

JOUR 3046

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

ABOUT THE COURSE

The class will examine environmental issues that occur locally in Eastern Connecticut and how journalism has been covering these issues and should in the future. The subject areas the course will examine include biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, water resources, recreation, solid and hazardous waste, air resources including climate change, and environmental justice. The course will also review how journalists cover environmental science and scientists, government regulators, environmental risk issues and environmental advocates. As much as possible, students will get out of the classroom and into the environment. For instance, students will learn about biodiversity issues by taking a hike near Wolf Den, where according to legend the last wolves in Connecticut were killed 200 years ago, and talk to a state wildlife biologist about wildlife issues. Students will examine how the state regulates the environment by visiting with officials at the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

The instructor has been covering environmental issues for most of his 35 years as a journalist. He was a reporter and editor for 28 years at the *Providence Journal* and for years he covered the environmental beat. He has been on the journalism faculty since 2002 and has written a journalism textbook, *Covering the Environment*, which helps students and professionals understand the environmental beat. He has continued to write freelance stories on the environment for major newspapers and magazines, including the *New York Times*, *Smithsonian* and *E The Environment Magazine*.

REQUIRED TEXT AND READINGS

Wyss, Bob, *Covering the Environment*. Routledge, 2008.*

Stories and scripts from newspaper, magazine, broadcast news organizations and online news sites as listed below.

*Author royalty proceeds donated to the Journalism Department.

FIELD TRIPS

Numerous field trips are planned. You will be required to complete a field trip consent form required by the university. Complete information about the trips will be provided. Some of the trips will involve some walking and some are outdoors. Consider wearing sturdy shoes and bringing sunscreen, bug spray and rain gear. All trips off-campus will originate by the parking lot behind Arjona. Even if it is raining, classes will continue. Alternate arrangements are being made in case of inclement weather. If you have any questions about a class, please call the instructor.

GRADING

Course blog submissions	60%
Final Exam	20%
Readings Reports	10%
Discussion and Participation	10%

COURSE POLICIES

Course Blog: During the three weeks of this course we will be working on a course blog that will detail what we have learned. The blog will feature text and possibly photos, links, video and audio. If you have never used a video camera or uploaded a digital audio recording to a computer, do not panic. The emphasis in this course will be on reporting, especially how you learn and then report that information. It will not be on how to use a camera or write a blog. The editors at Courant.com have expressed an interest in possibly using some of our blog material.

Final Exam: The exam will cover the required readings from *Covering the Environment*, the presentations by speakers in class and on field trips and any supplemental materials supplied by those speakers.

Readings Reports: Students are expected to read all material before each field trip or class. Most of the readings can be accessed by links in the class site at HuskyCT or by handouts from the instructor. The readings have been selected to provide the necessary background and introduction to each day's topic. Students will be asked to summarize those readings in very short, one-page reports, that must be filed electronically and could later be posted on the blog. Those comments will be submitted for these topics and days: Climate Change, May 12, Biodiversity, May 18, Agriculture, May 20, Recreation, May 21; Waste, May 22, Rivers, May 26 and Environmental Justice, May 28.

Discussion and Participation: This is a small class and we will be learning together. Discussion and participation is a vital component of this course and it is an important part of your final grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Introduction and orientation to the course.

Introduction to the beat, orientation to news story construction.

Week 2

Climate Change - The Science and the Politics and the Journalism

Orientation to audio.

Readings:

Revkin, Andrew C., "Yelling Fire on a Hot Planet." *New York Times*, April 23, 2006.

Gelbspan, Russ, "Snowed." *Mother Jones*, May, 2005.
Revkin, Andrew, C. "On Climate Issue, Industry Ignored Its Scientists." *New York Times*, April 24, 2009.
Coren, Michael Jr., "Growing Role for New Media Foreseen As Climate Science/Public Opinion Diverge." *Yale Forum on Climate Change and the Media*, April 6, 2009.
KQED News Climate Watch.
CTE Ch. 15.

Week 3

Covering Scientists - The differences between scientists and news reporters.

Orientation to still photography

Readings: CTE Ch. 4, 5.

Week 4

Covering the Regulators

Orientation to video

Readings: CTE Ch. 3, 6

Week 5

Covering the activists

Orientation to multimedia software

Readings: CTE Ch. 7

Week 6

Dams and Rivers. Meet on the banks of the Willimantic River, Willimantic.

