

Nature Culture & Landscape EAS501.119/ ENVIRON464.001

Instructor: Sara Adlerstein

Office hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM or by appointment- **Office:** 3010 Dana
adlerste@umich.edu

Class meets: Mondays and Wednesdays 5.30- 7:00PM in Dana 1028

Nature is no outside of ourselves; we are Nature. **Culture** is a mirror of who we are as a species, a society, a community; it is a barometer of health, an evolving canvas for life. **Landscape** is a human conception, constructed of our goals and aspirations, built from necessity, avarice, invention and imagination. This course will examine layers of the nature/human relationship; how conceptualizations of “the outside” impact ways we continue to shape the planet and be shaped by it intentionally and by default, and how **art** can play a role towards environmental conservation. These roles can range from increasing the set of skills of environmental professionals to improving performance and communication, ultimately to be able to shape human behaviour towards sustainable practices.

Environmental issues are becoming increasingly complex and addressing them requires bridging across the sciences, art and the humanities. We will examine how human attitudes, values and behaviors shape the world we live in today, and the directions we have yet to go. This course is intended to open dialogue and personal reflection on the state of the land and what it says about human beings. In it students will be asked to go beyond simply learning about the complex environmental issues we face today, to thinking critically and understanding what can be done to address them.

Course goals will be achieved through lectures, readings, documentaries, site visits, discussions, an essay, hands on individual and team projects, and presentations.

Week One	Classes Begin	September 5
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Wednesday 5: **Syllabus** - Introduce Individual & group projects
Mulrooney, S. 2016. Change of perspective. Nature Vol. 537:125- 126.

Week Two	September 10 & 12
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Monday 10: **From Cell to Self:** A personal journey between the natural sciences and the arts. An introduction - Incorporating arts and humanities and environmental sciences.

Wednesday 12: **An historical perspective on the evolution of the relationship between visual arts and nature in western culture.** Representations of nature and what they say about human relations with the environment. Cave paintings to Earth making - Christo – Goldsworthy and beyond.

Readings:

- Inwood H. & Taylor R. 2012. Creative approaches to environmental learning: two perspectives on teaching environmental art education. *Int. Elect. Journal of Envir. Edu.* Vol 2(1): 65-75.
- Brady, E. 2007. Aesthetic Regard for Nature in Environmental and Land Art. *Ethics, Place and Environment* 10(3): 287-300.
- Explore

The Art Story Modern Art Insight

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-beuys-joseph.htm>.

Carnegie Mellon University Libraries: Art and Ecology: overview & Green Museum

<http://guides.library.cmu.edu/artecology>

Women Eco Artists Dialogue

<https://directory.weadartists.org/science-art>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170709025950/http://greenmuseum.org/>

Week Three

September 17 & 19

Monday 17: **Video - Performance with an environmental conservation goal - *Mapping the River Video*** – interdisciplinary multimedia project by UM faculty and students.

Select your Power of Art Artist/Partner

Wednesday 19: **The role of representations of nature, culture and landscapes in children’s picture books for environmental stewardship and education.** Analyzing some of our favorite picture books. Invited lecture and discussion UM School of Education **Carolyn Berge**.

Readings:

- Allen, W., Podeski, C., Palmer, N., Schwadel, P., and Meyler, D. 2012. The human-environment dialog in award-winning children’s picture books. *Sociological Inquiry* 82(1):145-159.

Friday 21, Stanley Kubricks’ 2001: A space Odyssey. 8pm 2hrs 45 min

Week Four

September 24-& 26

Monday 24 **Field trip to North Campus to experience Land Art: Waving Fields a sculpture of earth and grass by Maya Lin.** Discussion about the value of Land Art and Public Sculpture for the environment.

Alternative under inclement weather. The role of ephemeral visual art in environmental stewardship and conservation: A Video of Andy Goldsworthy work: Rivers & Tides and Discussion.

Wednesday 26: World without ICE. Henry Pollack and Michael Gould. A conversation about a sound-photography installation: collaboration between a climate scientist and a musician to address climate change.

