Environmental Studies 195C ~ CRN 93494 Fall 2015 Course Syllabus

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERATURE, ARTS, & MEDIA











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Class meetings: Tue-Thur 11:30-12:45 pm, Terrill 108

Consultation hours: Tue 3:00-4:00 pm, Wed 10:30 am-12:00 noon Please call Jaclyn Devino (656-4055) for an appointment

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the environmental humanities exploring the range of values and cultural expressions of the human-nature relationship. We will explore contemporary and historical works of literary, visual, musical, performative, and media arts to see the role the expressive humanities have played in shaping social-cultural attitudes toward nature and the human dilemma of depending on nature as source and sustenance. Through readings, discussion, class presentations, and written and creative work, students will gain exposure to artists and movements in the environmental arts and literature as well as ecomedia studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Students will gain in-depth exposure to creative fields related to the environmental humanities, including environmentally themed literature, visual art, music, and film and media production. These will be studied in terms of their major recurring themes as these are expressed in representations of humans and nature, experiences intended and elicited, and material relations.
- 2) Students will be introduced to conceptual and analytical tools for understanding contemporary cultural practices through an ecocritical lens, as these are found within such fields as environmental communication, environmental cultural and media studies, ecocritical literary studies, and ecomusicology. Students will make use of these tools in analyses of cultural phenomena and in production of communicative or creative media objects.
- 3) Students will gain experience in personally and/or collectively engaging the creative process and producing a work of eco-art, literature, music, or media, to share with others and in the UVM community.

CORE TEXTS

- 1. Greg Garrard, **Ecocriticism**, 2nd edition (Routledge, 2012).
- Linda Weintraub, To Life! Eco-Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet (Univ. of California Press, 2013). See also the author's web site, http://lindaweintraub.com/ and esp. /teaching-guides/20th-century-ecoart-pioneers and /teaching-guides/20th-century-ecoart-pioneers and /teaching-guides/20th-century-ecoart-pioneers and /teaching-guides/20th-century-ecoart-explorers.
- 3. Mark Pedelty, Ecomusicology: Rock, Folk, and the Environment (Temple Univ. Press, 2012).
- 4. Additional readings will be made available electronically through the semester. Please stay up-to-date with these readings by checking the Blackboard course page regularly.

Approximately half of each of the above books (#1 to #3) will be required reading for the class. If you prefer not to purchase your own copy, the books will be available on 2-hour reserve at Bailey Howe Library.

COURSE ACTIVITIES

1. READING & CLASS PARTICIPATION (15%)

This course is a seminar style course in which reading is central to the learning process. We will spend much of our time examining the readings in depth. You are expected to have read all required readings for a given class **before** coming to that class. Guidelines and discussion prompts will sometimes be provided. This grade will also include your participation in class activities, such as the 1-minute talks (Sept. 3 & 8), but not the formal class presentations.

2. TWO ARTIST PROFILES / CLASS PRESENTATIONS (5% + 15% = 20%)

These will profile individual artists or groups of relevance to the course. The **first** will be a short visual presentation (Powerpoint or Prezi are recommended) on an artist profiled in Linda Weintraub's book *To Life!* The **second** will be on an artist of your choice (in any medium) and will include a visual presentation and a written report/analysis. Both presentations should be well-crafted, well-researched, and aesthetically considered, roughly 5 minutes in duration, and responding to class discussion topics. Excellent presentations will show both depth of personal reflection and thoughtful inquiry with accurate representation of authors' ideas and perspectives. These presentations provide an opportunity to explore new ideas and perspectives from class readings and practice sharing them with others. Students will be expected to sign up for topics early in the course, and to arrange with the instructor on specific artists and foci well in advance of the presentation (and no later than one week ahead).

Profile #1: Group Presentation (5%, to be done in groups of 3-4 students):

- Sign up for topics and dates (related to themes #1-4) by **Sept. 8**.
- Brief proposal is due one week ahead of presentation. Proposal should include: (1) team member names and division of tasks; (b) name(s) of artist(s) to be examined; (c) at least 3 non-course information sources.

Profile #2: Presentation & Written Analysis (15%, to be done individually or in pairs):

- 1-page **proposal** due **Oct. 13**. Proposal should include: (a) artist or group, (b) specific work(s) to be examined, (c) analytic approach, (d) at least 5 additional print or online information sources. See Appendix for lists of possible artists. Sign up sheet for presentation dates will be circulated on Oct. 13.
- Written artist profile should be 800-1000 words in length. It should analyze at least one work by the artist
 (e.g., a novel, a poetry collection, an art project, a musical album, etc.) and discuss its success (or failure) in
 terms of topics from the course: e.g., the representation-experience-materiality triad, the artist's use of
 one or more of the 7 thematic clusters (see Appendix), etc.
- If students choose to work in pairs, length expectation will be doubled (1600-2000 words), but class presentation duration should be the same (i.e., about 5 minutes per group).

3. **QUIZZES & EXAMS** (35%)

- Quiz 1: Sept. 24 (5%)
- Mid-term take-home exam (10%): handed out Oct. 13, due Oct. 20
- Quiz 2: Nov. 10 (5%)
- Final take-home exam (15%): handed out Dec. 3, due Dec. 10 in instructor's mailbox (ENVS office)

Quizzes will be multiple-choice/short-answer format and focused on vocabulary and concepts from required readings and lectures of previous weeks. **Exams** will be "take-home" with questions handed a week before the due date. All written work should be typed, spell-checked and proofread. Other details will be announced.

4. CREATIVE PROJECT (30 pts.)

The personal creative project is an opportunity to conceive, develop, present to the public, and critically reflect on an individual creative/artistic work based on class themes. This may be a work of creative art in any medium or genre, including poetry, literary prose, film/video, music, photo exhibition, art installation, performance, etc.; the sky is the limit on your imagination. Works will be presented at the **Class Eco-Arts Gala**, which will take place the week before Thanksgiving (location and exact date/time to be determined).

