

Communication & Journalism 313:
EcoCultural Communication: Humans & “The Environment”
Spring 2014
(Section 001, CRN 46534)

Instructor: Dr. Tema Milstein

Class meeting location & hours:

Communication & Journalism, Room 156
Tuesdays, 4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Office hours:

Tuesdays, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

Contact info: tema@unm.edu

<http://www.unm.edu/~tema>

**“Of our environment,
what we say is what we
see.”**

– James Cantrill & Christine
Oravec, *The Symbolic Earth*

Course content and objectives:

This course explores how culture and communication inform, shape, and shift our relations with “the environment.” We look at human-nature relations as both actively socially constructed and as deeply materially experienced, focusing on the global manifestations and reverberations of environmental communication and examining international, regional, and local eco-discourses. The class is particularly interested in cultural discourses that might support more sustainable or restorative human-nature relations. Critical and creative exploration as well as out-of-the-classroom experiences in the wider community will be central to the learning experience. Together, through readings, discussion, examples, research, and experiential field studies, we will expand our repertoire to begin to understand how:

- 1) cultural and communication processes and contexts inform, construct, and produce human perceptions of and actions toward/within nature;
- 2) ecocultural communication research can be used to deconstruct and critically investigate perceptions and practices of nature.

Required texts: Finish all assigned readings *before* you come to class. Be prepared to discuss, question, and build on the readings. **Each day will begin with a readings quiz.**

- **E-Reserves for C&J 313 (password: lobo313):** All readings are located on the course EReserves page. See schedule below for weekly reading assignments.

Course and Teaching Style: The learning focus in this course is on student-driven exploration. While we utilize a wide variety of learning approaches – including interactive lectures, guided freewriting, activities, field studies, and independent projects

– this course is essentially discussion-based and experiential. This sort of learning requires active individual and group participation. Each of you will get out of this class what you put into it. And your experience will be a collective one. To foster valuable experiential learning:

- Prepare yourselves by reading and involving yourselves in the readings.
- Engage in the class and actively participate in discussion, exercises, and outings.

Course Grade Requirements: Reading Quizzes, Participation, Field Study Reflection Papers, Final Project

In an effort to reduce paper use in this class, all assignments will be turned in by their due date on WebCT except when otherwise noted.

1. **Reading Quizzes (at start of every class):** Quizzes are not surprises in this class. You should expect a quiz near the start of each class that covers your readings for the day, is graded by other students, and serves as your reading review before lecture and discussion. Quizzes may not be made up. To prepare, read carefully, outlining main points and concepts.
2. **Participation (throughout semester):** You are expected to be an engaged and constructive participator in class. If you are present but not participating, this will count as a zero. In addition to discussion, we will have a variety of in-class and out-of-class exercises, etc. Some of these require you to prepare before class and bring in written work to turn in for participation points, and some involve creating and turning work in during class.
3. **Two Field Study Reflection Papers (due posted on Web CT on dates in class schedule):** You will engage in two field studies, picking from the following three options: #1 constructed nature, #2 a sustainable/restorative ecoculture, and #3 “wild” nature. More detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted on UNM Learn. During each self-guided field experience, *bring a notebook and take detailed notes of your observations*. The observations and ideas you write in the notebook will provide grounded specifics (e.g., examples and details) to explore in your paper.
 - a. In your 3-page reflection papers, put your observations in conversation with concepts from class readings and meetings to analyze your experiences through the lenses of ecocultural communication. These papers are meant for you to creatively and critically reflect on your field experience as it relates to your own discovery process surrounding course themes. Papers should put your *personal* reflection (your own emotional, sensory, and cognitive observations and interpretations that you take notes on within the field) *in interaction with two or more class readings*. First-person writing voice is encouraged. Choose the readings that best help you interpret, reflect upon, and analyze your particular field experience.
 - b. **Grading criteria for the Reflection Papers:**
 - i. Originality – I expect and appreciate creative approaches to these papers;

- ii. Depth of Critical Thinking – Use evidence to support your claims, develop your ideas in depth and explain the implications of your ideas;
- iii. Accuracy of Analysis – Use helpful concepts from readings and class meetings accurately and do not repeat what authors or others say. Instead, explicitly cite and engage core class concepts to analyze your own individual experience;
- iv. Grammar/Spelling – As with all your college assignments, edit carefully to show you fully respect your work and to be certain your work, in turn, receives the respect and consideration it deserves;
- v. Organization of thoughts – Your papers should exhibit a clear flow of thought. A thesis statement and a one-sentence preview of the structure of the ideas in the entry will help here, as will a conclusion.
- vi. Use of APA citations and reference list.

