

USA, The Natural Experiment: Environmental Debates

A First Year Seminar with materials and methods of American Studies, History, and Environmental Science

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Office Hours: M-Th, 1-3, and many afternoons 3-5

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FSem 100-24 (CRN# 4955)

MWF 10-10:50, in Sampson 225

Goals of the Course

This First Year Seminar will introduce you to college work at Stetson through a focus on American relationships with the natural world. We will explore this topic of *environmental history and culture* by dealing with The Three Whats: *what happened* (in the human relation with the environment); *so what* (why should we care?); and *now what* (what are the next steps?). In approaches to learning, the course will involve education through analysis, experience, and reflection. The great achievements of American civilization have included, in effect, a grand experiment on the landscape, with a whole range of results for good and ill. We will consider a range of American responses, nature's own point of view, and inventive suggestions about ways to deal with environmental and related problems; and each student will engage in guided research through the semester for putting forth their own proposals. So we will be thinking about experimentation in various ways: how has the American past involved experimentation with nature by adapting it to human goals, and what are the experimental ideas emerging to cope with environmental issues and human demands.

Through work with the books and other texts, library research, films, class projects, lectures, and discussion, emphasis will be placed on your development of thinking, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Please fill out a card so I can begin to get to know your academic interests right away.

Course Requirements and Grading

-Participation: attendance, class involvement, and 10 One-Page Essays	} 20% of final grade
-Research Paper	20%
-Two Midterm Exams	20% each
-Final Exam	20%

Extra Credit

- Attend related campus and community events, write a one-page essay, and briefly report your experiences to class.
- Arrange to make a class presentation on your research paper in relation to a particular day's topic.

I assume academic honesty. Anything less will be taken seriously at the department and university levels. Your work for this class must be your own, with quotations or references to the work of others clearly cited. On this topic and for ways to improve writing, you have resources from this class and at the Writing Center, Maggie Herb, Director, mherb@stetson.edu, located in the library near East Room computer lab, writingcenter@stetson.edu, 822-7717; and the Academic Success Center, Stacy Collins, Director, and April Thompson, Assistant Director, asc@stetson.edu; scollin1@stetson.edu, 822-7127, 209 East Bert Fish (behind the CUB in between the Pi Phi House and the Honors House, for mail: 421 N. Woodland Blvd, Unit 8366, DeLand, FL 32723).

If a student anticipates barriers related to the format or requirements of a course, she or he should meet with the course instructor to discuss ways to ensure full participation. If disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with the Academic Success Center (822-7127; www.stetson.edu/asc) and notify the course instructor of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. The student, course instructor, and the Academic Success Center will plan how best to coordinate accommodations.

Have you noticed that small class sizes are rare in this world? How can you make use of this resource? Because so much of this course involves exchange of ideas in class and consideration of subtle values, your *attendance and participation* are crucial parts of your learning and make up a significant part of your grade. There are many forms of participation, including careful listening, reviewing notes after class, writing the One-Page Essays, and especially questions and discussion in class (as facilitated by all of the above). Much of class time will build on your reading and will link to projects and films. More than three unexcused absences will be reported to the administration and put your grade in jeopardy.

The One-Page Essays are places for you to capture your thoughts, practice writing, and prepare for class; in

class, they can serve as a basis for comments and questions. The entries can allow you to test out ideas you are exploring, maybe even serving as your own experiments for paper topics. I encourage you to write, even if only briefly, every time you do some work for the class (before or after class, after reading, or after a project). In addition to this general advice, there are *ten one-page essays* due as part of your participation grade—that is, one per week (allowing for a few crazy weeks!). Turn them in during the week of the material discussed; *Essays submitted late will contribute to a lower Participation grade*. Write a paragraph on one typed page in response to the class material; include your *report* on what you've learned and your *reflections* in response to its facts and interpretations. This type of assignment will also be *a way to make up for excused absences*.

The class-time *Explorations* (EXPs) will be student-led presentations for review of course readings, leadership of discussions, and pursuit of further insights; they are also exercises in the skill of oral communication, and contributions to the learning experience of all course members. The format will vary with the material involved, and with your thoughtful suggestions; in general, please choose small groups for each EXP, choose key readings of about 20 pages for your fellow students, present an overview with your theme(s) about the material, plan discussion questions, and be prepared for more questions.

