

PHIL 2500.001: Environment & Society

Spring 2025

University of North Texas

Instructor: Shoshana McIntosh

Pronouns: she/her

Office Location: ENV 320F

Office Hours: By appointment (office or zoom)

Email: shoshana.mcintosh@unt.edu (please give me 48 hours to respond before sending a follow up email)

COURSE SCHEDULE/LOCATION

This class takes place Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:30-10:50 in ENV 115.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class explores ethical, ecological and political dimensions of pressing contemporary environmental issues including public land management, extinction crisis, ocean plastic pollution, industrial agriculture, and global climate change. We will examine underlying assumptions about human-nature relationships, paying close attention to the interconnections between environmental and social concerns. Over the course of the semester, our focus will shift from defining and analyzing environmental crises to thinking creatively about how to move toward more just futures.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This class will be a blend of lecture and discussions during class time. Readings, reading reflections, and Embodied Environmental Experience (triple E) posts will be assigned regularly. I have tried to choose readings that are relevant as well as appropriate in length and style. My hope is that we will read closely and critically. These are not all philosophical texts, strictly speaking, but rather we will read a range of authors including anthropologists, field philosophers, historians, environmentalists, and journalists through a philosophical lens. We will also engage with art, media, and other resources to bring further dimensions and perspectives into conversation.

Discussions will be an integral part of this course. We are not learning in a vacuum, and I recognize and value that we all bring different experiences and perspectives and these enrich our intellectual community. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please contact me so we can meet. Together as a class we will discuss habits and

guidelines for engagement with each other at the beginning of the semester and return to these as needed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Analyze key concepts and underlying assumptions associated with contemporary environmental issues
2. Engage philosophical skills in reading, writing, and discussions
3. Connect environmental issues with social and political concerns
4. Critically evaluate possible responses to and actions for addressing environmental issues

MATERIALS

All readings are available for free either as links or PDFs in Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Points Possible	Percentage of Final Grade
Reflection Paper	20 points	10%
Critique Paper	30 points	15%
Final Project	30 points	15%
5 Reading Reflections x 8 pts	40 points	20%
5 Embodied Env Experience Post x 8pts	40 points	20%
Participation and Presence in class	40 points	20%
Total Points Possible	200 points	100%

NOTE: The overall Canvas grade is incorrect. Always refer to the syllabus to see where you're at. Reach out to me if you need an update on your attendance as I do not track this in Canvas.

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.

PAPERS/PROJECTS 40%

There are three larger assignments: a reflection essay worth 10% of your final grade, a critique essay worth 15%, and a final creative project worth 15%. Assignments and details will be available in advance on Canvas.

READING REFLECTIONS 20%

There are 5 reading reflection assignments throughout the semester. These are always due on Sundays before 11:59 pm (see Schedule and Canvas for exact dates) and consist of comprehension and reflection questions directly related to the readings and in-class lectures/discussions from the previous week. You are welcome to consult the readings and other course materials as you respond to the questions. There is no time limit.

EMBODIED ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCES 20%

There are 5 EEE assignments throughout the semester. These are always due on Sundays before 11:59 pm (see Schedule and Canvas for exact dates). Since we will be inside, in a classroom all semester, it's important that we engage with our readings, thoughts, and questions through more embodied experiences in the various environments we move through and live in. For the EEE discussion post you will write a short reflection of your experience and engage with at least one of our assigned readings/material from the week in your post.

PARTICIPATION & PRESENCE 20%

Your presence and engagement in class are deeply valuable for us all. We will strive to build a critical intellectual community together this semester through in-class discussions and activities. Questions are always welcome during lectures, or via email if that format works better for you.

There will be a sign-in sheet which you should sign at the beginning of each class. If there are circumstances preventing you from attending class (illness, car trouble, etc.) please email me and let me know. Missing class without informing me or an approved excuse will result in lost attendance points. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to follow up with a classmate to get notes from class.

