

CMST 3900 – Performance and the Environment

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Office Hours: MWF 2:30-4; or by appointment

Required Text:

Safina, Carl. *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel*. Henry Holt and Co. 2015.

Pollan, Michael. *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World*. Random House, 2001.

Optional Text:

Cox, Robert and Phaedra C. Pezzullo. *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere 4th ed.* Sage, 2015.

General Education Statement:

CMST 3900 is a class designed around conceptualizing our relationality to the environment. CMST 3900 will enable students to theorize, articulate, and embody environmental issues such as: sustainability, environmental activism, and nonhuman animals relationalities. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity inherent in environmental issues as they are articulated through a Performance Studies paradigm.

In this course, we will explore how we, as human beings, form a relationship to the environment. We will discuss the political and social impacts of environmental discourse and how such discourse produces identity, persuasion, and aesthetics. We will produce texts and performances that challenge normative understandings of the environment, while increasing the plurality and complexity of everyday life. The mission of the class is to alter our perception (or rather, the means by which we primarily perceive) of the world and how we give our own perception primacy.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me at some time during the first two weeks of class to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to a posthumanist understanding of the world through an examination of environmental concerns. The course primarily looks at two different types of relationalities: Botany and Nonhuman Animals. These two aspects will challenge the discursive frameworks built into our understanding of how we constitute environment. We will use embodied performance as a method for investigating epistemological and ontological claims.

Course Goals:

This course should help you write and direct performance with a focus on engaging environmental concerns. The course will ask you write, memorize, and direct performance material. You will learn various concepts about the environment, but the practice of the course is located in the writing and performing *of* the environment. You will relate these performances to various areas of your life, while also expanding the boundaries of how one appreciates, critiques, and produces environmental performance.

Six kinds of Significant Learning:

In this course, we will utilize six kinds of significant learning.

- 1) Foundational Knowledge: understanding and remembering important concepts and terminology

How: Reader's Notes

- 2) Application: applying the concepts; putting into action what you have learned and developing critical, creative, and practical thinking skills.

How: Classroom Workshops/Reader's Notes

- 3) Valuing: learning how to recognize, develop, and reflect on feelings, interests, and values

How: Discussions

- 4) Human Dimension (personal and social): Learning about yourself and others

How: Construction of Performance Texts

- 5) Learning How to Learn: encouraging the continuation of learning outside the classroom through self-directed inquiring about a subject

How: Embodied Practice

- 6) Integration: understanding the connection between ideas and experiences and how they relate to other realms of life outside the classroom.

How: Performances

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Reader's Notes — Each Reader's Note requires to write a paper that engages the reading material. These papers are designed to integrate concepts with application through our interactions with other class members. Reader's Notes Requirements: One Page/ Double Spaced/ 12 pt. font/ Times New Roman.
 - a. Define a Term: Find a key idea in the text that resonates with you. Provide an explanation of what the idea means to you.
 - b. Apply the Term: Please use your own experience (aesthetic or personal) to explain how the term or concept works.
 - c. Questions: Please ask three questions for the class that emerge from the reading. These can be questions of clarification or audience feedback. The more complex the question, the more productive our discussions will be.
2. Performance Scripts – You will turn in a script with each performance that illustrates your ability to integrate the literary with the academic.
3. Performances – You will have three performances during the course that illustrate your ability to compose performance through an embodied aesthetic.
4. Attend Two Shows in the Hopkins Black Box Theatre – You must watch two shows over the course of the semester (there are three shows total). Your attendance is required to provide a live Performance Studies perspective, which should help influence your work in this class. If you do not attend (or work in collaboration) with two shows, your final grade will drop 10%.

GRADING POLICY/POINT BREAKDOWN

Assignment:	Points
8 Reader's Notes	200
3 Scripts	300
3 Performances	500
Total	1000

Course Grading Scale:

A+	= 1000-980
A	= 979-930
A-	= 929-900
B+	= 899-880
B	= 879-830
B-	= 829-800
C+	= 799-780
C	= 779-730
C-	= 729-700

D+ = 699-680
D = 679-630
D- = 599-000

Missed Assignments and Performances:

I do not accept late work. If you miss an assignment for a university excused absence and provide valid written documentation, you may complete the assignment within one week of the missed deadline. If you miss a performance or script date, 10% of the points on those assignments will be deducted from your grade. If you miss a second time, you automatically receive a 0 for the assignment.

