

Soc/CESoc/FWEcol 248: Environment, Natural Resources, & Society

Instructor: Yifei Li
Office: 308E Agricultural Hall
Email: yifeili@ssc.wisc.edu

Classroom: 150 Microbial Sciences Building
Class Time: Mon/Wed 2:30-3:45pm
Office Hours: Mon/Wed 9:00-10:00am

Overview

This course introduces you to the interdisciplinary literature on the relationship between the human world and the natural world. We engage scholarly writings from a wide range of perspectives. The course aims at provoking a renewed understanding of “nature,” in the ecological, biotic, social, and teleological senses of the word.

Broadly speaking, this course invites you to look both outward and inward. The *outward-looking* part of the course takes you to an in-depth analysis of global environmental challenges. We will discuss issues such as climate change denialism and industrialized agriculture. You will gain an understanding of different social forces that shape our environmental attitudes and behaviors, and how these forces continue to re-shape our collective relationship to nature. The *inward-looking* part of the course motivates you to initiate a private conversation with nature. Class discussions will provoke a sense of discomfort amidst the pinnacle of modern comfort; we will bring into question “modern” life that often goes unquestioned. We will also explore emerging possibilities of alternative ways-of-life. Taken together, this course stands with one foot in the scientific study of society, and the other foot in the normative understanding of social life.

This course is reading-, writing-, and participation-intensive. Students will be grouped into five book clubs, each responsible for one of the five texts listed below.

Core Texts

- **Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. M.** (2012). *Merchants of doubt: How a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*. London: Bloomsbury. (ISBN: 9781608193943)
- **Pollan, M.** (2006). *The omnivore's dilemma: A natural history of four meals*. New York: Penguin Press. (ISBN: 9780143038580)
- **Cronon, W.** (1983/2003). *Changes in the land: Indians, colonists, and the ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang. (ISBN: 9780809001583)
- **Thoreau, H. D.** (1854/2004). *Walden*. Boston: Houghton. (ISBN: 9780807014257)
- **Schor, J.** (2010). *Plenitude: The new economics of true wealth*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Press. (ISBN: 9781594202544; Full e-book available through UW Library)

These books are available at the University Bookstore. If you do not wish to buy them, you may read them at Steenbock Library. Other required readings are on Learn@UW at learnuw.wisc.edu.

Course Requirements

- **Reading reflections** (50*4=200 points)
You have five opportunities to submit reading reflections. You may choose to submit all five and have the lowest grade dropped, or submit four and skip any one of your choice. Each reading reflection is worth 50 points. Please limit each reading reflection to two pages, with one-inch margins, double-spaced. Use your ten-digit campus ID to identify yourself on the paper; do not write your name on it. Follow the grading rubric on page 11 as you write.

You are required to submit an electronic copy to Turnitin.com (Class ID: 11309466; Password: nature), as well as a hard copy before the start of class on these days. If you are not familiar with Turnitin.com, please refer to Appendix 1. Take advantage of the Writing Center (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>, 608-263-1992) to improve your writing skills.
- **Mid-term exam** (200*1=200 points)
The exam will consist of multiple choice questions and short answer questions. It will cover lectures, class discussions, and readings up to the day of the exam. The exam will be given during class time on March 2.
- **Film reviews** (50*2=100 points)
You have five opportunities to submit film reviews. Choose two and only two from the five. Refer to page 12 of the syllabus for brief introductions to the films. Each film review is worth 50 points. Please limit each film review to two pages, with one-inch margins, double-spaced. Follow the grading rubric on page 11 as you write. As with reading reflections, you need to submit a hard copy in class, and an electronic copy to turnitin.com.
- **Book club project** (a total of 200 points)
You will be randomly assigned to one of the five book clubs. See page 10 for details.
- **Contribution to discussion questions** (10*10=100 points)
During the second half of the semester, there are a total of ten days on which you are required to submit at least two discussion questions before 7 am to Learn@UW. Good questions demonstrate solid understandings of the readings, engage central themes of the readings, seek to clarify major arguments, connect ideas from different authors, introduce real-life examples, or make constructive suggestions for authors to refine their arguments. Late submissions will not be graded. Follow the grading rubric on page 11 as you write. The total points you earn from these questions are subject to attendance-based adjustment.
- **Final paper** (200*1=200 points)
You are encouraged to use this opportunity to produce a piece of writing that is meaningful to your larger career/life goals. It can be a draft thesis, a fellowship application, a research proposal, a community engagement project, a graduate school writing sample, an op-ed for the local paper, a policy memo, or some other format of your choice. The paper should be between 6 to 8 double-spaced pages, and must substantively engage course readings. See page 9 of the syllabus for details about logistics. We do not have a final exam.

