"In the beginning was the story. Or rather: many stories, of many places, in many voices, pointing toward many ends.” —William Cronon, environmental historian, Journal of American History, 1992

This course is a survey of the history of events, attitudes and values associated with the environment, wilderness, environmentalism, conservation, preservation, pollution, and sustainability. The course examines the historical roots of modern environmental problems in the United States and globally.

This course is designed to nurture your ability to engage in discourse about (i) attitudes about the environment, (ii) human actions and behaviors toward the environment, and (iii) how these actions and behaviors foster or hinder sustainability. Environmental action, be it political, financial or social, requires knowledge and awareness of environmental problems and the challenges associated with the range of possible solutions. This course will survey historical environmental perspectives and present-day environmental problems in the context of the human quest for progress. The process of preserving wilderness will be defined and used as a metaphor for understanding how we know the environment,
respond to it, use or abuse our surroundings and natural resources. Historical points of view will be compared and contrasted with modern environmentalism as well as multicultural and ecocentric perspectives. The course will cut across a number of settings, from urban to rural, wilderness to the planned landscape. Some of the concepts to be covered include: wilderness, preservation, environmental values and ethics, environmental attitudes and perceptions, environmental movements and organizations, contributions of women to environmental understanding, multicultural perspectives on the environment, natural resource use and management, resilience, energy, and ecological collapse.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Our main objective is this: Students will become better participants in today’s environmental discourse based on knowledge of the past.

You will gain knowledge, practice skills, and foster attitudes (KSA learning outcomes) that will help you reach this main objective:

**Knowledge**
- K1: Know signs of societal collapse & sustainability from history
- K2: Know evolving range of environmental views
- K3: Know evolving channels of environmental thought
- K4: Know Self—views, values

**Skills**
- S1: Read skillfully
- S2: Create skillfully
- S3: Speak skillfully
- S4: Reflect skillfully

**Attitudes**
- A1: Grow in humility
- A2: Grow in charity
- A3: Grow in empathy
- A4: Grow in patience

More specifically about your knowledge, by the end of the course you will:
- Understand historical roots of modern day attitudes and behaviors toward the environment;
- Understand how these attitudes and the actions associated with them have contributed to current environmental problems in the U.S. and globally;
- Relate the concept of ‘wilderness’ to current environmental issues;
- Assess and critique current environmental problems, and contemporary perceptions about them, from a systems perspective;
- Differentiate between various worldviews regarding the environment as well as the movements and organizations that represent these worldviews;
- Understand the factors and determinants that influence environmental attitudes and behavior;
- Understand sustainability from individual, societal, and global perspectives;
- Describe individual, social, and institutional actions and changes necessary for planetary health and the transition to sustainability;
- Know how to live like a weasel.
REQUIRED TEXTS

Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed
Jared Diamond
Penguin Group, 2011
ISBN: 9780143117001

Down to Earth: Nature’s Role in American History
Ted Steinberg
ISBN: 9780199797394

Honors students only

Making Sense of Nature
Noel Castree
Taylor & Francis, 2014
ISBN: 0415545501

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity, and the Natural World
Alice Deming and Lauret Savoy, Eds.
Milkweed Press, 2011
ISBN: 9781571313195

Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape
Lauret Savoy
Counterpoint Press, 2015
ISBN: 9781619025738

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Any additional reading assignments will be placed on the course website on Desire2Learn, which can be accessed at http://d2l.msu.edu.

RESOURCES

Numerous links to creativity tools, academic resources, online media, and environmental advocacy organizations are provided at http://d2l.msu.edu.

BASELINE EXPECTATIONS

You can expect me to be approachable, willing to listen, respectful of your ideas, and open to suggestions. In turn, I have the following expectations of you:

Class Attendance: Class attendance is considered to be an important part of your educational experience. Please arrive on time for every class meeting.

Classroom behavior: The following classroom behaviors are disrespectful to our class, and therefore not acceptable: excessive and/or loud talking with other students, disruptive arrivals and exits, answering cell phone calls, using text/instant messaging, using e-mail/Internet, and other distracting behaviors. Please turn off or silence your mobile phone during class. If you are expecting a call in an emergency situation, please inform the instructor before class.

