

## ENV 294 – Second Year Seminar – Fall 2016 SYLLABUS

**Professor: Jess Vogt** – Please call me “Jess”! ☺

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**Office:** McGowan South 203 G

**Office Hours:** My door is always open.

**Class:** Mondays, 11:20 am - 12:50 pm McGowan South 401

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### ABOUT THE PROFESSOR

**Biography:** Jess Vogt is passionate about creating spaces and opportunities in which everyone can find their way to contribute to creating a better world – a world where all people and all nature thrive and flourish. Her quest is to answer the question, *How can we create more resilient communities of humans and nature?* In September 2015, she joined the Department of Environmental Science and Studies in the College of Science and Health at DePaul University as an Assistant Professor. In addition to teaching and doing research at DePaul, Jess is also a Researcher with the Bloomington Urban Forestry Research Group (BUFRG) at Indiana University. BUFRG studies urban forestry and urban ecosystems through the lens of social-ecological systems. Jess considers herself a social-ecological systems and sustainability scientist and her research is rooted in the idea that we cannot study systems of nature without also studying the concentric social, economic, and institutional systems of people. For the past several years, her research with BUFRG has examined the social and ecological impact of the coproduction of the urban forest by nonprofit organizations and neighborhood groups in 5 U.S. cities (Atlanta, Detroit, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, and St. Louis). Most recently, she has been exploring the role of urban forests and urban forestry activities in the Anthropocene through the lens of sustainability science. Jess received her Ph.D. in Environmental Science, Master of Public Affairs (in Sustainability and Sustainable Development), and Master of Science (in Environmental Science) from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) at Indiana University (Bloomington Indiana USA), and attended Lawrence University (Appleton Wisconsin USA) for college, where she majored in Environmental Studies and Biology. See her full Curriculum Vitae at ResearchGate ([www.researchgate.net/profile/Jess\\_Vogt](http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jess_Vogt)), and read more about her lab at DePaul, the Lab for Urban Forestry in the Anthropocene (LUFA: [www.lufa-depaul.org](http://www.lufa-depaul.org)).

### **My Communication Philosophy:**

In order to make this a successful a learning experience for all of us, I am available to meet with students outside of class as much as possible. Therefore:

- I am in my office (203G) or lab (217) on most weekdays between 9am and 5pm and my door is always open. Please feel free to stop by anytime with questions, comments or concerns about the class, or even just to chat!
- Email me or talk to me before or after class if you want to schedule an appointment.
- Feel free to call or text me on my cell phone ((920) 850-2016) during reasonable hours with questions or concerns. Feel free to leave a voicemail; I'll get back to you.

## COURSE INFORMATION

The purpose of this two-credit seminar course is to advance student ecological literacy, promote the development of critical thinking and discussion skills, and foster a sense of community among Environmental Science and Studies students. We will be reading and critically analyzing classic and more recent selections from an anthology of American environmental writing titled, *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau*, edited by Bill McKibben (available for purchase at bookstore).

This is a student-driven, discussion-based class. Thus, good performance will depend upon a close and critical reading of the assigned readings, active participation in class discussions, and writing thoughtful reflection papers. The default format for each class will be: Students discuss the readings in small groups for 30-45 minutes at the beginning of each class using their reading responses to guide the initial discussion, followed by a larger group discussion led by that week's discussion leaders. Discussion leaders may alter this format if desired (see below).



## COURSE MATERIALS

### Required Texts:

McKibben, Bill (2008) *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau*. Penguin Random House: New York, NY. 1047 pp. ISBN 978-1-59853-024-7.

This text is available at the DePaul Barnes & Noble Bookstore and on Amazon, as well as many other book retailers.

We may occasionally augment selections from this text with additional readings or internet content (news articles, videos, audio recordings/podcasts, etc.) as appropriate. These will be posted in the weekly modules within the Content tab on Desire2Learn (D2L). *I expect that you will have read or otherwise reviewed (watched, listened to, etc.) all materials before coming to class.*

### Desire2Learn (D2L):

All course information will be posted in the weekly modules within the Content tab on the Desire2Learn (D2L) site for ENV 294, and assignments will be described and turned in via D2L Dropbox. I will send class-related emails via D2L so make sure your email address is updated in the system.

