Culture, Sustainability, & Change
Communication & Journalism 518
Spring 2013
(Section 001, CRN 46540)

8-Week Course: March 22-May 3
Fridays, 4 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. in C&J 121
Overnight required field study: April 13-14

Professor: Tema Milstein
Office: C&J 226
Office hours:
Jan. 15-March 8: Tuesdays, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.
March 18-May 3: Fridays, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.
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“...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
(1991) The culture of nature:
North American landscape from
Disney to the Exxon Valdez

COURSE SCOPE & LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Course Scope: This seminar explores culture, sustainability, and change by examining
the cultural and communicative ways humanity informs, shapes, and shifts relations with
“the environment.” Our course situates human-nature relations both as actively socially
constructed and as deeply materially experienced. As learners, through readings,
discussion, fieldstudy, and research, we will examine how:
   1) Cultural and communication processes and contexts construct, reproduce, and
      transform perceptions of and actions toward/within nature;
   2) Cultural and communication research can be used to deconstruct and critically
      investigate perceptions of and actions toward/within nature
The seminar will lead to a deeper understanding of ecocultural communication with a
focus on sustainable and restorative ways forward. The learning focus in this course is on
student-driven critical exploration, as well as out-of-the-classroom field experiences.

Course Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, you will have increased your
ability to:
1. Define and discuss key concepts linking culture, 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 culture, communication, sustainability, and change to power, knowledge, and society;
3. analyze how components of cultural identities and positioning, as well as the contexts and institutions in 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 culture, 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 paper submission and publication.

TEXTS:
1. Articles and chapters:
   EReserves: Most of our readings are on our C&J 518 EReserves site (password: lobo518).
   EBooks: Articles and chapters not on EReserves are marked as UNM EBooks in our schedule and can be accessed directly through our library online.
2. Book: Available to purchase online or in the UNM Bookstore.

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 in this class, all assignments are turned in before class by their due date on WebCT (except when otherwise noted).

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 half of our course’s class time. Also please keep in mind you are responsible for all material presented in class whether or not you attend.

Listening/discussion: To have successful learning, prepare yourselves by carefully and critically reading all material before class, and actively participating in discussion, exercises, and outings. I expect participation in discussions based on thoughtful contributions, encouraging of 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 Thursday by 10 p.m., post one engaging question for EACH reading assigned for that week to the appropriate thread on the course Web CT Discussion Board. The 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, etc., and provide starting points for discussion in seminar. Posts after the 10 p.m. deadline will not be counted. You are encouraged to engage with each other’s posts.

Application activity: Nearly every week, 1-3 students will be responsible for coming up with an appropriate learning activity for that week’s topic and for leading the class in that activity and related discussion. You will sign up in advance for this and meet with me to bounce ideas off of and in order not to repeat things we might already be doing in class. Your application exercises will be important and useful for everyone’s learning: consider, for instance, artifacts to analyze or reflect upon or other hands-on experiential activities that happen in or out of the classroom to help to bring that week’s topic to life. You will have a half hour of the class for the activity. If you can email your outline and materials for the activity before class, great; if not, please email me these things within a few days after that particular class.

Peer feedback on final papers: You will form a team based upon methodological or topical approach to your papers. On Week 7, by class time you are expected to have read each team member’s project in depth, typed one page of written feedback for each team member on her/his project (which you post on Web CT on the Discussion Board before class as a reply to their posted drafts), and be prepared to discuss the papers at some length. 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 you with an opportunity to engage your learning in the course with your own field observations and reflections. 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, discussion, etc. Bring a small field notebook you can carry on your person to jot down observations, quotes, and ideas. The observations and theoretical notes you write in your notebook 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 culture, communication, sustainability, and change contexts, processes, forces, and ramifications. Papers must be typed, double spaced, and 5-7 pages.

Grading criteria 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 interests in the themes of the class. In the end, you should feel you have 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. What is most important is that you substantively engage class themes and conceptual frameworks.

