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EVST 295.01: Special Topics - History of Wilderness Policy and Concepts

Bethany Swanson

University of Montana, Missoula, bethany.swanson@umontana.edu

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EVST 295: Special Topics
“History of Wilderness Policy and Concepts”
Environmental Studies Department
University of Montana
FALL, 2008

M/W/F, 10:10-11:00, JRH Rm. 204

Bethany Swanson, M.S.

*With Co-Instructor Pat Williams (Former Congressman & Senior Fellow @ UM's Center for the Rocky Mountain West)

Email: bethany.swanson@mso.umt.edu

Office Hours: M 11:00-12:00 & W 11:00-1:00, or by appointment

Office Phone: 406.243.4660

Office: JRH 101

Pat Williams

Center for the Rocky Mountain West (in the Old Milwaukee Station under the Higgins Bridge)

Email: WilliamsP@mso.umt.edu

Office Hours: Please feel free to call or email for an appointment

Office Phone: 406.243.7700

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to introduce and examine the history and policy of Wilderness designation including a review of the congressional process in the designation of Wilderness on federal land as well as the philosophy behind the wilderness concept. The course will utilize local examples from Montana as a context to provide students with a multi-dimensional and well rounded perspective on wilderness issues.

Course Objectives:

- ❖ Examine the history of both “wilderness” and Wilderness in the United States.
- ❖ Understand the policy involved in designating land as Wilderness.
- ❖ Utilize local (as in the state of Montana) examples to discuss and debate contemporary wilderness issues.
- ❖ Meet with Wilderness specialists to gain insight into the processes and philosophies associated with wilderness issues.
- ❖ Critically consider and articulate philosophical positions relating to wilderness through readings, group discussions in class (and hopefully out of class) and meetings with guest speakers.
- ❖ A working understanding of the policy and politics that precede the votes for or against Wilderness in the U.S. Congress.

Text:

Readings will be distributed via E-RES or in class.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADED WORK

❖ **SHOW UP AND PARTICIPATE** (10%)

This is a critical part of your course experience- We will be paying attention (i.e. taking roll). If you come and you've done the work this part of your grade is a no-brainer. If you are consistently missing or late OR you haven't done the work (we can usually tell) you'll be missing out on easy points. We're hoping you'll enjoy this class and want to come. Please keep in mind, we are reasonable people. If you can't make it to class please let me know: call or email and we'll chat. Having said that, if your absence becomes chronic or is unreasonable, it will be reflected in your grade.

❖ **WEEKLY JOURNAL RESPONSES** (40%)

Beginning September 25th, and every Monday of the semester thereafter, we will present a "Response" assignment at the beginning of class. They will be due at the beginning of each Friday's class period. These assignments will have a variety of formats, but will always entail a thoughtful, thorough and informed written response to a prompt. These assignments are designed to assess your engagement with the course and encourage you to grapple with various questions and issues that arise.

DUE: Every Friday at the beginning of class

❖ **LEADING CLASS DISCUSSION** (10%)

During the course of the semester you and a partner of your choice will be responsible for leading one class discussion. You will be expected to come to class prepared to engage your classmates and me with at least three discussion questions and/or a class exercise. We will pass around a sign-up sheet soon....

DUE: When you sign up

❖ **THE PAPER** (40%)

On principle, we don't believe in final exams: most of the time they're an unhealthy, unrealistic and counterproductive paradigm imposed on students by a rigid and formal academic bureaucracy. So instead of working yourself into a sleep-deprived, zombiesque stupor during the last few weeks of class, you will be working on this paper throughout the semester. Each of you will be choosing a Wilderness area in the Rocky Mountain West and writing a VERY thorough, thoughtful, insightful, informed, well-written and presented paper. This assignment is a work in progress- as we cover new concepts and materials you will add to your paper. Thus, in addition to the assignments above, you will be expected to turn in several rough drafts of THE PAPER. We will provide a very detailed timeline and description of this assignment. The point of this paper is not to torture you, rather it is an opportunity for you to hone your writing skills and produce work that you are proud of.

DUE DATES: TBA

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance:

We expect you to be here, we expect you to be on time and we expect you to be prepared. We will be keeping track. However, as we mentioned earlier, we know that as students you juggle a lot and my class is not the end all, be all. Just come, talk to us and be honest. We will understand.

Minimizing Impact:

We should strive to be conscious in our academic (and other) pursuits. Please double-side all assignments, avoid unnecessary cover pages and recycle/reuse paper.

Readings:

We will pull the readings for this course from a wide variety of sources. You'll find the readings posted on the University's E-Res system. Please come to us or speak with a library attendant if you have any questions about accessing E-Res. Our password on E-Res will be "Wilderness." In the interest of class flow and adaptability, I will be posting readings on E-Res every two weeks, rather than all at once. We may also be inclined to hand out readings during class.

Classroom Climate:

We expect our classroom climate to be fundamentally rooted in RESPECT. As the class facilitators, we will do my best to uphold an atmosphere in which people feel safe to express their opinions and concerns, regardless of their differences or alternative viewpoints. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. If, at any time, you feel disrespected, please come talk to us.