The work of the *Research Project* will grow during the semester, and these *Writing Steps* on your own research project are separate from the ten One-Page Essays on the shared course material:

-Step 1, One Key Book: during the first month, think of topics and questions related to the course and that you find interesting; you may find a live issue in relation to your life, coursework, major, career goals, or avocational interests. In history, cultural studies and related fields, books are the premier cultural products for good quality research and evaluation; find a book on your topic, one that will help you answer your questions. *Turn in the citation of your book, with a paragraph explanation about why you find it interesting, how it relates to the course, and what it is arguing about your topic.*

-Step 2, The Book in Relation to More Sources: in the next few weeks, use the library and other resources to consult more related texts, including primary and secondary sources, to supplement your book; find at least two of the following: book reviews, journal articles, encyclopedia entries, government documents, web pages, newspapers and magazines, audio-visual material, and/or interviews. *Turn in a one-paragraph statement of the relation of these sources to your book, and how they illuminate your topic and your emerging theme;* and

-Step 3, The Final Paper: In addition to reporting on your topic, be sure to evaluate your sources with expression of your theme, using facts and explanations to support your interpretation. During the last week of classes, *turn in your final written Research Paper of 10 typed pages*—earlier is welcome!

The *Midterms* will be essay questions that ask you to analyze the material of the course. The *Final Exam* will also be in essay format; one part of it will be a “second mid-term” and the other will be comprehensive. To encourage improvement, turn in your earlier writing with each successive writing assignment. In grading oral and written work, I will emphasize your understanding of the material, the persuasiveness of your argument, and your clarity of presentation. Please print on used or two-sided paper and turn it in clipped, without any folders or binders.

All the assignments involve careful thinking and writing. Please see the *American Studies Web Page*, <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/american-studies/>, for many postings designed to help you do your best work in the course and in life in general. In particular, click on Faculty > my name > Teaching, or go directly to <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/american/pcteaching.php> to see the Learning Guides, namely, the guides to learning, research, writing, discussing, speaking, and grading. On the same department web page, at the Learning By Doing link > Work to Learn/Learn to Work, or by going directly to <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/american-studies/worktolearn.php>, see tips on ways to use your Stetson education in preparation for later life and career, and see the American Bar Association's Guide to Legal Education with suggestions about use of an undergraduate education in getting ready for law school, with ideas that also apply to other post-graduate training and job settings. **Blackboard:** This computerized bulletin board will be a place to post course information, including bibliography, web references for class work and research, assignments and requirements, recent updates, and more.

Books for Purchase

-Ted Steinberg, Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History (second edition: 2009)

-Daniel Quinn, Ishmael, An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit

-Thomas Friedman, Hot, Flat, and Crowded : why we need a green revolution-- and how it can renew America (release 2.0, updated and expanded edition, 2009)

-David Orr, The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture, and Human Intention