4. ***Final Project (due posted on UNM Learn on date in class schedule):*** You can do a group project or an individual project. Either way, you have three choices of project form. This assignment can be in the form of:
- a. A conventional 10-page research paper on a communication, culture, sustainability topic that explicitly utilizes concepts from class (include at least 3 scholarly sources in addition to the course readings you use). Group research papers should be an additional 5 pages per additional person;
 - b. A (3-5 minute) video documentary posted on youtube or a posted, live, and interactive web site on a ecocommunication, culture, sustainability topic or action that explicitly utilizes concepts from class. You turn in the youtube or web site link to me on a 1-2 page reflection paper (for group projects, each participant turns in her/his own reflection paper) that explains why you chose to do what you did, how your choices were informed by the class, and what you think the possible beneficial ecocultural outcomes are. Include an annotated reference list that lists the readings you used and how you used them;
 - c. An ecoculture jam that explicitly utilizes concepts from class. You design, enact, record, and post this ecoculture jam on youtube, and turn-in the youtube link to me on a 1-2 page reflection paper (for group projects, each participant turns in her/his own reflection paper) that explains why you chose to do what you did, how your choices were informed by the class, what the experience was like (including how it felt, what responses were, what worked well, what you might do differently, and what you think the possible beneficial ecocultural outcomes were). Include an annotated reference list that lists the readings you used and how you used them.

The grading rubric for final projects is as follows: The best projects will reflect or extend the themes of the class in new venues. Special attention will be paid to the depth

of your engagement with the project and how you use your medium to communicate your points.

1. Effort (a reasonable amount of time and energy that is clearly apparent in quality of final project)
2. Responsiveness to feedback (open to and incorporated constructive feedback to help improve project)
3. Innovation/creativity (sheds new light, unique approach)
4. Quality of research (research was appropriate for goals of project and was well used to reach the goals)
5. Presentation (level of clarity and engagement of audience is high)
6. Completeness (project fulfills the goals of your assignment listed above and your individual goals, key points are clearly communicated)
7. Quality of writing and creative product (sophisticated level of product appearance, grammar/spelling)
8. Use of APA citations and reference list.

Some examples of final projects: These are ideas that are not fully developed. I provide them merely as a jumpstart to get your creative juices flowing. Try not to feel limited by these examples; instead, they are intended to give an idea of the breadth of possibility. No one has a better idea of what you want to do than you – I look forward to talking to you about your own ideas! I encourage you to pursue projects you find compelling and to pursue a creative process you think will best engage your passions and the themes you find most interesting in this course.

Sample projects (these would obviously need to be much more specific for an actual project):

1. An action research example: 1) Identify a product you use or is used a lot around you and do a life cycle analysis to look at various global implications of its use: trace the product's energy costs, groundwater pollution, shipping distances, volume consumed in Albuquerque, waste created, labor policies in the production place, associated environmental hazards, and alternative, less environmentally destructive options. You will need to get some of the information from the primary source: people responsible for making a company's policies and choices. (Example: one student doing this sort of project found that Edensoy is processed into soy milk in Hong Kong from organic soy beans shipped from California and then shipped across the Pacific again to California for packaging and distributing.) 2) Explore the contrast of the life cycle analysis with the communication messages the company uses to market this product. 3) Do an environmental action to change communication and culture around this product: This can range anywhere from a letter campaign, to a campus information booth, to guerilla performance art. Use your environmental action as your culture jam or documentary final product of your project.
2. An exploratory example: Explore how nature communicates in the city. *Possible research question* – How does water communicate in an urban environment? Create a video documentary to show the visual, aural and other communication of water in urban interactions. OR Explore how nature as environment might shape

- communication (e.g., study communication in a liminal nature space such as the petroglyphs or a liminal indoor-outdoor porch or a greenhouse? E.g., study cultural communication in a jungle compared to a desert). Create a particular environment for the presentation that people could enter to experience such a shift in communication and make a documentary about your research and the interaction with your creation.
3. An ecoculture jam example: Find an area of nature-human relations you would like to change or experiment with and do some culture jamming. (e.g., talk aloud to trees on campus, walk with your dog not using a leash with your dog making the decisions of where to go, get on your stomach to smell the grass, talk about your love for nature explicitly and emotionally with urbanite friends, etc.). Document your experiences in a creative way, observe your own and other people's reactions, interpret your experiences with the help of course concepts.
 4. A discourse analysis example: Participate in an environmental movement or industry that seeks to influence cultural and social approaches to nature (e.g., a forest guardian group, a lumber company, an urban wildlife habitat creation program, a river restoration group, or a budding campus community organic garden) and observe, analyze, and critique the main communicative elements. Explore the content of these messages and reactions to them. Evaluate whether the communication matches the goals of the movement or the realities of the industry. *Possible research question* – What are the existing cultural discourses within the movement or industry and are they beneficial for the environment? Explore alternative eco-communication possibilities. Share your findings with the movement or group you studied. Turned in final project can be in the form of a research paper or a research-based documentary, and include a discourse analysis of existing discourse, your proposal for new messages and meanings, and the group's responses.

