

City, Environment, and Nature

Geography 905

Fall 2017

3 credits

Meets:	Tuesday, 4:30 pm-7:10 pm
Location:	Bolton 487
Instructor:	Ryan Holifield
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Office Hours:	Tu/Th 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm <i>or by appointment</i>

Introduction to the course

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce graduate students *to different ways of conceptualizing, theorizing, and researching urban environments and urban natures*. Through close, intensive readings of books, chapters, and articles, we will examine several different approaches to urban ecology, including approaches grounded in systems and evolutionary ecological theories; environmental history; Marxist urban political ecology; feminist, queer, and related critical theories; and actor-network theory, along with assemblage theory and related poststructural approaches. In the process, we'll consider a wide range of substantive themes: ecosystems, nature, difference and inequality, habitat and infrastructure, food, and nonhuman urban dwellers, just to name a few. This seminar will be of potential interest to students in geography, urban studies, urban planning, architecture, anthropology, history, sociology, urban education, biological sciences, and others interested in the relationships between cities and nature or the environment.

The course is organized around both substantive urban environmental issues and the broad approaches listed above. One of our major goals will be to discern how these approaches *differ* – and what difference these differences make for our own choices in doing urban, environmental, or urban environmental research. We'll also investigate and evaluate efforts to combine these approaches in various ways. In most weeks, we'll encounter a mix of theory and empirical analysis/case studies, but sometimes one or the other will dominate.

The literature on cities, environments, and nature is not only diverse, but also enormous. There is no way that I can do justice to this literature in a single reading list; we will only read a sampling. However, I will encourage you to use your term paper as an opportunity to explore themes and research areas that we do not have time to read as a class.

Required and recommended materials

The following books are required for this class:

Cronon, William. 1991. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York and London, W.W. Norton.

Robbins, Paul. 2007. *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are*. Philadelphia: Temple.

Copies are available through ecampus bookstore, but you may also wish to search the Internet for used copies. Other required readings will be available via the class D2L site.

The following books are strongly recommended for this class (and for graduate school more generally), but not required:

Recommended resources on academic reading and writing:

Adler, M. J., and Van Doren, C. L. (1972). *How to Read a Book* (Rev. and updated ed.). New York: Simon and Schuster.

Boice, R. (1990) *Professors as Writers: A Self-Help Guide to Productive Writing*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press.

Strunk, W., and White, E. B. (1959). *The Elements of Style*. New York: Macmillan.

Williams, J. M. (1989). *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. Glenview, IL, Boston, and London: Scott, Foresman & Company.

Course learning objectives and assignments

By the end of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- (1) *Discuss* and *explain* the basic arguments, assumptions, and premises of dominant contemporary approaches to conceptualizing, theorizing, and researching urban environments and urban natures.
- (2) *Compare, contrast,* and critically *evaluate* these competing approaches, both in general and in relation to a particular substantive area of research.
- (3) Work with others to *facilitate productive discussions* of approaches to urban environments and urban natures.

The components of your class grade are linked closely to these learning objectives. Your final grade will be determined by the following:

1. Regular class participation (20%) [All objectives]

This class will operate primarily as a discussion-oriented seminar. By class participation, I mean the following: showing up regularly, being prepared for every class (i.e., having carefully read the assigned readings), and participating actively in discussions. "Participating actively" does not mean talking constantly, but it requires at least speaking up in each class session. Regular attendance and participation are crucial to the success of this course.

2. Class presentation and discussion facilitation (10%) [Objective 3]

Each student will introduce and co-facilitate (with me) two assigned seminar sessions during the course of the semester. For each session for which you are a co-facilitator, you will do the following: (1) read reaction papers and discussion questions submitted to the D2L site (see below); (2) at the beginning of class, briefly (2-4 minutes, roughly) review key concepts and themes from the readings, summarize ideas from the reaction papers, and introduce discussion questions that you and others have submitted; (3) help me facilitate the flow of discussion. You are welcome to check in with me ahead of time if you have ideas for structure or format.