Schedule of Topics and Readings (the Requirements include assignments to read in preparation for that day)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Requirements</u>
Aug. 18, 7-8	Introduction	What brings you here?
Aug. 19, 3-5	Environmental Analysis	three students groups evaluate course books 1. Steinberg, Preface (ix-xii), Acknowledgements (first and last paragraphs on xv-xvi), Prologue (3-7), and ch. 16 (274-279); 2. Friedman, ch. 3 (49-59); 3. Orr, ch. 2 (13-32)
Aug. 20, 3-5	Environmental Experience www.DeLandHouse.com , http://JacksonWalkerStudio.com/ , ...	Tour de Landscape: walking ‘round town Orr ch. 4 (pp. 43-52)
Aug. 21, 2:30-4:30	Environmental Reflection	film: “Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance” -begin Steinberg, chs. 1-2; http://www.ishmael.org/Education/Parables/SinkingShip.cfm , Quinn, “Sinking Ship”; http://asteroidsclub.org/category/jonathan-haidt/ , Jonathan Haidt’s Asteroid Club comparing the immanent disasters emphasized by different groups; what is the role of nature in our social problems?
Aug. 23	Land and People	Steinberg, chs. 1-2
Aug. 26	Climate, Cotton, and Chattel	Steinberg, ch. 5-6
Aug. 28	Prairie Entrepreneurs and Natives	Steinberg, ch. 8 and ch 9
Aug. 30: NO CLASS	<i>Student-Teacher Meetings</i> , individually or with up to three students, for 15 minutes: W 8/28, Tu 9/3, or W 9/4, 1-5pm in 218 Sampson; please sign up for one meeting	
Sep. 2: NO CLASS for Labor Day		
Sep. 4	Biological Management of Cities	Steinberg, ch. 10; <i>Step 1: One Key Book</i>
Sep. 6	The Industrial Cow	Steinberg, ch. 12
Sep. 9	Out of Sight, ... and then out of mind?	Steinberg, ch. 14; EXP 1
Sep. 11 Media Center 15L	library skills	Librarian Rosie Flowers: searching tips
Sep. 13 Media Center 15L	comparing different texts	Library Project: finding resources
Sep. 16	Go Green—but how?	Steinberg, ch. 15
Sep. 18: NO CLASS FOR VALUES DAY		
Sep. 20	Environmentalism!—right here?	walking tour of campus and begin Quinn, through p. 91 (chs 1-5); <i>Step 2: More Sources</i>
Sep. 23	Adapted For Hollywood	begin <i>Instinct</i> and begin Quinn, pp. 93-184 (chs 6-9)
Sep. 25	Givers and Takers	Quinn, pp. 93-184 (chs 6-9)
Sep. 27	Crazy for Nature	more <i>Instinct</i> and begin Quinn, pp. 185-end (chs 10-13)
Sep. 30	Hunting For Hope	Quinn, pp. 185-end (chs 10-13); EXP 2
Oct. 2	Wealth, Coming and Going	Friedman, Preface, chs 1-2
Oct. 4	Begin Again!—right now	more <i>Instinct</i> and <i>Midterm</i>
Oct. 7	Different Problems, Interrelated	Friedman, chs 4-5
Oct. 9	<i>Student-Teacher Meetings</i> , individually or with up to three students, for 15 minutes: F 10/4, M 10/7, Tu 10/8, 1-5pm in 218 Sampson; please sign up for one meeting	
Oct. 10-13: NO CLASSES	Fall Break: Look For Films for Nov. 1, and explain your suggestion to class, Oct. 14-25	
Oct. 14	Living With Extremes	Friedman, chs 6-7, esp. 138-60, 175-79
Oct. 16: Peter Edelman on Social Justice: What role for the environment?		
Oct. 18	Climate Change: should we deal with its causes or its effects?	Class Debate
Oct. 21	Devastation of the Innocents	Friedman, chs 8-10, esp. 180-198, 219-236
Oct. 23	Environmentalism Meets Artistic Imagination	Mark Dion, “Art and the Environment” and Maya Lin, “What is Missing?”
Oct. 25	Revolution, with technology	Friedman, chs 11-12, esp 249-277
Oct. 28	Enviro Goes to Market	Friedman, ch 14

Oct. 30	Triage	Friedman, chs 15-16, esp. 353-372, 387-396
Nov. 1	What Markets Provide	film, people's choice
Nov. 4	Superpower, from the ground up	Friedman, chs 18-19, esp. 429-436, 456-474
Nov. 6	What Do We Know, and what to build?	Orr, beginning through 12, 33-42, 61-75 (chs 1-2, 3, 6-7)
Nov. 8	Public Problems, and political distractions	Orr, pp. 85-90, 97-127 (chs 9, 11-13)
Nov. 11	Life's Purposes	Orr, pp. 160-186 (chs 18-19); EXP 3
Nov. 13	Problems and Opportunities—for Jobs More info @ Flagler 100	Robin Kazmarek, Director, Career Development; read Orr, pp. 127-159 (chs 14-17)
Nov. 15	Hunting for Hope, with better designs	film: "Next Industrial Revolution"; <i>Step 3:</i> <i>Final Paper due</i>
Nov. 18	Children and Nature, or without nature	Orr, pp. 187-219 (chs 20-21)
Nov. 20-22	Natural Experiments and an educational one: namely, this course	review and exam