New York University  
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication  
Media and the Environment

Professor Nicole Starosielski     MCC-GE 2XXX  
411 Lafayette, 3FL     Classroom location TBD
nicole.starosielski@nyu.edu     Wed 11:00 AM – 1:10 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will introduce you to the varied ways in which human and natural environments have been shaped by media representations and technologies, extending from newspapers, photography, and popular literature, to film, television, and video games. The course integrates the study of environmental media from diverse disciplinary perspectives, including eco-cinema, eco-criticism, environmental communication, and environmental studies. It surveys research from media studies that explores how environments are represented in visual media; from eco-critical texts that detail the specificities of poetic, literary, and artistic approaches to the environment; and work in environmental communication that documents the role of the mass media, including the Internet, broadcast television, and news programs, in the dissemination of environmental messages. The course will also interrogate the diverging functions of environmental media in different historical periods and social contexts, beginning with the rise of landscape photography, scientific representations of nature, and “fictional” wildlife films; extending through the development of canonical environmental media works in the 1960s; and ending with the role of contemporary interactive and “recycling” based aesthetics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
After completing this course, students will be able to effectively:

- Identify the unique contributions of different media forms to the representation and engagement of environmental issues.
- Compare the applicability of existing methodologies and critical frameworks for various aspects of environmental media production, distribution, and consumption.
- Evaluate the effects of environmental media texts and aesthetic approaches.
- Analyze the human and natural environment in terms of the politics of space, labor, economy, waste, etc.

REQUIRED TEXTS

ASSIGNMENTS
Participation will be based on attendance, diligent reading, and active participation in all class discussions. Students will be responsible for writing two papers that analyze a particular environmental media formation using the analytics offered in the course. Detailed instructions will be provided to students in class for these assignments.

Evaluation
Participation: 20%  
Midterm paper: 30%  
Final paper: 50%
**Evaluation Rubric**

A= Excellent
This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B= Good
This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C= Average
This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory
This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F= Failed
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Absences and Lateness**
Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work.

**Format**
Please type and double-space written work. Typing improves the clarity and readability of your work and double-spacing allows room for me to comment. Please also number and staple multiple pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please use it consistently throughout your writing. If sending a document electronically, please name the file in the following format Yourlastname Coursenumber Assignment1.doc

**Grade Appeals**
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered
paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph, I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

**General Decorum**
Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism** ([http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity))
The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you
- cheat on an exam,
- submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
- receive help on a take home examination that calls for independent work, or
- plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:
- copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
- download documents from the Internet;
- purchase documents;
- report from other’s oral work;
- paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
- copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people’s ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources. Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.
Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

- Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
- Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.
- Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
- Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
- Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions

If a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline. The Steinhardt School Statement on Academic Integrity is consistent with the NYU Policy on Student Conduct, published in the NYU Student Guide.

Student Resources

- Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.
- Writing Center: 411 Lafayette, 4th Floor. Schedule appts at rich15.com/nyu/ or walk-in.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Eco-criticism, Green Film Criticism, and Environmental Communication
Case Study: Climate Change


Week 3: Landscape, Photography, and Power
Case Study: Industrialization


Screening: Manufactured Landscapes (2006, 80 min)

Week 5: Colonization, Classification, Cinematography
Case Study: Scientific Communication


**Screenings**: *Proteus* (2004, 60 min), *Locomotion in Water* (2005, 13 min)

**Week 6: Nature, Ethnography, and Image-Events**  
Case Study: Wildlife Filmmaking and Endangered Species


**Screenings**: *Grizzly Man* (2005, 103 min); selections from *The Cove* (2009, 92 min).

**Week 7: (News) Stories of Modern Environmentalism**  
Case Study: Pesticides

**Reading**: Rachel Carson, selections from *Silent Spring* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

**Screening**: *The Silent World* (1956)

**Week 8: Environmental Spectacle and (Post-)Apocalyptic Discourse**  
Case Study: Overpopulation

**Screening:** clips from *Silent Running* (1971), *Omega Man* (1971), and *Soylent Green* (1973).

**Week 9: Comedy, Toxicity, and Monstrous Natures**
Case Study: Genetic Modification


**Screening:** clips from *Eight Legged Freaks* (1985), *Toxic Avenger* (1989)

**Week 10: The Sounds of Environmental Melodrama**
Case Study: Nuclear Meltdowns and Airborne Toxic Events

**Reading:** Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (New York: Viking, 1985)

**Screening:** *Safe* (1995, 119 min); Toxic Audio Tour, [http://invisible5.org/](http://invisible5.org/).
Week 11: Recycling, Video, and Environmental Justice
Case Study: Waste


Screening: *The Gleaners and I* (2000, 82 min)

Week 12: Artificial Ecologies: Animation, Games, and Interactive Environments
Case Study: Agriculture

Nicole Starosielski, “Movements that are Drawn’: A History of Environmental Animation from *The Lorax* to *FernGully* to *Avatar.*” *International Communication Gazette.*

Screening: *The Lorax* (1972)

Week 13: Mediated Inequalities: Documenting Global Resource Privatization
Case Study: Food and Water Scarcity

Steven L. Jackson, “Writing the Global Water Crisis,” *Technology and Culture* 49, no. 3 (July 2008).

Screening: *FLOW: For Love Of Water* (2008, 93 min)
Week 14: Media’s Environments
Case Study: Oil Economies and Petroleum-based media