Assignment Due Dates:

Assignments are due at class time on the specified day. If an assignment is due on Monday, the assignment must be ready by class time. It does not mean you can turn in the assignment on Monday at 11:59pm. PLEASE DO NOT email me your assignment.

Email:

If you email me with a question about an assignment or any other question concerning class, please allow at least 24 hours for a reply. If you email me the night before an assignment is due, there is no guarantee I will read and respond to your email before class time. There is also no guarantee that I will check my email over the weekend. If you have an assignment due on Monday, please do not wait until Saturday or Sunday to email me with a question.

Attendance:

I believe that students have the right to decide whether or not they would like to attend class. However, I also recognize that the course, as a communication course, is focused on the practice of communication, particularly how we communicate with one another. If you are not in class to communicate and workshop then you cannot expect to fulfill the full requirements of the course. Therefore, in my class you are allowed to miss 3 times. After the third absence your grade is automatically dropped 100 points (If you had an A+ and miss more than three times, your grade is now a B+). However, your grade will not be penalized further by subsequent absences (if your work is poor or you fail to turn in work, this might cause your grade to drop further, but your grade is no longer impacted by attendance). If you have 3 or more university excused absences, you are allowed one non-university absence before your grade is dropped to 100 points.

Late policy:

I will take attendance at the beginning of class. If you are not in class at that time you are absent. After coming late to class three times (which in effect would mean three absences) your grade will drop 100 points.

Phones:

We love our ever-expanding connections to the world at large. However, part of communicating well is being present to one another. There are times when I will ask you to use your phones as a part of the workshop or activity; however, if you are using your phone during other class activities, I will take that as a sign that you do not wish to be present to the people or the work. If you are not present, you are absent. I am not here to police your phone use; therefore, if you have your phone out, I will assume you are making the choice to accept an absence for the day. If you have an emergency with friends and family please notify me ahead of time that you might need to take a call during class. I have no problem with people acting as responsible adults.

Note that the day before and the day after a scheduled university holiday are regular class days. Classes will be held and assignments will be due. Please make travel plans with this in mind. Vacations are not university excused absences.

Course Schedule:

Please note: The course schedule will adapt depending on how we, as a class, are progressing toward our course goals. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out if assignment due dates/course schedule have changed.

JANUARY

1/13 Introduction to Course

1/15 Writing Workshop

1/18 (MLK HOLIDAY)

1/20 Reader's Note #1

1/22 Writing Workshop

1/25 Reader's Note #2

1/27 Writing Workshop

1/29 (PATTI PACE FESTIVAL)

FEBRUARY

2/1 Reader's Note #3

2/3 Writing Workshop

2/5 Performance Workshop

2/8 (MARDI GRAS)
2/10 Writing/Performance Workshop
2/12 Performance Workshop

2/15 PERFORMANCE #1
2/17 PERFORMANCE #1
2/19 PERFORMANCE #1

2/22 Reader's Note #4
2/24 Writing Workshop
2/26 Performance Workshop

MARCH

2/29 Reader's Note #5
3/2 Writing Workshop
3/4 Performance Workshop

3/7 Reader's Note #6
3/9 Writing Workshop
3/11 Performance Workshop

3/14 Writing/Performance Workshop
3/16 (USC UPSTATE)
3/17 (USC UPSTATE)

3/21 (SPRING BREAK)
3/23 (SPRING BREAK)
3/25 (SPRING BREAK)

3/28 Performance Workshop
3/30 PERFORMANCE #2
4/1 PERFORMANCE #2

APRIL

4/4 PERFORMANCE #2
4/6 Writing Workshop
4/8 Performance Workshop

4/11 Reader's Note #7
4/13 Writing Workshop
4/15 Performance Workshop

4/18 Reader's Note #8

4/20 Writing Workshop
4/22 Performance Workshop

4/25 Performance #3
4/27 Performance #3
4/29 Performance #3

MAY
FINAL EXAMS
FINAL PERFORMANCES/FINAL SCRIPTS

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