REVISED SYLLABUS
ENV 201 / JRN 201 / ENG 206

ENVIRONMENTAL MEDIA

PROFESSOR ALLISON CARRUTH

COURSE ESSENTIALS

Lecture
Wednesdays, 9:00-10:20
Precepts
Weekly, 80 minutes in length

OFFICE HOURS

I vary my office hours to accommodate student schedules. Please use the Calendly link below to schedule an appointment in person or on Zoom. For in person meetings, come to Briger Hall, B332: https://calendly.com/allison_carruth. *The teaching assistants will provide office hour information.*

COURSE SCOPE

How do contemporary media convey environmental science, shape environmental values, and interface with environmental movements? To what extent do media practices, platforms, and technologies shape how we imagine and interface with nature, other species, and complex environmental challenges (from the local to the planetary)? And how do different media *mediate* environmental science, ethics and politics ? In taking up these and other questions, the course examines a wide range of media—from documentary to climate modeling, science writing to data visualization, podcasting to animation—as they engage with key issues for environmental studies: biodiversity, climate, water, energy, pollution, foodways, environmental justice, and multispecies justice. The course also considers the ecological dimensions of media technologies—from social media to generative A.I.—and offers students the opportunities to produce environmental media projects of their own design. A foundational course for the ENV minor, the course connects the environmental arts and environmental humanities to media studies and science communication.

COURSE BOOKS

- Christina Gerhardt, *Sea Change: An Atlas of Islands in a Rising Ocean* (2023)
- Aimee Nezhukumatathil, *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments*
- Lauren Redniss, *Heatwave*
- Elizabeth Rush, *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore*

REQUIREMENTS & GRADE BREAKDOWN

Description	Due date	Percentage
Precept attendance and participation* (see below)	Ongoing	15
In-lecture iClicker quizzes, starting in week 3 Lowest 2 scores are dropped	Ongoing	10
Commentaries posted on Canvas (3 total) Write and submit to the Discussion board on Canvas three substantive posts on three separate weeks of the semester between week two and week eleven. To receive full credit, the post must be 1-2 paragraphs of reflection on / analysis about one or more of the week's assigned materials and must be posted by 11:59 pm on Tuesdays.	At least 1 before spring break	20
Collaborative exhibit (teams assigned in precept) Conceptualize, research and curate a contribution to a class digital exhibition of contemporary environmental media. Each team's exhibit will be submitted to a class Commons site. Components to create and submit as a team: ● 4-6 examples of environmental media that share a subject/location from at least two different media outlets / platforms / authors. Up to 2 examples can be from syllabus. ● 50–100-word explanatory captions about each individual example in your exhibit. ● 300–500-word introductory statement for your collection co-authored by the team. ● A bibliography of references cited and consulted.	March 22 (revised deadline)	25
Final environmental media project Dream up an original media project that builds on / responds to one of our assigned weeks on the syllabus. Possible formats for the project include: a photo-essay, an audio documentary or podcast episode, a series of video shorts, a story map, a mixed-media story, etc. You'll spend time in precept developing and workshopping these projects after spring break. The project must be accompanied by a reflective letter (200-300 words). **Interim assignments:** (1) A 1–2-page proposal (due 3/29); (2) rough cut / rough draft shared for peer feedback (due 4/19).	May 13	30

*To receive a **participation grade** in the A-range (A or A-) requires a pattern of meaningful contribution to the discussion community by raising and responding to questions, creating space for others to share their ideas, participating in breakout sessions, and making connections across our course themes and materials. All ideas and perspectives, shared in a spirit of mutual respect, are welcome around our table. **Policy on absences:** In addition to University-approved absences (for illness, religious observance or Varsity athletic competition), you may miss 2 precepts for any reason. Each additional absence will lower the participation grade by 2 points.

SCHEDULE

Lecture	Weekly Topics and Assigned Materials
Week 1 W 1/28 No precept this week	*Course introduction*
Week 2 W 2/4	*Global warming, local reporting: climate media, part 1* ☐ Mike Hulme, "Why We Disagree about Climate Change" (2009) ☐ Eric Klinenberg, "The Seas are Rising, Could Oysters Help?" (2021) ☐ Meera Subramanian, "United in Change" (2019) ☐ LISTEN, *Archival Ecologies*, "In the Burn Zone" (2023)—a Blue Lab podcast
Week 3 W 2/11	*More than a science beat: climate media, part 2* ☐ Rosanna Xia, "To fix climate anxiety (and also climate change) we have to fix individualism" (2024) ☐ Lacy M. Johnson, "How to Mourn a Glacier" (2019) ☐ Lauren Redniss, *Heatwave* (2025)
Week 4 W 2/18	*Environmental media beyond the climate crisis* ☐ "A Town Derailed," photographs by Rebecca Kiger and story by Alejandro de la Garza (2024) ☐ LISTEN "First a Miracle, Then a Curse" (Forever Chemicals), Hazard NJ (2024) ☐ EXPLORE *The Forever Pollution Project* ☐ EXPLORE environment sections of *Economist, Guardian, NPR*, and a media outlet based in/near your hometown
Week 5 W 2/25	*Biodiversity science, wildlife drama: the nature documentary* ☐ IN-LECTURE SCREENING: *My Octopus Teacher* (2020)
Week 6 W 3/4	*"The new nature writing," who it's for and how (or whether) it moves you* ☐ Aimee Nezhukumatathil, *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments* (2020)
3/7-3/15	*Spring recess*
Week 7 W 3/18	*Biodiversity databases, memorials and media campaigns* ☐ EXPLORE: Maya Lin, *What is Missing?* (2009-present) ☐ Nathaniel Rich, "The Mammoth Cometh" (2014) ☐ Matt Reynolds, "Why Bother Bringing Back the Dodo" (2023) ☐ IUCN Red List, "Ivory-Billed Woodpecker"

