
Environmental Advocacy
COMM/ENST 375
Summer Session I 2014
M-F 1:15-2:45, Mitchell 205

Required Texts:

Robert Cox, *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere*, 3rd edition, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2013). ISBN-10: 1412992095; ISBN-13: 978-1-4129-9209-1.

Supplementary reading/media as listed in the syllabus and posted on Sakai.

Why You Should Take this Course:

Messages about climate change, energy insecurity, poverty and pollution are ubiquitous. Every day, scientists, politicians, and environmental activists mount more evidence about forthcoming ecological crises. How are these messages created and disseminated, and how do the publics to which they are addressed give meaning to them? How do debates over the legitimacy of global warming claims, for instance, alter our ability to respond to such coming events? COMM/ENST 375, Environmental Advocacy, studies the ways in which communicative processes about the environment define issues, solve problems, and shape communities and worldviews.

By taking a conceptual approach to environmental advocacy, we will examine communicative controversies in discourses surrounding the environment, focusing on the ways in which communities negotiate and create meaning about the environment. The course begins with the assumption that environmental controversies—and attempts to resolve them—are represented symbolically, socially, and culturally through communicative practices. Further, discourses surrounding the environment are multiple, often conflictual, and constitutive of diverse communities. In other words, how we communicate about the environment has real-world, physical effects.

Please keep in mind that you will be reading material from multiple viewpoints, engaging in difficult conversations with people you may or may not know, and, hopefully, “trying on” many different ways of seeing the world. This course is structured to introduce you to the scholarly field of environmental communications, not to force you to think one way or another. Indeed, at the end of the semester, it is my hope you will be better able to advocate for your own perspectives.

Course objectives:

- Students will gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the processes and effects of social-symbolic constructions of the environment and of nature.
- Students will understand the historical, social, and political trajectory of environmental movements and campaigns as well as the communicative strategies employed within them.
- Students will be better able to identify, analyze, and respond to the rhetorical and discursive strategies employed in the (environmental) messages that they encounter on a daily basis. Similarly, they will understand the impact of their own communication on the environment.

- Students will have increased (communicative) competency as an (environmental) advocate, citizen, and person.

Class Policies:

Thoughtful, Respectful, Participation

The instructor is committed to making the classroom a space for the constructive exchange of ideas. You should be prepared to listen to and engage with ideas that are different than your own. This does not mean that you must agree with everyone or everything said in discussion. However, you must respectfully engage with those comments by listening to them, critically interrogating them, and, if necessary, constructively critiquing them. Racist, sexist, homophobic, and/or ableist comments will not be tolerated. If you ever feel uncomfortable for any reason, please contact the instructor immediately.

Judicious Technology Use

The instructor personally supports the use of technology as part of the educational process. As such, we will employ multiple forms of digital media and technology throughout the semester. However, digital literacy (increasingly required in organizational settings) requires a judicious use of technology. This means students must learn to judge when technology becomes a distraction rather than a useful tool. For the purposes of the classroom, cellphones should be on silent or turned off. Laptops, tablets, and other note-taking technology must be used only for educational purposes. If your technology use falls outside this category, you will lose participation points and be asked to turn off the device (and/or leave it outside the classroom.)

Incompletes

An incomplete or "I" will only be granted in extremely rare circumstances and only after a student has completed 80% of the coursework.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted via email up to 1 week after the original assignment was due. You will receive 5% deduction in your final grade for each calendar day your work is late. This includes holidays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Attendance Requirements

Attendance is required. You may miss up to 2 class periods for ANY REASON (you are ill, you want to binge-watch Game of Thrones, you have a doctors appointment, etc.) with no penalty. For each absence beyond 2 your final grade will be deducted by one letter grade. You are responsible for obtaining any material you miss as a result of your absence. If you believe you have earned an exception to this rule, please make an appointment with me.

Open Door Policy

The instructor is eager to meet with students to discuss the course and course material. To that end, she will offer both traditional and virtual office hours via Skype. Whenever office hours are held, the instructor will also be available via Skype. If you find that the scheduled office hours do not correspond with your schedule, email the instructor to set up an appointment. Students who take advantage of office hours tend to fair better over the course of the semester than those who do not. Please make use of these office hours whenever you have a question or concern, or if you simply want to chat about the course.

