

# Cover Sheet: Request 12870

JOU xxxx: Environmental Journalism

## Info

Process	Course New Ugrad/Pro
Status	Pending at PV - University Curriculum Committee (UCC)
Submitter	Theodore Spiker tspiker@jou.ufl.edu
Created	7/19/2018 10:42:01 AM
Updated	9/9/2018 10:04:23 AM
Description of request	Permanent course number for course (has been offered as a special-topics course several times). Will be part of a two-course specialized reporting sequence.

## Actions

Step	Status	Group	User	Comment	Updated
Department	Approved	JOU - Journalism 012304000	Theodore Spiker		7/19/2018
JOU Environmental Journalism.docx					7/19/2018
College	Approved	JOU - College of Journalism and Communications	Michael Weigold		7/19/2018
No document changes					
University Curriculum Committee	Commented	PV - University Curriculum Committee (UCC)	Andrew Figueroa	Added to September agenda.	8/29/2018
No document changes					
University Curriculum Committee	Pending	PV - University Curriculum Committee (UCC)			8/29/2018
No document changes					
Statewide Course Numbering System					
No document changes					
Office of the Registrar					
No document changes					
Student Academic Support System					
No document changes					
Catalog					
No document changes					
College Notified					
No document changes					

# Course|New for request 12870

## Info

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**Submitter:** Theodore Spiker tspiker@jou.ufl.edu

**Created:** 9/9/2018 10:02:21 AM

**Form version:** 3

## Responses

### Recommended Prefix

*Enter the three letter code indicating placement of course within the discipline (e.g., POS, ATR, ENC). Note that for new course proposals, the State Common Numbering System (SCNS) may assign a different prefix.*

Response:  
JOU

### Course Level

*Select the one digit code preceding the course number that indicates the course level at which the course is taught (e.g., 1=freshman, 2=sophomore, etc.).*

Response:  
4

### Number

*Enter the three digit code indicating the specific content of the course based on the SCNS taxonomy and course equivalency profiles. For new course requests, this may be XXX until SCNS assigns an appropriate number.*

Response:  
xxx

### Category of Instruction

*Indicate whether the course is introductory, intermediate or advanced. Introductory courses are those that require no prerequisites and are general in nature. Intermediate courses require some prior preparation in a related area. Advanced courses require specific competencies or knowledge relevant to the topic prior to enrollment.*

Response:  
Advanced

- 1000 and 2000 level = Introductory undergraduate
- 3000 level = Intermediate undergraduate
- 4000 level = Advanced undergraduate
- 5000 level = Introductory graduate
- 6000 level = Intermediate graduate
- 7000 level = Advanced graduate

*4000/5000 and 4000/6000 levels = Joint undergraduate/graduate (these must be approved by the UCC and the Graduate Council)*

**Lab Code**

*Enter the lab code to indicate whether the course is lecture only (None), lab only (L), or a combined lecture and lab (C).*

Response:  
None

**Course Title**

*Enter the title of the course as it should appear in the Academic Catalog.*

Response:  
Environmental Journalism

**Transcript Title**

*Enter the title that will appear in the transcript and the schedule of courses. Note that this must be limited to 21 characters (including spaces and punctuation).*

Response:  
Envirmntl Journalism

**Degree Type**

*Select the type of degree program for which this course is intended.*

Response:  
Baccalaureate

**Delivery Method(s)**

*Indicate all platforms through which the course is currently planned to be delivered.*

Response:  
On-Campus

**Co-Listing**

*Will this course be jointly taught to undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional students?*

Response:  
No

**Co-Listing Explanation**

*Please detail how coursework differs for undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional students. Additionally, please upload a copy of both the undergraduate and graduate syllabus to the request in .pdf format.*

Response:  
n/a

**Effective Term**

Select the requested term that the course will first be offered. Selecting "Earliest" will allow the course to be active in the earliest term after SCNS approval. If a specific term and year are selected, this should reflect the department's best projection. Courses cannot be implemented retroactively, and therefore the actual effective term cannot be prior to SCNS approval, which must be obtained prior to the first day of classes for the effective term. SCNS approval typically requires 2 to 6 weeks after approval of the course at UF.