DEADLINE SUN 3/22 11:59 pm	**Collaborative media exhibit submitted and posted to class Commons site**
Week 8 W 3/25	*Coastal communities, wetland ecologies: blue media, part 1* ☐ Elizabeth Rush, *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore* (2019) READ p. 1-70, p. 113-132; pp. 213-252; READ/SKIM rest of book depending on time you have
DEADLINE SUN 3/29 11:59 pm	**Proposal for final media project submitted to your preceptor by email**
Week 9 W 4/1	*Island communities, open ocean ecologies: blue media, part 2* ☐ WATCH *Blue Planet*, "Open Ocean" episode (2001) ☐ Christina Gerhardt, *Sea Change: An Atlas of Islands in a Rising Ocean* (2023) Browse entire book; then read/view carefully: "Introduction : of oceans and islands" and the following island entries—Greenland, Maldives, Guåhan, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Grenada, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Pine Island
Week 10 W 4/8	*Animated media, environmental stories of technology* ☐ WATCH *The Wild Robot* (2024)
Week 11 W 4/15	*The environmental impacts of media technologies* ☐ Allison Carruth, excerpt from *Novel Ecologies* (2025) ☐ GPTFootprint: Increasing Consumer Awareness of the Environmental Impacts of LLMs, Vitus Larrieu, UG '26, Trace Zhang, UG '26, Nora Graves, UG '26 ☐ GPTFootprint: Increasing Consumer Awareness of the Environmental Impacts of LLMs
DEADLINE SUN 4/19 11:59 pm	**Rough cut/rough draft collaborative media exhibit submitted on Canvas for peer review in precept during Week 11**
Week 12 W 4/22	*Course synthesis* ☐ WATCH *The Hottest August,* dir. by Brett Story dir. (2019)
DEADLINE WED 5/13 7:00 pm	**Final media project submitted on Canvas (this is the deadline set by the Registrar for our course's final assessment)**

PHYSICAL BOOKS

When one of the required texts is assigned on the syllabus, please have the print book with you for the lectures and precept that week.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Intellectual honesty is vital for meaningful discovery and learning and for the fair evaluation of academic work. Princeton students are expected to acknowledge all sources for assigned work, adhere to each course's specific collaboration policies and not seek an unfair advantage over other students. For details and resources visit the Princeton Honor System website: https://ua.princeton.edu/contents/undergraduate-honor-system.

AI / GAI POLICY FOR THIS CLASS

Princeton has established three university-wide policies for student use of AI in preparing for classes and completing coursework: "1) it is impermissible for students to submit AI-generated output to fulfill an academic assignment and represent it as their own work (RRR 2.4.6); 2) it is the role of the course instructor(s) to determine what is allowable and what isn't within the context of the class and; 3) when students use GenAI products in one of the permitted ways, they are required to disclose that use." **In this course,** you may use Generative AI (GAI) tools to support your work in preparing for or researching an assignment. If you do make use of GAI, quote any output that you include in the final assignment(s) with appropriate citation. In addition, include a cover letter with the assignment in which you describe how you used the tool and include both the entire text of your prompt(s) and the corresponding output(s).

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have any approved accommodations, please let me know early in the semester and before relevant deadlines. Princeton students are required to register with the Office of Disability Services (ods@princeton.edu; 258-8840) for disability and academic accommodations.

STUDENT RESOURCES

- Carl A. Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding: http://fieldscenter.princeton.edu/other
- Inclusive Princeton Listing of Campus Centers and Student Resources: https://inclusive.princeton.edu/community/campus-centers-offices
- Counseling & Psychological Services: https://uhs.princeton.edu/counseling-psychological-services
- McGraw Center Digital Learning Lab: https://mcgraw.princeton.edu/
- Office of Disability Services: https://ods.princeton.edu/
- Office of Undergraduate Research: http://undergraduateresearch.princeton.edu
- Reference Librarians: http://library.princeton.edu/hours/information
- Writing Center: http://writing.princeton.edu/center
- University Health Services and mental health support: https://uhs.princeton.edu

LETTER GRADE RANGES

The course uses the standard Princeton letter grade criteria corresponding to these percentage ranges. Final grades are not rounded up. To receive an "A," the final percentage must be at least 94.0 (a grade of 93.8, for example, would receive an "A-").

Letter Grade	Range
A+	100% to 97%
A	< 97% to 94%
A-	< 94% to 90%
B+	< 90% to 87%
B	< 87% to 84%
B-	< 84% to 80%
C+	< 80% to 77%
C	< 77% to 74%
C-	< 74% to 70%
D	< 70% to 60%
F	< 60% to 0%