Ecoculture: Communication, Sustainability, & Change
Communication & Journalism 502
Spring 2015
(Section 001, CRN 47928)

Tuesdays, 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. in C&J 121
(See meeting dates on schedule)
Overnight required field study: April 11-12

Professor: Tema Milstein
Office: C&J 206
Office hours: By appointment
Tuesdays 1:30-3:30
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www.unm.edu/~tema/

“Of our environment, what we say is what we see.”
– James Cantrill & Christine Oravec
The Symbolic Earth
COURSE SCOPE & LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Scope: This seminar explores cultural and communicative ways humanity informs, shapes, and shifts ecological relations. Our course situates human relations with/in “the environment” both as actively socially constructed and as deeply materially experienced. The seminar will lead to a deeper understanding of communication’s role in contemporary ecocultural orientations and will focus on restorative ways forward. Course learning emphasis is on student-driven critical exploration, as well as out-of-classroom field experiences. As learners, through readings, discussion, fieldstudy, and research, we will examine how:

1) Cultural communication processes and contexts construct, reproduce, and transform perceptions of and actions with/in nature;
2) Cultural communication research can be used to deconstruct and critically investigate, and reenvision perceptions of and actions with/in nature

Class will not meet every week due to the required April 11-12 field study in northern New Mexico (an estimated additional fee of $160 collected first day of class will cover field entry fees and lodging costs).

Note: If needed, communication students can petition to count this course as an intercultural communication concentration elective as it is usually taught as such.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, increased ability to:
1. Define and discuss key concepts linking ecoculture, communication, sustainability, and change and explain the value of these concepts and their integration to diverse audiences;
2. show in discussion and writing how you connect and apply theories and research about ecoculture, communication, sustainability, and change to power, knowledge, and society;
3. analyze how components of ecocultural identities and positioning, as well as the contexts and institutions within which one lives, shape and have shaped relations with nature and your own orientation to ecocultural communication research;
4. apply and connect theories and research about ecoculture, communication, sustainability, and change in your own research to demonstrate your understanding and to explore your particular questions;
5. produce an academic research paper suitable for conference and journal submission.

TEXTS: Most readings are on our C&J 502 EReserves site (password: lobo502). Books, articles, and chapters not on EReserves are marked in our schedule as accessed via academia.edu (online) or UNM EBooks (accessed directly through our library online).

GOLDEN RULE: If you introduce an author or a concept not read in class, this is an opportunity for you to introduce helpful supplementary substance to engage everyone’s learning. In other words, contribute expansively in the learning experience, avoiding the unproductive habit of name- or concept-dropping.
EXPECTATIONS:
Participation,
Field Study Reflection Paper,
Final Paper

In an effort to reduce paper use, most assignments are turned on UNM Learn.

Participation: Students missing class also miss the chance to participate on these days. As such, regular attendance will be necessary to successfully complete the course. Keep in mind our field study counts for nearly half of our course class time. You are responsible for all material presented in class whether you attend or not.

Listening/discussion: To have successful learning, prepare yourselves by carefully and critically reading all material before class, and actively participate in discussion, exercises, and outings. I expect discussion participation based on thoughtful contributions, encouraging others to participate, asking follow-up and clarification questions of others, and active listening (e.g., taking notes on others’ comments, building on group discussion, and not repeating comments or dominating discussions).

Weekly reading questions: Each Tuesday by 9 a.m., post one engaging question for EACH reading assigned to the appropriate week forum on UNM Learn Discussions. If you are first to post, start a new thread for each reading naming the thread by author and title. If you post after the first poster for a reading, post to that thread by “reply” to the previous poster. Your questions should serve as on-line discussion-generators that critically and/or creatively engage the reading’s concepts and/or applications or point to areas where you need clarification, and provide starting points for discussion in seminar. Posts after 9 a.m. will not be counted. I encourage you to engage with each other’s posts in your posts.

Application activity: Nearly every week, 1-3 students will be responsible for coming up with an applied learning activity for that week’s topic and for leading the class in that activity and related discussion. At the start of term, you will sign up to create and facilitate one activity. Set up a meeting with me for at least one week in advance both to bounce around ideas and avoid repeating things we might already be doing in class. Your application activity will help bring that week’s topic to life and will be useful for everyone’s learning. Be creative and deliberate in your design of these activities. These hands-on experiential activities can happen in or out of the classroom. You will have a half hour of class for the activity. Email me your final outline and materials for the activity 24 hours before class.