Response:  
Earliest Available

**Effective Year**

Select the requested year that the course will first be offered. See preceding item for further information.

Response:  
Earliest Available

**Rotating Topic?**

Select "Yes" if the course can have rotating (varying) topics. These course titles can vary by topic in the Schedule of Courses.

Response:  
No

**Repeatable Credit?**

Select "Yes" if the course may be repeated for credit. If the course will also have rotating topics, be sure to indicate this in the question above.

Response:  
No

**Amount of Credit**

Select the number of credits awarded to the student upon successful completion, or select "Variable" if the course will be offered with variable credit and then indicate the minimum and maximum credits per section. Note that credit hours are regulated by Rule 6A-10.033, FAC. If you select "Variable" for the amount of credit, additional fields will appear in which to indicate the minimum and maximum number of total credits.

Response:  
3

**S/U Only?**

Select "Yes" if all students should be graded as S/U in the course. Note that each course must be entered into the UF curriculum inventory as either letter-graded or S/U. A course may not have both options. However, letter-graded courses allow students to take the course S/U with instructor permission.

Response:  
No

### Contact Type

Select the best option to describe course contact type. This selection determines whether base hours or headcount hours will be used to determine the total contact hours per credit hour. Note that the headcount hour options are for courses that involve contact between the student and the professor on an individual basis.

Response:  
Regularly Scheduled

- Regularly Scheduled [base hr]
- Thesis/Dissertation Supervision [1.0 headcount hr]
- Directed Individual Studies [0.5 headcount hr]
- Supervision of Student Interns [0.8 headcount hr]
- Supervision of Teaching/Research [0.5 headcount hr]
- Supervision of Cooperative Education [0.8 headcount hr]

Contact the Office of Institutional Planning and Research (352-392-0456) with questions regarding contact type.

### Weekly Contact Hours

Indicate the number of hours instructors will have contact with students each week on average throughout the duration of the course.

Response:  
3

### Course Description

Provide a brief narrative description of the course content. This description will be published in the Academic Catalog and is limited to 50 words or fewer. See course description guidelines.

Response:  
This introduction to Environmental Journalism will help you find the most accurate, credible and timeliest information on environmental science and related issues – discerning uncompromised expert sources, using human narratives and descriptive storytelling to relate real-world impact, and tapping the databases, records and other tools used by environmental reporters.

### Prerequisites

Indicate all requirements that must be satisfied prior to enrollment in the course. Prerequisites will be automatically checked for each student attempting to register for the course. The prerequisite will be published in the Academic Catalog and must be formulated so that it can be enforced in the registration system. Please note that upper division courses (i.e., intermediate or advanced level of instruction) must have proper prerequisites to target the appropriate audience for the course.

Response:  
JOU 3101 or instructor permission

Completing Prerequisites on UCC forms:

- Use "&" and "or" to conjoin multiple requirements; do not use commas, semicolons, etc.
- Use parentheses to specify groupings in multiple requirements.
- Specifying a course prerequisite (without specifying a grade) assumes the required passing grade is D-. In order to specify a different grade, include the grade in parentheses immediately after the course number. For example, "MAC 2311(B)" indicates that students are required to obtain a grade of B in Calculus I. MAC2311 by itself would only require a grade of D-.
- Specify all majors or minors included (if all majors in a college are acceptable the college code is sufficient).
- "Permission of department" is always an option so it should not be included in any prerequisite or co-requisite.

*Example: A grade of C in HSC 3502, passing grades in HSC 3057 or HSC 4558, and major/minor in PPHP should be written as follows:  
HSC 3502(C) & (HSC 3057 or HSC 4558) & (HP college or (HS or CMS or DSC or HP or RS minor))*

### **Co-requisites**

*Indicate all requirements that must be taken concurrently with the course. Co-requisites are not checked by the registration system.*

Response:  
None

### **Rationale and Placement in Curriculum**

*Explain the rationale for offering the course and its place in the curriculum.*

Response:  
Special-topics course in reporting on science and the environment. Course developed by Environmental Journalist in Residence Cynthia Barnett.