You will need to propose and develop your idea for the project, thinking through what you want to communicate and how you will execute the project. Choose something that draws on your own skills, passions, and environmental interests, and that relates to the themes and discussion points from class. Allow enough time to see what the obstacles might be, should you need to try another variation on your first idea. You will also need to figure out a way to present your project formally for the public (e.g., thinking about mounting, visual screens, playback, etc., as needed), to be present during the Gala to host your work (or documentation of it), and to document your work for presentation/review in class.

Objectives:

- 1) To produce a creative cultural or media object, performance, event, or production that communicates creatively and effectively your insights and sense of environmental perceptions and concerns;
- 2) To present your creative work to the public;
- 3) To reflect on what and how it communicates your message/insights and to evaluate its success.

Components:

(1) Proposal First Draft (2%, due Oct. 6), to include:

- a) **Project idea**: Brief description of your idea and tentative design, and inspirations for your work.
- b) **Medium & background**: Indicate the specific medium/media for your work (e.g., words, watercolor, video, multi-media installation, etc.) and your personal capacity/experience working in this medium. If you require any additional support with the medium or task, indicate where you will get this.
- c) Format: Describe how you will set up and share your project with the public.
- d) Rationale: Indicate why you think this approach will be effective for what you want to express.

(2) Progress report (3%, due Oct. 27), to include:

- a) Revised proposal: Include all above information with any revisions made (due to feedback, etc.).
- b) Status: Indicate what you have done, obstacles encountered and how you have dealt with them, etc.
- c) Work plan & timeline: Indicate what remains to be done, and when and how you will do it.

(3) Creative project (20%, due Nov. 19).

This should include a 100-150 word **Artist Statement** to be placed on the wall near your exhibition station. If the actual project is being exhibited or performed outside of the Gala event, you must include documentation of it (such as photographs, video, etc.). The project will be **evaluated** on the following criteria (treated equally):

- · Quality, depth, and creativity in personal expression
- Clarity of intention and communication
- Effective use of materials/media
- Relationship to class themes
- Personal effort engaged

(4) Exhibition Review (5%; due in class on Dec. 1).

This should be a 500-word critical review of the class show based on your observations of works on display and discussions with artists/writers, indicating both your personal evaluation of the quality of the show and your sense of the audience response to the show. Focus on works that struck you as most successful or interesting.

(5) Personal Reflection (5% each, for 10% in total; due in class on Dec. 3).

This should include your 100-150 word **Artist's Statement** from the show, followed by a 300 word **Critical Self-Evaluation** on the successes and challenges of your piece of art. This might include reference to execution, intention, clarity, appropriateness of medium, ideas for improvement, unexpected challenges (physical, emotional, intellectual, etc). Review your objectives and how these were met. Include any documentation, such as photographs, recordings, links, etc. Indicate your criteria for assessing effectiveness for the project.

5. EXTRA CREDIT (up to 1% pt. per review, for a maximum of 3% pts.)

You may attend extracurricular events and speakers related to environmental literature/arts/media topics or view related videos for extra credit. For each event or video, please clear it with me first and then write up a 1.5 to 2 single-spaced page paper summarizing (a) what the event or video was about (one page), and (b) your critical response to it (one page).

COURSE POLICIES

ABSENCES

Students are expected to attend **all** classes, unless you have an excused absence. Attendance will be taken, and unexcused absences will factor into your final grade. (Absences are not excused unless they are personally cleared with the instructor by phone or email.) If you miss a class, please ask another student for assistance in catching up on the material. If you are feeling "under the weather," please make an effort to come to class and keep up with the course rhythm, even if you don't feel like talking. We expect you to make it a commitment to attend every class, both for your own personal learning and to contribute to the community of learners in the group.

LATE WORK

All written work should be turned in on time, i.e. at the beginning of class on the day the assignment is due. Late work is subject to penalties, with grades dropping half a letter grade each day your work is late unless you have a medical excuse. If you need an extension due to illness or family emergency, please speak with me personally. I will do my best to read all the assignments soon after they are turned in and try to return them to you within two weeks.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

UVM supports students' active involvement in their religious/faith communities. Students wishing to be excused from class participation during their religious holidays should submit a documented list of such holidays by the end of the second full week of classes.

COLLABORATION VS. PLAGIARISM

You are encouraged to work with others in the class on your assignments, sharing resources and ideas and helping each other with direction, focus, clarity, and personal support. Please make an effort to get to know your peers. Much of the eco-art movement and similar such initiatives have been built on collaborative networking, and such activity is encouraged.

At the same time, UVM's commitment to academic honesty will be followed. This means that unless otherwise stated, written assignments should be your own. If you draw on other sources, they should be cited properly to give adequate credit. If you work with other students to prepare for an exam, your written answers should be individually constructed, not copied from each other or shared notes. Work that appears to be plagiarized will be given no credit and students will be asked to meet with the instructor to explain the situation. Plagiarism at UVM is grounds for academic suspension; please don't do it.

GRADING

Grades in this course will be assigned based on the following model:

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, & ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is **tentative** and subject to change. Not all readings listed will be required; others may be added. Please consult BlackBoard for up-to-date list of topics and assignments.