Peer feedback on final papers: You will form a team based upon methodological or topical approach to your papers. By due date on the schedule, you are expected to have read each team member’s in-progress paper in depth, typed one page of written feedback for each project (which you post on UNM Learn as a reply to posted drafts),

“…the culture of nature – the ways we think, teach, talk about, and construct the natural world – is as important a terrain for struggle as the land itself.”

– Alexander Wilson

The Culture of Nature:
North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez
and be prepared to discuss the papers at some length with authors. Peer feedback posted after start of class will not be counted toward your grade.

Field Study Reflection Paper: The required weekend field study will provide us with an opportunity to engage course learning in the field via observation and reflection. During our weekend, local guides, I, you, and our environment will provide a loose framework for engaging in the sites – such as through tours, questions, signage, silence, talking to experts, brochures, self reflection, senses, discussion, etc. Bring a small field notebook you can carry on your person to jot down detailed observations, quotes, ideas, theoretical notes, etc. Your notes will provide grounded and fresh details to explore in your paper. In your paper, creatively and critically reflect on your field experiences as they relate to your own discovery process surrounding the themes, theories, and concepts in this course. Papers should put your personal reflections (your own cognitive, sensory, emotional, etc., observations and interpretations within the field) in interaction with five or more class readings to explore ecoculture, communication, sustainability, and change contexts, processes, forces, and ramifications. Papers must be typed, double spaced, and 5-7 pages.

Grading Rubric for the Field Experience Reflection Paper:
1.) Originality – I expect and appreciate creative approaches to these papers (first person writing is not only allowed but encouraged); 2.) Depth of Critical Thinking – Use evidence to support your claims, develop your ideas in depth and explain the implications of your ideas; 3) Accuracy of Analysis – Use helpful concepts from class readings accurately in ways that help to explore or build ideas and avoid simply repeating what authors say; instead reveal your own ideas and thoughts as you engage with extant concepts to analyze your own experience; 4) Organization of thoughts – your papers should exhibit focus and a clear flow of thought. A thesis statement and a preview of the structure of the paper in the introduction will help here, as will a conclusion; 5) Grammar/Spelling – edit very carefully (closely read a final draft through at least five times) to show you fully respect your work and to be certain your work, in return, receives the respect and consideration it deserves. Use APA style.

Final Paper: This assignment is designed to encourage you to pursue your individual research interests within the themes of the class and assist you in developing a much deeper grasp of the specific compelling ecocultural communication topic you engage. You can tackle a new research project, do a pilot project for your thesis or dissertation work, or work on an area of your ongoing research. Most important is that you substantively engage class themes and conceptual frameworks. I am very happy to discuss your project with you. I encourage you to set an appointment to meet sometime during my office hours early in the semester to discuss your project idea and questions you might have.

1. In-process draft: You will post your in-process paper to the appropriate UNM Learn Discussions forum by the due date on our course schedule. This draft-in-process should be at least 10-15 pages and well edited and include (at minimum) a title page, abstract, introduction, thesis statement, research question, methodology section, literature review, a draft of your analysis, and an outline of
the remainder of the paper. Include, too, a cover page for your reviewers that outlines areas you are struggling with, areas you feel are most effective, and aspects upon which you would like reviewers to focus. In addition to your peers, I will provide clear feedback at this stage.

2. **Final draft:** The final paper you turn in should be 20-25 pages (with a strict limit of 25 pages) not including reference list. Use 12-point font, 1-inch margins, double-space, and APA style. You should cite at least five relevant readings from class to support your work, and at least 10 highly relevant scholarly sources from outside class readings. Your finished product should be of high research and writing quality and suitable for submission to a conference and/or a refereed journal. There should be no spelling/grammatical errors. If you would like help with your writing, the Graduate Resource Center (GRC) is a fantastic support, offering free graduate-level writing assistance in many forms. I encourage you to use the GRC (http://unmgrc.unm.edu/).