### **Course Objectives**

*Describe the core knowledge and skills that student should derive from the course. The objectives should be both observable and measurable.*

Response:

- Analyze the specialization of Environmental Journalism and its role in an informed citizenry, including both watchdog and storytelling roles.
- Evaluate pressing environmental issues with objectivity and fairness.
- Analyze sources and differentiate among them, including ranges of scientific, policy, activist and corporate sources and their press releases; and including the ability to discern manipulation such as greenwashing from scientifically valid solutions.
- Critique a range of nonfiction environmental communications, from film to photography and from activist to scientific communications.
- Demonstrate ability to communicate in-depth environmental issues in journalistic form to lay audiences in compelling ways.

### **Course Textbook(s) and/or Other Assigned Reading**

*Enter the title, author(s) and publication date of textbooks and/or readings that will be assigned. &nbsp;Please provide specific examples&nbsp;to evaluate the course.*

Response:  
Assigned readings updated every semester (for newest examples of environmental journalism).

### **Weekly Schedule of Topics**

*Provide a projected weekly schedule of topics. This should have sufficient detail to evaluate how the course would meet current curricular needs and the extent to which it overlaps with existing courses at UF.*

Response:  
Week 1, August 22nd

Course intro and policies; philosophy and history of EJ: Modern Environmental Journalism has roots in the seventeenth century, when John Evelyn writes "Fumifugium, or the Inconvenience of

the Aer and Smoake of London Dissipated” (1661), proposing remedies for London’s choking black air: The immoderate use of, and indulgence to, sea-coale in the city of London exposes it to one of the fowlest inconveniences and reproaches that can possibly befall so noble and otherwise incomparable City. Whilst they are belching it forth their sooty jaws, the City of London resembles ... the suburbs of Hell [rather] than an assembly of rational creatures. We’ll take a look at the history of this vigorous field from Evelyn to Florida’s own Marjory Stoneman Douglas – a journalist and author long before she became an environmental activist at age 76 – and Rachel Carson, whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* remains one of the best-known works of Environmental Journalism for its profound impact. *Silent Spring* helped launch the modern environmental movement, spurred the federal government to ban DDT, and helped bring about a remarkable recovery of eagles, falcons and other fish-eating birds then at the brink of extinction.

Prepare for class: 1) Read the syllabus through to the end and bring any questions you have! 2) “Marjory Stoneman Douglas, ‘Voice of the River,’” by Tim Collie, the Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel, May 18th 1998. 3) “*Silent Spring* Turns 50,” by Elizabeth Grossman, June 25th 2012, Atlantic. 4) *Silent Spring* Part I – Carson’s first excerpt in the New Yorker, published in the June 16th 1962 issue: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/06/16/silent-spring-part-1>.

Class story meeting: Introductions: To each other, including your interests in the environment and the place(s) most important to you. To the syllabus and course mechanics. In-class documentary films: Annie Leonard’s “The Story of Stuff” and “The Story of Bottled Water.” Many core issues on the EJ beat, from water to energy to food, circle back to over-consumption and waste. First part of Mark Kitchell’s “Fierce Green Fire” if we have time.

Week 2, August 29th

Environmental Journalism, the beat: We’ll launch into the profession at the local level: Even given the global problems of climate change, deforestation and emptying seas, the best place to help people understand what’s happening to the environment is to show them in their own backyards, drinking water supplies, etc.

Guest speaker: Dinah Voyles Pulver of the Daytona Beach News Journal, who has won the prestigious Waldo Proffitt Award for Excellence in Environmental Journalism not once, twice, or three times, but four!

Prepare for class: 1) Dinah’s five-part multi-media series *Troubled Water: The Indian River Lagoon in Peril*. 2) Click around “Losing Ground,” interactive on vanishing Louisiana by Bob Marshall, Jacobs and Al Shaw, for ProPublica & The Lens; 3) Review some of Climate Central’s computer-animated stories: including “This is how climate change will shift the world’s cities,” by Brian Kahn

Class story meeting: Introduction to our class project on energy and poverty. Review some multiplatform projects.

Week 3 September 5th

Covering Freshwater: Water lies at the heart of all the planet’s biggest environmental stories – climate change, and human and ecosystems health, along with the competition among water, food and energy. Reporting on freshwater encompasses both quality – nitrates and other pollutants; and quantity, which involves the sustainability of water extraction for human use and equity among different users from ag to utilities (us) – and ecosystems.

