

ARTH 4468 and ARTH 7420
Fall 2014
Thursday 3-6 PM, 220 Design Bldg.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ART: CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS LANDSCAPE



Trevor Paglin, *Chemical and Biological Weapons Proving Ground / Dugway UT*
Distance ~ 42 miles; 10:51 a.m., 2006

The worry is not whether the world will end, as in the old model of the *disastron*, but whether the end of the world is already happening, or whether perhaps *it might already have happened*.

Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects*

This upper-level and grad course will consider humans' changing attitudes toward nature and the environment by examining historical and contemporary modes of representing and interacting with the environment (focusing primarily on landscape, and mostly on American landscape), and in particular aesthetic and artistic methods of doing so. This will be done along two tracks. The first comprises historical lectures and student-led discussions of readings throughout the course. The second involves students working on their own projects in the public sphere addressing environmental issues. Students' projects will be inspired by, and reflect the concepts of, track one class material, and be analyzed in historical, aesthetic, and environmental contexts in final project papers.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to address, analyze, and interpret important conceptual themes and historical precedents in contemporary art practice that are interdisciplinary in nature.
2. Students will learn how contemporary artists work in teams and collaborate on field and research work.
3. Students will consider and develop new modes of thinking and creative research to encourage thinking across disciplines and promote collaboration among practitioners.
4. Students will exhibit improved writing, visual literacy, and oral communication skills through weekly reading discussions, project presentations, and final paper.

Text

To be read over the course of the semester and discussed in classes 13-14:

Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn. Press, 2013.

***Additional "Special" Readings

Special readings are REQUIRED and noted for the classes they apply to. These are available as pdf files on the Moodle site for this course. They are listed under particular classes on the Course Schedule. **They are to be read PRIOR to the particular class with which they are listed.**

Requirements and Grading

30% Reading Leading assignments (leadership of class discussion based on mastery of a reading and the determination of key questions)

20% First project

40% Final Project: 20% project contribution, 20% written report (details TBA)

10% Unannounced quiz on readings

Graduate Credit: In addition to the above, graduate students will be required to take the leadership roles in-group projects.

PLUS AND MINUS GRADES

Fall 2015 is the first semester in which the new plus-and-minus grading system is being deployed. Please note that most of your grades will be in the form of letter grades assigned according to the following guidelines:

The letter grade A, including A+ and A-, denotes *distinguished mastery* of the course material.

The letter grade B, including B+ and B-, denotes *good mastery* of the course material.

The letter grade C, including C+ and C-, denotes *acceptable mastery* of the course material.

The letter grade D, including D+ and D-, denotes *minimally acceptable achievement*.

F denotes failure.

Plus or minus grades on particular assignments will be determined by the nature of the assignment and explained in each case.

Attendance and Grading

Attendance counts. Please note LSU regulation.

LSU PS44.R03: “Because class absences are likely to affect a student’s mastery of course content, they may be considered among these “academic considerations” in determining the final course grade. Therefore, instructors, at their discretion, may also include “unexcused” absences as component of the course grade, as long as attendance policies are spelled out clearly in the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester.”

Projects

First project (due October 6)

Work in collaborative groups. Plan an interactive, participatory event in public space that communicates content relevant to the environment. Execute it, document it, and present it on the Internet and in class.

Second project (due December 1)

Work in a collaborative group on a radical media project that explores ideas addressed in the course. Each member of the group should write a report and analysis (10-12 pages) that describes the project, details his or her own role in the project, and interprets it in historical and theoretical terms. Statement is presented as a formal paper. Project and all statements uploaded to an Internet site.

Project work requires living up to your responsibilities and learning to collaborate with every member of your group. Issues encountered during collaboration should be reported to the professor immediately.

COURSE SCHEDULE*

(*Subject to modification during the course of the semester)

Class 1 Part 1: Introduction, terminology, and ancient and contemporary conceptions of landscape.

Part 2: Introduction to Collective Art.

Class 2 Part 1: Rise of “Landscape” Aesthetics in the 18th Century

Part 2: Collectivist Practice as Environmental Art

Readings:

Edmund Burke. “A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful” (1757). Excerpt, 193. From *Land and Environmental Art*. Ed. By Jeffrey Kastner and Brian Wallis. London: Phaidon, 1998.