TOPIC	READING	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
Sept 1, 3, 8, 10		
Introduction to the Environmental Humanities, Eco-Arts, & Eco- Critique Introduction to the semiotic/interpretive triad: (1) Experience: impressions, sensory perceptions, visceral affects, emotions, motivations. (2) Materiality: resources, materials, production processes, ecological impacts. (3) Representation: signs, images, narratives, metaphors, rhetorics, interpretations.	 For Thur Sept 3: Garrard, Ecocriticism, ch. 1 ("Beginnings: Pollution") For Tue Sept 8: Garrard, Ecocriticism, ch. 2 ("Positions") For Thur Sept 10: Weintraub, To Life!: pp. 5-16 ("Eco Art Is," "Eco Art Is Not"), 43-50 ("Eco Art Materials"); skim the rest of the first part of the book up to p. 50. Pedelty, Ecomusicology, "Introduction" (pp. 1-12). Ivakhiv, on eco-documentaries (hand-out). Katherine Brooks, "18 Green Artists" 	Sept 3 & 8: 1-minute place/identity talk (accompanied by one image, to be shared on BB by 11:00 a.m. on Thursday) Sept 10: Sign up for first presentation groups (themes #1-4)
Sept 15, 17 Theme #1: GROUND: MOTHER Tree of Life, Fertility, Mother Earth, Gaia, Women's Art, Women's Work	For Tue Sept 15: 1. Kolodny, "Unearthing Herstory" 2. "Pachamama Declaration" 3. Rogers, "Knot" For Thur Sept 17: 1. Griffin, "Woman and Nature" (pp. 82-102) 2. Merchant, "Eve as Nature"	(Presentation groups begin)
Sept 22, 24 Theme #2: FORCE: ANIMACY Life Force, Instinct, Elementality, Animality, Metamorphosis, Darwinism	For Tue Sept 22: 1. Whitman, "I think I could turn and live with animals" 2. Killingsworth, "'As I the beasts spoke': The animal/animist/animated Walt Whitman" 3. LeGuin, "The author of the acacia seeds" For Thur Sept 24: 1. Plumwood, "Being prey" 2. Berger, "Why Look at Animals?"	Sept 24 : Quiz # 1
Sept 29, Oct 1, 6 Theme #3: HARMONY: PASTORAL Arcadia, Beauty, Balance of Nature, Locality, Rootedness, Rurality, Nation	For Tue Sept 22 1. Garrard, Ecocriticism, ch. 3 2. Wordsworth, "Poems on the Naming of Places" 3. Dissanayake, "Komar and Melamid Discover Pleistocene Taste"	

	For Thur Oct 1 1. Pedelty, "The Musical Nation" and "Regional Geography in Song," ch. 1-2 in Ecomusicology For Tue Oct 6 1. Ecocriticism ch. 6, pp. 117-129. 2. Berry, "Stay home" 3. hooks, "Touching the Earth" 4. Anzaldua, "Towards a New Consciousness" 5. Choice: Oates, "Against Nature"; or: Evans, "Nature' and Environmental Justice"	Oct 6: Project proposal first draft due
Oct 8, 13, 15 Theme #4: SUBLIMITY: WILD Wilderness as Threat & as Domain; Epiphany, Revelation, Deep Time & Space	For Thur Oct 8 1. Garrard, Ecocriticism, ch. 4, pp. 66-79. 2. Wright, "Clear night" 3. "Ktaadn" excerpt from The Maine Woods 4. Cornell, "Eliot Anderson: Average Landscapes" (including "The sublime, the picturesque, the beautiful") For Oct 13 & 15 1. Cosgrove, "Images and Imagination in 20 th Century Environmentalism," pp. 1862-7. 2. Sweeney, "'An Indomitable Explorative Enterprise'," pp. 131-139 and 148-153 3. Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness"; or Oravec, "To Stand Outside Oneself"; or Dunaway, "Reframing the Last Frontier" 4. Muir, "A Windstorm in the Forests" (start reading from "One of the most beautiful and exhilarating," half-way down p. 282)	Oct 13: Artist profile #2 proposal due; sign up for presentation dates Take-Home Exam handed out
Oct 20, 22, 27 Theme #5: POLLUTION: COLLAPSE Corruption, Sin, Monstrosity, Entropy, Ruins, Apocalypse	For Tue Oct 20 1. Garrard, Ecocriticism, ch. 5, pp. 93-97, 101-116. 2. Carson, "A fable for tomorrow" 3. Choice: Wagoner, "Elegy for a forest clear-cut by the Weyerhauser Company" and Hahn, "The Calf"; or: T. T. Williams, "The clan of one-breasted women" For Thur Oct 22 4. Cosgrove, "Images & Imagination," pp. 1867-73; or Hammond, "Monsters of modernity" 5. Misrach, "Exceeding the Carrying Capacity" 6. Chaudhuri, et al., "Dear Climate" 7. Alexie, "The powwow at the end of the world" 8. Jeffers, "The Inquisitors," "Passenger Pigeons" 9. Weintraub: "Maya Lin," "Marina Zurkow" For Tue Oct 27 10. DeLillo, "The Airborne Toxic Event"	Oct 20: Mid-Term Take- Home Exam Due Oct 27: Project Progress Report due

Oct 29, Nov 3, 5 Theme #6: PROTEST: RESURGENCE Witnessing, Jeremiad, Resistance, Heroism, Revolution, New Beginning	For Thur Oct 29 1. Opie & Elliott, "Tracking the elusive Jeremiad," pp. 9-11 2. Ingram, "Melodrama, Realism, and Environmental Crisis" 3. Klein, "Blockadia" For Tue Nov 3 1. Weintraub: Beehive Design Collective, Critical Art Ensemble, Rev. Billy Talen 2. Tsing, "Blasted Landscapes" For Thur Nov 5 1. Klein, "Blockadia" 2. Ingram, "Melodrama, Realism, and Environmental Crisis"	
Nov 10, 12, 17 Theme #7: SYSTEM: MANAGEMENT Documentation, Conservation, Whole Systems, Globality, Spaceship Earth	For Tue Nov 10 1. Garrard, Ecocriticism, ch. 8 2. Seed & Macy, "Gaia meditations" 3. Cosgrove, "Contested global visions"; Cosgrove, "Images & Imagination," pp. 1873-9. For Thur Nov 12 & 17 1. Wrightson, "An introduction to acoustic ecology" 2. Toop, "The Boy with the Tomato Head" 3. Boes, "Beyond Whole Earth"	Nov 10 : Quiz #2
Nov 19 Eco-Arts Gala Exhibition		Projects to be presented
Nov 24-26 Thanksgiving Week Holiday	(no class)	(no class)
Dec 1, 3, 8 Conclusions & Reflections		Dec 1: Exhibition Review due Dec 3: Critical Self- Reflection due. Take- Home Exam handed out
Dec 10 Final Due Date	(no class)	Take-Home Exam (& remaining work) due

APPENDIX A: THE SEVEN THEMATIC CLUSTERS

Many powerful themes can be found in environmental literature and the eco-arts, today and in the past. Organizing them into a small number of thematic clusters can help us to make sense of that multiplicity, but also to identify relations between them: for instance, ways that certain themes (such as "natural harmony" or "eco-apocalypse") can become overbearing if not balanced by others.

