American iconography has conjured many images and narratives surrounding the natural world since colonial encounter. These have served various functions, producing the “pristine,” the “primitive,” a “state of nature,” a “scary wilderness” to be tamed or avoided, a vessel for indigenous knowledge, and an admired place of natural wonder. This course interrogates the question of nature, the politics of environmentalism, and the dissemination of images and ideas that we (people and scholars) face when discussing the natural. From resource exploitation to everyday sustenance, to global conservation movements, different strategies are formed that rely on particular understandings of what nature is, and more precisely, what it should be.

This course situates itself within environmental and visual anthropology, political ecology, media studies, and socio-environmental thought. Students will review Latin American cases, both ethnographic and historical, to illuminate how nature has been imagined and the socio-political consequences of those various treatments of nature. Through image, film, and media analysis, review of social and environmental theory, and political and ecological history in Latin America, students will lead engaged discussions and analyze forms of socio-environmental interaction in order to rethink nature as a site of conflict, controversy, wonder; and, as inherently entangled within scholarly understandings of Latin American history.
Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

Students will:

- Conduct discussion-based seminars and critically engage with key theoretical, historical, political, and socioeconomic issues
- Exercise public speaking, communication, and presentation skills
- Critically engage with systemic inequalities, injustices, and familiar problems within postcolonial life
- Understand how literature and film or other “arts” and humanities contribute to social science
- Gain a comprehensive understanding of critical (developmental and environmental) issues for everyday life in Latin America, informed by empirical case studies, artistic exploration, and theoretical engagement
- Practice research and writing skills, interpreting an array of texts and visual media
- Profoundly engage with social and critical theory
- Build an understanding of visual methods, political ecology, environmental and visual anthropology (from both regional case studies and theoretical/interpretive overviews), conservation social science, debates over land use/rights, and various perspectives on nature
- Understand and practice experimental ethnography, ethnographic storytelling, photography, and ethnographically engaged creative work
Grading and Assignments:

Assessments are split into four quarters (25% each) and the total represents the final grade:

1. **Reflection papers (10)** (one page or approx. 300 words min.) and two additional reflections as “skips” or extra credit. These reflections can also be shared with the class if desired as collaborative work or a presentation (to be discussed). They serve as opportunities for you to share ideas, explore the themes within the readings, and demonstrate your knowledge of what was covered during the week. You should be able to summarize and offer your own critical perspective on the readings. Do the same for the films (if you choose to reflect on those) and remember to contextualize and refer to class themes. You may reflect upon films, readings, discussions, personal experiences, case studies, or approved outside work/research. Do not forget your name, date, and assignment title on everything! **Turn in your work through the Canvas “Assignment” module as marked on the syllabus. Make sure it’s a doc attachment, not a chat/posting.**

2. **Participation.** This consists of attendance, in-class discussion, preparation, and (importantly) your facilitating presentations. Please take notes and come to class prepared with your readings printed for discussion. Each student will complete one presentation on a topic they choose. Please complete 2 if working in pairs or groups of 3. Summarize the main ideas/arguments within the chosen topic, critically reflect and offer your own opinion based upon class themes, be creative, provide appropriate visuals and engage with the class through discussion questions or other means. These can be approx. 15 min. PowerPoints are strongly encouraged but you’re also welcome to think outside the box (i.e., organize a debate, activity, something creative and intellectually stimulating).

3. **Environmental Justice/Advocacy Editorial** (2-4 pages/1500 words, and references) and **Presentation** (at least 10 min with 5 min Q and A): Create an engaged editorial or advocacy piece that presents a case study and point of view with immediate relevant concern. This can be any topic related to environmental politics broadly defined. Feel free to use visual substance, creative writing, an imaginary author or audience (like an advocacy letter to an authority figure) and references that demonstrate thorough research and understanding of critical analysis of everyday life, environmental justice, and political ecology. These editorials or advocacy letters should demonstrate creativity in their written and visual components, insightful ethnographic analysis in the reference component, and a unique perspective or argument throughout. Use the opportunity (unlike in the final) to speak/write in a different (less academic) voice.

4. **Final Research / Archival Paper or Critical Ethnography / Applied Political Ecology Report.** You will write a 10–12-page, approx. 3000 words min. (word count excludes references and appendices), double-spaced research paper with an appropriate use of referencing and academic format (please see rubric below). Students choose their own topics and make an office hours appointment to review. For ethnography: we will discuss and practice in person, but you will incorporate original qualitative data (like observations, interviews, grey literature, mixed participatory methods, visual
exercises and so on) into an argument that is informed by a thorough research essay. Due December 11th by 11:59pm.

