UN 1001 Perspectives: From Nature to Environment: What’s the Difference?
Fall, 2003. Tues., Thurs. 3:35 p.m. – 4:50 p.m. EERC 214

Instructor: Dr. Michele E. Anderson
Office: Walker 341  Office hours (Tentative): Tues. 1 p.m. – 2 p.m., Thurs. 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. and by appointment.
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[Please feel free to contact me by Email; I check my Email often. I am more likely to check the pasty.com address evenings and weekends.]

My news Web site: www.keweenawnow.com

Web sites for the class:
I plan to have a Web CT site, which will allow students to post discussion comments, links to interesting articles, etc. I’ll also post the syllabus with the calendar and schedule changes on the Web CT. This semester the reserve readings for this class will be posted on the library’s electronic reserve system so you may access them from the Internet. Details will be given in class.

Perspectives goal: Perspectives on Inquiry “engages students in college level inquiry through which they develop fundamental intellectual habits, understand how to integrate perspectives on knowledge, and begin to learn how to meet the changing needs of a global, technological, diverse, and environmentally sensitive society.”

Course Description: In this class we will look at how nature – and the environment – are pictured in different ways in art, literature, film, media, advertising and elsewhere. We will ask questions, such as, “When do we speak of ‘nature’ and when do we speak of ‘the environment’? What is the difference between the two and how does that difference affect how they get pictured in the various media?” Environmental issues can be controversial, so we also will look at different points of view on various environmental issues and how those differences affect the way nature/the environment is presented.

Course objectives:

1. Students will read 18th-century to present-day authors whose writing is characterized by observations of “nature” and discuss these authors’ reactions to the natural world – from insects to plants and wildlife to forests, canyons, mountain streams, rivers, lakes and oceans.

2. Students will discuss, both verbally and in writing, how both “nature” and “environment” are depicted and discussed in both fiction and non-fiction, in various present-day media and advertising, and in art, photography and film.

3. Students will compare readings, observations and visiting speaker presentations in order to gain knowledge of different perspectives on nature and environment.
developing critical thinking skills, they will examine readings and media representations for accuracy and balance in the presentation of environmental issues. Choosing a topic from environmental issues presented in class readings, students will research a similar issue in their own community and a national or international issue in which they are interested.

4. Students will have opportunities for creativity through such group activities as role-playing, debate and dramatic reading, as well as individual oral presentations accompanied by visual aids and a creative essay based on a nature journal.

Required readings to purchase in the Campus Book Store:


Listed below are required readings on reserve in the MTU Library or on the library's electronic reserve (Internet URL to be given in class): SELECTED PAGES from these books will be assigned to be read by certain dates. Additional optional readings may be recommended during the course by both instructor and students.


Trust Us, We’re Experts! By Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber. New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 2002.


In addition, selected poems and articles from newspapers, magazines, Web sites and newsletters will be distributed in class or assigned for reading on the Internet or on reserve. Students may be asked to share with the class useful titles they have read on their own.

Workload and expectations: You may find this class more demanding than some of your classes in high school. Keep in mind that Perspectives is important as a preparation for future college work. Each Perspectives class centers on an inquiry into a different unresolved question, but all Perspective classes share similar goals intended to help the student. Expect to be assigned a substantial amount of college-level reading and writing as well as independent research work outside of class. Be prepared to put in an average of 6 hours of work outside of class in addition to the 3 hours in class each week. Some of the assignments, such as presentations, will be done in groups.

Attendance and class participation (15% of grade): Since much of the class will consist of discussion of readings, group interaction and presentations, and occasional visiting speakers, you cannot afford to miss a class. Expect your grade to be lowered if you have more than 3 unexcused absences in the semester. Expect to participate actively in each class. Take notes on the reading assignments and bring them to class to help you share your ideas.

Journal writing (informal) (20%): The graded informal writing for this class will be in-class or at-home journal entries for readings or media assignments. A question or questions will be given at the beginning of class on the class day before the assignment is due or at the beginning of class on the day it is due. You may use the book or article or your reading notes to help you answer the question(s). IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE NOTES ON YOUR READINGS AND TO BRING THESE TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSIONS AND JOURNAL QUESTIONS. The journal entry will be collected in class the day the reading is due. Since the purpose of the journal is to help you organize your thoughts and prepare for class discussion, these will not be accepted late (possible exception for serious excused absence). Your reading notes, class notes, etc., are
considered informal writing but will not be collected or graded. However, a lack of notes, especially on the library reserve readings, will affect your discussion and journal grades. You may wish to print off or Xerox some pages of these readings to bring to class with your notes in the margins, etc. However, the electronic reserve has been set up to save your having to buy a Xeroxed class reader from the bookstore. In addition, the library is absorbing the cost of copyright permissions, which would otherwise be paid by you within the cost of a reader. The few readings for which we were unable to obtain copyright permission will be available on paper or book reserve in the library (Ask for them at Circulation Desk. Indicate it is for UN1001, Section 57, and give my name, Michele Anderson.)