Each of these themes has been the focus of intense critical debate. For instance, is the assumption that women are closer to nature than men—as proposed in many forms of eco-maternalist thought (focused on the Mother Nature trope; see theme #1)—a progressive and useful notion, or is it regressive, bound to fail in a world where women and men can hardly revert to "traditional" roles? Can apocalyptic ideas about the ecological future (theme #5) empower people to change things, or do they just leave us feeling helpless? Is it helpful to blame others as being responsible for the ecological crisis, as many eco-protest movements do (theme #6), or does that simply divide humanity into conflicting groups? More generally, what are the more fruitful ways today of engaging with these powerful metaphors: mother Earth, sublime nature, pollution as sin, and so on?

We will deal with these seven thematic clusters in sequence over the semester, but you should familiarize yourself with them in advance in order to inform our discussions in class and to help you decide on your class presentation, project, and analysis topics.

Note: **Bold** type among names or titles indicates a strong recommendation.

1. GROUND: MOTHER

(a) Bedrock, Mother Earth, Gaia:

The Mother Earth trope is so prevalent as to be unquestioned, yet it has a history that relates concepts of nature to social constructs of gender, sexuality, activity/passivity, divinity, exploration, conquest, madness, and utopia. Depictions of landscape as maternal extend back to deep antiquity, but find a particular resonance in periods when women's voices are being reclaimed against an industrial order perceived to be patriarchal and masculinist. References to maternal earth deities are found around the world, from the Russian $Mat'Syra\ Zemlya$ (literally, "moist mother earth") to the Aymara and Quechua Pachamama ("World Mother") to ecopolitical invocations of Mother Earth as in the 2010 Cochabamba Declaration on the Rights of Mother Nature. Theories of ancient "Goddess civilization" were revived in the 1970s and 1980s by Gimbutas, Eisler, Starhawk, and others; and the Gaia hypothesis, with its mix of scientific theory, ancient mythology, and popular ecological spirituality, has provided further fuel for depicting (and contesting) nature as female.

(b) Fertility, Verdancy, Flourishing, Tree of Life:

At what point does a flower, tree, vine, or seashell become an object of aesthetic appreciation or artistic craft? Vegetative forms *in*form age-old traditions of domestic decoration, clothing design, and embroidery; later they appear intermingled with human figures in religious sculpture and iconography, from gargoyles and "green men" to the Hermetic and Kabbalistic "trees of life," to Baroque and Art Nouveau forms.

(c) Women's Art, Women's Work, Weaving, Healing:

With work by Virginia Woolf, Georgia O'Keefe, and others as precursors, the women's art movement of the past half-century—including the body art of Carolee Schneemann, Ana Mendieta, Mary Beth Edelson, and Betsy Damon, the "Sanitation Art Manifesto" of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party," and the varied feminist literary interventions of Margaret Atwood, Susan Griffin, Ursula LeGuin, Marge Piercy, Octavia Butler, and Donna Haraway—reveals a diverse set of options for rethinking gender stereotypes while revaluing qualities traditionally associated with women and nature.

READING:

Weintraub: Carolee Schneemann, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Gelitin, Red Earth, Lily Yeh

Others: Lorraine Anderson, ed., Sisters of the Earth: Women's Prose and Poetry About Nature; Margaret Atwood, Surfacing, The Handmaid's Tale; Sam Gill, Mother Earth: An American Story; Susan Griffin, Woman and Nature; Annette Kolodny, The Land Before Her; Ursula LeGuin, Always Coming Home; Carolyn Merchant, The Death of Nature

VIEWING: Full Circle (Dir. Donna Read, 1989) **LISTENING**: Bjork, *Biophilia*; Pauline Oliveros

2. FORCE: ANIMACY

(a) Life Force, Instinct, Drive, Elementality, Process:

Artistic depictions of animals extend back to the Paleolithic. Interpretations of ancient cave art typically focus on the importance of the hunt in hunter-gatherer lifeways, but are peppered with speculation on "shamanic" modes of consciousness and perceptions of life force, energy, mana, Wakan, Orenda, and the like. Elemental markings are also a feature of art influenced by theories of more primitive modes of thought, unconscious instinctuality (as in the Surrealism of Max Ernst, Joao Miro, Salvador Dali, and others), and the desire to return to the pure expression of fundamentals, as in the works of Symbolists, the writings of H. P. Lovecraft, and the land and earth art of Robert Smithson ("Spiral Jetty"), Nancy Holt, Richard Long, Andy Goldsworthy, and Chris Drury. In less restrained forms, such markings become the artistic free-for-all of abstract expressionists like Jackson Pollock, ecstatic expression within jazz, rock, and musical free improvisation (late John Coltrane, the AACM, Magma, Circle X), the films of Stan Brakhage and Kenneth Anger, the Burning Man Festival, and the energy philosophy of Georges Bataille. In more circumscribed forms, they become references to natural process—as in minimalist music and process-based art.