Mandatory Texts:


Films/Links (**Recommended for Class/Watch or Finish at Home):

**The Salt of the Earth (2014) (via Amazon Prime)
**Araya (1959) Venezaula/France (via Kanopy)
**Lifting the Green Screen (Tras el Velo Verde) (2020) US/Costa Rica
  https://vimeo.com/380129281
  Password: GreenScreen19!
**Wild Wealth: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsAiKk7w9sE
** (choose) Edward Burtynsky: Ted Talk on Manufactured Landscapes: (via YouTube)
  Full Film, Manufactured Landscapes (2006): (via Amazon Prime)
  Anthropocene: The Human Epoch (2019) (via Amazon Prime)
  And... Watermark (2013)
**The 11th Hour (2007) US (via Amazon Prime)
**(choose) Experimental Documentary:
  Koyaanisqatsi (1982) US
  Chronos (1985) US
  Powaqatsi (1988) US
  Baraka (1992) US
  Naqoyqatsi (2002) US
  Samsara (2011) US
** (choose) Patricio Guzmán:
  Nostalgia for the Light (2010) Chile
  The Pearl Button (2015) Chile
  Cordillera of Dreams (2019) Chile

Also...
  The Territory (2002) US/Brazil
  River of Gold (2016) US/Peru
  Andes Mágicos (2019) Various/South American
  When Two Worlds Collide (2016) Peru
  The Sacred Science (2011) Peru
  The Mirror of the Spirit (2010) Peru/Brazil

Nature/Society Resources and Ideas:
https://culanth.org/fieldsights/citation-matters-an-updated-reading-list-for-a-progressive-environmental-anthropology

https://ilas.columbia.edu/content/nature-society-program
https://nacla.org/article/globalization-latin-american-media

https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.energy.29.102403.140729

Denaturalizing Nature

Open letter to Waldron et al.
https://openlettertowaldronetal.wordpress.com/

Assembling the Baroque
http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/cresc/workingpapers/wp109.pdf

Good sources for environmental anthropology:
https://culanth.org/fieldsights/citation-matters-an-updated-reading-list-for-a-progressive-environmental-anthropology

Foundations:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH-q7uvGHlo

Environmental anthropology (short):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaEncGWkn-Q
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ywvdp0gayrE

Environmental anthropology (Long):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kOdVJeelNc

Critical Political Ecology:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAWfggb1ezw

Intro to doing anthropology and fieldwork:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhCruPBvSjQ

Where non-human politics and environmental justice meet:
https://culanth.org/fieldsights/settler-atmospherics

de la Cadena, Uncommoning Nature. World making through the divisions between humans and non-humans:
http://supercommunity.e-flux.com/texts/uncommoning-nature/

A story of the anthropocene:
http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2015/03/22/the-inhuman-anthropocene/

Useful Information:

- Feedback is critically important. Please do come to office hours and make an appointment. I expect to see each student at least twice. It’s critical for your progress and in preparation for the final research paper. You must show initiative and come prepared with questions.
• Students should maintain an understanding of UF policies, the honor code, academic integrity, and how to conduct class participation and effective communication in appropriate ways that always contribute to general wellbeing and add to the productive academic atmosphere.

• Late policy: Please notify ahead of time and explain the circumstances, giving an appropriate reason. Late work can be accepted with an appropriate reason, although, in most cases, full credit won’t be possible with a late penalty.

• This class conforms to UF Attendance Policies: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#illnesspolicytext

• University Police: The UF police are together for a safe campus. Phone: 392-111 (911 for emergencies) http://www.police.ufl.edu

• Career Connections Center: (352-392-1601 | CareerCenterMarketing@ufsa.ufl.edu) connects job seekers with employers and offers guidance to enrich your collegiate experience and prepare you for life after graduation.

• Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575) provides counseling and support as well as crisis and wellness services including a variety of workshops throughout the semester (e.g., Yappy Hour, Relaxation and Resilience).

• Dean of Students Office (352-392-1261) provides a variety of services to students and families, including Field and Fork (UF’s Food Pantry) and New Student and Family programs

• Disability Resource Center(DRCaccessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu | 352-392-8565) helps to provide an accessible learning environment for all by providing support services and facilitating accommodations, which may vary from course to course. Once registered with DRC, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

• Multicultural and Diversity Affairs (352-294-7850) celebrates and empowers diverse communities and advocates for an inclusive campus.