3. Weekly discussion questions and four outlines / reaction papers (20%) [Objectives 1 and 2]

You will be required to prepare four outlines of assigned readings and four brief "reaction papers" of 500-750 words in length. In addition, you should submit at least one discussion question each week that we have assigned readings (except the first). You will be responsible for distributing your outlines, papers, and questions to your instructor and your classmates via the D2L site, **no later than 7:00 pm on the Monday evening before the class session**. The discussion leader for a session will be required to review the outlines, reaction papers, and questions submitted each week; we'll use these as launching points for discussion. Everyone else should try to review these as well. You will receive your assignments, along with further instructions for preparing the outlines and discussion questions, in a separate handout on D2L.

4. Term paper and peer review (50%) [Objective 2]

Your final assignment for the semester will be to prepare a term paper of 4000-5000 words in length. You will receive more information about the term paper assignment, including the peer review of a classmate's first draft, in a separate handout.

Timeline:

- ❖ Working topic, question, and thesis due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, Sept 14** (1%)
- ❖ Working outline, bibliography, and initial draft pages due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, Oct 25** (4%)
- ❖ First complete draft, ready for peer review, due by 11:59 pm on **Wednesday, Nov 22** (10%)
- ❖ Peer review due by 11:59 pm on **Wednesday, Nov 29** (5%)
- ❖ Final draft due by 11:59 pm on **Tuesday, Dec 19** (30%)

Estimated time for course components	
	Hours
Time in the classroom* (15 sessions)	40
Time spent reading seminar materials	47
Time completing outlines and reaction papers	10
Time preparing discussion facilitation	3
Time preparing term paper	44
Total for semester (@3 credits x 48 hrs/credit hour)	144

Late work

If for any reason you need to submit work late, or if you anticipate difficulties submitting your work on time, please let me know immediately. Although I typically don't penalize late submissions in a small graduate seminar, I expect everyone to turn work in on time in order to keep the seminar running smoothly. This is especially important for reaction papers/outlines, first drafts, and peer reviews.

University policies

For the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's official policies on **disabilities, religious observances, active military duty, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, academic misconduct, complaint procedures, and grade appeal procedures**, please see the following web site: <http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf>. Geography 905 adheres to all of these policies.

If you have questions or concerns about the class, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor.

Schedule of required readings

All readings that are not in your required books will be available on D2L as PDFs or as links to online PDFs.

NOTE: Readings are VERY MUCH subject to change, but I will warn you ahead of time if/when I make changes.

1) Introduction—September 5

Botkin, D. B., and C. E. Beveridge. 1997. Cities as environments. *Urban Ecosystems* 1 (1):3–19.

Braun, B. 2005. Environmental issues: writing a more-than-human urban geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 29 (5):635-650.

Heynen, N. (2014). Urban political ecology I: The urban century. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(4), 598-604.

Heynen, N. (2016). Urban political ecology II: The abolitionist century. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(6), 839-845.

Heynen, N. (2017). Urban political ecology III: The feminist and queer century. *Progress in Human Geography*, 0309132517693336.

McDonald, G. W., and M. G. Patterson. 2007. Bridging the divide in urban sustainability: from human exemptionalism to the new ecological paradigm. *Urban Ecosystems* 10 (2):169–192.

2) Ecosystem—September 12

Burgess, E. W. 2008 (1925). The growth of the city: an introduction to a research project. *Urban Ecology*: 71–78.

Tansley, A. G. (1935). The use and abuse of vegetational concepts and terms. *Ecology* 16 (3):284–307.

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Pickett, S. T., et al. (1997). A conceptual framework for the study of human ecosystems in urban areas. *Urban Ecosystems* 1 (4):185–199.

Melosi, M. V. (1993). The place of the city in environmental history. *Environmental History Review* 17 (1):1–23.

Harvey, D. (1996). The dialectics of social and environmental change. Chapter 8 in *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Rocheleau, D., Thomas-Slayter, B., & Wangari, E. (Eds.). (2013). Gender and environment: A feminist political ecology perspective. Chapter 1 in *Feminist political ecology: Global issues and local experience*. Routledge.

Murdoch, J. 2001. Ecologising sociology: Actor-network theory, co-construction and the problem of human exemptionalism. *Sociology*, 35 (1), 111-133.

3) Nature—September 19

Young, R. F. (2009). Interdisciplinary foundations of urban ecology. *Urban Ecosystems* 12 (3):311–331.

Cronon, W. (1991). Prologue: Cloud over Chicago. In *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Foster, J. B. (1999). Marx's theory of metabolic rift: classical foundations for environmental sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(2), 366-405.

