Environment and Society
GEO 103
Mon., Wed. 10:35-11:30
Watson Theater

Instructor: Professor Tom Perreault
Office: 529 Eggers Hall
Phone: 443-9467
email: taperrea@maxwell.syr.edu
Office Hrs: Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-3:00, Wednesdays 12:00-1:00, or by appointment

TAs: Andrea Furnaro Katie MacDonald Dominic Wilkins
142 Eggers Hall 142 Eggers Hall 142 Eggers Hall
443-9136 443-9136 443-9136
atfurnar@syr.edu kmacdona@syr.edu dowilkin@syr.edu

Office hours: M 11:30-12:30, 2:30-3:30 Th 1:00-3:00 W 1:00-3:00
or by appointment or by appointment or by appointment

Sections: M002 F 9:30-10:25 M004 Th 3:30-4:25 M008 F 9:30-10:25
M003 F 11:40-12:35 M005 Th 5:00-5:55 M009 F 10:35-11:40
M006 F 10:35-11:30 M007 F 12:45-1:40 M010 F 11:40-12:35

Course Overview
There is no relationship more fundamental for society than the one we have with our natural environment. This course focuses on the social aspects of natural resource use, and connects local-scale phenomena with regional-, national-, and global-scale processes. We begin by reading about and discussing some conceptual issues that are central to our understanding of nature-society relations. These include resource extraction, pollution, environmental management, environmental ethics and environmental justice. We then examine the interaction of these processes and problems by considering some aspects of environment-society relations that we engage with every day of our lives: climate, resource extraction, energy, water and food.

Discussion Sections
Discussion sections meet once a week to review concepts from lectures and readings, and to introduce new material related to the course. Discussion section will also involve group activities and role-playing exercises related to topics covered in readings and lecture. You will have three writing assignments due in discussion section during the semester. Overall, discussion section accounts for 40% of your grade (200 out of 500 total points). If you want to do well in this class, you have to do well in discussion section.
NOTE: Attendance and active participation in discussion section is expected, and will count toward your final grade. Just showing up to class is not enough. In order to receive full credit for participation, you need to keep up with the required readings, and come to section ready to discuss them critically.

Required Reading
There are no textbooks for this class. Instead, all required readings are available via Blackboard (http://blackboard.syr.edu). These are listed according to the author’s last name, just as they are in the course schedule (below) and appear in the order in which you should read them. These readings are a mix of academic articles, book chapters and articles from newspapers and magazines. Be sure to keep up with the readings, because they will be covered on exams and discussion section assignments.

Grading
A total of 200 points will be available from discussion sections grades. Additionally, there will be two mid-term exams (worth 100 points each) and a final exam (also worth 100 points). Grading is as follows:

Discussion Section:
- Concept paper #1 (due week 3) 50 points
- Concept paper #2 (due week 8) 50 points
- Concept paper #3 (due week 14) 50 points
- Participation 50 points

\[ \text{Discussion Total} \quad 200 \text{ points} \]

Lecture:
- Exam 1 (September 27) 100 points
- Exam 2 (November 8) 100 points
- Final Exam (December 11) 100 points

\[ \text{Lecture Total} \quad 300 \text{ points} \]

CLASS TOTAL 500 points

Grading policy (please read this carefully):

- All assignments must be submitted on or before the date indicated on the syllabus. We do not accept late work without prior permission. Anything turned in late without prior permission will receive a score of zero. There will be no exceptions.

- Submit hard copies of your assignments to your TAs in discussion section. We will not accept electronic versions of assignments.

- All assignments should be proofread and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Sloppy work will be penalized at the discretion of your TA.
• Be sure to number and staple your pages. Unstapled papers, or with papers with un-numbered pages will be marked down one-half letter grade. All work must be written on a computer and printed with a printer. Handwritten work will not be accepted.

• Save electronic versions of all your assignments, as well as the graded hard copies you get back from your TA. These may be necessary in case of any assignments get lost, or if there are disputes or questions regarding your grade.

Classroom Etiquette
Please use common sense and common courtesy in your behavior in lecture and discussion section. Arrive to class on time. If you have to arrive late, please enter the room quietly and don’t let the door slam behind you. Please don’t talk or read during class. Persons behaving in a discourteous manner will be asked to leave the classroom. Classroom behavior will be considered in factoring final grades.

Personal Electronics
The use of personal electronics is not permitted in this class. Please be sure that your cell phone is silenced before coming to class. Texting, emailing, or surfing the web during class will not be tolerated. Persons caught texting during lecture or discussion section will be penalized 5 points each time, and may or may not be notified. You will need to take notes the old school way: with pen and paper. Anyone using electronic devices during lecture will be asked to leave.

Learning Outcome
This course is intended to improve your critical thinking skills and writing ability, as well as your environmental literacy. After completing this course, you should be able to: (1) Better understand contemporary environmental issues, particularly resource use patterns and their spatial aspects; (2) Identify and critically analyze key political, economic and social dimensions of environmental management; (3) Write effectively and analytically about contemporary nature-society relations.

Academic Integrity
Syracuse University’s Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors.