• Office of Student Veteran Services (352-294-2948 | vacounselor@ufl.edu) assists student military veterans with access to benefits.

ONE.UF is the home of all the student self-service applications, including access to:

- _Bursar_ (352-392-0181)
- _Financial Aid_ (352-392-1275)
- _Registrar_ (352-392-1374)

Academic Skills Development

• Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication 402 Rolfs Hall (341 Buckman Drive) Telephone: 352 392 5421 · Website: go.ufl.edu/cwoc

• Writing Studio 2215 Turlington Hall (330 Newell Drive) Telephone: 352 846 1138 · Website: go.ufl.edu/write

• UF Office of Research 460 Grinter Hall (1523 Union Road) Telephone: 352 392 1582 · Website: go.ufl.edu/research

• Research Integrity at UF Office of Research 460 Grinter Hall (1523 Union Road) Telephone: 352 273 3052 · Website: go.ufl.edu/integrity
Schedule

***Nature, Environmentalism, and Images***

**Week 1 (8/23): Course Intro!**

**Discussion:** Questioning the representation of nature and people in a postcolonial context

*Wild Wealth:* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsAiKk7w9sE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsAiKk7w9sE)

**Introductions:** Review the syllabus, presentation assignments, questions, overview

**Recommended:**
- Latin American photographers (good list) [https://remezcla.com/lists/culture/iconic-latin-american-photographers/](https://remezcla.com/lists/culture/iconic-latin-american-photographers/)

**Week 2 (8/30): Environmentalism, Perspectives, and History**

**DUE:** Reflection 1

**Discussion:** Guha, Ramachandra. 2000. *Environmentalism: A Global History*; and Salgado’s documentary

**Watch at home:** Salgado’s documentary, *Salt of the Earth*

**Read:** “Preface (editor),” “Preface (author),” and “Part One” pp 1-62 in Guha (2000)

**Recommended:**
- [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/30/world/europe/german-forest-ranger-finds-that-trees-have-social-networks-too.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/30/world/europe/german-forest-ranger-finds-that-trees-have-social-networks-too.html)

**Week 3 (9/6): Environmentalism, Perspectives and History - Part Two**

**DUE:** Reflection 2

**Discussion:** Guha, Ramachandra. 2000. *Environmentalism: A Global History*; and new approaches (or any approach)

Recommended: Towards ethnography and nuancing perspectives on nature
- de la Cadena, Uncommoning Nature. World making through the divisions between humans and non-humans: http://supercommunity.e-flux.com/texts/uncommoning-nature/
- A story of the anthropocene: http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2015/03/22/the-inhuman-anthropocene/
- Carole McGranahan post: https://savageminds.org/2012/05/31/what-makes-something-ethnographic/

Week 4 (9/13): Conservation and Conflict, Making an Image
DUE: Reflection 3
Discussion: Scientific mainstream and alarmist narratives, problematizing the call to action, introducing ethnography and visual methods
Watch at home: The 11th Hour

Read: Nugent, Steven. 1995. Big Mouth: The Amazon Speaks (excerpts)
Read: “Introduction,” in Ethnographies of Conservation: Environmentalism and the Distribution of Privilege

Recommended:
- Ch 1; Ch 2; and Ch 11; in Anderson and Berglund (eds.) 2003. Ethnographies of Conservation: Environmentalism and the Distribution of Privilege

Week 5 (9/20): Conservation and Conflict, Making an Image (part two)
DUE: Reflection 4
Discussion: Another side to scientific mainstream and environmentalist narratives, problematizing the call to action, introducing ethnography and visual methods

Read: Martinez-Alier excerpts from “Environmentalism of the Poor” and “Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South” (with Guha)
Read: Cymene Howe, 2019, Ecologics: Wind and Power in the Anthropocene (excerpts)

Recommended:

Week 6 (9/27): Conservation and Conflict, Making an Image (part three)
DUE: Reflection 5
Discussion: Scoping Environmentalism
Watch at home: One of Burtynsky’s films, either Anthropocene: The Human Epoch or Manufactured Landscapes
Read: Carrier and West (eds.) *Virtualism, Governance, and Practice: Vision and Execution in Environmental Conservation* (excerpts)
Read: Vivanco 2002, “Seeing Green: Knowing and Saving the Environment on Film”
Read: Marcone 2015, “Filming the Emergence of Popular Environmentalism in Latin America: Postcolonialism and Buen Vivir”

Recommended:
- Goodman et.al. “Spectacular Environmentalisms”

**Week 7 (10/4): Ethnographic Portrait, Encounters with the Nonhuman**
DUE: Reflection 6
Discussion: Living with nature (and each other)?