Readings

- Kelly, M. 1996. Public Art Controversy: The Serra and Lin Cases. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 54, No. 1: pp. 15-22.
- Matless, D. & Revill, G. 1995. A solo ecology: the erratic art of A. Goldsworthy. *Ecumene* 2(4):423-447.

Week Five

October 1 & 3

Monday 1: Visual artist urges to rethinking approaches to controlling nature – UM Art & Design emeritus Professor **Ted Ramsay**.

Wednesday 3: **Presentation of Self-portrait Individual Projects**

Readings

- Meade, M. 2008. Creative Ecology: Art's role in addressing environmental and sustainability issues in Australia. Connecticut College: Arts & Environmental Studies, Australia. 44pp.
Explore <http://www.tedramsay.com>

Week Six

October 8 & 10

Monday 8: The role of poetry in environmental education and stewardship. Poet – UM LSA Emeritus Professor **Keith Taylor**.

Wednesday 10: Visual artist documents environmental changes and tells her story. **My backyard: my paradise** by local artist **Marcia Polenberg**.

Secret assignment due

Select you Children Book topic/partner

Readings:

- Arigo, C. Notes toward an Eco-poetics: Revising the Postmodern Sublime and Juliana Sparhs's This Connection to Everyone with Lungs. *How2 Journal* vol 3 (2) 20pp.
https://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/vol_3_no_2/ecopoetics/essays/arigo.html
- Ramsey, D. 2002. The role of music in environmental education: lessons from the cod fishery crisis and the dust bowl days. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* 7(1): 183-197.
- <https://www.bobdylan.com/songs/>

Week Seven

October 15 & 17

Monday 15: Study Break

Wednesday 17: Environmental Art: Blind Spot– Obscure observations, incompatible images, ideas and actions in the landscape. A presentation by UM- Stamp School of Art & Design Professor **Robert Platt**.

******Friday 19**

Actions in the landscape - University of Michigan Penny Stamp Graduate Studios North Campus – **Robert Platt** – Meeting place/ TBA.

Readings:

TBA

Explore http://stamps.umich.edu/people/detail/robert_platt

Week Eight

October 22 & 24

Monday 22: Music and Nature –University Musical Society (UMS) Rite of Spring (Stravinsky). Presentation by dramaturg and Campus Engagement Specialist at UMS **Shannon Fitzsimons**.

Wednesday 24: No class/for Friday 19

Wednesday 24: The Rite of Spring - Stravinsky. Performance by Yuja Wang and Martin Grubinger with Percussion Planet Ensemble - Hill Auditorium 7.30 p.m.

Readings:

- Turner, K. & Freedman, L. 2004. Music and environmental studies. The journal of Environmental Education 36 (1): 45-52.

Week Nine

October 29 & 31

Monday 29: Power of Art Student Presentations

Wednesday 31: The built environment: gardens & political art/ideology. A presentation by botanist UM Associate curator Matthaei Botanical Gardens **David Michener**.

Readings:

- Taylor, K. 2012. Landscape and meaning: Context for a global discourse on cultural landscape values. *Managing cultural landscapes*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Week Ten**November 5 & 7**

Monday 5: **Conflicts with representation of nature and culture in a natural history museum.** Visit to the UM Natural History Museum **Native American** dioramas - Tour guided by UMNHM Director of Education **Kira Berman**. – *Meeting place TBA.*

Wednesday 7: **Chilean Arpilleras: representation of nature and resistance during the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile.** Presentation by former UM Residential College Spanish Program Director, Professor Emerita **Eliana Moya**.