One of the most common violations of academic integrity is plagiarism. Put simply, plagiarism is using someone else’s work and passing it off as your own. It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will result in a grade of ‘F’ for the course. Students are responsible for knowing University definitions and rules regarding
academic honesty. For further information, see: class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/syllabus-recommendations/

**Disability-Related Accommodations**
Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 304 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to Dr. Perreault and review those accommodations with him. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, Office of Disability Services http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/

**Student Athletes**
If you are a student athlete, we will do our best to accommodate your travel and competition schedule. Please provide Dr. Perreault with necessary forms, and make arrangements with your TA, well in advance of your expected absences.
# Course Schedule

## Part I: Key Concepts

### Week 1

**August 28**  
Course Introduction

**August 30**  
What are Talking About When we Talk About ‘Nature’?

*Week 1 reading:* Cronon (*In search of nature*)

*Week 1 Sections:* Introductions and review of concepts

### Week 2

**September 4**  
*Labor Day – No Class Today*

**September 6**  
Wilderness and the social construction of nature

*Week 2 Readings:* Robbins (*Social construction of nature*)

*Week 2 Sections:* Group discussion: Understanding the nature of ‘nature’  
Begin concept review paper #1

### Week 3

**September 11**  
Welcome to the Anthropocene

**September 13**  
Uneven Geographies of the Anthropocene

*Week 3 readings:* Steffen et al. (*The Anthropocene*)  
Raloff (*Extremely bad weather*)  
Ceballos et al. (*Biological annihilation*—read Intro, Discussion, Conclusion)

*Week 3 Sections:* Group project: Global environmental change

*Concept paper #1 due in section*

### Week 4

**September 18**  
Environmental Ethics

**September 20**  
Environmental Justice

*Week 4 Readings:* Robbins (*Environmental ethics*)
Yeebo (‘Inside a massive electronics graveyard’)

Week 4 Sections: Concept review and discussion

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Week 5
September 25   Guest lecture: Political Economy of Nature

September 27   **Exam 1**

**Week 5 readings:** Robbins (‘Labor, accumulation and crisis’
+ ‘Primitive accumulation: A history lesson’)

**Week 5 sections:** No sections this week

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**Part II: Resources, Energy and Climate**

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Week 6
October 2   Guest lecture: Market-Based Environmental Governance

October 4   The Commons vs. the Commodity

**Week 6 readings:** Robbins (‘Markets and commodities’)
Robbins (‘Institutions and the commons’)

**Week 6 Sections:** Role play exercise: Payment for ecosystem services

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Week 7
October 9   The Nature of Resources

October 11   Weapons of Mass Extraction

**Week 7 readings:** Carlisle & Pevzner (“Introduction: Extraction”)
Bridge (“The hole world”)

**Week 7 Sections:** Discussion and concept review
Begin concept review paper #2
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<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>October 16</th>
<th>Energy and Society</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>The Carbon Economy</td>
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**Week 8 reading:**  
Bridge (‘Gas and how to get it’)  
Huber (‘Oil, life, politics’)  
Huber (‘Whose carbon footprint matters?’)

**Week 8 Section:**  
Group project: Energy use, pollution and policy  
Do Carbon Footprint exercise ahead of time and bring results to section  
http://www.unequalcarbonfootprints.org/ucf/index.cfm

  *Concept paper 2 due in section*

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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>October 23</th>
<th>Hydrofracking and its Discontents</th>
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<td>October 25</td>
<td>Guest lecture: Nuclear Energy</td>
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**Week 9 readings:**  
Nature (‘Should fracking stop?’)  
Economist (‘Bonanza or bane?’)  
Robbins (‘Uranium’)

**Week 9 Section:**  
Role play exercise: Hydrofracking

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<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>October 30</th>
<th>Climate Change</th>
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<td>November 1</td>
<td>Climate Politics</td>
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**Week 10 readings:**  
NOAA Climate Assessment 2017 (‘A look at 2016’)  
Robbins (‘Carbon dioxide’)

**Week 10 Section:**  
Discussion and concept review  
Read: Climate Change Atlas (‘Introduction’)  
and look at Global Climate Change Map

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<th>Week 11</th>
<th>November 6</th>
<th>Geographies of Global Climate Justice</th>
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<td>November 8</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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*Geography 103*

*Environment and Society*
Week 11 readings: 
Fraser ('Goodbye glaciers')
Whitt ('Dying and drying')

Week 11 Section: 
No section this week
Part III: Food and Water

Week 12

November 13  Geographies of Modern Agriculture

November 15  The Hidden Costs of Cheap Food

**Week 12 readings:**
- Imhoff (‘We reap what we sow’)
- Walsh (‘Getting real about the high price of cheap food’)
- FRAC (‘Hunger in America, 2013’)

**Week 12 sections:**
- Role play exercise: Farm bill
- Read: Food Atlas (‘Introduction’) and look at Global Food Maps
- Begin concept paper #3

Week 13

Thanksgiving week (November 20-24): No Class

Week 14

November 27  Water and Society: Dilemmas of Quantity, Quality and Access

November 29  Hydrosphere as Source and Sink

**Week 14 readings:**
- Robbins et al. (‘Bottled water’)
- Onondaga Lake Superfund Site (pp. 4-20)

**Week 14 Sections:**
- Group project: Water footprint
- Read: Water Atlas (‘Introduction’) and look at Water Footprint Map
  (bring laptops and tablets)

**Concept paper #3 due in section**

Week 15

December 4  Water Justice

December 6  Course wrap-up, student evaluations, review for final exam

**Week 15 readings:**
- Perreault et al. (pp. 485-486, 490-501)

Week 15 Sections:  Review for final exam

FINAL EXAM:  Monday, December 11, 3:00-5:00pm, Watson Theater
Bibliography

Ceballos, Gerardo, Paul R. Ehrlich, and Rodolfo Dirzo 2017. Biological annihilation via the ongoing sixth mass extinction signaled by vertebrate population losses and declines. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*.
FRAC (Food Research and Action Center) 2013. Hunger in America, 2013. In *A Place at the Table: The Crisis of 49 Million Hungry Americans and How to Solve it* (ed. By Peter Pringle), New York: Public Affairs Press.
*R. 2011. Should fracking stop? Extracting gas from shale increases the availability of this resource, but the health and environmental risks may be too high. 15 September* (vol. 277): 271-275.