Read: Büscher and Fletcher “Towards Convivial Conservation”
Read: Raffles, Hugh. 2002. Excerpts from *In Amazonia*
Read: Law and Lien “Denaturalizing Nature” Lecture

Recommended:
- “After Nature: Steps to an Anti-essentialist Political Ecology” Escobar
- Taussig, Michael. 2004. Excerpts from *My Cocaine Museum*

**Week 8 (10/11): Applied and Postmodern Approaches**
DUE: Reflection 7
Discussion: Thinking through Critique (and Critiquing through Thought)
Watch at home: *Araya*

Read: Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, *The Ends of the World* (excerpt)
Read: Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (excerpt)
Read: Bond, *Negative Ecologies: Fossil Fuels and the Discovery of the Environment* (excerpt)

Recommended:

***Nature, Ethnography, Commodification, and Decolonialism***

**Week 9 (10/18): Globalization and Environmental Narratives**
DUE: Reflection 8
Discussion: World Systems, Dependance Theory, Historical Materialism and Political Economy/Ecology

Watch at home: One (or more) of the experimental documentaries


Recommended:

Week 10 (10/25): Commodity and Postcolonial Spaces
DUE: Reflection 9
Discussion: Taussig, ethnography in Colombia, history and violence and commodities

Read: Taussig, (1980) The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America (excerpts)

Recommended:
- Moore, “Ch 6,” and Wilk, “Ch 9,” in Rethinking Environmental History

Week 11 (11/1): The Costa Rican Case
DUE: Reflection 10
Discussion: Ecotourism, Commodification, and Costa Rica
Watch at home: Lifting the Green Screen
trailer to my ethnographic doc: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtiRmkH4Pg8
A link to watch the whole film: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/380129281
Password: GreenScreen19!

Read: Fletcher, Dowd-Uribe, and Aistara eds., Ecolaboratory: Environmental Governance and Economic Development in Costa Rica (excerpts)
Read: Perfecto and Vandermeer, Breakfast of Biodiversity: The Truth about Rain Forest Destruction (excerpts), including “Forward” by Shiva
Read: Cuello et. al., “Costa Rica: Corcovado National Park,” in Parks in Peril: People, Politics, and Protected Areas

Recommended:
• Horton, *Grassroots Struggles for Sustainability in Central America* (excerpts)
• Korsant, “A Freirean Ecopedagogy or an Imposition of Values? The Pluriverse and the Politics of Environmental Education”

**Week 12 (11/8): Altery and Naming Our Current State of Affairs**

**DUE:** Reflection 11

**Discussion:** Alternative (and subversive) ways of being and understanding the world


**Read:** Haraway, Donna. *Staying with the Trouble* (excerpts)

**Read:** Gudynas 2011, “Buen Vivir: Today’s Tomorrow”

**Recommended:**
- Strassler excerpts, “Demanding Images”
- *Latinx Environmentalisms* (excerpts)


**DUE:** Reflection 12

**Watch at Home:** one Guzmán documentary from list (or more) (*The Pearl Button* is especially relevant with Ogden’s work)

**Discussion:** Ogden, Laura. 2021. *Loss and Wonder at the World’s End*

**Read:** Ogden (2021)

**Recommended:**
- TBD

**Week 14 (11/22): NO CLASS**

**Watch at home:** Any other film from list or propose a substitute

**Recommended:**
- Garcia Marquez: “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings,” and “The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World”

**Week 15 (11/29): Ethnographic Insights: Decoloniality and Extraction**

**DUE:** Student Presentations

**Discussion:** Gómez-Barris, Macarena. 2017. *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*

**Read:** Gómez-Barris (2017)
**Recommended:**
- TBD

**Week 16 (12/6): Conclusions...**
**DUE: Student Presentations**
**Discussion:** Final thoughts, presentations, reflections, and discussion

**Recommended:**
- TBD

**DUE: Final Essays: Mon. Dec. 11!!**
**Research Essay Writing Rubric**

**Structure:** Student shows evidence of knowing how to write an academic essay. There is an introduction, body, and conclusion. References are provided and there are clear links between the paragraphs that show an argument supported by facts that are situated in the literature/research.  
**HINT:** Beginning, middle, and end!