Before emailing the instructor, please consult this syllabus and the Sakai site for answers to basic queries. If you choose to email the instructor, please put 'COMM 375' in the subject line and include your full name in the email. Please allow 24-48 hours for a response. I will typically only respond to emails during normal business hours. You are, of course, welcome to send me an email after business hours or on weekends, but I will typically not respond until the next business day. Thus, if you have questions about an assignment or course policy, please allow for ample response time and/or visit me in my office hours. For privacy reasons,

the instructor cannot and will not disclose protected personal information over email (this includes information about grades.)

UNC Honor Code

All student work submitted to the instructor must meet the standards of UNC's Honor Code. If you have questions about the code, please go to <http://honor.unc.edu> or visit with the instructor. Any honor code violations will be referred to the UNC honor court.

Accommodations for Students with Special Needs

Students who require accommodation in seating, instruction, testing, or any other element of the course should contact the instructor during office hours. The instructor will work with the Department of Accessibility Resources & Service (AR&S) and the student to make appropriate accommodations.

Assignments and Evaluations:

Participation & Attendance:	25%	100 points
Partner Pair & Share Journal:	15%	60 points
Discussion Lead:	20%	80 points
“Lived Experience” Project & Blog:	20%	80 points
Final Project & Presentation:	20%	80 points
Total		400 points

Description of Assignments

Partner Pair & Share Journal:

At the beginning of the course, you will be assigned a reading/thinking partner with whom you will discuss and collaborate throughout the course session. Typically, you will be asked to share your thoughts on the reading or on the course material before we come together to discuss as a class. At times, the instructor will provide you a particular question to answer or task to complete with your partner. Other times, she will ask you to discuss one thing you learned and/or one question you have about the reading. The point of this learning task is to provide a low-pressure environment to engage in discussion and the sharing of ideas.

During the course of the summer session, you and your partner will record your discussions in a “journal.” This journal can be digital or physical, but will be turned in on the last regularly scheduled day of class. Each journal entry should include the date of the Partner Pair & Share, the assigned question/task (if there is one) and a brief summary of your discussions. Include any conclusions that you come to (but don't feel required to do so.)

Participation: This section of COMM/ENST 375 is taught as an interactive course; as such, your participation is required for personal and collective success. We will engage in a variety of learning tasks that will help you sharpen your critical thinking, reasoning, and advocacy skills to address issues surrounding the environment. These learning tasks may include lecture, individual tasks, group work, creative projects, and class discussion. Each of these learning tasks is designed to help you learn, think, and experiment in a low-stakes environment. While each of these learning tasks won't be “graded” individually, the instructor will be paying close attention to your participation—this is how you will earn (some proportion of) those 100 points.

Each day you must be present, prepared, and ready to participate. Summer classes move at a particularly fast pace so students should be prepared for class by **reading and studying** class materials **before** coming to classes. If you keep up with the course readings and have been diligent in course material discussions in class, you should be more than prepared to contribute.

Your participation grade will be a function of your attendance, your engagement with ideas and concepts during in-class discussions, your commitment to in-class activities, and overall engagement in the course. Here are some ways to earn participation points:

- Regularly attend class meetings
- Be on time for class meetings/stay for the entire class period
- Read the assigned readings closely; take notes, come with questions or ideas to discuss
- Read your classmates' posted summaries and discussion questions; come with answers prepared and/or pose additional questions
- Listen carefully to your classmates presentations, comments, etc. and attempt to incorporate them into your comments
- Bring up relevant outside material in class discussions—did you encounter something outside of the classroom that illuminates or helps describe a concept we're covering?
- Visit the instructor's office hours
- Form a study/reading group (you may want to let the instructor know you are doing so)
- Start a Google Doc/Dropbox/etc. to collectively prepare or to discuss difficult course material (you may want to let the instructor know you are doing so)

Your participation grade will be determined at the end of the semester. If you are concerned about this evaluation, please make an appointment with the instructor to discuss. The instructor reserves the right to assign pop quizzes if lack of discussion and/or participation indicates that students aren't closely reading course material.

Discussion Lead: In small groups of 2 or 3, you will select an assigned article to read and analyze for the purposes of leading discussion. Those available for a Discussion Lead are listed in the syllabus with an asterisk (*). Two days before your group is assigned to lead discussion, you should collectively upload a single Word document to Sakai that includes the following:

- The names of all members of the group
- The title and author of the essay
- A two or three sentence summary of the main argument in the essay
- A brief discussion of key concepts/ideas in the essay; define any important terms here.
- A few sentences about how the piece frames communication and advocacy, What does this essay say about "the environment?" In the essay, what is the role of communication? How does it relate to previous class discussions/lectures?
- At least four open-ended discussion questions gleaned from the essay.