Extra Credit Opportunities: You can do one of the following:

1. Do a third field study to do all three and earn a B or better on all three.

OR

2. Attend or take part in a human-nature-culture event or ecocultural service experience. Write a reflection paper following the general instructions for the field study papers (e.g. field study approach, cited reading sources, APA style). Earn a B or better.

OR

3. Create an ecocultural communication jobs database file with at least 15 links to pertinent job search sites and/or job databases. Annotate each link with a short descriptive paragraph for easy perusing. Post the database to the Ecocultural Communication Facebook site.

-- Earning a B or better on one of these extra credit options will bump up your grade by a fraction e.g., from B to B+. Limit of one fraction bump up per person. All due on UNM Learn by May 2 at latest; I encourage you to turn in earlier.

Grading:

Your quizzes, participation, and final project will be given the following weights in calculation of final grades:

10 Reading Quizzes:	250 points (25% of final grade)
Participation:	200 points (20% of final grade)
2 Field Study Reflection Papers:	250 points (25% of final grade)
Final project:	300 points (30% of final grade)
<hr/>	
Total:	1,000 points (100%)

Your final grade is on a strict percentage basis based on your points earned:

900-1,000 Excellent	97-100% = A+
	93-96.9% = A
	90-92.9% = A-
800-899 Good	87-89.9% = B+
	83-86.9% = B
	80-82.9% = B-
700-799 Competent	77-79.9% = C+
	73-76.9% = C
	70-72.9% = C-
600-699 Below Average	67-69.9% = D+
	63-66.9% = D
	60-62.9% = D-
0-599 Failing	BELOW 60% = F

A = Work meets all requirements of the assignment and shows a superior understanding of the material. Excellent work is creative in presentation, and in the application and evaluation of concepts. A assignments are precise, well thought-out, well organized, and have no stylistic errors.

B = Work meets all requirements of the assignment and shows a valid understanding of the material. Good work exceeds assignment content expectations and has no to few stylistic errors. B assignments are clear in presentation and in the application and evaluation of concepts. B assignments are accurate and thought-out.

C = Work simply meets the requirements of the assignment. Average work meets the minimum assignment content expectations and has some stylistic errors. C assignments show an understanding of the material, and in general how to apply and evaluate it. Demonstrates basic competency in organization, spelling, grammar, and structure is simply meeting the average expectations of a college student.

D = Work does not meet the minimum assignment expectations for content and has several stylistic errors. Below average work misses portions of requirements and shows

the student has failed to grasp or utilize concepts. D assignments do not show competency in basic fundamentals expected of college students.

F = Work does not reflect the content expectations and is plagued by numerous stylistic errors. Poor work indicates a student has no grasp of the material or does not care.

TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN CLASS & POLICIES:

- 1. Come to class prepared and sit up front** – *Read the assigned readings BEFORE you come to class.* This helps ensure you can participate and get the most out of lecture and discussion. *You'll feel more involved in class and retain more when you sit near the front,* so don't be shy.
- 2. Remember you have many resources to help you learn and do well:** I am here to discuss class content and ideas with you in class (and during office hours to give you the chance to enrich your learning experience). In addition, to help you improve the grammatical and stylistic quality of your written assignments, your source for *free* writing tutoring support is UNM's Center for Academic Support (CAPS, www.unm.edu/caps), which is based in Zimmerman Library. You can work with a tutor in CAPS to help improve the quality of your writing for this class and, in the process, your overall writing ability. CAPS also provides a free online virtual tutoring lab: <http://caps.unm.edu/online/vtl>, as well as Smarthinking, <http://caps.unm.edu/online/smarthinking>, a 24-7 online tutoring and academic support service that allows you to submit your writing and receive the tutor's comments usually within 24 hours. I highly recommend taking advantage of these resources for your written assignments.
- 3. Ethics: Students found plagiarizing will receive a failing grade for the class, and the case will be reported to the University.** The course emphasizes ethical practices and perspectives. Above all, both students and the teaching team should strive to communicate and act, both in class interactions and in assigned coursework, in a manner directed by personal integrity, honesty, and respect for self and others. Included in this focus is the need for academic honesty by students as stated by the UNM Pathfinder. Students need to do original work and properly cite sources. For example, be aware of plagiarism—directly copying more than 3 or 4 words from another author without quoting (not just citing) the author is plagiarism. Further, course content will encourage the ethical practices and analysis of communication. If you commit plagiarism or engage in academic dishonesty of any kind, you will receive an “F” for the course and be reported to the Dean of Students where further disciplinary action may be taken (Please see UNM's *Pathfinder Handbook* for more details on the university's Academic Dishonesty policy).
- 4. Late work & absences:** Late work will not be accepted. Turn in your work in a timely manner by deadline. In addition, you will *not* have a chance to rewrite your work after it has been turned in. However, you are

