

NRSM 373 Wilderness & Civilization: Honors CRN: 73067

Meeting times: Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30 – 1:50 PM plus multiple Friday and weekend field trips.

Meeting location: Jeannette Rankin Hall 203

Instructor

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Course Description

This course takes a critical and multidisciplinary view of the concepts of wilderness and wildness. The course content is broken into three units: philosophical and ethical foundations of the wilderness idea, including critiques; wildland policy and management; and conservation science. We will explore philosophical, ethical, social, legal, and scientific perspectives on the human-nature relationship, traversing a range of topics including wilderness, Wilderness, matrix lands, natural resource management, environmental policy, conservation biology, climate change, Native American and Indigenous perspectives, and other areas important for conservation. The course meets for weekly discussion/lecture sessions, in addition to periodic Friday and weekend overnight field trips.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Understand foundational concepts in conservation.
- Explain the history and development of the American wilderness concept, including critiques.
- Illustrate, classify, and evaluate current practices in river restoration, forest management, and fire management and understand how these activities contribute to the function and integrity of large landscapes.
- Synthesize principles from the literature, presentations from lecturers, and experiences on field trips to assess and explain competing tradeoffs in conservation, wilderness management, climate change adaptation, and management of non-wilderness lands.
- Formulate, express, and modify—based on frequent review of your assumptions and of evidence—a cogent ethical position on conservation, wilderness, and wildland recreation.

Writing-related learning outcomes

Foundational

- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express written opinions and ideas that are developed, logical, and organized
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions (e.g., APA in text citation style)
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

Advanced

- Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources
- Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate
- Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline
- Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work
- Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline
- Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy

Readings

The course has many assigned readings. Readings are posted on Moodle in pdf format. Read the assigned readings before the class meeting with which they are associated and come prepared to engage in thoughtful, respectful, discussion. Reflection papers (see below) should draw on the readings, and synthesize the concepts presented in the assigned readings with your analysis or critique of lecture presentations and field trip activities and experiences.

Assessment and Grading

Item	Due dates
30 % Attendance, participation (class meetings and field trips)	Always
40 % Reflection papers (2 @ 20% each)	Oct 4, Nov 15 (tentative)
30 % Final exam	Dec 14

Attendance and participation

Attendance and participation are essential for success and contribute to your grade. Attendance will be taken at the end of each class meeting. Missing more than two scheduled class meetings (unexcused absences) will result in a 2% deduction per missed meeting. Unexcused absences from field trips will result in a 5% deduction per day missed from your attendance/participation grade.

Reflection papers

Students are required to write two reflection papers during the semester. The final exam involves synthesizing revised versions of these reflection papers with new material in single essay. Prompts will be provided in class and via Moodle.

Reflections papers should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the readings, lectures, in class activities, and field trips
- Provide an analysis, thoughtful examination, or critique of the material presented
- Make substantive connections to multiple, but not necessarily all, of the readings
- Be well written (grammatically correct) and well organized
- Optional: Include original figures and tables, which will not count against the page limit.

Reflection papers are not summaries. Students must provide their own analysis and synthesis, and demonstrate original thinking, and not simply summarize or restate course content from readings. Direct quotes are not allowed. Papers need to be original single-author works—they are not collaborative efforts between students.

Final Exam

Students will submit a final paper as their final exam, due on or before the scheduled exam time during finals week. A prompt and format guidance will be provided.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating, and other misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. 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 and follow the [Student Conduct Code](#).

Disability Accommodations

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE). If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact the ODE at: (406) 243-2243, ode@umontana.edu, or visit www.umt.edu/disability for more information. I will work with you and the ODE to implement an effective accommodation, and you are welcome to contact me privately. Retroactive accommodation requests will not be honored, so please, do not delay.

Covid-19 (updated August 18, 2022)

- The university encourages COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, which are offered for both students and employees at the Health Services Pharmacy inside Curry Health Center.
- Masks are only required inside Curry Health Center and in some medical/research laboratories on campus. This requirement will be clearly posted. Required or not, we respect those choosing to wear a mask to reduce the spread of respiratory viruses.
- COVID testing for students is available at Curry Health Center. For employees, contact your primary care provider or visit a walk-in clinic. Free at-home tests can be [ordered online](#) or there may be tests available through the Health Services Pharmacy, call 243-5171.