The day of your discussion lead, your group will begin discussion with a 5-7 minute presentation on the article and then offer your discussion questions to the class. You should be prepared to be the 'experts' on the essay you have chosen.

Lived Experience Project & Blog

6 times (2x/week for the last three weeks) over the course of the Summer Session you will post a "blog" entry that corresponds to a project of your choosing. By the end of the first week of class (Friday the 16th) you will inform the instructor of your project type and topic. She will approve it or offer suggestions by the beginning of the next week (Monday the 19th.) You may use your own blog or use the Forums function on Sakai to complete this task.¹ If you choose to use your own blog, please email the instructor the URL of your blog (and make sure

¹ Students interested in maintaining anonymity may either construct a blog under a pseudonym or use the Sakai function—only the instructor and students in the class can see the Sakai posts.

it is visible to her.) More information about this assignment will be provided in a separate document.

Final Project & Presentation

This project is related to your Lived Experience Project & Blog. At the end of the semester, you will take what you have learned in your Lived Experience Project and apply it to a final Advocacy project. The format of the project is up to you—you may write a letter to Congress, you might make a multi-media video and post it on YouTube, you may start and circulate a GoFundMe campaign, or you may make a multi-use creative project. The only requirements for this project are as follows:

1. You have an argument, normative idea, or advocacy related to the course material and your Lived Experience Project.
2. You've identified an appropriate, relevant audience to whom you will direct communication/advocate. (Congress? The Sierra Club? UNC Students?)
3. You've identified the most appropriate medium to convince your audience of your argument (some examples above.)
4. You submit a two-page, double-spaced essay describing the above and will submit it to the instructor on the Final Examination day.

On Final Examination Day, each person should be prepared to present and justify their project in a 3-5 minute presentation.

Grading Procedures:

The average grade in this course is a "C." Students who earn this grade will have completed all course assignments on time, done work representative of Carolina standards, and will have positively contributed to in-class discussions. Students who receive grades higher than a "C" will have demonstrated extra effort in completing course assignments and contributing to the classroom climate. "B" level students will have excelled beyond producing solid work by demonstrating significant time spent developing and revising their work and ideas. Students who earn a "B" will demonstrate informed and incisive application of course materials in their graded assignments and in classroom discussion. Students who earn an "A" must consistently excel in every aspect of this course. "A" level work far exceeds the expectations of the course and shows students' understanding of course materials through critical and creative application in graded assignments and in the classroom. Their work is polished, virtually error-free, and is of outstanding quality. Students who earn a grade of "D" or lower have not met expectations in the course and/or have not shown consistent effort toward improvement.

Grade inquiries and/or grade disputes will be discussed only during office hours or by appointment. The instructor will not discuss graded work for 24 hours after handing back the assignment. Students then have one week to dispute a grade with the instructor; after this time period grades will not be changed.

The following grade scale will be used to determine your overall grade in the course.

A	93-100%	C+	76-79%
A-	90-93%	C	73-75%
B+	86-89%	C-	70-72%
B	83-85%	D	60-69%
B-	80-82%	F	0-59%

Tentative Schedule: (schedule may change as course unfolds; instructor will make students aware of any alterations.)

Key: (S)=Sakai, (L)=available through UNC Library, *=available for Discussion Lead

	Topic	Reading	Media	Assignments Due
Tuesday May 13	Course Introduction	(1) Tema Milstein, "Environmental Communication Theories," in <i>Encyclopedia of Communication Theory</i> , eds. Stephen W. Littlejohn & Karen A. Foss, (2009): 344-49 (e-book, L) (2) "Critical Thinking Toward Critical Writing" (email)		
Part I: Communication, Meaning-Making, and the Environment				
Wednesday May 14	Intro to Environmental Communication	Cox, Intro & Ch 1		
Thursday May 15	What is the environment? Contested Meanings	Cox, Ch 2		Discussion Lead Sign-Up
Friday May 16	The (Visual) Rhetoric of the Environment TBA: Genome Sciences Building Tour	(1) *DeLuca & Demo, "Imagining Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism" (S) (2) "Genome Sciences Building"		Lived Experience Project Proposal Due
Monday May 19	TBA: Genome Sciences Building Tour	Dickinson & Maugh, "Placing Visual Rhetoric" (S)		Instructor will return L.E. Proposals