(b) Animality, Predation, Metamorphosis, Darwinism:

Hybrid relations between humans and animals traceable to age-old folk tales, mythic narratives (as that of the Australian Dreamtime), classical myths and divine pantheons, medieval bestiaries, and other narratives of metamorphosis infuse baroque art forms, Art Nouveau, and literary and cinematic forms of "magic realism" in South America, Africa, Australia, and Eastern Europe. In the scientific era, Darwinian struggle-for-life narratives have shaped environmental discourse profoundly, infusing racist and imperial narratives and biological determinisms, but also the many genres of scientific nature writing and eco-poetry, from H. D. Thoreau to Robinson Jeffers. The meaning of the animal, as John Berger and others have argued, changes over time in direct relation to the forms of encounter and relationship with animals extant within a human social order. Even as philosophers like Peter Singer, Tom Regan, and Carol Adams argue for blurring the ethical line between humans and animals, genetic engineering threatens to dissolve boundaries in more radical ways.

READING:

Weintraub, *To Life!*: Joseph Beuys, Andy Goldsworthy, Tomas Saraceno, Simon Starling Others:

John Berger, "Why Look at Animals?"; Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish"; Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (1871); **Annie Dillard**, "Living Like Weasels"; Susan Griffin, "The Hunt"; Stephen Harrigan, "Swamp Thing"; Hay Hosler, *Clan Apis* (2013); **D. H. Lawrence**, "Snake," "Fish"; **Gretchen Legler**, "Wolf"; Les Murray, "Presence," "Migratory," "Shoal"; Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" (1974); Richard K. Nelson, "The Gifts"; Nivakle, "The Jaguar and the Hunt"; Catherine Puckett, "Beauty and the Beast"; **David Rothenberg**, "Making music with birds and whales"; Val Plumwood, "Being prey"; Thomas Seeley, "Swarm as Cognitive Entity" (2010); Gary Snyder, "Migration of Birds, April 1956"; Desmond Stewart, "The Limits of Trooghaft"; **Walt Whitman**, "Song of Myself"; Charles Wright, "A blessing"; Richard White, "Salmon" (1995)

VIEWING:

Bambi (Disney Studios); Princess Mononoke (H. Miyazaki); Garden of Earthly Delights (S. Brakhage); Grizzly Man (W. Herzog); Zoo (R. Devor); The Red Black and Green Revolutionary EcoMusic Tour (video)

LISTENING:

Devendra Banhart, "Little Yellow Spider"; Ornette Coleman, *Free Jazz* (1961); Paul Winter, "Wolf Eyes," *Whales Alive* (1993); David Rothenberg, *Sudden Music* (2002); Art Ensemble of Chicago; Pauline Oliveros

3. HARMONY: PASTORAL

(a) Arcadia, Idyll, Beauty, Utopia, Balance of Nature:

From the classical *Idylls* of Theocritus and the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* of Virgil to the romantic pastorals of Wordsworth, Clare, and Thoreau, to the long tradition of idyllic, arcadian, and pastoral references in music and the visual arts (such as Beethoven's and Brahms's "pastoral symphonies"), pastoral tropes have been central to civilized—especially urban—humanity's understandings of nature and our relationship to it. In their connections to ideas of nature, these tropes suggest that beauty itself is natural (inherent and biological) and that the only culture appropriate to it is one that dwells in harmony with it. Critical observers have asked whether this natural harmony might not be a cultural invention; this deconstructive urge has been pushed to the fullest in poststructuralist cultural critique. More complex forms of "neopastoral," "post-pastoral," and "critical pastoral" can be found in the speculative, futuristic, and queer literary (or cinematic) pastoral works of Ray Bradbury (*The Martian Chronicles*), Ernest Callenbach (*Ecotopia*), Kim Stanley Robinson (the *Mars* trilogy), and Ang Lee (*Brokeback Mountain*).

(b) Rootedness, Locality, Rurality, Nation, Buen Vivir:

Pastoralism has come variously adumbrated with nationalism, rural escapism, and political resistance, in the romantic nationalism of Sibelius, Chopin, Smetana, Elgar, and Vaughan Williams; the national gardening traditions of England, France, and Japan; communalist, back-to-the-land, and Garden Cities movements in architecture and design; and the live-lightly ethics of Wendell Berry, with their resonance in latter-day "slow food" and "locavore" movements. Folk, country, "roots," and "traditional" musics of many kinds have long served as battlegrounds for rival visions of "small town" or "down home" rurality: from the proletarian anthems of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger to the patriotic songs of Merle Haggard, Charlie Daniels, and Toby Keith; and from the sunny (if psychedelic) rurality of John Denver, the Byrds, the Incredible String Band, and the Grateful Dead, to the darker, more gothic byways of American and British folk, such as the "Basement Tapes" of Bob Dylan and The Band; the songs of Shirley Collins, Fairport Convention, and films like *The Wicker Man*; and later hybrids of "acid folk," "psych folk," "dark folk," and "freak folk." Similar struggles have obtained in other national contexts, where the "good life" (or *Buen Vivir*, in Spanish) might be a progressive socio-ecological movement among marginalized classes or, contrarily, a cultural conservatism that would close borders to foreigners and reclaim the "soil" for the land's "true" natives.

(c) Natural Health, Religion of Nature, Healthy Environments, Going Native, the Ecological Indian:

Ideas of nature's healing properties continue to inform American and European traditions of outdoor sport, scouting, "physical religion," perceptions of indigenous practices, and environmental thought from Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir to their latter-day descendants. Quests for harmony have flirted with exotic and escapist fantasies of Otherness—sought in indigenous cultures (as in the widespread phenomenon of "playing Indian," or Native cultural appropriation) as well as cultures of the "orientalized" East—but have also been cultivated by specific non-western cultures (as in the Japanese Zen arts of gardening, calligraphy, and archery) and in recent movements of restorative landscape art, New Age music, the soundscape education of R. Murray Schafer, and the "no child left inside" ethic of outdoor educators. The trope of "healing," "restoring," or "mending the earth" is also expressed in artistic efforts connected to themes of maternity/fertility, as in the work of women artists like Mary Beth Edelson; pastoral harmony, as in the restoration and reclamation art of Patricia Johansen, Jackie Brookner, and others; and apocalypse, as in the work of Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison.