Mutual respect: In order to create a positive atmosphere for open discussion, you should feel confident that you can express your views and perspectives freely without penalty, and that your comments will not
be attributed to you outside the classroom. Please show consideration all of us by honoring the expressions of others. Disagreement is natural, but trust and respect should permeate this class.

Quality of assigned work: I expect high quality writing in all your assignments, and I hope that you will take pride in your written work. Your written assignments should be well planned and coherent, following standard, written English language and grammar, with proper citations of all references.

Use of electronic devices: While electronic and wireless devices have improved our lives in many ways, they also can be distracting and disruptive to fellow classmates, and they can undermine learning in the classroom. Evidence from psychological research has suggested that the use of electronic devices in the classroom negatively affects the performance of other students within view of the devices, and it also negatively affects student users’ ability to track their own ability to learn and understand (for more information about this research, see Stop Multitasking! It’s Distracting Me (And You)). A recent study led by MSU researchers found that “even the smartest college students suffer academically when they use the Internet in class for non-academic purposes” (see more at: Surfing the web in class: Bad Idea). Consequently, all electronic screens and wireless devices should be used only for course-related purposes. And make sure your phone is on silent.

COURSE LOGIC
Once the baseline expectations are in place, the course logic kicks in: In-class activities and at-home readings help you complete the assignments, which give you points and personal growth.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
As the course logic shows, your participation in activities and completion of the readings are the foundations of your success in the class. I am not going to grade your in-class participation because your participation (or lack thereof) will be graded indirectly through the assignments (below). Active, respectful participation in class will enhance everyone’s grades in the end. But, more importantly, you will enjoy the class and learn more! Open, frank, and civil discussion is encouraged and expected in each class period.

Guidelines for Excellent Student Participation
Quality of interaction with others
- noting connections among what others are saying, showing how the comments are similar or different, so as to carry the discussion forward
- encouraging other members of the group or class, by complimenting them, or by offering gestures that show you understand
- demonstrating respect and politeness toward others, especially during times of disagreement

Quality of contribution to discussion
- showing obvious interest in material, demonstrated by attentiveness and being prepared, coming to class with questions and concepts/theories which you want to discuss
- offering clear and creative comments and questions about the material
citing passages from the text (as evidence) to support your comment or question

demonstrating improvement in all the above over the semester

AT-HOME READINGS
See the course schedule below and D2L for reading assignments. You are expected to read assignments before class and be prepared to describe the main themes of the readings and present your own discussion questions. Failure to be prepared for class will be readily apparent to all of us and will eventually show up in your assignment grades.

POINT-EARNING ASSIGNMENTS
There are four types of assignments: Maker Spaces, Reading Notes, Exit Tickets, and Exams. There will be a clear rubric given with each assignment so you will know how to earn the grade you want. I do not accept late work unless we have made arrangements per the absence policy below.

Maker Spaces (52 points)
To be an effective force for community sustainability, you need to learn how to make things that contribute to environmental discourse based on your knowledge of sustainability dynamics. A Maker Space is your opportunity to practice this. You will choose a place that will be the topic of all of your Maker Spaces. Each Maker Space assignment must involve some writing, but you must also use other media (e.g., graphics, videos, comix, audio, &etc) because these are important means of communication today. An example Maker Space might be, “Write a practice blog post with pictures for Slate that explains your observations about one concept/person/thing from our readings that relates to your place.” Each successive Maker Space builds on skills (“creative thinking tools”) you used in the previous ones. The Final Maker Space is worth the same amount as an exam and synthesizes all of your previous learning about your place.

Reading Notes (8 points)
Research in education & cognitive science shows that taking structured notes while reading increases comprehension and retention. Even better if these notes are handwritten and/or contain graphics, like diagrams. It’s a skill, and I will teach you. To practice, you will take notes on each assigned reading. I will grade your notes to date at Midterms and Finals.

Exit Tickets (8 points)
At the end of each class, you will complete a brief reflection question and turn it in. Exit Tickets are important for self-knowledge and introspection skills. This is also how I monitor attendance. Please buy a pack of 5x7 notecards for these.

Exams (32 points)
There will be one Midterm and one Final exam. We will determine the format(s) together as a class.

