

ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC

COMMUNICATION 309-01A (HM)
Spring 2011
Cycle 2-4-6
11:20 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Quad 365

Professor: Dr. Terence Check
Office: Quad 440, Office Phone: 2027, E-mail: TCHECK
Best appointment times: Even cycle days, 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Also available most odd days.

Course Description and Learning Goals: This course will examine the use of symbols in the articulation, construction, and understanding of the environment. I have four main goals for this course:

Awareness: I want to enhance your awareness of environmental issues. By the end of the semester, you will have a better understanding of significant environmental issues and the appeals that persuaders use when making arguments about these issues, particularly on prominent issues such as climate change. All perspectives are welcome in this class, but regardless of the specific positions you take, by the end of the semester you should be able to identify the various viewpoints on a range of environmental controversies.

Advocacy: I want to improve your advocacy skills. Advocates for social change use rhetorical appeals to articulate their positions to audiences. You will use rhetoric pragmatically by designing a message that advances a claim related to the environment

Criticism: I want to empower you to become a better critic of environmental messages in society. In this course, you will learn how to analyze the rhetorical content of environmental messages. You will learn the strategies that advocates use to influence audiences on environmental issues and you will assess the relative effectiveness of these arguments. You will be able to render a deep reading of environmental messages so that you are able to make sophisticated arguments about how they convey meaning and shape audience attitudes and behavior.

Citizenship: I want you to think about what it means to be a global environmental citizen. You will study environmental communication in the context of civic engagement and democratic deliberation, so that you can identify pressing environmental concerns and imagine how you might act on them.

In addition to these main goals, I will work on improving specific skills. I want to improve your critical thinking skills. By constructing and defending your arguments in class discussion and papers, you will learn to think critically about the texts and topics that you study. I want to improve your research skills. By completing the research required for the papers, you will enhance your library and online research skills. I want to improve your

discussion skills. By participating in class discussion, you will learn to articulate your ideas with a group. Last, I want to improve your writing skills. By completing research papers, you will improve your writing skills.

Required Texts at the SJU Bookstore:

Judith Hendry. Communication and the Natural World. State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2010.

Noel Sturgeon. Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009.

Additional readings will be assigned and are available through online databases, the internet, and the COMM 309 Moodle course page. You should bring required readings to class on the day we discuss them.

Course Requirements: You must complete all of the following requirements in order to pass:

1. Paper I: Direct Mail Persuasion Letter	15%
2. Paper II: TV News Analysis	15%
3. Paper III: Advertisement Analysis	15%
4. Paper IV: Politics and Culture Analysis	15%
5. Midterm Examination	15%
6. Final Examination	15%
7. Participation	10%

For each of the assignments, I will hand out a sheet that will explain the requirements in greater detail. There will be a study guide for each of the examinations.

There are no make-ups of examinations unless you have a University-related function and you arrange to take it in advance of your departure, or if you have an illness or other health problem that requires hospitalization or separation from others on the day the examination is taken. (If you have a medical appointment or procedure and you know the date in advance, please make arrangements with me to take the exam in advance of your appointment). Students diagnosed with the H1N1 flu virus should not come to class and may seek alternative arrangements with the instructor. Also, students with learning or language differences that require extra processing time can make arrangements with the instructor for additional time on the exams.

Participation is essential for the success of the course, since most class sessions are conducted in a discussion format. The grade that you earn for participation is based on the quality and quantity of your in-class contributions. This is not merely class attendance (attendance is evaluated separately; good attendance does not guarantee a good participation grade). The following criteria determine this section of the grade: Expression Skills: discusses and debates ideas, stimulates conversation, relates comments to topic,

allows others to discuss ideas; Attitude: comes to class on time, shows evidence of being prepared for class, shows genuine interest in topics and activities in class, accepts responsibility for own actions; Perception Skills: takes others into account when formulating responses, incorporates readings into discussion, incorporates outside material into discussion, generalizes and synthesizes ideas; and Contributions: participation and completion of short research projects to aid in class discussion. The majority of participation is in-class vocal involvement. After all, this is a Communication class.