Attendance

Attendance is required. In the first half of the semester, i.e. January 20 to February 29, there will be several unscheduled attendance checks in different forms, including but not limited to pop quizzes, group activities, and surveys. Students failing an attendance check will receive a grade penalty at the instructor's discretion, unless an acceptable excuse is provided ahead of time.

In the second half of the semester, i.e. March 7 to May 4, your total earned points for discussion questions are subject to attendance-based adjustment according to the table below.

Attendance Record	Adjustment
Full attendance, or missed one class	+10 points, but not to exceed a total of 100 points
Missed two to three classes	No adjustment
Missed four classes	-10 points, but not to go below zero
Missed five or more classes	Adjusted to zero, and case reported to Dean of Students

Lateness Policy

If you submit your work after the due date, your score will be penalized by 10% for each day of lateness. You are required to turn in both hard copies and electronic copies before they are due, unless otherwise specified. Late submission of discussion questions will not be graded. The due date for the final paper is non-negotiable.

Exam Policy

A make-up exam will be given only if you provide the instructor, in writing, an acceptable excuse from an accredited professional regarding the situation. You should submit the written notice before the day of the exam. The make-up exam will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for all students that miss the exam, but no later than two weeks after the scheduled exam.

Grading Scale

A=94% or higher AB=88-93.9% B=82-87.9% BC=76-81.9%
C=70-75.9% D=60-69.9% F=59.9% or lower

Readings

It is extremely important for you to keep up with the required readings for each session. I lecture with the assumption that you have read all pieces before class. I normally do not lecture from the readings, but try to build on them. In order for you to benefit from lectures, it is best to read the assignments in advance. You may also bring along your questions about specific readings to class.

Communication

Course-related information is often communicated to you via email, on Learn@UW, and in class. Please make sure you check your wisc.edu emails. You are welcome to communicate with me via email. Please expect a reply within 48 hours. However, I will not respond to questions if answers can be found in this syllabus. Nor will I respond to questions that have been addressed in class.

Academic Honesty

All work that you submit for this class must be your own. All sources and assistance used in preparing your work must be precisely and explicitly acknowledged. Please read Appendix 2 if you need more information about this. If you are still unsure, come and talk with me, or consult the Writing Center (www.writing.wisc.edu, 608-263-1992).

Cheating on the exam and/or writings will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating and/or plagiarizing will receive a grade of F for the entire course, and the case will be reported to the Dean of Students. NO EXCEPTIONS. You should familiarize yourself with UW rules regarding academic honesty at <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html>.

Classroom Etiquettes

One of my responsibilities is to ensure that the environment in the classroom is conducive to learning. If you are late, you should find a seat in the back of the classroom. If you need to leave early, please let me know in advance and sit in a location where it will be easy to quietly leave the room. Turn off all cell phones and put away newspapers before class begins. Please hold side-conversations and discussions until after class.

Although computers are a valuable tool for research and study, they are inimical to participation and collegiality in the classroom. The use of laptops or other electronic devices for note-taking or other purposes in class, therefore, will NOT be permitted.

Accommodation

I wish to include fully any students with special needs in this course. Please let me know (the earlier the better) if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order to enable you to participate fully. The McBurney Center (www.mcburney.wisc.edu, 702 W. Johnson Street, 608-263-2741) can provide useful assistance and documentation.

If English is not your first language, or one of your first languages, you may have an additional thirty (30) minutes for the exam. If this applies to you, please come and talk with me at your earliest convenience. The Great University Tutoring Service (GUTS, guts.studentorg.wisc.edu, 608-263-5666) can provide additional assistance with language and other academic skills.