Cell phone policy: Please put your cell phones silent or vibrate mode during class. If an emergency situation arises, communicate this with your instructor and step outside the classroom.

Computer policy: Computer and internet use should aid participation in class. If their use becomes a distraction from class this will affect your participation grade.

Headphones & Earbuds: Please remove these while in class to be fully engaged in class and respectful to your classmates and instructors.

COURSE POLICIES

As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. UNT's full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found in the UNT Policies section of the syllabus. See these Engagement Guidelines (<https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips>) for more information.

Late work

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 so we can work out the best path forward.

Otherwise, all work turned in after the due date/time will receive a grade of zero unless the student has a university-excused absence and provides documentation with 48 hours of the missed deadline.

UNT POLICIES**Academic Integrity Policy**

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodations must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access [website](#).

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & 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.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT & STUDENT SERVICES

Student Support Services

General Student Services website (<https://vpaa.unt.edu/advising/resources/students>)

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- Student Health and Wellness Center (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- Counseling and Testing Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- UNT Care Team (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- UNT Psychiatric Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- Individual Counseling (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

Food Insecurity

- UNT Food Pantry (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/desresources/programs/food-pantry/index.html>)

- Denton Community Food Resources
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/desresources/programs/food-pantry/resources>)

COURSE SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES:

WEEK 1 Introduction

Reading

- 1/14 Introductions and Syllabus
- 1/16 Crist, Eileen. 2017. "The Affliction of Human Supremacy." *The Ecological Citizen* 1 (1): 61-64.
- 1/16 Butnor, Ashby. 2012. Excerpt from "Critical Communities: Intellectual Safety and the Power of Disagreement." *Educational Perspectives* 44 (1 & 2): 29-31.

Due Dates

- 1/19 Week 1 Reading Reflection

WEEK 2 Environment, Nature, Wilderness

Reading

- 1/21 Marris, Emma. 2013. "The Yellowstone Model," p. 17-36 in *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World*. Bloomsbury read page 1-11 of PDF
- 1/23 "The Yellowstone Model," read page 12-17 of PDF

Due Dates

- 1/26 Week 2 EEE Post

WEEK 3 Public Lands and Exclusion

Reading

- 1/28 Finney, Carolyn. 2014. "Bamboozled," pp. 21-31 (10 pages) in *Black Faces, White Spaces: Rethinking the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors*. UNC Press.
- 1/30 Herrera, Jack. 2024. "Native tribes are getting a slice of their land back — under the condition that they preserve it." *Los Angeles Times*. January 3rd.

Due Dates

- 2/2 Week 3 Reading Reflection

WEEK 4 Multispecies Entanglements

Readings

- 2/4 Marris, Emma. 2021. "Philosophies of the Non-Human" pp. 28-46 (18 pages) in *Wild Souls: Freedom and Flourishing in the Non-human World*.

- 2/6 [Feral Atlas](#) (links to an external site) reading and exercise

Due Dates

- 2/9 Week 4 EEE Post

WEEK 5 Consumption: Who's Responsible?

Reading

- 2/11 Maniates, Michael. 2002. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" pp. 43-66 in Thomas Princen et al (Eds.) *Confronting Consumption*. MIT Press.
- 2/13 No Reading – Listen to NPR podcast "Waste Land" (2020)

*Introduce Reflection Paper Assignment (due 3/2)

Due Dates

- 2/16 Week 5 Reading Reflection

WEEK 6 Consumption: Food and Animals

Reading

- 2/18 Gruen, Lori and Jones, Robert C. "Veganism as an Aspiration, in "In The Moral Complexities of Eating Meat."
- 2/20 No Reading – Listen to TED Radio Hour podcast "The great food rescue"

Due Dates

- 2/23 Week 6 EEE Post

WEEK 6 Consumption: Plastic Bodies

Reading

- 2/25 Van Dooran. 2014. "Fledging Albatrosses" pp. 21-43 in *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction*.
- 2/27 Discussion and paper workshop