**COURSE EVALUATION****Final Grade:**

Your final grade in the course will be based on a combination of pre-class reading responses and in-class participation, reflection papers, and leadership of class discussion. *No extra credit is available.*

ITEM	Points
<b>Engaged Participation</b> (attendance [ <i>but see Grade Adjustment below</i> ], Reading Responses [see below], active participation, and discussion in small groups and with the whole class)	30
<b>Discussion Leadership</b> (leaders should prepare at least 5 big picture/provocative questions for each reading to help guide the discussion; grades will be determined based on degree of preparation, evidence of critical analysis, and constructive leadership and participation)	15
<b>Briefing Papers</b> (a brief overview [400-600 words, single-spaced prose] on the topic and a reflection of the discussion, due at the beginning of the following class period)	45
<b>Course Reflection</b> (a short [600-800 words] summative reflection on the topics of the entire course, a prompt will be provided later during the quarter, due during finals)	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**Point Scale:**

The following point scale will be used to assign letter grades *before the adjustment for attendance (see below)*: A (92%-100%), A- (90%-91.9%), B+ (88%-89.9%), B (82%-87.9%), B- (80%-81.9%), C+ (78%-79.9%), C (72%-77.9%), C- (70%-71.9%), D (60%-69.9%), and F (0%-59.9%).

**Grade Adjustment for Attendance:**

There are only 10 class meetings during the quarter – this means that every class is 11% of the time we spend with one another. Your classmates and I value your presence, attention, and participation in every class. To this end, attendance is mandatory. *Each and every non-made-up class absence will result in a deduction of one half letter grade from your final grade in the course. There are no “freebie” absences.* For instance, if your calculated grade is a B+ but you have missed and not made up 1 class, your grade in the course will be a B; if you miss 2 classes and do not make them up, your grade will be a B-. If you miss 1 class but make it up by writing an Absence Paper, your final grade will remain a B+.

**\*\*\*Absence Paper to make-up class** – I understand that sometimes we get sick or have unexpected things happen in our lives. To make sure a class absence doesn't count against you, in place of the usual <1 page Briefing Paper you should write a longer, absence paper connecting the readings from the class you missed with previous weeks' readings.

Absence Paper format is as follows: 1000-1200 words, single-spaced, your name and class period missed on the top line, complete citation for the readings chosen, a description of the reading and a clear review of how the authors meet the purpose/objectives, and a paragraph or two connecting the two texts to other material from class (other texts, class discussions, activities). Submit the briefing paper *via email within 3 business days* of the missed class to make up for the missed class.

### **Reading Responses:**

Each week we will examine ~3 thematically related readings from *American Earth* (e.g., agriculture, wilderness, population, pollution, environmental ethics.). You will be expected to read the texts closely and critically. Come to class with a brief response (a few sentences of commentary, questions, reaction, critique, other thoughts, etc.) related to each reading, which will serve as a basis for small group and large group discussion. What did you find particularly interesting about the text? What did you find confusing or surprising? It is not meant to be a comprehensive review of the paper, but an opportunity to focus your questions and comments ahead of discussion. These can be used after the discussion to develop your longer, more nuanced reflection papers. *I will periodically collect and grade reading responses, and will check that you have them weekly to ensure that students are coming to class having critically read the selections.*

### **Discussion Leadership:**

Each student will help lead discussion for 2 class periods throughout the semester in a small group of 3-4 students. The group of students leading discussion is expected to facilitate the whole class discussion (45-60 minutes) and help highlight the big ideas from each reading. The instructor can be considered a co-leader and will help provide context for the reading or redirect the discussion as needed. Leaders should prepare a series of questions (at least 5 per reading) that might provoke debate/discussion to guide the discussion. These questions should be submitted before class via email to the instructor, who will post the questions to D2L for the class record. Leaders should be able to verbally summarize the articles, assess of the influence of each piece, and be able to provide some perspective on the history of the environmental topic; the end of the book (p. 975) has a chronology which could be a good starting point to help understand the timeline of events and the importance of the readings. Discussion leaders are expected to jump in and ask questions or add perspective when there is a lull in the discussion. *Alternative class formats (debates, round-tables, etc.) could be used if discussion leaders choose. Supplemental materials or activities such as watching a short video clip, bringing in a relevant popular media article, brainstorming on the board, or other activities could supplement the discussion if leaders choose.* Please talk with me before leading your discussion if you want to try alternative formats or if you have any questions about the readings. **See also Tips for Leading a Discussion, posted on D2L.**

