

ENV 105: Social Responsibility and the World of Nature

CRN: 20912, Room: 1 Pace Plaza E310, Tues and Thurs, 1:50pm – 3:15pm
An **AOK-1** Civic Engagement Course

COURSE SYLLABUS

Social Responsibility and the World of Nature is an introduction to some of the key issues, principles and debates in contemporary environmental thought, as well as an exploration of humanity's role as participants within the natural world. The course offers an opportunity to discover how various perspectives on nature have guided social change, influenced our choices, and shaped global cultural development. Through these investigations we will also consider how individual and collective action can connect with, influence, and ultimately guides the process of change within the greater whole.

To facilitate these aims we will examine the environment from a variety of sociological, ecological, cultural, political, and ethical perspectives. We will explore these topics through texts and digital media on the subjects of environmentalism, social action, history, and current events. A significant portion of the coursework will include in-class activities, discussions, critical writing, and a Permaculture style design project and presentation. *Learning Outcomes* include: methods for turning theory into practice, the development of practical skillsets, and creation of a portfolio built upon personal interests and academic accomplishments.

In coordination with these activities, and as a Civic Engagement course requiring 20 hours of community service, students will be encouraged to:

1. Gain insight into the state of the global environment through examining current challenges, potential solutions, and considering alternative courses of action.
2. Cultivate a sense of ecological consciousness and cultural curiosity built on newly informed perspectives, projects, and experiences.
3. Learn how to take positive action for and within the natural world, formulating a personal definition of one's role as a global and ecological citizen.

Course assignments over the semester will include:

- Weekly online quizzes/discussions on readings & videos supporting class activities, **all media will be available on Blackboard the week before the quiz is due.**
- *Natural World Reflections Essay* – a contemplative exercise in the environment.
- *Term Design Project* – Will include designing and outlining an individualized project, of personal passion, within the scope of the project guidelines.
- *Presentation and Write-up* – On the topics of your Design Project and Civic Engagement experience as a reflection on your learning throughout the semester.

WEEKLY TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND READINGS

Please read and watch assigned media and take **weekly quiz** *before* the first class of that week. Ex.: Week 2, examine all *Media* noted, and take quiz on Blackboard before class that week. Project and essay assignments are **due before or in class** as stated; assignment details will be provided in the weeks before they are due as noted below.

Week 1: Course Overview, Civic Engagement, and a Literary Introduction

1/26, 1/28

Assignment: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Research Project Opportunities for Next Class
Due Week 3 – Course Survey (on Blackboard)

Week 2: Intro to Ecology, the Biosphere, and Natural History

2/2, 2/4

Media: *Watch* – Home, A Film by Yann Arthus-Bertrand, 1.5hrs
Read – Ecological Principles, Stone
Read – Should You Fear the Pizzly Bear, Velasquez

Assignment: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Send Placement Emails / Make Phone Calls

Week 3: Environmental Ethics and Humanity in the Natural World

2/9, 2/11

Media: *Read* – Smarty Plants - The brains behind plant behavior, Marinelli
Read – The Sexual Politics of Meat, Adams

Assignment: Due Week 5 – Natural World Reflections Essay
Due Thursday, 2/11 – Course Survey (on Blackboard)

Week 4: Primates, Intelligence, and Culture – A Look at Animal Behavior and Human-Animal Communication

2/16, 2/18

Video: Project Nim (available via Blackboard / NYPL)
Media: Orangutan Cultures and Evolution of Material Culture, Animals Reader
Zoo Animals and Their Discontents, Halberstadt

Week 5: Global Environmental Citizenship & The Open Future Institute's Questions Project: An Introduction

2/23, 2/25

Media: What Do Chinese Dumplings Have to Do with Global Warming?, Twilley

Assignment: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Placement Finalized with Action Plan
Due Tuesday, 2/23 – Natural World Reflections Essay (Hard Copy)

**Week 6: Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Economics –
A Kombucha Case Study**

3/1, 3/3

Media: *Watch* – The Story of Stuff, by The Story of Stuff Project, 20min
 Read – Creating a World without Poverty – Author’s Summary, Unis

**Week 7: Introduction to Permaculture – A Whole-Systems Approach to
Sustainability and Design**

3/8, 3/10

Media: *Watch* – INHABIT: A Permaculture Perspective, 1.25hrs
 Read – Essence of Permaculture, Holmgren
 Read - How Permaculture Can Restore Ecosystems & Communities

Assignment: Due Week 8 – “Midterm” Essay, available on Blackboard

Week 8: Term Design Project – Overview, Brainstorm, and Discussion

3/15, 3/17

Assignment: Due Tuesday, 3/15 – “Midterm” Essay

Term Project – *A Permaculture Style Design and Analysis* –
Topic & Sources: Due Week 9 (Thursday)
Draft & Presentation Outline: Due Week 10 (Thursday)
Presentation: Due Weeks 11 & 12
Essay / Project: Due Finals Week, Thursday 5/5

Spring Break: 3/21 – 3/26 (no class, university wide)

**Week 9: Agriculture and Culinary Culture – The Light and Dark Sides of
Global Food Culture and Production**

3/29, 3/31 (Guiding Eyes Visit)