Research Supporting these Types of Assignments


**COURSE GRADING**

- Reading Notes 8 points
- Exit Tickets 8
- Exams 32
- Maker Spaces 52

**Total** 100

Final course grades will be assessed according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>4.0</th>
<th>3.5</th>
<th>3.0</th>
<th>2.5</th>
<th>2.0</th>
<th>1.5</th>
<th>1.0</th>
<th>0.0</th>
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<tr>
<td>Points Earned</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
<td>88-92%</td>
<td>83-87%</td>
<td>78-82%</td>
<td>73-77%</td>
<td>68-72%</td>
<td>60-67%</td>
<td>&lt; 60%</td>
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**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Academic Integrity**

Cheating is wrong, hurtful, and ultimately useless. Don’t do it. If you do, per MSU’s *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades policy*, I will submit an Academic Dishonesty report and assign you a penalty grade for the assignment and/or the course. I am, however, calling you to a higher standard than originality—to humility, charity, empathy, and patience in your academic conduct.

**Academic Accommodations**

If you have a registered disability with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), it is your responsibility to discuss it with me, ideally the first week of class. Then, it’s my responsibility to maintain confidentiality and facilitate the accommodations outlined in your VISA.

**Family Leave and Medical Absences**

MSU and I are committed to ensuring that you can take care of yourself, your friends, and your family while being a student. If you need to be absent (even for 1 day) due to bereavement, family responsibilities, or your own illness, please notify me as soon as you know. We will arrange alternative course work. If you don’t notify me, I can’t help you, and I want to help.

**Student Health Resources**

School is hard. Life is hard. Life in school can be really hard. MSU provides free physical and mental health resources to students. I’m happy to help you get connected. And I’m always here to listen.

- Olin Health Center
- MSU Counseling and Psychiatry Services (CAPS)
- Neighborhood Clinics
- Intramural Sports
- Campus trees and gardens
• YouTube cat videos

*Limits to Confidentiality*
I am honored to be here for you—to listen, to comfort, to advise. However, MSU policy requires me to report anything I learn about students who have been harmed or who may harm others or themselves. If you disclose these things to me, I will be there for you, but I will also report them to MSU and they will decide what to do from there.

*More Information*
You can find more information and full content of the above policies by entering keywords in the MSU homepage search bar. We will follow the full policies listed there.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>Basics</td>
<td>Adler &amp; Van Doren, Chs.1-2 (18 pgs)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>Env. Beliefs</td>
<td>Corbett, Chs. 1-2 (45 pgs)</td>
<td>Maker Space Baseline</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>Env. Discourse</td>
<td>Steinberg, Prologue &amp; Ch. 1; Castree, Ch. 1 (53 pgs)</td>
<td>Maker Space 1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>Env. Representations</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch. 2; Castree, Ch. 2 (50 pgs)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>Discourse Channels</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch. 3; Castree, Ch. 3 (51 pgs)</td>
<td>Maker Space 2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Env. Behaviors</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch. 4; Corbett, Ch. 3 (43 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Steinberg, Chs. 5 &amp; 6; Dillard 1974 excerpt; + ?? (30 +??)</td>
<td>Maker Space 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch.7 (17 pages)</td>
<td>Reading Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break! No class. Get outside 😊</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Steinberg, Chs. 8 &amp; 9; Cronon 1995; social self (63 pgs)</td>
<td>Maker Space 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3/21</td>
<td>Signs of Collapse</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch. 10; Diamond, Ch. 4 (39 pgs)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>Signs of Success</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch. 11; Diamond, Ch. 9 (46 pgs)</td>
<td>Maker Space 5</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Mixed Signs</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch. 12; Diamond, Ch. 12 (36 pgs)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>So What?</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch. 13; Diamond, Ch. 14 (44 pgs)</td>
<td>Maker Space 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>So What?</td>
<td>Steinberg, Chs. 14-15; Carson 1962 excerpt; NPR 2007 (50 pgs)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>So What?</td>
<td>Steinberg, Ch. 16, Diamond, Ch. 15 (77 pgs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Diamond, Ch. 16 (40 pgs)</td>
<td>Maker Space 7 FINAL, Reading Notes</td>
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