READING:

Weintraub: Goldsworthy.

Others:

Ernest Callenbach, Ecotopia; Phil Deloria, Playing Indian; Joan Didion, "On going home"; Gretel Ehrlich, "The Solace of Open Spaces"; Stephen Halpern, Sound Health: The Music and Sounds that Make Us Whole; Linda Hogan, "What holds the water, what holds the light"; bell hooks, "Touching the earth"; Ursula LeGuin, Always Coming Home; N. Scott Momaday, "Sacred and ancestral ground"; Joyce Carol Oates, "Against nature"; Mary Oliver, "The Honey Tree"; Paul Roquet, "Ambient Landscapes from Brian Eno to Tetsu Inoue"; Scott Russell Sanders, "On settling down"; Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For"; William Wordsworth, "Michael," "Poems on the Naming of Places," "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"; R. Murray Schafer, The Tuning of the World (1975); David Toop, "The Boy with the Tomato Head"

VIEWING

An Inconvenient Truth (D. Guggenheim, 2005); Daughters of the Dust (J. Dash, 1991); Days of Heaven (T. Malick, 1978)

LISTENING:

Pete Seeger, (anything); Woody Guthrie, (anything); Incredible String Band, *The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter* (1968); Grateful Dead, "Dark Star"; Steve Roach, *Structures from Silence* (1984); Stephen Halpern, *Spectrum Suite* (1975); Brian Eno and Harold Budd, *Ambient 2: The Plateaux of Mirror* (1980)

4. SUBLIMITY: WILD

(b) Wilderness as Threat, as Domain, and as Spectacle: From being seen as a place of chaos and exile (as far back in history as the *Gilgamesh Epic*), the forested wilderness came to be seen, through Romantic eyes, as a place of sublimity, sacredness, and awe—a theme taken up eagerly by American landscape artists, writers, and photographers from Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School to John Muir and Ansel Adams. The "magisterial gaze" of the late nineteenth century offers up wilderness as a landscape of discovery, identity formation, and national accomplishment. Revisionist historians like William Cronon have questioned the virtues of the wilderness trope or found it to be more ambivalent and multifaceted, appearing in diverse guises from folktale "otherworlds" and heroic mountaineering ventures to eco-horror films. It nevertheless shapes debates about "saving nature" or finding redemption in nature that inform movements in the arts such as the ritualistic "holy theater" of Jerzy Grotowski and Gardzienice, and the "ironic sublime" of artist Anselm Kiefer and filmmaker Werner Herzog. Defenders of wilderness continue to express fears that wilderness has or

will be tamed, debased, "emasculated," or transformed into the merely picturesque and thus commodified (as in the scenic vistas built into the National Park highway driving experience).

- (a) Epiphany, Vision, Revelation, Enchantment: The moment of seeing—seeing something new, seeing anew, seeing into the heart of things beyond appearances or mundane concerns, witnessing reality at its most pure and naked—weaves its way through art and literature concerned with land, new vistas, and new understandings of nature, humanity, and the cosmos. It underlies the impulse to break out of the confines of tamed and commodified life. Writers and poets from Henry Thoreau ("Ktaadn") to Robinson Jeffers, Jack Kerouac, Annie Dillard, and Charles Wright have attempted to recreate such visionary moments; photographers such as Ansel Adams and filmmakers like Stan Brakhage have arguably captured them; and composers and improvisational performers, from John Cage and Merce Cunningham to Keith Jarrett and Evan Parker, have variously tried to produce such moments through live performances open to the workings of chance and spontaneity.
- (c) Deep Time and Space, Uncanny, Oceanic, Return to Zero: In its more temporally or spatially transcendent guises, the sublime is the object of various artistic "returns to Zero," such as those of Kasimir Malevich, Mark Rothko, and Zeninspired artists; the Land Art of Robert Smithson, and the light and sky based art of James Turrell and Charles Ross; the structural filmmaking of Michael Snow, and the sensorial cinematic experiments of Harvard's Sensory Ethnography Lab (notably Leviathan); the minimalist music of LaMonte Young and William Basinski; and the "dark ecologies" of Paul Kingsnorth, Tim Morton, and others. In "warmer," more immersive (and arguably pastoral) forms, the sublime finds audiences through popular fascination with cetaceans, and in musical genres such as psychedelic, cosmic space rock, the "oceanic" progressive rock of Yes, and the ambient electronica tradition stretching from Brian Eno and Klaus Schulze to the chill-out rooms of the rave subculture (see Theme #3).

READING:

Weintraub: Frans Krajcberg, Alan Sonfist

Others: Edward Abbey, "The Great American Desert"; John Cage, Silence; Denis Cosgrove, "Images and Imagination in 20th-Century Environmentalism: From the Sierras to the Poles"; William Cronon, "The Trouble With Wilderness"; Finis Dunaway, "Reframing the Last Frontier: Subhankar Banerjee and the Visual Politics of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge"; Steven Feld, "From Schizophonia to Schismogenesis: The Discourses and Practices of World Music and World Beat"; Barbara Kingsolver, "New Year's Day"; Lucy Lippard, "Too Much: The Grand Canyon(s)"; Aldo Leopold, "Thinking Like a Mountain"; Thomas Merton, "Rain and the Rhinoceros"; Christine Oravec, "To Stand Outside Oneself: The Sublime in the Discourse of Natural Scenery"

VIEWING:

Koyaanisqatsi (G. Reggio, 1983), Baraka (R. Fricke, 1993), Lessons of Darkness (W. Herzog, 1995), Manufactured Landscapes (J. Baichwal, 2006), Cave of Forgotten Dreams (W. Herzog, 2010)