**Argument:** The student makes a point. The information provided is clearly presented towards a particular purpose that is presented as a thesis/main argument/main idea. The reader should understand why the information is presented as it supports the claims of the essay. The argument should also be situated within relevant debates and literature covered by the topic.  
**HINT:** Don’t just mirror one author’s argument… tell us why thinking or analyzing something in a particular way is important and show us how your thinking (on whatever your topic is) is original.

**Style:** The writing is clear! The reader understands what is being said and why. The statements clearly support each other and logically connect. The information supports the main argument and is focused. Referencing codes are uniform and well done.  
**HINT:** If English is your second language (or not your native language), you will not be marked down for grammar and punctuation. The effort, meaning, intention of what you want to say will be clear enough from the originality of the work.  
**HINT:** Avoid cliché. Avoid slang and colloquial terms and metaphors with multiple interpretations (i.e., it should be very clear to the reader how points are to be interpreted).

**Research:** Students demonstrate depth of knowledge and clear engagement with the topic(s). A combination of sources is sought (e.g., ethnographic, peer-reviewed, public scholarship, grey literature). When quotes are used, they are clearly presented in order to advance the argument. References are used in proper context (i.e., one author’s anecdote is not confused with her main point, and so on).  
**HINT:** Think you have enough sources? Get more! Keep reading…

**Effort and Originality:** The student’s voice clearly comes through regardless of writing style or structure of the work. The student has worked hard and exceeded requirements. Here, points are normally returned for hard work and thorough research, even if (or especially when) the arg./writing is not clear.  
**HINT:** What do you think?! And… write about something you want to know more about.

**A:** Excellent work. The argument is original and well-crafted. Research is vast and well-presented and thoughtful. The assignment guidelines have been exceeded here, and the student has done more work than requested. The student has found many peer-reviewed sources and has demonstrated their relationship to the course material.
Ultimately, all elements (argument, style, structure, research, effort/originality) are demonstrated in high quality.

**A-**: Great work. Normally, these essays require a more thoughtful explanation and engagement with the text. The argument can be developed further. Although all requirements are exceeded (writing is very clear, references are good and plentiful, the topic is mastered, and strong effort present) the examples and/or argument is too obvious and could benefit from more originality.

**B+**: Great work but needs more of an argument. Add more details, specificity, and explanation. More time and effort and attention to detail and use of research sources usually pushes these into the A range. The arg. must be made clearer – don’t make the reader guess your point!

**B**: Good/OK. All elements (arg., structure, style, research, effort/originality) are there but they are undeveloped. Argument is poorly stated or difficult to follow (if it exists). These essays tend to have good structure and basic understanding of the topic but are unclearly written and poorly focused. They benefit from a better outline, clearer connection between the evidence and main idea, more details and specificity, and more explanation of ideas rather than moving along to the next one. Similarly, paragraphs lack coherent connection to one another.

**B-**: There is some sense of an essay structure, but elements are missing (e.g., no conclusion, introduction introduces things unsaid or not relevant, bad referencing, so on). These essays are not clearly written and not focused, but there is evidence of structure, research, some knowledge, attempting the assignment, and presenting information in an academic manner.

**C (−/+)**, **meets all requirements but not well-executed**: Student provides referencing, but it’s not well done. No argument, and difficult to follow the student’s thinking – writing is unclear. Effort and originality are lacking. Or, if there is originality, it doesn’t follow any logic and wanders off topic (meaning thinking is unclear, no evidence of research, and no focus). These essays may read more like a blog posting than a formal essay. Without peer-reviewed sources or with too much reliance on internet-based sources, it remains difficult to see evidence of knowledge and thorough research.

**D (−/+)**, **poor quality essay**: Student completed the assignment, but with poor quality. Minimums were met and there is evidence of a valid attempt to complete the task, but none of the aspects of a good essay are present: no essay structure or focus, non-existent argument, unclear writing, no meaningful example that the student understands the topics at hand, no reference section or lack of sources.

**F/Not a valid attempt/plagiarism (even by accident)**: Sufficient evidence of cheating or plagiarism of any kind. Even if not warranting a formal accusation, copy/pasting, and relying too much on internet sources, and, ultimately, evidence of higher than 45% of unoriginal text (not in quotation marks) is not a valid attempt to complete the assignment, for example. Essays that are drastically below the minimum required for the assignment also demonstrate evidence for not completing or even attempting to complete the task.
Reference Material (on going):


