MCC-UE 9027.SY1
Media and the Environment
Spring 2019

Instructor Information

- Dr. Jahnnabi Das
- Consultation by appointment
- jahnnabi.das@nyu.edu (Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails)

Course Information

- Pre-Requisite: None
- Mondays: 9:00am – 12:00pm

This course will investigate the dominant critical perspectives that have contributed to the development of Environmental Communication as a field of study. This course explores the premise that the way we communicate powerfully impacts our perceptions of the "natural" world, and that these perceptions shape the way we define our relationships to and within nature, as well as how we define and solve environmental problems. The goal of this course is to access various conceptual frameworks for addressing questions about the relationship between the environment, culture and communication. Students will explore topics such as consumerism, representations of the environment in popular culture and environmental activism. This is a praxis-based course, meaning that a major, hands-on communication project will be based on critical theory.

The course will address the following questions: How are environmental problems discussed and mediated within the public realm? How do these rhetorical and visual discourses structure our relationship to environmental crises? How can students create a communication strategy that frames environmental problems in a specific way in order to align the problem with appropriate solutions?
Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials
It is a course expectation that you have done the required reading and have prepared sufficiently to discuss them in class.

There is no fixed textbook for this Course, but a selection of readings texts for each week. These reading texts and additional reading materials will be uploaded on NYU classes.

Course Overview and Goals

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- Identify the role of discourse, rhetoric and representation in shaping the way we think about the natural world
- Describe how communication plays a significant role in the framing and discussion of environmental problems and solutions.
- Explain the way representations of nature and the environment are politically, socially, and economically structured.
- Analyse and engage in debates about local, national and global environmental disputes.
- Critically examine the way recent environmental concerns, such as global warming/climate change are represented to the public.
- Interpret how conflicting discourses about the environment depend upon different values and views of nature and the human place in nature.
- Critique contemporary debates about environmentalism by framing them from the perspective of cultural analysis.
- Synthesise critical theory in order to create an environmental communication strategy for an environmental cause.

Course Requirements

Class Participation
This will be an ongoing task throughout the semester. This is a seminar-based course, so your thoughtful participation is an important component of this assessment. You will be given a grade for participation based upon attention during class, responsiveness and thoughts about comments made by other students, and a demonstration that you have read the material. Please check the NYU classes for further instructions and update.
In Class Summation & Leading Discussion

In Week 1, students will be broken up into groups of two to lead class discussions from Weeks 2-6. Students will post an individual 200-word summation of the appointed required reading on NYU Classes (Forums) by 3pm the day before class and each bring to class one current example to illustrate the main point. In class, each group will make a class presentation to get our conversation started. The presentation should draw on required readings, include a summation of the readings, and at share with the class the current example they have chosen to illustrate the main point. The summation should also include a couple of key questions and some critical reflections on the readings including the most interesting part or a confusing or difficult aspect of the readings. The instructor will look for students’ critical capacity to examine the ways in which current environmental concerns are represented to the public.

Midterm Exam

You will complete a formal exam assessment which will require you to write short answers to the questions on crucial concepts canvassed in the course so far and seminar discussion.

Project Proposal – 500 words

The research proposal will be about the environmental communication strategy of a selected social agent in social media. For this task, you should select either a climate change propagator or denialist (individual or organisation) and explore how this individual/organisation uses one particular social medium for advancing the purpose. This proposal must be done in consultation with your instructor and should include a very brief introduction, the project question, rational and a brief description of the research methodology (how to collect and analyse data to address the research question). The main focus of the task is on the research question and methodology. Further information will be provided in the class.

Final Project – 2500 words

The final project is an environmental communication research project completed according to the project proposal. The final project should include an introduction, a section dedicated to reviewing relevant literature, the research question, an appropriate method of data collection, findings, an analysis as well as implications of the findings. It should include scholarly references at the end. Further information will be provided in the seminar workshop.
Grading of Assignments
The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Weeks 1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Summation &amp; Leading Discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>From Week 2 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Mon April 1 (Week 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9:00am, Mon 15 Apr (Week 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>9:00am, Mon 13 May (Week 15)</td>
</tr>
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For this course, your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, is converted to a letter grade without rounding.

Extra credit: Site policy does not allow grading of work outside of the assignments included in the syllabus. The final grade will only be calculated from the assessment components listed here and no other work, whether additional or substituted, is permitted.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Letter Grades
Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Explanation of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course’s topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Work is unfinished or unsubmitted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade Conversions

For this course your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, correspond to the following letter grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 to 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 to &lt; 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 to &lt; 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 to &lt; 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 to &lt; 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 to &lt; 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 to &lt; 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 to &lt; 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 to &lt; 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65 to &lt; 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 to &lt; 65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Schedule

Week 1: 4-Feb-19

Introducing Environmental Communication

Required Reading:

Week 2: 11-Feb-19
Origins of Environmentalism & Environmental Communication

Required readings:


Recommended readings


Week 3: 18-Feb-19
Social Constructions of Environment

Required readings:


Recommended readings


Week 4: 25-Feb-19
Environmental Advocacy: Organising for Change

Required readings:


**Recommended readings**


**Week 5: 4-Mar-19**

**The Environment in Crisis: Climate Change & apocalypse in media**

**Required readings:**

• Squarzoni, P. 2014, Climate Changed, (selection tbc)


**Recommended readings**


**Week 6: 11-Mar-19**

**Global Warming & Cultural Renderings: A Case of Climate Change**

**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Week 7: 18 – 22 Mar**

**SEMESTER BREAK – No Class**
Week 8: 25-Mar-19  
Climate Impacts: Disasters, Displacements & solutions  
Required readings:  
Recommended Readings  
Discussion of final project proposal  

Week 9: 1-Apr-19  
Environmental Discourse  
Required readings:  
Recommended Readings  
Recommended Viewing:  
- The Monsanto Papers, The Four Corners  
- Cowspiracy
Week 10: 8-Apr-19
Environmental Racism

Required reading:


Recommended watching & Listening
- Hage G’s interview on his book. Please check NYU class for link.
- ‘Stop Adani Destroying our Land and Culture’

Week 10: 12-Apr-19* (*FRIDAY)
Green Consumerism & Environmental Commodification

Required reading:


Recommended Viewing
- BBC Documentary: Mining the Moon for Future.