I am very happy to discuss your project with you and encourage you to meet with me. I recommend you set an appointment to meet sometime during my office hours in the first few weeks of class to discuss your project idea and questions you might have. On week 6, you will turn in your in-process paper to receive peer feedback. This draft-in-process should be at least *10-15 pages and well edited* and include at minimum a thesis statement, research question, and methodology. I will also provide clear feedback and guidance at this stage to help direct your project’s completion. The final paper you turn in should be *20-25* (with a strict limit of 25) pages not including reference list, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced, and in APA style. You should use at least five readings from class to support your work, and at least 10 scholarly sources from outside the 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 help 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 in a group 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 also eases. If you choose this route, each author also turns in a one-page paper describing the team’s collaboration process, work load, 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 during finals week to be an open-to-the-public colloquium in which you present and discuss your work with others. This session will be organized much like a mini-conference, with presentation panels and Q&A (*We may meet longer than usual on this day to provide enough time for the presentations and discussion.*). At this event, you may receive further guidance from audience members on ways to strengthen your work before the due date. Key in preparing for this event is an emphasis on presenting your work so it is accessible to a diverse audience with or without ecocultural communication orientations.

**Due date:** Your written final paper is due on May 15 posted to the appropriate thread on the course Web CT Discussion Board. Papers posted late will not be considered.
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, culture, sustainability, and change to your particular study are clearly explicated and their value and integration clearly communicated)
2. Academic depth (communication, culture, 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 cultural 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%

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. Audiotape, digital, or video recording of the seminar is generally prohibited unless first cleared with the instructor.

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

Week 1: Introductions & Basics of Ecocultural Communication
F  3/22


FIELDSTUDY FEE DUE TO TEMA IN CLASS

Week 2: Gender & Sexuality (Ecofeminism & Queer Ecologies)
F  3/29

Application Activity group:

___Reslie__________________________


Check out the book’s chapters online and choose ONE to read in depth and to respond to. Web CT discussion around this reading will differ from most discussions as it will engage a range of chapters on a common theme: queer ecologies.

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**Week 3: Race, Ethnicity, Class (Global Environmental Justice & Political Ecology)**

F 4/5

Application Activity group:

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Not required, but useful for this week, the following reading is in our EReserves Week 3 folder. 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 Web CT 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:

Week 4: Indigenous & Postcolonial Ecocultures  
F  4/12  

Application Activity group: ___David,  
   Monica______________________________________________


SATURDAY & SUNDAY, APRIL 13 & 14: REQUIRED OVERNIGHT FIELDSTUDY TO NORTHERN NEW MEXICO. DETAILS DISCUSSED IN CLASS. FEE MUST BE PAID ON WEEK 1.

Field Study readings: These must be completed and discussed on Web CT by 4/12

Application Activity group: ________Nicole,  
   Sue_________________________________________


*Note: The Brown & Morgan reading is assigned to provide preparation and framework for your optional alone in nature time on Sunday morning.*

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**Week 5: Ecological and More-than-Human Communication**

**F 4/19**

Application Activity group: _____ Maggie ________________________________


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

DUE BEFORE CLASS: FIELDSTUDY REFLECTION PAPER (ON WEB CT)

Week 6: Human-Animal Ecocultural Relations
F  4/26

Application Activity group: ________ Nick, Natasha________


DUE BEFORE CLASS: FINAL PAPERS-IN-PROGRESS

Week 7: Changing Ecocultural Consciousness & Climate
F  5/3

Application Activity group: __Maryam, Cyd,


DUE BEFORE CLASS: PEER FEEDBACK ON PAPERS-IN-PROGRESS

FINAL PAPER COLLOQUIUM: During finals week – we will Doodle a date. This session will be organized much like a mini-conference, with presentation panels and Q&A. Please feel free to invite friends, colleagues, and family to have an opportunity to share your work. Final paper due May 15 posted on WebCT.