Participation:

You are expected to complete the readings and assignments and participate in class. Class will be facilitated based on that expectation. We understand that not everyone is inclined to speak out regularly during class discussions. Do your best. We expect everyone to participate in some capacity to the best of their ability.

Make-Up Work:

We understand the need for make-up work. However, you will have a narrow window in which to do so. In general, a missed assignment is due the very next class period and will receive less credit when handed in late. Again, we am reasonable and if you need to make up work, talk to us about it.

Questions & Concerns:

Just to reiterate: please come talk to us! We can discuss any questions and/or concerns you have regarding class assignments, course material, grades, your future, whatever you need to talk about; it's literally one of our favorite parts of teaching. If our office hours don't work for you, we'll find the time.

Guest Speakers:

We're going to try to bring in a variety of guest speakers this semester. Their perspectives and expertise are extremely edifying. Please remember, they are taking time out of their busy schedules and you are expected to pay them the utmost respect. Furthermore, your "Show up and Participate" grade will be enhanced by engaging speakers with good questions.

DAY TO DAY in EVST 295

***Warning:** What follows is a general framework of readings is subject to change and will most likely be amended. We approach this aspect of coursework a little differently than you may be used to. **Your specific daily readings for this course will be posted on E-Res as well as delineated in class at least two weeks in advance (EVST 295.02, password: wilderness.)** A key element of our teaching philosophy is to remain responsive and adaptable to your needs and desires for this class. In approaching your assigned reading this way, We're hoping to adapt the coursework to our progress. There are more readings associated with this course than we could possibly get through in one semester. We want to ensure that the assigned readings are as pertinent as possible. As we carry on, we're open to suggestions. This is *our* class and we want the atmosphere to feel democratic. We're always interested in your ideas and we encourage you to take charge of your education.

August 25	M	Introductions, Overview of Course and Syllabus
August 27	W	What is Wilderness? Readings: Nash, Roderick. <i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i> , "Prologue." Snyder, Gary. <i>Practice of the Wild</i> , "The Etiquette of Freedom."
August 29	F	The Idea of Wilderness Readings: Oelschlaeger, Max. <i>The Idea of Wilderness</i> , "Chapter One: The Idea of Wilderness."
September 1	M	NO CLASS- LABOR DAY <i>Go play outside!!!</i>
September 3	W	Historical Perspectives of Wilderness- Colonial Readings: Nash, Roderick. <i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i> , "Chapter Two: A Wilderness Condition."
September 5	F	Historical Perspectives of Wilderness- Romantics and Transcendentalists Readings: Nash, Roderick. <i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i> , "Chapter Three: The Romantic Wilderness." Nash, Roderick. <i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i> , "Chapter Five: Henry David Thoreau- Philosopher."
September 8	M	Historical Perspectives of Wilderness- Nationalism and Imagery of American Wilderness
September 10	W	Historical Perspectives of Wilderness- Qualities and Characteristics
September 12	F	The Wilderness Act, Part One
September 15	M	The Wilderness Act, Part Two

September 17	W	Guest Lecturer Pat Williams- Congressional Process
September 19	F	Guest Lecturer Pat Williams- Congressional Process
September 22	M	American Public Lands Management, Part One
September 24	W	American Public Lands Management, Part Two
September 26	F	Wilderness Organized: The American Environmental Movement
September 29	M	Conservation vs. Preservation
October 1	W	Faces of Wilderness
October 3	F	OPTIONAL: Field Trip to the Rattlesnake Wilderness & Potluck * More information to follow.....
October 6	M	Introduction to Montana Wilderness
October 8	W	Montana Wilderness: A Case Study
October 10	F	Contemporary Wilderness Management
October 13	M	Pat Williams- Congressional Process, cont'd
October 15	W	Pat Williams's Wilderness Story, 1 st Installment
October 17	F	Pat Williams's Wilderness Story, 2 nd . Installment
October 20	M	Guest Speaker- TBA
October 22	W	Guest Speaker- TBA
October 24	F	Guest Speaker- TBA
October 27	M	Conservation Strategies
October 29	W	What's the Difference?- Wilderness, National Parks, Disney Land
October 31	F	WILDERNESS FUN AND GAMES
November 3	M	Wilderness Critiqued, Part One Cronan's article
November 5	W	Wilderness Critiqued, Part Two Response to Cronan's article

November 7	F	Wilderness and Recreation
November 10	M	Loving Wilderness to Death
November 12	W	Cities in the Wilderness
November 14	F	Wilderness and Media
November 17	M	Guest Speaker: Anti-Wilderness
November 19	W	Wilderness and Wildness
November 21	F	Dispossessing Wilderness- A Native American Perspective
November 24	M	Third World Critique of Wilderness
November 26	W	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
November 28	F	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
December 1	M	Final Presentations
December 3	W	Final Presentations
December 5	F	Final Presentations
December 8	M	FINALS
December 10	W	FINALS
December 12	F	FINALS

UM Academic Honesty Policy:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Cod, which is available for review online: www.umt.edu/SA/VP/SA/index.cfm/page/2585.