydrodevelopment Dynamics,” Ch 4.1, pp. 295-317 in Johnston, R. B., Klaver, I. J., Castillo-Ramos, A., Strang, M., Niles, N. & Hiwasaki, L. Eds. *Water, cultural diversity & global environmental change: Emerging trends, sustainable futures?* Jakarta: UNESCO International Hydrological Programme and The Hague: Springer Press.

Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Delta, Bangladesh and India: A Transnational Mega-Delta.

<https://india.mongabay.com/2020/03/ganges-brahmaputra-meghna-delta-in-peril-due-to-sea-level-rise-says-study/>

Sand Mining and its impacts on the Environment in Inida.

Sand, a natural resource that seems abundant and often ignored is the second most extracted one, just after water. Excess extraction of sand from lakes, riverbeds, deltas and shores has destroyed habitats, changed the course of rivers, eroded banks, and swallowed up villages in India and worldwide.

<https://india.mongabay.com/2021/05/video-sand-mining-and-how-it-erodes-lives-and-the-environment/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9wQ-Th35Mg&t=337s>

**QUIZ 4 Living with the Trinity**

07/26/21 Post your Discussion

07/28/21 Discussion 3 Replies

**WATCH Sinking Cities (2018) Tokyo (55 min)**

[**https://www.pbs.org/video/sinking-cities-tokyo-sg5m7t/**](https://www.pbs.org/video/sinking-cities-tokyo-sg5m7t/)

Tokyo is looking for new ways to fight back against rising waters. Typhoons, tsunamis, earthquakes, and sinking neighborhoods threaten one of the world’s most populous cities, and the economic engine of Japan, with some of the world’s largest problems.

07/30/21 Discussion

08/01/21 Discussion 3 replies

**WEEK 5 CLIMATE CHANGE, CLIMATE JUSTICE, POLLUTION**

**Readings**

Shiva, Vandana, and J. Bandyopadhyay, *The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement* by, pp. 133-142.

Whyte Kyle-2020-Update-Dakota-Access-Pipeline-US-Colonialism.

[2020-Update-Dakota-Access-Pipeline-US-Colonialism.pdf (msu.edu)](https://kylewhyte.cal.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2020/07/2020-Update-Dakota-Access-Pipeline-US-Colonialism.pdf)

[What Standing Rock Teaches Us About Environmental Justice – Items (ssrc.org)](https://items.ssrc.org/just-environments/what-standing-rock-teaches-us-about-environmental-justice/)

Popvich, Nadia, John Schwartz and Tatiana Schlossberg.2017. *“How Americans Think About Climate Change in Six Maps.”* New York Times March 21st.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/03/21/climate/how-americans-think-about-climate-change-in-six-maps.html>

**QUIZ 5 BOTTLED WATER**

08/2/21 Post your Discussion

08/04/21 Discussion 3 Replies

**WATCH: *Before the Flood*, 2016, Directed by Fisher Stevens, National Geographic.**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbEnOYtsXHA**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbEnOYtsXHA)

**Watch:** Sinking Cities Episode 1 New York | 55m

<https://www.pbs.org/video/sinking-cities-new-york-twghqw/>

Has New York City – overwhelmed in 2012 by Superstorm Sandy –learned from that event? Can it defend itself against rising seas and the next big storm? With 520 miles of shoreline and no coastal protection, will creative engineering be enough?

**The Story of Bottled water** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se12y9hSOM0>

**https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-plastic-animation/**

08/05/21

**QUIZ 6 CLIMATE CHANGE-PLASTIC POLLUTION**

WEEK 6 FINAL EXAM DUE 6 August 2021

**August 6, Friday - 11:59 p.m. on Canvas.**