I will determine your final grade based on the following scale:

A	940-1000
AB	890-939
B	840-889
BC	790-839
C	740-789
CD	690-739
D	600-689
F	599 or below

Attendance: Attendance is expected. Several absences can have a significant impact on your grade. You may miss up to three classes-- after that, each absence lowers your final grade by a third. I assume that you would only miss class because of an illness, a University function, or another important reason, and this policy is designed to allow for up to three such absences during the semester without penalty. However, if you are able, I recommend that you attend all of the classes, since I discuss material that the readings do not cover. If you have to miss a number of classes due to extraordinary circumstances or for legitimate University functions, please see me in advance. Be on time: I will take attendance at the beginning of class (if you arrive late, it is your responsibility to remind me after the conclusion of that class that you were in class). You are responsible for what is discussed in class, and for schedule changes announced in class.

Pass/Fail: Students wishing to take the course pass/fail must notify me of these intentions in a typed and signed letter, or by e-mail, by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2012. This option is not available to Communication majors and minors and some other students. Consult with your advisor before seeking this option.

Plagiarism: Any plagiarism on any assignment will result in an F for the course. According to the MLA Handbook, "To use another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarize...A writer who fails to give appropriate acknowledgment when repeating another's wording or particularly apt term, paraphrasing another's argument, or presenting another's line of thinking is guilty of plagiarism" (1995, p. 26). Students cannot purchase or use another paper and submit it as their own work. Students cannot use papers from another class for this course, nor submit papers completed in this course for other classes.

Electronic Equipment in Class: Cell phones should be turned off prior to class. No portion of the class may be videotaped or recorded with any electronic device unless the professor grants permission for this purpose. Texting is not allowed during class. Students may use laptops only for purposes directly related to the class session, such as taking notes or accessing a reading on Moodle.

Teaching and Grading Philosophy: This is my life's work, and I'm committed to researching and teaching in this area. All students will be treated equally and fairly. I respect your work and I'm committed to promoting it outside the classroom, such as at undergraduate conferences. The class will begin and end on time. Assignments should be clear and well explained. I am willing to work outside of class during office hours with students who are motivated to seek my help. Please make an appointment to see me if you have any questions or concerns during the semester.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

This schedule is tentative and **may change** as the instructor incorporates current events or updated readings into the course. You should view this as a guide, with changes implemented as they become necessary. However, you should assume that the deadlines for assignments are firm. Additional readings may be assigned.

If the article citation is followed by a Moodle designation, then the article is available on the course Moodle page. You will be able to locate the article under the week in which it is assigned.

If the article citation is not followed by a Moodle designation or web URL, then the article is available through one or more subscription databases on the library home page, such as the Communication and Mass Media Complete database. Go to the library home page and click on the "Journal Finder" link, then follow the instructions to locate the citation. If you know the database that has the article, you can click on the "Databases A-Z" link on the library home page, find the database, and search for the article.

Monday, January 17: Introduction to the Course.

Thursday, January 19: Communication and the Environment.
Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter one.

Monday, January 23: Issues and Mainstream Environmental Perspectives.
Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapters two and three.

Wednesday, January 25: Radical Environmental Perspectives.
Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter four.

Friday, January 27: Introduction to Environmental Rhetoric.
Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter five.

Read: Elisabeth Rosenthal. "Where Did Global Warming Go?" New York Times. October 16, 2011. (Internet)

Tuesday, January 31: Prophetic Rhetoric.

Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter seven.

Read: One of the articles in the "Temperature Rising" series by Justin Gillis in the New York Times. (Specific article assigned in class).

Thursday, February 2: The Pathos of Animals.

Read: Julia B. Corbett. "Communicating the Meaning of Animals." Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2006. (Read pp. 176-199 on Moodle).