Laura Wildman, of American Rivers and Dan Mullin, of the Willimantic Whitewater Association, will discuss their proposal to remove four dams on the river while we walk the banks of the river.

Duncan Broatch, a hydroelectric operator in Eastern Connecticut who helped develop the two hydro facilities on the Willimantic, will discuss the importance of hydroelectricity and the retention of historic dams.

Readings:

Hughes, C.J., "Are These Dams Really Necessary?" *New York Times*, February 8, 2004.

Mapes, Lynda V., "Changing Currents." *Seattle Times*, March 9, 2006.

Grunwald, Michael, "Everglades." *Smithsonian*, March, 2006.

Tibbles, Kevin, "Hydropower." *NBC Today*, April 22, 2008.

"Power in the North." *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, June 13, 2001

Week 7

Meet at the Preston Waste-to-Energy Plant, Preston, Ct.

Waste

Paul Nonnenmacher, director of public affairs of the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority and others will lead a tour of the Preston Waste-to-Energy plant and discuss solid waste, recycling and environmental justice issues.

Readings:

Braccidiferro, Gail, "Plans for Landfill Draw Neighbors' Protests." *New York Times*, May 25, 2008.

Bailey, Jeff, "Rumors of a Shortage of Dump Space were Greatly Exaggerated." *New York Times*, August 12, 2005.

Sapien, Joaquin, "Life in Poison, An Alabama Town's Long Struggle to Survive." The Center for Public Integrity, May 18, 2007.

Williams, Rebecca, "Packrats Hooked on Freecycling." Great Lakes Radio, May 17, 2004.

Week 8

Meet at the Mashamoque Brook State Park, Pomfret

Biodiversity

John Folsom, Mashamoque Brook State Park superintendent, will hike with students to Wolf Den and describes how Israel Putnam may have killed the last wolf in Connecticut. Jenny Dickson with the DEP will discuss issues of biodiversity and wildlife management.

Readings:

Meersman, Tom, "Invaded Waters: Foreign Creatures are Unwelcome Guests in the Great Lakes." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, June 13, 2004.

Stokstad, Erik, "Ornithology: Gambling on a Ghost Bird." *Science*, August 17, 2007.

Kelley, Tina, "Bats Perish, and No One Knows Why." *New York Times*, March 25, 2008.

Buck, Rinker, "A Race in on to Cure Bats." *Hartford Courant*, March 29, 2009.

Ohman, Kinna, "Wolves Make Mark on Yellowstone." Great Lakes Radio, December 17, 2007.

Week 9

Meet at Cranberry Hill Farm, Ashford and Goodwin Forest, Hampton.

Agriculture

Sherry Simpson and Art Talmadge of Cranberry Hill Farm will discuss how her small farm uses sustainable agriculture techniques.

Steven Broderick, forester and program director for the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, will discuss sustainable forestry practices at the Goodwin Forest.

Readings:

Silverman, Fran, "The Sweet Smell of Home-Grown Success." *New York Times*, August 13, 2006.

Specter, Michael, "Big Foot." *The New Yorker*, February 25, 2008.

Cummins, Roz, "Girls Just Wanna Have Farm." *Grist*, October 18, 2007.

Philpott, Tom, "Your Food Doesn't Come From the Store." *Grist*, October 9, 2007.

Philpott, Tom, "A Tale of Two Counties." *Grist*, October 10, 2007.

Week 10

Meet on the Shenipsit Trail in Vernon.

Forests

Robert Butterworth, chair of the Trail Committee of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, will lead a hike and talk about issues of trail development, management and pressures.

Readings:

Kay, Jane, "100 Years, 100 Million Acres of Land Saved." *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 16, 2006.

Hofius, Sarah, "Urban Greenway, An Alternative Route from Maine to Florida." *USAToday*, October 5, 2004.

Barringer, Felicity and Yardley, William, "Surge in Off-Roaders Stirs Dust and Debate in West." *New York Times*, December 30, 2007.

Regenold, Stephen, "Northern Exposure: Hiking the North Country Trail." *New York Times*, April 24, 2009.

Week 11

Work on news stories and multimedia reports in class.

Week 12

Meet at Millstone nuclear station, Waterford, Ct.

Readings on nuclear energy to be provided

Week 13

Work on news stories and multimedia reports in class

Week 14

Work on news stories and multimedia reports in class

Final Exam