The University recognizes that as a community many of its members use names other than their legal names to identify themselves. More information about the UW preferred name policy can be found online at http://registrar.wisc.edu/preferred_name.htm

Nighttime Safety

The University has established several transportation and walking escort services to help you stay safe while getting around campus and the nearby areas after dark. Make use of services such as SAFEwalk and SAFERide (<http://transportation.wisc.edu/transportation/safeservices.aspx>).

Class Schedule

	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
Introduction	1/20	No class meeting on this day.	N/A
	1/25	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. M. (2013). The collapse of western civilization: A view from the future. <i>Daedalus</i>, 142, 1, 40-58. 	N/A

	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
Science, Politics, and Knowledge	1/27	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. M. (2012). <i>Merchants of doubt: How a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming</i>. London: Bloomsbury, Introduction & Chapter 1 (pp. 1-35). 	N/A
	2/1	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winner, L. (1986). <i>The whale and the reactor: A search for limits in an age of high technology</i>. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, Chapter 2 (pp. 19-39). 	Reading Reflection #1 due today before 2:30 pm. Bring a physical copy, and also upload a copy to turnitin.com.

	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
Nature and Culture of Eating	2/3	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollan, M. (2006). <i>The omnivore's dilemma: A natural history of four meals</i>. New York: Penguin Press, Introduction & Chapter 16 (pp. 1-11; 287-303). 	N/A
	2/8	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McKibben, B. (2007). <i>Deep economy: The wealth of communities and the durable future</i>. New York: Times Books, Chapter 2 (pp. 46-94). 	Reading Reflection #2 due today before 2:30 pm. Bring a physical copy, and also upload a copy to turnitin.com.

The Human Nature of Nature	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
	2/10	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cronon, W. (1983/2003). <i>Changes in the land: Indians, colonists, and the ecology of New England</i>. New York: Hill and Wang, Chapters 2 & 3 (pp. 19-53). 	N/A
2/15	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urry, J., & Larsen, J. (2011). <i>The tourist gaze 3.0</i>. London: SAGE, Chapter 7 (pp. 155-188). 	Reading Reflection #3 due today before 2:30 pm. Bring a physical copy, and also upload a copy to turnitin.com.	

Simplicity and Individuality	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
	2/17	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoreau, H. D. (1854/2004). <i>Walden</i>. Boston: Houghton, first half of "Economy" (pp. 1-37, i.e. from "When I wrote ..." to "... my own experiment"). 	N/A
2/22	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McKibben, B. (1989). <i>The end of nature</i>. New York: Random House, Chapter 2 (pp. 40-78). 	Reading Reflection #4 due today before 2:30 pm. Bring a physical copy, and also upload a copy to turnitin.com.	

True Wealth	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
	2/24	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schor, J. (2010). <i>Plenitude: The new economics of true wealth</i>. New York, N.Y: Penguin Press, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-23). 	N/A
2/29	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meyer, J. M. (2010). <i>The environmental politics of sacrifice</i>. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, Chapter 2 (pp. 13-32). 	Reading Reflection #5 due today before 2:30 pm. Bring a physical copy, and also upload a copy to turnitin.com.	

<p>Mid-term Exam</p> <p>Wednesday, March 2, 2015, 2:30 - 3:45pm</p>
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Oreskes & Conway, 2012	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
	3/7	TBA (Guest Speaker: Ian Carrillo)	N/A
	3/9	Documentary film: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenner, R. (2015). <i>Merchants of doubt</i>. Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Classics. 	Book Club #1 book summary due at noon. Film Review #1 due before class.
	3/14	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. M. (2012). Chapter 6 (pp. 169-215). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW.
	3/16	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. M. (2012). Chapter 7 (pp. 216-239). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW.

<p>Spring Recess</p> <p>Saturday, March 19 to Sunday, March 27</p>

Pollan, 2006	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
	3/28	Documentary film: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenner, R. (2009). <i>Food, Inc.</i> Los Angeles, CA: Magnolia Home Entertainment. 	Book Club #2 book summary due at noon. Film Review #2 due before class.
	3/30	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollan, M. (2006). Chapters 5-7 (pp. 85-119). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW. Final Paper Draft due today before class. Book Club #1 peer evaluation form due before class. Book Club #1 book glossary due at midnight.
	4/4	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollan, M. (2006). Chapter 9 (pp. 134-184). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW.