Read: Marshall Myers. "The Use of Pathos In Charity Letters: Some Notes Toward a Theory and Analysis." Journal of Technical Writing and Communication 37.1 (2007): 3-16. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Monday, February 6: Advocacy Appeals.

Due: Paper I (Direct Mail Advocacy Letter)

Wednesday, February 8: Myth and Meaning in Environmental Arguments.

Read: Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter eight.

Read: Thomas Rosteck and Thomas S. Frenz. "Myth and Multiple Readings in Environmental Rhetoric: The Case of *An Inconvenient Truth*." Quarterly Journal of Speech 95.1 (February 2009): 1-19. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Friday, February 10: Rhetorical Leadership and Environmental Arguments.

Read: Kathryn M. Olson. "Rhetorical Leadership and Transferable Lessons for Successful Social Advocacy in Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*." Argumentation and Advocacy 44 (Fall 2007): 90-109. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Tuesday, February 14: The Framing of Environmental Issues.

Read: John M. Broder. "Seeking to Save the Planet, With a Thesaurus." New York Times 2 May 2009. (Internet)

Read: P. Wesley Schultz and Lynnette Zelezny. "Reframing Environmental Messages to be Congruent with American Values." Human Ecology Review 10.2 (2003): 126-136. (Free E-Journals database)

Read: Gill Ereaut and Nat Segnit. Warm Words: How Are We Telling the Climate Story and Can We Tell It Better? Institute for Public Policy Research. August 2006. (Internet)

Thursday, February 16: Critiques of Framing.

Read: Robert J. Brulle. "From Environmental Campaigns to Advancing the Public Dialog: Environmental Communication for Civic Engagement." Environmental Communication 4.1 (March 2010): 82-98. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Read: World Wildlife Fund. Weathercocks and Signposts: The Environment Movement at a Crossroads. April 2008. (Internet)

Monday, February 20: Polarization and the Rhetoric of Skepticism.

Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter six.

Read: Leah Ceccarelli. "Manufactured Scientific Controversy: Science, Rhetoric, and Public Debate." Rhetoric & Public Affairs 14.2 (2011): 195-228. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Wednesday, February 22: Environmental News Reporting.

Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter nine.

Friday, February 24: Analyzing Environmental News.

Read: Kevin Michael DeLuca. Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism. New York: The Guilford Press, 1999. (Read pp. 101-118 available on Moodle).

Tuesday, February 28: Image Events and Body Rhetoric.

Read: Kevin Michael DeLuca. "Unruly Arguments: The Body Rhetoric of Earth First!, ACT UP, and Queer Nation." Argumentation and Advocacy 36 (Summer 1999): 9-21. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Thursday, March 1: Imagining Environmental Disaster.

Read: Stephen Keane. "The Day After Tomorrow," in Disaster Movies: The Cinema of Catastrophe. London: Wallflower, 2006. 95-102. (Moodle)

Due: Paper II (TV News Analysis)

Friday, March 2 (6:00 p.m.) through Sunday, March 11: Spring Break

Monday, March 12: Fear Appeals.

Read: Saffron O'Neill and Sophie Nicholson-Cole. "'Fear Won't Do It': Promoting Positive Engagement With Climate Change Through Visual and Iconic Representations." Science Communication 30.3 (March 2009): 355-379. (SAGE Complete database)

Wednesday, March 14: Apocalyptic Narratives and the Rhetorical Jeremiad.

Read: Michael Salvador and Todd Norton. "The Flood Myth in the Age of Global Climate Change." Environmental Communication 5.1 (March 2011): 45-61. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Friday, March 16: Green Marketing and Green Consumerism.

Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter ten.

Tuesday, March 20: Analyzing Environmental Advertising.

Read: Sturgeon, Environmentalism in Popular Culture, chapter one.

