

ENVS392: Nature, Culture, Technology
Spring 2008
Office Hours:
Mondays 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Tuesdays 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
and by appointment

Dr. Tendai Chitewere

257 Burk Hall • 415-405-2676 • tendai@sfsu.edu

***Course Description:** Nature, Culture and Technology is a course designed to explore the interdisciplinary perspectives that are attempting to understanding the current local and global environmental crisis. This course analyzes the ways in which various technologies affect in our everyday lives and specifically, how new and old technologies are both a cause and response to environmental degradation. We will explore the history of key concepts such as nature and culture, and consider debates in the fields of development, biotechnology, and organic farming. We will examine several broad areas that demonstrate the interconnections between nature, culture, and technology and consider how local populations are impacting and impacted by emerging technologies including the relationships between race, class, and gender, local and global landscapes. In the process, we will critically study the emergence of green technology and examine the social, cultural, and environmental implications of this growing trend.*

Course Objectives:

- i) to introduce students to the interdisciplinary study of the environment through the discourse of nature, culture and technology;
- ii) to explore and critically analyze the ways these concepts are used to inform and define environmental sustainability;
- iii) to describe, analyze and critically discuss the social, cultural and environmental applications of emerging green technology in local and global contexts;
- iv) to provide the opportunity to develop good writing and research skills through investigating a small project that illustrates the relationship between nature, culture, and technology;
- v) to provide the opportunity to develop good presentation skills through engaged class participation and through giving class presentations.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact me as soon as possible. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Evaluation

Biography	5	2.11.08
OASIS completion		2.20.08
Quizzes and homework	30	Varies
Midterm	10	3.17.08

Draft of research paper	10	4.16.08
Peer review comments	5	4.23.08
Presentation	10	4.30.08 – 5.7.08
Final Research Project	20	5.21.08
Class participation	10	all semester
Total	100	

Grading Scale: A 90-100, B 80-89, C 70-79, D 60-69, F<60.

Course Materials

Required Text:

McCully, Patrick. *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams*. Zed Books. 2001.
 Grossman, Elizabeth. *High Tech Trash: Digital Devices, Hidden Toxics, and Human Health*.
 Island Press.2006.

Articles on iLearn

ERES <http://eres.sfsu.edu> password:

Schedule of Classes

Date	Day	Topic	Assignment due
1.28.08	Monday	Introduction. Exploring the relationships between nature, culture, and technology	
1.30.08	Wednesday	Campus Teach-In on Climate Change	
2.4.08	Monday	The Current Environmental Crisis. Why we talk about nature, culture, and technology	1 page summary of teach-in session. Ross, Andrew. Ch. 1. Smith, Neil. Ch. 4.
2.6.08	Wednesday	Nature	Soper, K. Ch. 3. Higgs, Eric. Ch. 1
2.11.08	Monday	Culture	Biography Due Eagleton, Terry. Ch. 2
2.13.08	Wednesday	The Nature of Technology and the Technology of Nature	Merchant, Carolyn. Ch. 4
2.18.08	Monday	Exploring the intersections of nature, culture, and technology in everyday life	TBD