	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
Cronon, 1983/2003	4/6	Documentary film: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baichwal, J. (2007). <i>Manufactured landscapes</i>. New York, NY: Zeitgeist Films. 	Book Club #3 book summary due at noon. Film Review #3 due before class. Peer Reviews of Final Paper Draft due today before class.
	4/11	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cronon, W. (1983/2003). Chapter 4 (pp. 54-81). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW. Book Club #2 peer evaluation form due before class. Book Club #2 book glossary due at midnight.
	4/13	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cronon, W. (1983/2003). Chapter 5 (pp. 82-107). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW.

	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
Thoreau, 1854/2004	4/18	Documentary film: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arthus-Bertrand, Y. (2009). <i>Home</i>. Beverly Hills, California: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment. 	Book Club #4 book summary due at noon. Film Review #4 due before class.
	4/20	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoreau, H. D. (1854/2004). "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For" (pp. 76-93). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW. Book Club #3 peer evaluation form due before class. Book Club #3 book glossary due at midnight.
	4/25	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoreau, H. D. (1854/2004). "Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors" and "Conclusion" (pp. 241-254; 299-312). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW.

	Date	Required Prep Work	Work Due
Schor, 2010	4/27	Documentary film: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teague, K. (2013). <i>Money & life</i>. California: StormCloud Media. 	Book Club #5 book summary due at noon. Film Review #5 due before class.
	5/2	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schor, J. (2010). Chapter 3 (pp. 67-97). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW. Book Club #4 peer evaluation form due before class. Book Club #4 book glossary due at midnight.
	5/4	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schor, J. (2010). Chapter 5 (pp. 145-184). 	Discussion Questions due 7 am today on Learn@UW.
	5/6	No class meeting on this day.	Final Paper due. Book Club #5 attach your peer evaluation form to final paper.
	5/11	No class meeting on this day.	Book Club #5 book glossary due at midnight.

Final Paper due at noon on Friday, May 6, 2015

- Final Paper Draft**
 The draft should be 1-2 pages, and should outline what you plan to write in the full paper. It is due before class on March 30. Submit to turnitin.com. No need for print-outs.
- Peer Review**
 Each of you will be randomly paired up with two to three of your fellow classmates. Share your drafts via emails. Read the drafts you receive, and provide constructive comments by replying to their emails no later than 2:30 pm on April 6.
- Record Keeping**
 Make sure you retain the comments you receive from your peers, as you will need to attach them to the final paper submission.
- Final Paper Submission**
 The due date for the final paper is non-negotiable. Place a hard copy in the collection box in Room 350 of Agricultural Hall, and also submit your paper to turnitin.com. Use your ten-digit campus ID to identify yourself on the paper; do not write your name on it.

Book Clubs

You will be randomly assigned into one of the five book clubs. You may join only one club. The table below shows the composition of grades you can earn in this group activity.

Graded Item	Scope	Scale	Basis
Book summary	Collective	0-50	See below.
Book glossary	Collective	0-50	See below.
Participation	Individualized	0-50	Your participation in the three class meetings on the book.
Peer evaluation	Individualized	0-50	Your club-mates' evaluations of your contribution.

Book summary. The summary should be five to seven pages in length, with one-inch margins, double-spaced. The summary should aim at outlining major arguments in each of the chapters, without referencing external sources. The summary will be graded against the following rubric.

Expectations	Marks	Notes
<i>Accuracy.</i> The summary demonstrates an accurate understanding of major arguments and findings presented in the chapters.	___/30	
<i>Accessibility.</i> The summary uses accessible language. It prioritizes major themes over illustrative examples.	___/10	
<i>Originality.</i> The summary paraphrases central themes using your own words, minimizing the use of quotations from the text.	___/10	
Penalty for grammatical errors, improper citation, misspells, incomplete sentences, and/or colloquialism	(___)	

Book glossary. There are many important concepts in each of the books. I expect the book club to collectively create a glossary to explain these concepts in plain language. I do not have a particular expectation about the length of each entry, or how many entries to have. There is an exemplar on Learn@UW for you to consult – a glossary that Oreskes & Conway created for their 2013 article, *The collapse of western civilization*. The glossary will be graded against the following rubric.