Read: Jennifer E. Lerner and Linda Kalof. "The Animal Text: Message and Meaning in Television Advertisements." Sociological Quarterly 40.4 (1999): 565-586. (Wiley Online Library database)

Thursday, March 22: **Midterm Examination**

Monday, March 26: Visual Rhetorics.

Read: Kevin Michael DeLuca and Ann Teresa Demo. "Imaging Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism." Critical Studies in Media Communication 17.3 (September 2000): 241-260. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Read: Finis Dunaway. "Reframing the Last Frontier: Subhankar Banerjee and the Visual Politics of the Arctic National Wildlife." American Quarterly 58.1 (2006): 159-180. (Project Muse database)

Wednesday, March 28: Visual Rhetorics.

Read: Julie Doyle. "Seeing the Climate? The Problematic Status of Visual Evidence in Climate Change Campaigning." Ecosee: Image, Rhetoric, Nature. Eds. Sidney I. Dobrin and Sean Morey. Albany: SUNY Press, 2009. 279-298. (Moodle)

Read: Richard D. Besel. "From Awareness to Action: The Rhetorical Limits of Visualizing the Irreparable Nature of Global Climate Change." Proceedings of the 9th Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment. 2008. 1-7. (Moodle)

Friday, March 30: Shocking Images and Enthymematic Interventions.

Read: Kathryn M. Olson and G. Thomas Goodnight. "Entanglements of Consumption, Cruelty, Privacy, and Fashion: The Social Controversy Over Fur." Quarterly Journal of Speech 80 (August 1994): 249-276. (Communication and Mass Media Complete database)

Tuesday, April 3: Reading Environmentalism in Popular Culture.

Due: Paper III (Advertisement Analysis)

Wednesday, April 4 (6:00 p.m.) through Monday, April 9: Easter Recess

Tuesday, April 10: Reading Environmentalism in Popular Culture.

Read: Bron Taylor and Adrian Ivakhiv. "Opening Pandora's Film." Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture 4.4 (2010): 384-393. (Moodle)

Thursday, April 12: Reading Environmentalism in Popular Culture.

Read: Sturgeon, Environmentalism in Popular Culture, chapter two.

Monday, April 16: Reading Environmentalism in Popular Culture.

Read: Sturgeon, Environmentalism in Popular Culture, chapters three and six.

Wednesday, April 18: Animation and Ideology.

Read: Nicole Starosielski. "'Movements That Are Drawn': A History of Environmental Animation From *The Lorax* to *FernGully* to *Avatar*." International Communication Gazette 73.1-2 (2011): 145-163. (SAGE Complete database)

Read: Sturgeon, Environmentalism in Popular Culture, chapter four.

Friday, April 20: No Class: 21st Annual Undergraduate Communication Research Conference, University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis campus.

Sunday, April 22: Earth Day.

Tuesday, April 24: Civic Engagement and Public Participation.

Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter twelve.

Due: Paper IV (Politics and Culture Analysis)

Wednesday, April 25: Scholarship and Creativity Day.

Friday, April 27: Rhetoric and Consumption.

Read: Sturgeon, Environmentalism in Popular Culture, chapter seven.

Tuesday, May 1: Advocacy for Environmental Justice.

Read: Hendry, Communication and the Natural World, chapter thirteen.

Read: Christine Shearer. "The Human Face of Global Warming." Kivalina: A Climate Change Story. Haymarket Books, 2011. (Read pp. 101-126 available on Moodle).

Thursday, May 3: The Future of Environmentalism.

Read: Kevin DeLuca. "A Wilderness Environmentalism Manifesto: Contesting the Infinite Self-Absorption of Humans." Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement. Eds. Ronald Sandler and Phaedra C. Pezzullo. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007. 27-55. (Moodle)

Monday, May 7: Environmental Rhetoric, Place and Community.

Read: Bill McKibben. "All For One, or One For All." Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future. New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2007. (Read pp. 95-128 available on Moodle).

Tuesday, May 8: Study Day

Thursday, May 10: **Final Examination, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**