encouraged to meet with the professor in advance to discuss and ask questions about your assignments in progress. If you know you have a UNM-excused absence coming up, you must turn in your assignments in advance or by deadline. Any excused absence must be documented, and you must get this documentation to the professor if you want to receive credit for your work. Late work, again, will not be accepted.

5. **Professionalism:** Work turned in should be polished. Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments turned in for a grade must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, stapled, and must conform to standard rules of English grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Assignments that seriously depart from these rules (due to sloppiness and not deliberate and careful creative effort) or the required format described in the assignment will be returned un-graded and counted as a zero/F. APA style is required for all of your citations and reference list (for guides on how to use APA style, see <http://www.stylewizard.com/apa/apawiz.html> and <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/16/>).
6. **Email etiquette & responsibility:** A good rule to follow when addressing all people via email in a professional context is to use a greeting and that person's name or title to open your email message. Since you are not texting a buddy, it is respectful to begin one's email with "Hi, Tema" or "Dear Dr. Milstein," before going into your message itself. If you feel more comfortable addressing people by title, note that professors are not addressed as Ms. or Mr., but as Professor so-and-so or Dr. so-and-so. Check your UNM email account regularly, as I use this account to keep in touch with you about course requirements or updates. If you use another email address, please set up your UNM account to forward your UNM account email to that address.
7. **Technology:** Be respectful of each other's learning by turning off cell phones and not using the internet, texting, or listening to music while in class. I will ask you to leave if you are engaging in such activities as they disrupt learning in the classroom.
8. **Grade appeals:** I have a 24-7 policy, which means you must wait 24 hours after receiving a grade and appeal within 7 days. I will not discuss grades on the day a grade for an assignment is returned. If you receive a grade you feel is unfair, please provide me a **written response** either via email or on paper, no later than 7 days after the grade has been assigned (note: not the day you receive your grade), explaining how you feel the grade you received did not reflect your fulfillment of the assignment. I will then assess your written response and reassess your graded assignment.
9. **Diversity:** This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors including gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. The course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating.

- 10. ADA accessibility:** Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact Accessibility Services (277-3506) and inform the professor as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Jan. 21

Introduction to class and each other

Week 2: Jan. 28 - EcoCulture and Communication

Cox, R. (2012). Introduction & Chapter 1: Studying environmental communication. In *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere* (pp. 1-37). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage.

Cronon, W. (1996). Forward to the paperback edition. In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (pp. 19-22). New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Week 3: Feb. 4 - EcoCultural Theories and Ideologies

Corbett, J. B. (2006). Chapter 2: A spectrum of environmental ideologies. In *Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages* (pp. 26-56). Washington, DC: Island Press.

Milstein, T. (2009). Environmental communication theories. In S. Littlejohn & K. Foss (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory* (pp. 344-349). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

LAST DAY TO DROP A COURSE WITHOUT A GRADE: FEB. 1

Week 4: Feb. 11 - Culture, Childhood, and Ecological Interaction

Pyle, RM (2002). Eden in a vacant lot: Special places, species, and kids in the neighborhood of life. In PH Kahn, Jr. & SR Kellert (Eds.), *Children and nature:*

Psychological, sociocultural, and evolutionary investigations (pp. 305-327).
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Chawla, L. (2002). Spots of Time: Manifold Ways of Being in Nature in Childhood. In P. H. Kahn, Jr. & S. Kellert (Eds.), *Children and Nature: Psychological, Sociocultural, and Evolutionary Investigations* (pp. 199-226). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press

Due today by 3 p.m.: Participation Childhood and Nature paper on UNM Learn under “Assignments”

Week 5: Feb. 18 – Cultural Discourses of Nature Consumption

Glenn, C. B. (2004). Constructing Consumables and Consent: A Critical Analysis of Factory Farm Industry Discourse. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 28(1), 63-81.

Milstein, T. (2009). ‘Somethin’ tells me it’s all happening at the zoo:’ Discourse, power, and conservationism. *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 3(1), 24-48.