### **Briefing Papers:**

After each discussion, all students are expected to write a brief reflection paper (400-600 words of single-spaced prose) giving an overview of the topic and a reflection of the readings based on class discussion. Reflection papers should relate the readings to broader environmental issue(s) and the development of environmental thought and policy over time, or can integrate how personal

experiences relate to the readings/theme. *Submissions should not just be a summary of each reading, but an analysis of how the readings are related, common themes, relevance to personal experiences, etc.* Electronic copies – **PDF or Word document only!!** – are due via D2L Dropbox before the following class period.

### **Course Reflection:**

This will be your opportunity to reflect on the course by writing a 400-500 word reflection on a question that will be provided in the Course Reflection D2L Dropbox assignment later in the quarter.

## **ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### **Minimum Technology Policy:**

Because participation and engagement with one another is so important, I prefer not to have any technology – laptops, tablets, phones, etc. – in the classroom (unless I specifically ask you in advance to bring an internet-enabled device to class).

### **Here's why:**

Studies have shown that allowing technology in the classroom is distracting and results in decreased student learning. Although we may think we are effectively “multitasking” when you’re simultaneously using multiple applications on our computers (or when you’re listening to class discussion and checking your email), you cannot truly do more than one thing at once. At best, “multitasking” results in what is called “fast switching,” or rapidly moving between separate activities, where at any instant all of your brain is only focused on one of the activities. Take it from Adam Gazzaley, MD, Ph.D., a professor of neuroscience at University of California, San Francisco (from his TED talk, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiANn5PZ4BI>):

*“With each switch, there is a time delay, and this leads to a cost and an impact on performance. You do not do two things as well as you do one thing, if you switch back and forth between them.”*

Technology is a type of distraction and interference that impairs long-term and short-term memory, and, ultimately, learning. ***For these reasons and others, technology – computers/laptops, tablets, cell phones, etc. – are discouraged in the classroom*** when not specifically asked for. With these distractions at a minimum, we will be able to more fully engage in the class, with each other and with the readings in class discussions and activities.

### **Email Etiquette:**

I would prefer that you use email communication for all class business. This way, we all have a record of communications (and so I will remember when I agreed to meet with you, etc.! ☺). Please practice the following email etiquette, which you might find useful not just in this class, but in all your email communications.

- Use a short but descriptive subject line. ***Something more than just “ENV 294” is crucial.***
- Continue conversations about the same topic or question in the same email thread by *replying* to the email rather than creating a new message.

- Emails should be as brief as possible but also include sufficient information for me to know what you're asking.
- See <http://emailcharter.org> for more suggestions on email etiquette to help keep our inboxes manageable.

### **Late Assignments:**

Late assignments *may* be accepted if you *notify me in writing in advance of the due date*. Typically, I am willing to provide a 24-hour no-questions-asked extension to students who ask courteously and respectfully. Beyond 24-hours, late assignments will not be accepted. Without notification, no late assignments will be accepted, and D2Ls Dropbox will not accept late submissions.

### **Online Teaching Evaluations:**

Instructor and course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable. As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted.

Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. ***Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback – I will provide you time in-class to complete Online Teaching Evaluations on the last day of class.***

### **Academic Integrity:**

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the quarter and our conversation will remain confidential.

**Writing Center:**

I strongly recommend you make use of the Writing Center throughout your time at DePaul. The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing) for more information.

**Dean of Students Office:**

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) helps students in navigating the university, particularly during difficult situations, such as personal, financial, medical, and/or family crises. Absence Notifications to faculty, Late Withdrawals, and Community Resource Referrals, support students both in and outside of the classroom. Additionally they have resources and programs to support health and wellness, violence prevention, substance abuse and drug prevention, and LGBTQ student services. The Office is committed to your success as a DePaul student. Please feel free to contact them at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos>.