For the journal entry use lined 8.5 x 11 paper. Put your name and the date at the top and write clearly, leaving margins and skipping lines. The journals are graded on quality and quantity of what you say — not necessarily on organization. Don’t be afraid to write on both sides of the paper! Keep your returned journal papers in a folder along with your graded essay drafts and final copies. That way, if you need assistance from me during office hours or from coaches in the Writing Center, you can bring your folder to the appointment so that we can analyze your progress/difficulties and make suggestions for improving your writing.

Journal grades are \(+\), Excellent; \(\pm\), Very good; \(\pm\), Satisfactory; \(\frac{1}{-}\), Revise and hand in again; 0, no credit.

Three short essays (formal writing) (60%): Your readings and reading notes, journal entries and notes on class discussions, films, discussions and guest speaker presentations should help you prepare for the 3 required essays. For each essay (4-5 pages) you will be asked to submit a proposal of a topic, hand in a first draft of the paper -- both a hard copy and a copy attached to email, preferably in Microsoft Word. You will then revise the corrected draft and hand in the final paper with it. It is important to hand in the corrected draft with the final paper so that I can see how you applied my suggestions.

Save both your draft and final copy on your computer or on a floppy disk. (Give them distinct file names.) You may be asked to revise the final copy if it is not satisfactory. Both the draft and the final copy should be double-spaced and typed using Microsoft Word or a Rich Text format that shows italics, etc. Leave at least an inch margin all around. Use Times New Roman 12-pt. font. (If you use a larger font, you should write 6 pages.)

Oral presentations (5%): Some group oral presentations will be assigned throughout the semester. These may include debates, role-playing, etc. Your oral grade will also be based on 2 oral presentations on your essays. About half the class will give a 4-5-minute presentation on Essay #1 and half on Essay #2. Everyone will be required to give an individual presentation on his or her Essay #3, including a handout, overhead transparencies, charts or other visual aid with a related illustration or illustrations. If you
need any audio-visual equipment other than the overhead projector, please inform me a week in advance.

Essay #1: This first essay will be based on a Nature Journal you will begin as early as the first week of class (See handout, “Keeping the Nature Journal,” by Fred Young of the Isle Royale Institute):

1. You will go somewhere away from concrete and traffic -- a park, a forest, a beach -- to make observations (modeled on those of such authors as Thoreau and Rousseau). If possible, go there more than once at different times of the day. (There are places like this, such as the MTU trails, within walking distance of campus.)

2. Write down your impressions, thoughts and observations of the natural world around you. Try to notice details about nature that you haven’t noticed before. Try to imagine it as it might have been a century or two ago or how it might be a century from now. If the place inspires you to write a poem, take a photograph, or draw a picture. Any of these may be submitted with your essay. Take notes in your journal.

3. Choose one of the readings we have discussed and give your reactions to the author’s descriptions of some aspect of the natural world. Relate this to your own Nature Journal. If you wish, you may incorporate anecdotes about your own real past contacts with nature (childhood, adolescence, etc.). Research on the author, further readings of works by that author, or comments on more than one author are optional for this essay.

Essay #2: This essay will be based on environmental issues mentioned or suggested in the novel, Prodigal Summer. These include such topics as family/organic farming vs. industrial farms, return of predators and hunting issues, use of pesticides, lawns vs. habitat preservation, sustainable forestry, etc. You will research a local environmental issue in your town, county or state -- something you have read about or heard about in the media -- that is similar to one taken from the novel. International students may choose an issue important in their own country. Choose a topic that interests you. Find at least four articles from your local or state newspapers, magazines or newsletters and discuss whether they express similar or differing viewpoints on the issue. Compare and contrast these with any T.V. or radio news on the issue, if any. Indicate whether you believe the reports are balanced and accurate and why. Include notes and bibliography in your first draft as well as the final essay. Helpful Web sites for this will be posted on the Web CT. A class library visit will help you learn about resources for research available through the MTU library. Extra credit: If possible, interview at least two people involved in the issue, especially if it is an issue that has public involvement. (This can be done in person, by phone or email.)

Essay #3: Based on your reading of Earth Odyssey and related articles, choose a current international environmental issue (global warming, ozone depletion, rain forest
deterioration, water issues, etc.) or, based on your reading of Edward Abbey's essays, a national environmental issue that affects public lands or affects the whole nation in some way (grazing or logging in national parks, nuclear waste dumping in Nevada, drilling in Alaska, Canadian-American Great Lakes issues, etc.) and therefore has attracted the involvement of citizen groups representing various points of view. Find at least four media sources on the issue. Summarize the history of the issue if it has been going on for some time. As you do research, find images that illustrate the issue (advertising, cartoons, art, photography, etc.) to use as visuals in your oral presentation. As in Essay #2, interviews are optional, for extra credit.

Feel free to come to my office (341 in Walker) if you have questions on assignments or class procedures.

A note on plagiarism: Plagiarism – using the ideas or words of others without acknowledging the source – is unethical and a violation of university policy. Plagiarism cases will be handled by the Office of Student Affairs. Some consequences of plagiarism could be failure of a paper or course. The University has subscribed to an anti-plagiarism service that can detect plagiarized material. We will discuss correct documentation of sources in class. Afterwards, if you still have questions about the proper way to cite the ideas of someone else, please see me.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY: MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (487-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact me, your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action office (487-3310).