Fieldstudy #1 Due today by 3 p.m. turned in on UNM Learn (*I highly recommend reading this week’s readings before you go on this field study as the readings may help inform your reflection*)

Week 6: Feb. 25 - Ecocultural Case Studies

Only one reading this week for an Okanagan in Western colonizing culture perspective:
Read Armstrong, J. (1995). Keepers of the Earth. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind* (pp. 316-324). San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

In class, we will watch *The Graceful Descent* and discuss with moviemaker Katie Young for a young American traveling in New Zealand perspective.

Week 7: March 4 – Ecocultural Case Studies continued (José Castro teaching on Ecuador); Culture and Nature Tourism

Gudynas, E. (2011). Buen vivir: Today’s tomorrow. *Development*. 54(4), 441-447.

Milstein, T. (2008). When whales “speak for themselves”: Communication as a mediating force

in wildlife tourism. *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 2(2), 173-192.

Week 8: March 11 – Power, Culture, and Nature

Plumwood, V. (1997). Androcentrism and anthropocentrism: Parallels and politics. In K. J. Warren (Ed.), *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature* (pp. 327-355). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Evans, M. M. (2002). "Nature" and environmental justice. In J. Adamson, M. M. Evans & R. Stein (Eds.), *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, and Pedagogy* (pp. 181-193). Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Week 9: March 18 – NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Week 10: March 25 - Popculture, Media, and Nature

Sturgeon, N. (2009). Introduction & Chapter 1: The politics of the natural. *Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural* (pp. 3-49). Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

Stibbe, A. (2012). Advertising awareness: The ability to expose advertising discourses that undermine sustainability, and resist them. In P. Villiers-Stuart & A. Stibbe (Eds.), *The Handbook of Sustainability Literacy: multimedia version* (pp. 1-4). Brighton Faculty of Arts: Sustainability Network.

Fieldstudy #2 Due today by 3 p.m. turned in on UNM Learn

Week 11: April 1 – Culture and Communicating Eco-Transformation

Three readings this week:

Dilling, L., & Moser, S. C. (2007). Introduction. In S. C. Moser & L. Dilling (Eds.), *Creating a Climate for Change: Communicating Climate Change and Facilitating Social Change* (pp. 1-27). Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo: Cambridge University Press.

Corbett, J. B. (2006). Chapter 10: Communication and social change. In *Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages* (pp. 280-311). Washington, DC: Island Press.

Wihbey, J. (2013). Millennials, change, and outlook for climate activism and coverage. *The Yale Forum on Climate Change & the Media*.

Access the third reading on millennials at this site (it is not on EReserves):
<http://www.yaleclimatemediaforum.org/2013/03/millennials-change-and-outlook-for-climate-activism-and-coverage/>

Week 12: April 8 - EcoCulture Jamming

Sandlin, J. A., & Milam, J. L. (2008). Mixing pop (culture) and politics: Cultural resistance, culture jamming, and anti-consumption activism as critical public pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 38(3), 323-350.

Week 13: April 15 – Culture and Hearing Nature Speak

Pollan, M. (2001). *The botany of desire: A plant's-eye view of the world*. New York: Random House. Pp. xiii-xxv.

Brown, T., & Morgan, B. (1983). *Tom Brown's field guide to nature observation and tracking*. (pp. 17-87). New York: Berkley Books. *

Note: The Brown & Morgan reading is especially assigned to provide preparation and framework for your "wild" nature #3 fieldstudy.

Week 14: April 22 – Final project preparation as individuals or in groups

You have this week off, as class meeting time will be fulfilled with next week's field study. You can use this week's time to work on your final projects.

Week 15: Urban Ecocultural Communication

TUESDAY, APRIL 29 – CLASS FIELD STUDY from 1:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Our class field study today will include a reading quiz on the following:

Hatley, J. (2002). Where the beaver gnaw: Predatory space in the urban landscape. In Backhaus, G. & Murungi, J. (Eds.), *Transformations of Urban and Suburban Landscapes: Perspectives from Philosophy, Geography and Architecture* (pp. 35-53). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Dickinson, E. (2012). (Re)appropriating the petroglyphs: Commercial representations of a cultural landscape. *Journal of Consumer Culture*. 12 (2), 117-136.

Optional Extra Credit assignment due by May 2

Fieldstudy #3 Due April 28, by 11:59 p.m. turned in on UNM Learn

Week 16: May 6 – Final Project Presentations

Present projects in class today.

Final Projects due posted on UNM Learn today *no later than noon.*

Congratulations on completing our class. Happy summer!