LISTENING:

Klaus Schulze, "Timewind"; Yes, "Tales from Topographic Oceans," "Close to the Edge"; LaMonte Young, "The Well Tuned Piano"; John Luther Adams, "Become Ocean"; Sunn O))), "Monoliths and Dimensions"; anything by Arvo Part

5. POLLUTION: COLLAPSE

- (a) Corruption, Sin, Degeneracy, Monstrosity, Disorder: Awareness of pollution—perhaps the primary impetus for environmental consciousness—shares qualities with age-old calls for moral regeneration from sinfulness and iniquity. Tropes of dirt, waste, toxicity, and abjection are the reverse side of those of purity, stability, harmony, and the "rooted" integrity of "blood and soil" (see Theme #3). Fear of pollution and impurity also marks the modern concern for Promethean overshoot, evident in novels like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and resonant in more recent critiques of genetic modification and nuclear mutation. In contrast to these, artists like Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Vic Nunez, and recycled or second-hand artists and filmmakers (like Agnes Varda in *The Gleaners and I*) have sought to dignify the work of trash collection and clean-up so as to make visible their increasing urgency.
- (b) Entropy, Decline, Ruins, Gothic, Apocalypse: Apocalyptic themes have arisen for millennia, taking religious guises among subaltern groups and secular ones among political revolutionaries. Dystopian tropes have shaped environmental discourse since Malthus's projections of overpopulation, a theme taken up by neo-Malthusians like Paul Ehrlich and Garrett Hardin and by Transition Town activists and "peak oil" survivalists, as well as in the popular environmental writings of Fairfield Osborn, Rachel Carson, the Club of Rome, and others. Imagery of urban decay and environmental pollution characterize representations of industrialism in genres from social realist novels to science fiction, vampire and zombie films, industrial music, and global warming themed media art (such as Marina Zurkow's videos of a flooded world). Imagery of death and extinction mixes with tropes of vitality in hybrid forms including Gothic novels and music, the "inhumanist" poetry of Robinson Jeffers, and the "apocalyptic folk" of underground musicians like Current 93. Postapocalyptic narratives are prominently expressed in science-fiction depictions of ecological collapse (as in John Brunner's *The Sheep Look Up*), and theorized in terms of their potential for recalibrating societal responses to current trends.

READING:

Weintraub: Ant Farm, HeHe, *Maya Lin, Tavares Strachan, *Marina Zurkow Others:

Sherman Alexie, "The Powwow at the End of the World," "Sonnet, Without Salmon"; Margaret Atwood, "Time Capsule Found on the Dead Planet", *Oryx and Crake*; Mike Davis, "The Dialectic of Ordinary Disaster"; Lance Duerfahrd, "A Scale that Exceeds Us: The BP Gulf Spill Footage and Photographs of Edward Burtynsky"; Ray Gonzalez, "Hazardous Cargo"; Kim Hammond, "Monsters of Modernity: Frankenstein and Modern Environmentalism"; John Opie and Norbert Elliot, "Tracking the Elusive Jeremiad: The Rhetorical Character of American Environmental Discourse"; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Percy B. Shelley, "Ozymandias"; Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead*; Patricia Smith, *Blood Dazzler* (2008); Robert Smithson, "The Monuments of Passaic"; Joel Weisman, *The World Without Us*

VIEWING:

Soylent Green, Silent Running, apocalyptic video mash-ups; WALL-E; Lessons of Darkness (W. Herzog, 1991); Chris Jordan photo series "Midway: Message from the Gyre" (2009-present), Trouble the Water (dir. Tia Lessin, Carl Deal, 2008), Into Eternity: A Film for the Future (dir. Michael Madsen, 2010), Darwin's Nightmare, Beasts of the Southern Wild, Slurb (dir. Marina Zurkow); Pumzi (2010 Kenyan short film); Robert & Shana ParkeHarrison, The Architect's Brother; The Waste Land (dir. L. Walker, 2010); The Gleaners and I (dir. A. Varda, 1999)

LISTENING:

Joni Mitchell, "Big Yellow Taxi" (1970); Marvin Gaye, "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)" and title song, *What's Going On?* (1971); Gorillaz, *Plastic Beach* (2010); Steel Pulse, "Global Warming" (2010); Current 93, "All the Stars Are Dead Now," *Thunder, Perfect Mind* (1992), Black Ships Ate the Sky (2006).

6. PROTEST: RESURGENCE

- (a) Witnessing, Estrangement, Irony, Jeremiad, Confrontation: Associated initially with the apocalyptic, protest movements from the Diggers and Ranters of early modern England to today's eco-activists have cultivated modes of speaking and writing that mix jeremiadic conventions of "truth telling" with direct, stubborn, and sometimes silent physical presence to publicly witness and shame environmental wrongdoers. Since the 1960s, activists led by Greenpeace have added media tools, from cameras to smart phones, while tactical media campaigners and "culture jammers" like the Critical Art Ensemble, the Yes Men, and Rev. Billy Talen's Church of Stop Shopping question the culture of consumerism as culpable for environmental deterioration and social injustice. Tropes of justice link with narratives of diversity and indigenous resistance in today's environmental and climate justice movements (like Canada's Idle No More), and in animal rights/liberation discourses.
- (b) Heroism, Resistance, Renewal, Reclamation: Perhaps the most popular form of cinematic eco-narrative is one that pits environmentalist heroes against maleficent villains, which may include corporations, governments, or other wrongdoers—a rhetoric of "us and them" found in countless fictional as well as documentary dramatizations of environmental activism, from *The Lorax* to *Silkwood*, *The China Syndrome*, and *The Cove*. The symbology of environmental activism covers a broad range, from the "monkeywrenching" and shadowy "ecotage" of Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front to the quieter subversion of the "guerilla gardening" movement to the festival-like marches and gatherings marking Earth Day in its several incarnations since 1970. Rather than outright revolution, however, environmentalism more commonly opts for some sort of transformation: a reclamation of what had been sacrificed, a restoration through "re-rooting" in the land, and a regeneration from the ground up. In its most individualized form, this becomes the lone eco-hero, as in *No Impact Man*; in its more mythical form, it becomes the hero-as-everyman, as in the art of Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison; and in its collective form, it is the Earth renewing itself through a groundswell of ecologically awakened humanity.