Media: *Watch* – Food Inc., 1.5hrs
 Read – We Are What We Eat, Pollan

Assignment: Due Thursday, 3/31 – Project Topic and Research Sources (Online)

**Week 10: Looking to the Future – Technological Determinism, Alternative
Environmental Ethics, and a Question of Context**

4/5 (Josh OFI Visit), 4/7

Media: *Watch* – Wall-E, 1.5hrs
 Read – Four Visions of the Century Ahead, Costanza

Assignment: Due Thursday, 4/7 – Project Draft & Presentation Outline (Online)

Week 11: Term Design Project – Presentations and Discussion (Part I)

4/12, 4/14

Assignment: Due-in-Class – Project Presentations & Discussion

Week 12: Term Design Project – Presentations and Discussion (Part II)

4/19, 4/21

Assignment: Due-in-Class – Project Presentations & Discussion

**Week 13: Connecting It All Together: A Question of Sustainability –
Thinking Globally, Acting Locally, and What’s Next?**

4/26 (Field Trip!), 4/28

**Week 14: Term Design Project – Document, Course Write-up, and Civic
Engagement Tracking Sheet – Submission Day**

5/5

Assignment: Due Thursday, 5/5 –

1. Term Design Project Document (online or hard copy in class),
2. Course Write-up (online),
3. Civic Engagement Tracking Sheet (hard copy in class)

COURSE POLICIES AND GRADING

Assignments & Grades (% of total):

Natural World Reflections Essay:	5%
Civic Engagement Project & Discussion:	20%
Online Quizzes / Weekly Assignments:	30%
Term Design Project – Presentation & Plan:	30%
Participation & Attendance:	10%
Course Write-up:	5%

Civic Engagement Project:

All students *must* complete a 20 hour, volunteer service project in the area of social engagement and/or environmental stewardship to pass the course. Placements must be “in the field”, be unpaid, and have minimal office type work. Tracking sheets (provided) must be turned in on the last day of class. You are welcome to select your own organization to work with; some resources and suggestions are available on Blackboard. Tracking the project is on the honor system; if dishonesty is discovered it may result in course failure. Please confirm all final placements with me via email.

Blackboard:

All readings, videos, discussion boards, and quizzes will be available digitally on Blackboard, as well as occasional class updates and a variety of external links and resources. If you need assistance accessing Blackboard please see IT Services or contact me directly ASAP.

Attendance and Punctuality:

You are expected to attend all classes. Missing more than 3 classes without prior arrangement will lead to grade reduction (5% each class missed). Missing more than 5 classes will lead to course failure. Excessive lateness will not be permitted, do your best to arrive on time. If there is some issue, please inform me beforehand if possible.

It is expected that you will attend the entire class session, if you need to leave early please discuss with me before class. If you need to excuse yourself for any reason do so discretely, being mindful of class activities.

Students with Disabilities:

Education at Pace is meant to be an open and equal opportunity for all students. If you have any personal issues or concerns about your ability to participate in any of the class activities, please see me as soon as possible and we will arrange whatever assistance may be necessary to assist your participation.

Phones and electronic devices that are not actively being used for class activities must be turned off and put away out of respect for the learning process and other members of the class. Consistent and inappropriate use of such devices will result in a significant reduction of your class participation score.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:

Presenting words or ideas that are not your own or cheating on assignments are unacceptable and will result in failure of the course. If you have questions or concerns about this or would like further clarification, please contact me directly or see the Pace Academic Integrity Policy in the online student handbook, which will serve as a standard for this class.

Assignments, Participation, Readings, Discussions, Quizzes and Finals:

Read assigned weekly texts before class as specified in the syllabus and take the weekly quiz or participate in the discussion board (not meant to trick you, but to check completion and basic topic understanding). Be prepared to discuss and engage readings relative to lecture topics, videos, and class activities. This is important for gaining insight into multiple perspectives on the topics!

Quizzes and discussions are open on Tuesday of the week preceding the readings and close before class the following Tuesday. For example: during Week 2, the quiz for Week 3 will be open; complete readings listed in Week 3, and take the Week 3 quiz *before* the Tuesday class of Week 3.

Assignments are due according to the syllabus. Late assignments will incur a 5% per day penalty. Format should be: double spaced, size 12-font, with standard margins (apx. 1")

Active participation in class discussions and activities is expected and an important consideration this part of your course grade. Engaging the materials in a group setting is part of the real value of meeting as a class, and also an excellent way to solidify concepts and develop personal perspectives. Being shy is fine, but do your best to keep your attention up and awareness high!

Please note: the syllabus and assignments are subject to change to aid in scheduling guest speakers, accommodating unforeseen circumstances, and to keep course content current and appropriate. The final project of the course will count as your final exam grade.

For additional questions and clarification on assignments and class activities you are welcome to contact me by e-mail or make an appointment for office hours; in general, availability will be for one hour after Tuesday's class session each week, unless otherwise noted.

And finally... please enjoy! College is meant to be a fun, enlightening and engaging experience. Try not to stress too much and do your best!