Due Dates

- **3/2 Reflection Paper due Sunday, March 2 before 11:59 pm**

WEEK 8 Global Climate Crisis: Animal Agriculture

Reading

- 3/4 MacDonald, Mia (2022) "Maximum Plunder: The Global Context and Multiple Threats of Animal Agriculture" in Adams, C. J., & Gruen, L. (eds.) *Ecofeminism, second edition: Feminist intersections with other animals and the earth*. Read pp. 355-363
- 3/6 "Maximum Plunder" Read pp. 363-371

*Introduce Critique Paper Assignment (due April 6)

Due Dates

- 3/9 Week 8 Reading Reflection

Spring Break: No Classes March 10-14

WEEK 9 Thinking Beyond Technology

Reading

- 3/18 Boucher, Martin J and Philip Loring. 2017. "Climate change isn't a tech problem so we need more than a tech solution." (Links to an external site.) *Ensisia*. March 20th.
- 3/20 Monbiot, George. 2022. "Embrace what may be the most important green technology ever." (links to an external site). *The Guardian*. November 24th.
- 3/20 Berger-Tal, Oded & Lahoz-Monfort, José J. (2017). "Conservation technology: The next generation." *Conservation Letters*.

*Brainstorm Critique paper topics in class

Homework

- Begin drafting your ideas/outline for the Critique paper – be ready to workshop in class

WEEK 10 Climate Justice

Reading

- 3/25 Shiva, Vandana. 2015. "Soil, Not Oil," pp. 95-115 in *Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis*. North Atlantic Books.
- 3/27 TBD

*Workshop paper ideas/outlines in class

Due Dates

- 3/30 EEE Post

WEEK 11 Global Climate Crisis

- 4/1 Read Whyte, Kyle (2019) "Way Beyond the Lifeboat" in Debashish Munshi et al (Eds) *Climate Futures: Reimagining Global Climate Justice*
- 4/1 Watch (in class) first half of *Anote's Ark* [documentary]
- 4/3 Watch (in class) second half of *Anote's Ark*

Full film citation: Matthieu Rytz, EyeSteelFilm, & Documentary Channel (Producers), & Rytz, M. (Director). (2018). Anote's Ark. [Video/DVD] First Run Features. Retrieved from <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/anote-s-ark-3>

Due Dates

- **4/6 Critique paper due Sunday, April 6 before 11:59 pm**

WEEK 12 Who and what are we “sustaining”?

Reading

- 4/8 Alaimo, Stacy. 2012. “Sustainable This, Sustainable That: New Materialisms, Posthumanisms and Unknown Futures.” *PMLA* 127(3): 558-564.
- 4/10 Rewilding Charter

*Introduce final project / workshop ideas (presentations 4/29 & 5/1, final due date 5/6)

Due Dates

- 4/13 Week 12 Reading Reflection

WEEK 13 Future Histories

Readings

- 4/15 Oreskes, Naomi and Erik M. Conway. 2013. “The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future.” *Daedalus* 142(1): 40-58.
- 4/17 No Reading – Play More & More (links to external site) game as class / workshop final project ideas

Due Dates

- 4/20 Week 13 EEE Post

WEEK 14 Creative Futures

- 4/22 Simun, Miriam. (2018) excerpt from *Training Transhumanism (I Want to Become a Cephalopod)* and [web page](#) (links to an external site) **Selection TBD**
- 4/22 Watch clips from Simun, Miriam. (2019) *Your Urge to Breathe is a Lie* (in class)
- 4/24 No Reading – Work on final projects in class

Homework

- Work on Final Projects

WEEK 15 Final Project Presentations

- 4/29 No Reading – Present Final Projects and discussion
- 5/1 No Reading – Present Final Projects and discussion

***We will not meet during finals week**

FINAL Project files and reflection paper: Due Tuesday, May 6 before 11:59 pm (no extensions given)