2.20.08	Wednesday	Library (Meet in room 426A) ¹	OASIS
2.25.08	Monday	Water as a Natural Resource	McCully, Patrick. Ch. 1
2.27.08	Wednesday	Controlling Water	McCully, Patrick. Ch. 2, 3, & 4
3.3.08	Monday	The Culture of Large Dams	McCully, Patrick. Ch. 5, 6, & 9
3.5.08	Wednesday	Local Water Politics	McCully, Patrick. Ch. 7 & 8
3.10.08	Monday	Local Responses to Dams: Guest Speaker	McCully, Patrick. Ch. 10
3.12.08	Wednesday	Irrigation and Agricultural Technology	
3.17.08	Monday	Midterm Exam	
3.19.08	Wednesday	Agriculture as a Cultural Resource	Gutham, Julie. Ch. 1 & 6
3.24.08	Monday	Spring break	
3.26.08	Wednesday	Spring break	
3.31.08	Monday	Spring break	
4.2.08	Wednesday	Biotechnology and the Production of Food	Fricker, Alan. Ch. 18
4.7.08	Monday	Film: The Future of Food	Grossman, Elizabeth. Ch. 1 & 2
4.9.08	Wednesday	Sustainability and Green Technology	1 page review of film. Grossman, Elizabeth. Ch. 3 & 4
4.14.08	Monday	High Tech Trash	Grossman, Elizabeth. Ch. 5 & 6
4.16.08	Wednesday	Environmental Justice I	Draft of final paper due. Bring two copies to class
4.21.08	Monday	Local Environmental Justice	Grossman, Elizabeth. Ch. 7, 8, & 9
4.23.08	Wednesday	Green Collar Jobs: working with green technology	Final draft due with a copy of peer reviewed draft you did.
4.28.08	Monday	Review of assignment and presentations	Toth, Gary. Ch. 8
4.30.08	Wednesday	Presentations	Presenter: 250 word abstract of your presentation

¹ Feel free to bring your laptop to this class as there is a limited number of computers.

5.5.08	Monday	Presentations	Presenter: 250 word abstract of your presentation
5.7.08	Wednesday	Presentations	Presenter: 250 word abstract of your presentation
5.12.08	Monday	The Commodification of Nature	Higgs, Eric. Ch. 5
5.14.08	Wednesday	Conclusion: New directions in green and sustainable technology. Simple living and voluntary simplicity	Elgin, Duane. Ch. 42
5.21.08	Wednesday	Final Exam	Final Papers Due

Course Guidelines

1. Class Participation

This is an engaging and interactive class. All participants are expected to come to class prepared to be engaged with each other and the material being covered. All readings and assignments are due at the beginning of class, occasionally homework will be collected or a quiz given during the first 5 minutes of class. There are no make up for quizzes and homework assignments.

2. General Guidelines for Submitting Assignments

- All assignments are due on or prior to the stated due date. Due to the nature of the grading in the class, late assignments will only be accepted with prior discussion with me.
- All assignment must be double spaced, in 12-point font, and include page numbers.
- References will use the Chicago manual of style.

3. Late Assignments

Late assignments will only be accepted with prior arrangement with the instructor. Please discuss any challenges you are having immediately with me.

4. Zero Tolerance Policy for Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the ideas and words of someone else without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. There is a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism, thus any work that contains plagiarized material will be given a grade of zero.

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings—any pieces of information—that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person's spoken or written words; or
- when paraphrasing another person's spoken or written words.

(Source: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>)

If you have any questions or doubts about whether or not you may be plagiarizing when writing an assignment for this course, consult <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml> or see me immediately.

5. Contact and Feedback

You are encouraged to talk with me before or after class, visit my office hours, or make an appointment to talk with me about this class, general advising, or your professional development. Please feel welcome to discuss your progress in my class, your SF State experience, or career goals.

6. Email

You are welcome to send me email messages related to this class or your professional development. When sending e-mail to me, please put “ENVS 392” followed by your subject in the subject line. All messages are expected to be professionally addressed, polite, and grammatically correct.

7. Cell Phones, Laptops, and other electronic devices

Cell phone use is not permitted at any time during the class because they are a distraction to you, your classmates, and the instructor or guest speaker. Frequently leaving a class session will count as an absence from the class. If you are expecting an emergency call, please see me before class begins. Laptops are not permitted except during our visit to the library or if needed to accommodate a disability. Please see me if you have a unique situation that may require the use of a personal laptop during class lectures.

8. GE: Segment III Cluster Note.

“Students subject to the 1991-92 Bulletin or later Bulletins must: 2. Begin their Segment III course work during or after the semester in which they achieve upper division junior standing (i.e., 60 semester units), but NOT before. 3. Begin their Segment III course work only after completing all General Education Segment I requirements.”

This syllabus is subject to change. For the most updated information on the course, please refer to announcements made in class or visit the iLearn class website. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to make up any missed material.