Uvedale Price. “An Essay on the Picturesque” (1796). Excerpt, 193-94. From *Land and Environmental Art* (as above).

John Brinkerhoff Jackson. “The Word Itself” (1984). Excerpt, 194-95. From *Land and Environmental Art* (as above).

Suzanne Lacy. “Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys,” 19-46. In Lacy, ed. *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1995.

Grant Kester. “Theories and Methods of Collaborative Practice” Parts 1 and 2, 18-28. In *Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art*. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University, 2005.

Class 3 Part 1: American Landscape Painting and the Hudson River School

Part 2: Collectivist Practice as Environmental Art

Readings:

Grant Kester. “Introduction.” In Kester. *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art*. Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 2004.

Part 3: Groups assemble

Class 4 Part 1: Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Park Movement

Part 2: Problems and solutions with New Genre Public Art

Readings:

Robert Smithson. "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape." *Artforum* (Feb. 1973).

Miwon Kwon. "From Site to Community in New Genre Public Art: The Case of 'Culture in Action.'" In Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 100-37. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Class 5 Part 1: Jeff Carney,

Part 2: Project 1 workshop. Students meet in groups with professor. No readings.

Class 6 The Turner Thesis and its Aftermath: Modernists Landscape and the Rise of the Environmental Movement: John Muir. Marsden Hartley, Georgia O'Keeffe, Ansel Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold, and more.

Reading

Henry Nash Smith. "The Myth of the Garden and Turner's Frontier Hypothesis." In *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, 250-60 + notes 295-98.

Class 7 Midterm Projects Due. Class Discussion. No readings.

Class 8 Part 1: Yes Men, *The Yes Men Are Revolting*, 2014, independent film

Part 2: Earthworks in the 1960s and 1970s: from *Silent Spring* to "Back to the Land"

Readings

Tony Smith's Jersey Turnpike Experience 1966 (Group).

Robert Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey.

Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind, *Artforum*, 1968.

Class 9 Part 1 Paul Orr, LEAN

Part 2: Land Art in the late 1970s through the 1990s: Reclamation, Remediation, or Revelation. Helen and Newton Harrison, Agnes Denes, Dominique Mazeaud, Mel Chin, others.

Reading

On line: "Ecovention, Sections 1 and 2." On Greenmuseum.com.
Access at: <http://www.greenmuseum.org/c/ecvention/sect1.html>
And: <http://www.greenmuseum.org/c/ecvention/sect2.html>

Class 10 Eco-Terrorism and Deep Ecology

Readings

Rebecca K. Smith. "'Ecoterrorism'?: A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists." In *Environmental Law* 38 (2) (Spring 2008), pp. 539-76.

Class 11 Open Class

Either another topic will be introduced and readings assigned, or the class will be devoted to another activity as needed.

Class 12 Tech Trash, E-Waste, and New Media Activist Art. Andrea Polli

Readings

Martin Heidegger. "The Question Concerning Technology." In Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans William Lovitt. New York: Garland, 1977. Orig. pub. 1954.

Chris Carroll, "High Tech Trash: Will Your Discarded TV End Up in a Ditch in Ghana?" In *National Geographic* (Jan. 2008).

Leo Hickman. "The Carbon Cost of Googling." In *The Guardian* online blog (Jan. 12, 2009).
Access at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/ethicallivingblog/2009/jan/12/carbon-emissions-google>

Class 13 Recent Approaches

Readings

Amanda Boetzkes. "Introduction." *The Ethics of Earth Art*. Minneapolis, Univ. of Minn. Press, 2010.

William Cronon. "The Trouble With Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." In *Common Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, 69-90. New York: Norton, 1995.

Class 14 Hyperobjects. Discussion of Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects* and Speculative Realism's Focus on the Environment

1. A Quake in Being: An Introduction to Hyperobjects

Part 1 What Are Hyperobjects?

2. Viscosity
3. Nonlocality
4. Temporal Undulation
5. Phasing
6. Interobjectivity

Part 2 The Time of Hyperobjects

7. The End of the World
8. Hypocrisies
9. The Age of Asymmetry

Class 15 Final Project Presentations and discussion.