Expectations	Marks	Notes
<i>Breadth.</i> The glossary addresses major concepts and theoretical notions raised by the author(s).	___/20	
<i>Depth.</i> Entries in the glossary engage with the book, and reproduce the level of sophistication of the book.	___/20	
<i>Readability.</i> The glossary uses accessible language. Entries are concise and original. Presentation is clear and consistent.	___/10	
Penalty for grammatical errors, improper citation, misspells, incomplete sentences, and/or colloquialism	(___)	

Participation. The first of the three class meetings on each book aims at discussing the overall theme of the book and the documentary film. Members of the book club shall sit at the front of the classroom, and collectively discuss key issues raised by the author(s). The second and third class meetings will focus on select chapter(s). On these days, the book club shall lead class discussions with the help of “crowd-sourced” questions on Learn@UW.

Grading Rubric for Reading Reflections*

Expectations	Marks	Notes
The paper provides a concise summary of major arguments and findings in the focal readings using your own words.	___/30	
The paper establishes intellectual connections between the two pieces assigned for the week.	___/10	
The paper relates one major issue raised by the authors to your personal observations and/or experiences.	___/10	
Penalty for grammatical errors, improper citation, misspells, incomplete sentences, and/or colloquialism	(___)	

*An exemplar is available on Learn@UW

Grading Rubric for Film Reviews

Expectations	Marks	Notes
The review provides a synopsis of the film's storyline, highlighting the main themes using your own words.	___/30	
The review relates scenes in the film to pertinent readings and discussions in this course.	___/10	
The review offers an independent evaluation of the film by assessing, for example, its credibility and visual appeals.	___/10	
Penalty for grammatical errors, improper citation, misspells, incomplete sentences, and/or colloquialism	(___)	

Grading Rubric for Discussion Questions

Expectations	Marks	Notes
The questions demonstrate a solid understanding of the focal chapter(s)*. Each question opens with a summary or a commentary of one main argument from the chapter.	___/5	
The questions help enriching class discussion of the focal chapter. This can be accomplished, for example, by bringing in a real-life event, or by raising a morally contentious issue.	___/5	
Penalty for grammatical errors, improper citation, misspells, incomplete sentences, and/or colloquialism	(___)	

*The two questions should address different aspects of the focal chapter.

An Exemplar Discussion Question

*This question was submitted by a former student in this class in response to Chapter 6 (*The Denial of Global Warming*) of *Merchants of Doubt*.

It appears that a major problem with scientific research is that it is not effectively distributed and communicated with the general public. The large majority of journal articles are too technical and scientific for most Americans to understand and they are generally not accessible without paid subscriptions. How can we communicate this information in ways that the general population can understand and have access to?

Documentary Films

Merchants of Doubt | 2015 | 96 min | Director: Robert Kenner

- A documentary that looks at pundits-for-hire who present themselves as scientific authorities as they speak about topics like toxic chemicals, pharmaceuticals and climate change.
- Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8ii9zGFDtc>
- Full film on Learn@UW



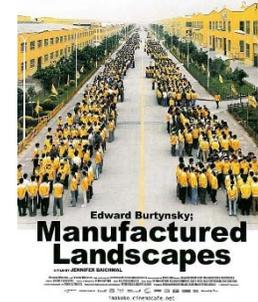
Food, Inc. | 2009 | 94 min | Director: Robert Kenner

- An unflattering look inside America's corporate-controlled food industry.
- Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eKYyD14d_0
- Full film on Learn@UW
- DVD available for checkout at College and Steenbock Libraries



Manufactured Landscapes | 2007 | 86 min | Director: Jennifer Baichwal

- Photographer Edward Burtynsky travels the world observing changes in landscapes due to industrial work and manufacturing.
- Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv23xwe0BoU>
- Full film: <http://www.hulu.com/watch/463580>
- DVD available for checkout at Memorial Library



Home | 2009 | 93 min | Director: Yann Arthus-Bertrand

- With aerial footage from fifty-four countries, 'Home' is a depiction of how Earth's problems are all interlinked.
- Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDlbBy9vfgI>
- Full film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqxENMKaeCU>



Money & Life | 2013 | 86 min | Director: Katie Teague

- A passionate and inspirational essay-style documentary that makes a provocative proposition: can we see the economic crisis not as a disaster, but as a tremendous opportunity?
- Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jY6qJVxg5w>
- Full film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPZxAILZ8-Q>