**Co-authorship:** Feel free to collaborate on your project, working in pairs or groups to create a co-written final paper. Co-authored works will follow the same format and length – effective collaboration often adds work, time, and challenge, as it eases. If you choose this route, each author also turns in a one-page paper describing the team’s collaboration process, individual workload, and effort. I expect there to be an even distribution of workload and effort.

**Final paper colloquium:** We will organize the final meeting of the course to be an open-to-the-public colloquium in which you present and discuss your work with others. This session’s creative format will be chosen by the class. At this event, you may receive further guidance from participants on ways to strengthen your work before the final paper due date. Key in preparing for this event is an emphasis on presenting your work so it is accessible and engaging to a diverse audience with or without ecocultural communication orientations.

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

1. **Clarity** (Key course concepts linking communication, ecoculture, sustainability, and change to your particular study are clearly explicated and their value and integration clearly communicated)
2. **Academic depth** (communication, ecoculture, sustainability, and change theories are applied and connected in ways that demonstrate depth of understanding and cogently explore your particular questions, with special attention to issues of power, knowledge, and society)
3. **Reflexivity** (reflexively exhibit ways the ecocultural contexts and institutions in which you/your topic/your study participants live both shape and are shaped by relations with/in nature)
4. **Quality of writing** (sophisticated level of academic writing; effective organization/readability; excellent and error-free grammar/spelling; APA style)
5. Presentation (conference-level presentation of your work at our colloquium in a style that is accessible and engaging for a diverse audience).

EVALUATION:
Grading Scale:
At this level of learning, I start with the expectation that you are all engaged students who apply yourselves to do A-level work. It’s up to you whether you meet this expectation. Each student’s final course grade will be determined with respect to the following total-point grading equation:

- **Listening/discussion**: up to 25% decrease in final grade for below good participation. No decrease for good to excellent listening/discussion.

- **Weekly reading questions**: 5% decrease in final grade for *EACH WEEK* not completed. No decrease for all questions thoughtfully articulated and turned in on time.

- **Application activity**: up to 20% decrease in final grade if not done or not well considered or effective. No decrease for good to excellent.

- **Peer feedback on projects**: up to 20% decrease in final grade if not turned in or if not constructive. No decrease for good to excellent posted feedback.

- **Field Study Reflection Paper**: 100% possible based on doing excellent on each point of the field study reflection paper grading rubric (see above). 20% of final grade.

- **Final Research Paper & Colloquium presentation**: 100% possible based on doing excellent on each point of the final project grading rubric (see above). 80% of final grade.

**Total Final Grade = 100%**

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**TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN CLASS & POLICIES:**

1. **Late assignments**: Late assignments are not accepted. If you have a *documented* personal or family emergency that is unforeseen and considered an excused absence by UNM, you may negotiate for a time to turn in an assignment after it is due. In these cases, you must make a good faith effort to notify the instructor (for example, by email) before or immediately following your absence. Computer trouble, having a paper or exam due in another course, forgetting the assignment is due, not having access to a computer,
having minor car trouble, and being out of town on business/vacation are not considered emergencies.

2. **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/.

3. **Maintaining a Positive Learning Environment:** Out of respect for your and others’ learning experiences please exhibit positive, respectful, and mature behavior while in class. All cell phones should be turned off or put on vibrate during class time – no texting. If you receive an urgent call or text, please leave the room quietly without drawing undue attention.

4. **Constructive Feedback:** I aim to provide useful responses to you to help you refine and strengthen your work throughout this class. Also, please feel free to offer suggestions to help improve the course and course structure. The topic of ecocultural communication is constantly changing—I hope this course will reflect and embrace that change. I encourage you to give me feedback throughout the course.

5. **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 graduate-level quality of your written assignments, your source for free graduate writing tutoring support is the Graduate Resource Center (http://unmgrc.unm.edu/), located in Mesa Vista Hall. You can work with a graduate tutor to help improve the quality of your writing for this class and, in the process, your overall writing ability.

6. **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).

7. **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.

8. **Diversity:** This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as 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.

9. **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.