Villanueva Gardner, C. (1999). An ecofeminist perspective on the urban environment. In *The nature of cities: Ecocriticism and urban environments*, eds. M. Bennett and D. Teague.

Brahinsky, R., Sasser, J., & Minkoff-Zern, L. A. (2014). Race, space, and nature: An introduction and critique. *Antipode*, 46(5), 1135-1152.

Latour, B. (2010). An Attempt at a "Compositionist Manifesto". *New Literary History*, 41(3), 471-490.

4) City—September 26

McIntyre, N., K. Knowles-Yanez, and D. Hope. (2000). Urban ecology as an interdisciplinary field: differences in the use of "urban" between the social and natural sciences. *Urban Ecosystems* 4 (1):5–24.

Cronon, W. (1991). "Dreaming the Metropolis." Chapter 1, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Harvey, D. (1978). The urban process under capitalism: a framework for analysis. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 2(1-4), 101-131.

Bondi, L., & Rose, D. (2003). Constructing gender, constructing the urban: a review of Anglo-American feminist urban geography. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 10(3), 229-245.

Latour, B., E. Hermant, S. Shannon, and Plessis-R. I. S. (1998). *Paris ville invisible (Paris: Invisible City)* La Découverte. (Selection)

(See D2L for links. Here is the full Internet English-language version: <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/virtual/paris/english/frames.html>).

5) Heterogeneity and difference—October 3

Pickett, S. T. A., Cadenasso, M. L., Rosi-Marshall, E. J., Belt, K. T., Groffman, P. M., Grove, J. M., ... & Swan, C. M. (2017). Dynamic heterogeneity: a framework to promote ecological integration and hypothesis generation in urban systems. *Urban Ecosystems*, 20(1), 1-14.

Pulido, L., Sidawi, S., & Vos, R. O. (1996). An archaeology of environmental racism in Los Angeles. *Urban Geography*, 17(5), 419-439.

Pulido, L. (2016). Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 27(3), 1-16.

Shillington, L. J., & Murnaghan, A. M. F. (2016). Urban Political Ecologies and Children's Geographies: Queering Urban Ecologies of Childhood. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40(5), 1017-1035.

McFarlane, C. (2011). The city as assemblage: dwelling and urban space. *Environment and Planning-Part D*, 29(4), 649.

6) Water—October 10

Kaushal, S. S., McDowell, W. H., Wollheim, W. M., Johnson, T. A. N., Mayer, P. M., Belt, K. T., & Pennino, M. J. (2015). Urban evolution: The role of water. *Water*, 7(8), 4063-4087. [also available online at: <http://www.mdpi.com/2073-4441/7/8/4063/htm>]

Cronon, W. (1991). "Rails and water." Chapter 2 of *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Kaika, M., & Swyngedouw, E. (2000). Fetishizing the modern city: the phantasmagoria of urban technological networks. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24(1), 120-138.

Truelove, Y. (2011). (Re-) Conceptualizing water inequality in Delhi, India through a feminist political ecology framework. *Geoforum*, 42(2), 143-152.

Ranganathan, M. (2015). Storm Drains as Assemblages: The Political Ecology of Flood Risk in Post-Colonial Bangalore. *Antipode*, 47(5), 1300-1320.

7) Food and agriculture—October 17

Schwarz, K., Cutts, B. B., London, J. K., & Cadenasso, M. L. (2016). Growing gardens in shrinking cities: A solution to the soil lead problem?. *Sustainability*, 8(2), 141.

Cronon, W. (1991). "Pricing the Future: Grain." Chapter 3 of *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

McClintock, N. (2010). Why farm the city? Theorizing urban agriculture through a lens of metabolic rift. *Cambridge Journal of regions, economy and society*, 3(2), 191-207.

Hovorka, A. J. (2006). The No. 1 Ladies' Poultry Farm: A feminist political ecology of urban agriculture in Botswana*. *Gender, place and culture*, 13(3), 207-225.

Whatmore, S., & Thorne, L. (1997). Nourishing networks: Alternative geographies of food. *Globalising Food: Agrarian Questions and Global Restructuring*. Eds. D. Goodman and MJ Watts. London, Routledge.

8) Trees – October 24

Holtan, M. T., Dieterlen, S. L., & Sullivan, W. C. (2015). Social life under cover: tree canopy and social capital in Baltimore, Maryland. *Environment and behavior*, 47(5), 502-525.