READING:

Weintraub: Joseph Beuys, Bonnie Ora Sherk, **Beehive Design Collective**, **Critical Art Ensemble**, Mel Chin, Marjetica Potrc, Michael Mandiberg, SUPERFLEX, **Reverend Billy Talen**

Others:

Andrew Boyd, ed., Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution; Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, "Blasted Landscapes (and the Gentle Arts of Mushroom Picking)"; Gabriella Giannachi, "Exposing Globalisation: Biopolitics in the Work of Critical Art Ensemble"; Naomi Klein, "Blockadia"; Yates McKee, "Art After Occupy: Climate Justice, BDS, and Beyond"; "The People's Agreement of Cochabamba" (2010); Politika, "Art and Activism in the Age of the Anthropocene"; Peter Lamborn Wilson, "Avant Gardening"

VIFWING

Nuage vert (dir. Evans and Hansen); Earthlings (dr. S. Monon, 2005); Streetlight Manifesto, "Would You Be Impressed?" (2007)

LISTENING:

Captain Beefheart, "Frownland"; Mos Def, "New World Water" (1999); Michael Franti; Grind for the Green (G4G)

7. SYSTEM: MANAGEMENT

(a) Conservation, Preservation, Documentation, Exhibition, Database, Mapping: Images of the Earth from space shape the iconography of popular environmentalism. Their predecessors can be traced to imperial traditions of documentation, encyclopedism, colonial rule, and the "exhibitionary complex," alongside related fields of holistic ecology, scientific systems theories, and organismic and cybernetic notions of biospheric self-organization. Following the urge to measure, document, and assess, technocratic environmentalists like Buckminster Fuller and the Worldwatch Institute have striven to eliminate inefficiencies so as to "redesign" human relations with nature—a desire that underpins recent movements toward sustainability in the arts, such as carbon accounting. Postmodern artists like Mark Dion playfully continue such traditions to subvert their premises (that we can know everything), while furthering the archaeological impulse to dig, discover, and order that which is found in the "archaeology" of the contemporary world. The urge to document is also related to the urge to "bear witness" (see theme #6) and render visible that which would otherwise be silent or unexposed. There are, in this sense, two sides to documentation: a top-down "panoptic" (allseeing) mode which controls the (literal and figural) movement of subaltern or nomadic subjects, and a bottom-up "reverse panopticism" that "speaks back to power" through hand-held cameras, smart phones, and social media networks. The desire to document, preserve, and protect disappearing species, landscapes, cultures, and experiences has informed the conservation movement for centuries, from imperial (ancient China, colonial Europe) to modern times. It continues to inform the efforts of the Nature Conservancy, the World World Fund for Nature, Cultural Survival, UNESCO (with its World Heritage sites and biosphere reserves), and many movements in the arts and humanities, including R. Murray Schafer's World Soundscape Project; the work of ethnomusicologists and world music and soundscape recordists; the database visualizations of artists like Maya Lin ("What is Missing?") and Helen and Newton Mayer Harrison; and, more obliquely (and often ironically), the "appropriation art" of found-footage filmmakers and sonic remixers (such as Bruce Connor, Negativland, and DJ Spooky).

(b) Cosmic Order, Whole Earth, Globality, Whole Systems, Spaceship Earth: The popular cachet of globality, however, has less to do with either efficiency or politics and more with spectacle: images of the Whole Earth, simulated recreations of biospheres (as in Biosphere 2 and The Eden Project), and projections of rainforest loss and climate calamity provide for an "environmental theater" that conjures the proximity of humans with each other and with potential catastrophe. In this sense, the predecessors of the global database are visual depictions of universality, from the medieval Great Chain of Being to the early modern classification systems of Linnaeus and their alter-cultural counterparts. Opposed to the pastoral arcadia of "future primitive" ecotopians (see theme 3) are the more technotopian forms of Spaceship Earth discourse: these include the restraint-focused neo-Malthusianism of Kenneth Boulding, Garrett Hardin, and others (popular in the 1970s), and the "ecomodernism" of the Breakthrough Institute, whose New Jerusalem would harmonize science with nature through technologies of bio-engineering, biomimicry, an information-rich global systems ecology, and nested forms of liberal governance spanning from bioregional to global scales.

READING:

Weintraub: Hans Haacke, Helen & Newton Harrison, Natalie Jeremijenko, Maya Lin

Others: Tobias Boes, "Beyond Whole Earth: Planetary Mediation and the Anthropocene"; Denis Cosgrove, "Contested Global Visions: *One-World, Whole-Earth,* and the Apollo Space Photographs"; Thomas Lekan, "Fractal Eaarth: Visualizing the Global Environment in the Anthropocene"; R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (1975); John Seed and Joanna Macy, "Gaia meditations"; Kendall Wrightson, "An introduction to acoustic ecology"

VIEWING

Maya Lin, "What is Missing?", Center for Land Use Interpretation (various videos)

LISTENING:

Mickey Hart, *Planet Drum* (1991); Jon Hassell and Brian Eno, *Possible Musics: Fourth World, Vol.* 1 (1980); David Dunn; Annea Lockwood, *A Sound Map of the Hudson River*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 1. The UVM Media Tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5VoByux4mQ&feature=youtu.be
- 2. The UVM Multimedia Lab: http://library.uvm.edu/media/cmd/cmdinfo.php