Tuesday May 20	Popular Conceptions of the Environment: A Case Study	(1) *Thomas Rosteck and Thomas S. Frenz, "Myth and Multiple Readings in Environmental Rhetoric: The Case of An Inconvenient Truth," Quarterly Journal of Speech 95 (2009): 1-19	Screening: "An Inconvenient Truth"	
Part II: Environment & The Public/You! Citizen Voices & Public Forums				
Wednesday May 21	Public Participation	(1) Cox, Ch 4 (2) "deliberative public engagement: nine principles" (S)		
Thursday May 22	Is Conflict Inevitable? Managing Conflict Re: Environmental Issues	Cox, Ch 5	Cultivating Common Ground	
Friday May 23	Guest Speaker: Jessica Rich "On Fracking in North Carolina"			
Monday May 26	Holiday			
Part III: Media, Technology, and the Environment				
Tuesday May 27	Messages in News Media & Environmental Journalism	(1) Cox, Ch 6 (2) *Lull, "Hegemony" (S)		#1-2 Posts Due @ midnight
Wednesday May 28	Digital Media & The Environment	(1) Cox, Ch 7, (2) *Sevick Bortree "Pro-Environmental Behaviors Through Social Media: An Analysis of Twitter Communication Strategies" (S)		
Part III: Organizing for Change: Discursive Construction & Environmental Movements/Campaigns				

Thursday May 29	Communication, Advocacy & Movements, an Overview	Cox, Ch 8		
Friday May 30	Communication, Advocacy & Movements Cont'd	Cox, Ch 9		
Monday June 2	Critical Rhetoric: Deep Ecology	(1) *Ness, "The Shallow and the Deep" (S) (2) Naess & Sessions, The Deep Ecology Platform (3) Drengson, " Some Thoughts on the Deep Ecology Movement "		
Tuesday June 3	"Radical" Environmentalism	*Cesar Cuauhtemoc Garcia Hernandez, "Radical Environmentalism: The New Civil Disobedience?" <i>Seattle Journal for Social Justice</i> 289 (2007-08): 294-313 & "Conclusion" 321-323. (L)		
Wednesday June 4	Guest Speaker: Mark Cousino "Art as Advocacy in Kenya & Haiti"			#3-4 Posts Due @ midnight
Thursday June 5	Critical Rhetoric: Ecofeminism	Warren, "Nature is a Feminist Issue" (S)		

Friday June 6	Interrogating & Fighting “Toxic” Environments	*Phaedra Pezzullo, “Touring ‘Cancer Alley,’ Louisiana: Performances of Community and Memory for Environmental Justice,” <i>Text and Performance Quarterly</i> 23, no. 3 (2003): 226-252. (L)	<i>Mann v. Ford</i> (pt 1)	
Monday June 9	Toxic Racism	(1) *George Lipsitz, “Toxic Racism,” <i>American Quarterly</i> 47, no. 3 (1995): 416-427. (L) (2) Pellow, <i>The Silicon Valley of Dreams</i> , 1-18. (S)	<i>Mann v. Ford</i> (pt 2)	
Tuesday June 10	Food Sovereignty/ Justice & The Slow/Local Food Movement	Katz, <i>The Revolution *Will Not Be Microwaved</i> , 1-13, 17-22, 127-134. (S)		
Wednesday June 11	Green Capitalism/ Greenwashing	(1) Cox, Ch 10, (2) Md Saidul Islam, “Green Consumerism” in <i>Green Culture: An A-t0-Z guide</i> , ed. Kevin Wehr, (e-book, L)	<i>Farmed & Dangerous</i>	
Part IV: Risk & Concluding Thoughts				
Thursday June 12	The Environment & Risk	Cox, Ch 12		#5-6 Posts Due @ midnight
Friday June 13	The Environment, Democracy, & Advocacy Course-Wrap UP	(1) Shiva, “Principles of Earth Democracy”(Google Books) (2) Astyk, “ The Theory of Anyway ”		

FINAL Tuesday, June 17 @ 11:30	Instructor available for grade consultations by appt.			Final Projects Due—Please bring treats for your classmates! We're celebrating!
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*Monday, May 26 is a university holiday