10. **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. Please 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.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Please record our meeting DATES in your calendar planners

*Some weeks are off in exchange for fieldstudy weekend meeting hours*

(content subject to change)

Week 1: Introduction

T 1/13

**FIELDSTUDY $160 FEE DUE TO TEMA IN CLASS TODAY**

Week 2: Basics of Ecocultural Communication

T 2/10

Application Activity: ___Melissa, Mariko___________________________

6 readings/6 posts:


Week 3: Gender & Sexuality (Ecofeminism & Queer Ecologies)
T  2/24

Application Activity: Ailesha (Avery, if she stays)

5 readings/5 posts:


Academia.edu:

UNM EBook:
Mortimer-Sandilands, C., & Erickson, B. (Eds.) (2010). Queer ecologies: Sex, nature, politics, desire. (pp. 331-358). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. Check out the book's chapters online and choose ONE to read in depth and respond to. UNM Learn discussion around this reading will differ from most discussions as it will engage a range of chapters on a common theme: queer ecologies.

Week 4: Race, Ethnicity, Class (Global Environmental Justice & Political Ecology)
T  3/3

Application Activity: Stephen

6 readings/6 posts:

UNM EBook: (Read only Chapter 1: Introduction)


*Not required, but useful for this week, the following reading is on EReserves. It provides a broad overview of the Environmental Justice Movement via a social constructionist lens. It is long, too long to require with the other 6 readings, but I am including it as an optional reading for those of you who have special interest in this area. No UNM Learn reading question required – if you do read it though, please feel free to add to online or in-class discussion by bringing in concepts/frameworks from this reading:*


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**Week 5: Indigenous, Postcolonial, & Decolonizing Ecocultures**

T 3/17

Application Activity: _______José, Ed, _________________________________

5 readings/5 posts:


Academia.edu:

Week 6: Ecological and More-than-Human Communication
T 3/24

Application Activity: __________ Kaisa______________________

6 readings/6 posts:


Access the remaining readings via academia.edu:


Holm, N. (2012). Consider the squirrel: Freaks, vermin and value in the ruin(s) of nature. Cultural Critique, 80, 56-95.

If this week’s perspective interests you, I highly recommend this book (not required):

**DUE BEFORE CLASS: FINAL PAPERS-IN-PROGRESS (ON UNM LEARN DISCUSSIONS)**

**Week 7: Human-animal/humanimal Ecocultural Relations**

_T 4/7_

Application Activity: ________ Master Melissa ______________

2 readings/2 posts:

*UNM EBook: (Read entire book)*


**DUE BEFORE CLASS: PEER FEEDBACK ON PAPERS-IN-PROGRESS (REPLY TO AUTHOR PAPER ON UNM LEARN DISCUSSIONS)**

**Week 8: REQUIRED FIELD STUDY, NORTHERN NEW MEXICO**

_S/SU 4/11 – 4/12_

UNM Learn Discussion posts on this week’s readings must be completed by 4/9

Application Activity: ___________Katrina_____________________

3 readings/3 posts:


_Academia.edu:*


*Note: The Brown & Morgan reading provides a framework for your optional alone time in wild nature Sunday morning. Brown has become a controversial figure for good reason in terms of indigenous cultural appropriation (see http://www.trackertrail.com/tombrown/controversies/). Still, I have yet to find a better primer on increasing outdoor awareness. If you know of one, please share!*

Recommended reading (not required for this class; of use to those interested in global and northern New Mexico acequia culture):

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**Week 9: Changing Ecocultural Consciousness & Climate**

**T 4/21**

Application Activity: _______ Taty ________________________

Final hour of class devoted to open Q&A discussion forum on strategies for change with counterculture icon activist Mark Rudd. Klein article key to preparing for this discussion.

8 readings/8 posts:

*Lots of readings this week, but extra time to read and a few on the short side. As always, please read closely and carefully:*


Culture, 5(4), 447-466.


Access final reading @ www.thenation.com/article/181621/climate-change-peoples-shock

DUE BY 4 PM TODAY: FIELDSTUDY REFLECTION PAPER (ON UNM LEARN ASSIGNMENTS)

Week 10: Final Paper Colloquium
T  4/28

Please feel free to invite friends, colleagues, and family to have an opportunity to share your work.

FINAL PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT, MONDAY, MAY 4 (ON UNM LEARN ASSIGNMENTS)