Cronon, W. (1991). "The Wealth of Nature: Lumber." Chapter 4 of *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Heynen, N., Perkins, H. A., & Roy, P. (2006). The political ecology of uneven urban green space: the impact of political economy on race and ethnicity in producing environmental inequality in Milwaukee. *Urban Affairs Review*, 42(1), 3-25.

Patrick, D. J. (2014). The matter of displacement: a queer urban ecology of New York City's High Line. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 15(8), 920-941.

Jones, O., & Cloke, P. (2008). Non-human agencies: Trees in place and time. In *Material Agency* (pp. 79-96). Springer US.

9) Animals – October 31

Becker, B., Leisnham, P. T., & LaDeau, S. L. (2014). A tale of two city blocks: Differences in immature and adult mosquito abundances between socioeconomically different urban blocks in Baltimore (Maryland, USA). *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 11(3), 3256-3270.

Cronon, W. (1991). "Annihilating Space: Meat." Chapter 5 of *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Davis, M. (1998). Ecology of fear: Los Angeles and the imagination of disaster. New York: Metropolitan Books. (Chapter 5)

Wolch, J. (1996). Zoöpolis*. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 7(2), 21-47.

Hinchliffe, S., M. B. Kearnes, M. Degen, and S. Whatmore. (2005). Urban wild things: A cosmopolitical experiment. *Environment and Planning D* 23 (5):643.

Optional/recommended:

Hovorka, A. (2008). Transspecies urban theory: Chickens in an African city. *cultural geographies* 15 (1):95.

10) Human habitats – November 7

Rees, W. E. (1999). The built environment and the ecosphere: a global perspective. *Building Research & Information*, 27(4-5), 206-220.

Biehler, D. D. (2009). Permeable homes: A historical political ecology of insects and pesticides in US public housing. *Geoforum*, 40(6), 1014-1023.

[alternative possibility: Biehler, D. D. (2010). Flies, manure, and window screens: medical entomology and environmental reform in early-twentieth-century US cities. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36(1), 68-78.]

Dooling, S. (2009). Ecological gentrification: a research agenda exploring justice in the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(3), 621-639.

Crabtree, L. (2006). Disintegrated houses: exploring ecofeminist housing and urban design options. *Antipode*, 38(4), 711-734.

Head, L., and P. Muir. 2006. Suburban life and the boundaries of nature: resilience and rupture in Australian backyard gardens. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 31 (4):505–524.

11) Lawns – November 14

Robbins, Paul. (2007). *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are*. Philadelphia: Temple. (Read pp. 1-138)

Guthman, J. (2008). Review: Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are. *The Professional Geographer* 60 (3):425–426.

Other short supplementary readings TBD.

12) Sustainability – November 21

Rees, W. E. (1997). Urban ecosystems: the human dimension. *Urban Ecosystems* 1 (1):63–75.

Sassen, S., and N. Dotan. (2011). Delegating, not returning, to the biosphere: How to use the multi-scalar and ecological properties of cities. *Global Environmental Change* 21(3): 823-834.

MacGregor, S. (2002). Bright new vision or same old story? Looking for gender justice in the eco-city. *Urban affairs: Back on the policy agenda*, 71-92.

Rutland, T., and A. Aylett. (2008). The work of policy: Actor networks, governmentality, and local action on climate change in Portland, Oregon. *Environment and Planning D: Society and space* 26 (4):627–646.

13) Experimentation, science, resilience – November 28

McPhearson, T., Pickett, S. T., Grimm, N. B., Niemelä, J., Alberti, M., Elmqvist, T., ... & Qureshi, S. (2016). Advancing urban ecology toward a science of cities. *BioScience*, 66(3), 198-212. (Available online at <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/66/3/198/2470145/Advancing-Urban-Ecology-toward-a-Science-of-Cities>).

Evans, J. P. (2011). Resilience, ecology and adaptation in the experimental city. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36 (2):223-237.

Barthel, S., Parker, J., & Ernstson, H. (2015). Food and green space in cities: A resilience lens on gardens and urban environmental movements. *Urban studies*, 52(7), 1321-1338.

[Possible others TBD]

14) Term paper workshop – December 5

No assigned readings.

15) Wrapup of seminar – December 12

No assigned readings.