Week 11: 15-Apr-19
Alternative Media and EcoActivism

Required readings:


Week 12: 22-Apr-19 (NO CLASS – EASTER MONDAY)
Make up class is Friday 12 April (Week 10)
Week 13: 29-Apr-19
Final Projects – Work in Class

Week 14: 6-May-19
Final Projects – Work in Class

Week 15: 13-May-19
Final Projects – Work in Class

Course Policies

Submission of Work
Assignments (excluding in-class presentations and exams) must be submitted electronically via NYU Classes. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm that the work has been successfully uploaded. In the unlikely event that a submission to Classes fails, students must immediately submit the work to the Academic Programs Coordinator via email before the original submission deadline accompanied by an explanation of the issue. All in-class presentations and exams must be completed during the scheduled class time. An assessment component is considered completed when the student has met all the terms for that assessment component as outlined by the instructor.

An assessment component completed after the deadline without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) for each day the work is late. Work completed beyond five weekdays after the due date without an agreed extension receives a mark of zero, and the student is not entitled to feedback for that piece of work. Because failure to submit or fulfil any required assessment component will result in failure of the course, it is crucial for students to complete every assignment even when it will receive a mark of zero.

Plagiarism Policy
The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University’s plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges.
**Attendance Policy**

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centres is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. The class roster will be marked at the beginning of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalised by a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to two unexcused absences. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

Faculty cannot excuse an absence. Requests for absences to be excused must be directed to the Academic Programs Coordinator. Students must provide appropriate documentation for their absence. In the case of illness, students must contact the Academic Programs Coordinator on the day of absence. They must provide medical documentation to the Academic Programs Coordinator within three days of the absence in order to be medically excused. The note must be obtained from a medical professional licensed to practise in Australia. The note must include a medical judgement indicating that the student was unfit to attend class/work on the specific day or dates of the absence. Faculty will be informed of excused absences by the Academic Programs Coordinator.

**Religious Observance**

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Academic Programs Coordinator in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

**Classroom Expectations**

This is a seminar subject and requires the active participation of all students. It also requires engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Your behaviour in class should respect your classmates' desire to learn. It is important for you to focus your full attention on the class, for the entire class period. In all classes we expect that students will follow the common classroom expectations outlined here in order to support constructive and effective classroom experience.

- Arrive to class on time.
- Once you are in class, you are expected to stay until class ends. Leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not acceptable behaviour.
- Phones, digital music players, and any other communications or sound devices are not to be used during class. That means no phone calls, no texting, no social media, no email, and no internet browsing at any time during class.
• Laptop computers and tablets are not to be used during class except in rare instances for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor.

• The only material you should be reading in class is material assigned for that class. Reading anything else, such as newspapers or magazines, or doing work from another class, is not acceptable.

• Class may not be recorded in any fashion – audio, video, or otherwise – without permission in writing from the instructor.

• Be mindful of the space you take up in class and make space for others.

• Listen actively and be engaged and present when others are speaking.

• Do not use profanities in class discussion (they may still occasionally appear in course readings and assignments where considered appropriate).

• Criticise ideas, not people (groups and individuals).

• Use ‘I’ statements when giving opinions. Don’t try to speak for any group with which you identify.

You will be advised if there are additions to these common procedures for participation in this class.

Inclusion, Diversity, Belonging and Equity

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton has said, “…not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities.” At NYU Sydney we are committed to creating a learning environment that:

• fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and

• promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavours.

Provisions to Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Centre for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 or mosecsd@nyu.edu as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.
Instructor Bio

Jahnnabi Das is a former journalist, and holds a PhD in environmental journalism from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). She has extensive teaching experience in journalism, media and public communication. Her research interest includes the issue of justice and the media, particularly in the context of climate change. She is concerned with the exercise of power affecting the ideals and pragmatics of justice in the contemporary media practices. Jahnnabi also worked as a research manager with environmental activists. She is currently writing a book titled ‘Reporting Climate Change in the Global North and South: Journalism in Australia and Bangladesh’ for Routledge.
Appendix 1

Supplemental Textbooks & Materials
(Not required to purchase; some available in NYU SYDNEY Library)


- Gomes, M.E. & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind (pp. 316-324). San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.


• Rogers, R. A. Overcoming the Objectification of nature in constitutive theories: Toward a transhuman, materialist theory of communication. *Western Journal of Communication*, 62, 244-272.
• Starosielski, Nicole. "'Movement s that are drawn': A history of environmental animation from The Lorax to Ferngully to Avatar," *International Communication Gazette*, February 2011, Vol. 73_ no. 1-2, 145-63.
• Sturgeon, Noel. "'The Power is Yours Planeteers!' Race, Gender and Sexuality in Children's Environmental Popular Culture," in Stein, New Perspectives on Environmental Justice, pp.262 277.


• Also see the Journal of Environmental Communication: http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/renc