Readings:

- Haraway, D. 1984-1985. *Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden* by. *Social Text*, No. 11: 20-64.
- Silverman, R. and Sinopoli, C. 2011. Besieged! Contemporary political, cultural and economic challenges to museums in the academy as seen from Ann Arbor. *University Museums and Collections Journal* Vol 4:27-37.
- Vogel, S. 1991. Always true to the object, in fashion. From: *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Ivan Karp & Steven Lavine, eds. Chapter 12.
- Miller, J. 2009. Native American Dioramas at the University of Michigan Exhibit Museum of Natural History to be Removed. *AnnArbor.com*. <http://www.annarbor.com/news/native-american-dioramas-at-u-m-exhibit-museum-of-natural-history-to-be-removed-jan-4/>
- Native American dioramas in transition video <http://fcmndsc.wordpress.com/tag/native-american-dioramas-in-transition/>
- Capriccioso, R. 2009. Museum to remove controversial Native American dioramas. *Indian Country Today* September 12. https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/museum-to-remove-controversial-native-american-dioramas-MidODY_kzkuOJAh1bhbhLQ/?full=1

Week Eleven**November 12 & 14**

Monday 12: **Group Project Presentation**

Wednesday 14: **Representation of Nature/Culture/Landscapes in an art museum.** UM Museum of Art (UMMA) visit - Tour guided by Mellon Academic Coordinator **David Choberka**. *Meet at UMMA main entrance.*

Readings:

- Cosgrove, D. 1985. Prospect, Perspective and Evolution of the Landscape Idea. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. NS 10(1):45-62.

Week Twelve**November 19 & 21**

Monday 19 **Using ceramics to communicate bio diversity- Scientific Illustration 3D.** Video Conference with Chilean scientist-artist **Fernanda Oyarzún**.

Wednesday 21 Thanksgiving Recess

Readings:

TBA

Week Thirteen

November 26 & 28

Monday 26: **Scientific Illustration 2D -*The Alliance of Art and Science*:** Presentation by senior illustrator UM Museum of Natural History **John Megahan**.

Wednesday 28: **Environmental Art:** Art addressing Climate Change.

Readings

- Ainsworth, S., Prain, V., and Tytler, R. 2011. Drawing to learn in science. *Science* 333 (6046): 1096-1097.
- Explore www.johnmegahan.com
- Explore <http://artistsandclimatechange.com>

Week Fourteen

December 3 & 5

Monday 3: **The role of photography and documentaries in environmental conservation.** Ansel Adams, Ken Burns, Eliot Porter and others.

Wednesday 5: Children Book Project presentations

Readings.

- Doyle, J. 2009. Seeing the climate? The problematic status of visual evidence in climate change campaigning.
- <http://www.visionsofthewild.com/about.html>

Week Fifteen

December 10

Monday 10: **Final discussion:** Reflecting on the course experience

Grading Breakdown & Projects

Power of Art	20%
Self-portrait	20%
Children Book	20%
Group Project	20%
Participation	20%
70% Attendance minimum requirement	

Research the work of an artist - Power of Art

This project is for a critical analysis of the power of art. Two students choose a medium and an artist (or collective) working on environmental advocacy. The medium includes music/sound, film, painting, sculpture, photography, poetry, theater, dance, activism, digital, design, multimedia performance, public participation, storytelling, documentaries etc. The students analyze the intent of the art and provide their perspective on how effective is the medium and the artist work. Students submit a summary up to one page (single spaced) and present their work to the class (5 minutes).

Individual Project - Self-portrait

Each student conceives a piece to depict their personal relationship with nature. The project can be conceived as a self-portrait or an aspiration piece. Students can choose any medium. The students present their work to the class (5 minutes).

Group Project Power of Art

Three students identify: i) an environmental/cultural issue on campus they would like to address through elements of change or ii) a good example of stewardship they would like to celebrate. Students create an art intervention. They can choose any medium and think collaborative. The goal is to call attention on what goes on in our own backyard. The project content is presented in class and posted on social media or other ways of communications outside of the classroom (5 minutes).

Children Book Project:

Two students create a picture book to raise awareness about our local source of water: The Huron River. The content educates about the river and connections of our daily actions to the health of the ecosystem. It also can provide tips on how to minimize our impacts and give examples of local interventions and opportunities to conduct volunteer work. The goal is to highlight the importance of personal behavior for the health of the river and inspire children to care and make environmentally sound choices. The books will be read in class with attendance of K12 educators (5 minutes). Books could be made available for wider distribution through SEAS electronic library –University of Michigan Publishing Services.