Prepare for class: 1) Check out ACLU of Michigan’s Curt Guyette’s coverage of the Flint Water Crisis. 2) “In Flint Crisis, a New Model for Environmental Journalism,” by Cynthia Barnett, *Yale Environment 360*. 3) (Scroll) USA Today’s investigative series “Beyond Flint.” 4) Project: Blue Ether, the 2016 Environmental Journalism class project, stories at <https://www.wuft.org/specials/water/>.

Class story meeting: Hal Knowles and Lynn Jarrett of UF’s Program for Resource Efficient Communities will come talk with us about the local data and findings we’ll be using in our 2017 class project. Begin to brainstorm project.

Week 4 September 12th

Climate Change, the story of our time: Just as the science of climate change – and the tangible impacts around us – become increasingly clear, the United States is retreating from years of work to try and lower emissions and to make the nation more resilient. Helping the general public understand the global-to-local story of Earth's warming and its impacts has become more important than ever before – as has making the climate change story engaging. In-class documentary film: Before the Flood, Leonardo DiCaprio.

Prepare for class: 1) The New York Times's interactive three-part series, "Antarctic Dispatches," May 2017. 2) David Wallace-Wells controversial cover story on climate change in New York Magazine, The Uninhabitable Earth, July 9th 2017. 3) "Goodbye Miami," by Jeff Goodell, Rolling Stone, June 2013.

Class story meeting: We'll look at emerging multimedia, graphics, mapping and reporting platforms that can help audiences visualize climate change. Members of Gainesville's Community Weatherization Coalition will visit to further help us brainstorm the stories in our class project.

Week 5, September 19th

Conservation photography tells a purposeful story. "The images exist for a reason," explains National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore. "To save the earth while we still can." We'll dig into this dynamic form and how it differs from traditional nature or landscape photography; the key role of imagery in environmental storytelling; and strategies for shooting photos that help audiences understand environmental issues and their personal connection.

Guest speaker: Conservation photographer Jennifer Adler, National Geographic Explorer and UF doctoral candidate in Interdisciplinary Ecology.

Prepare for class: 1) "Conservation Photography Art, Ethics, and Action," published in the International Journal of Wilderness, by Cristina Mittermeier, founder of the International League of Conservation Photographers. (On Canvas.) 2) "Assignment Earth: How Photography Can Help Save the Planet, American Photo magazine Sept.-Oct. 2007, pages 58-83. (Available on Google Books.) 3) Explore our guest speaker's National Geographic project, Walking on Water. (<https://walkingonwaterfl.org>) 4) View Jenny's TEDx talk, "Illusions: A Lens into Our Fragile Freshwater" ([http://bit.ly/TEDx\\_JenniferAdler](http://bit.ly/TEDx_JenniferAdler)). 5) View this short video on Joel Sartore's Photo Ark project: <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/ng-live/151208-sartore-photo-ark-lecture-nglive>

Class story meeting: Project story ideas, reporting strategies, begin building our story budget and assignments.

Week 6, September 26th

Greenwashing and spin: Is that new housing development really green? How much water will the proposed organic beef operation pump? Is phosphate feeding the world or depleting the Earth? Asking the questions and the follow-up questions... reporting with sophistication and fairness ... and recognizing greenwashing vs. effective corporate social responsibility/sustainability programs. In-class documentary film: Merchants of Doubt, Robert Kenner.

Guest speaker: Jasper Fessmann, UF doctoral candidate in Mass Communications with a specialization in Public Interest Communications, who will help us identify and counter the greenwashing PR strategies and tactics used to manipulate journalists and the public.

Prepare for class: 1) Read Part I of the series "Exxon: The Road Not Taken," by Neela Banerjee, Lisa Song and David Hasemyer, September 2015, reporting for the Pulitzer Prize-winning nonprofit news site Inside Climate News. 2) "BP Labors to Cast Doubt on Spill Study It Dislikes," by Bryan Gruley and Bradley Olson, Bloomberg Business, March 11th 2015. 3) Click around BP's Gulf spill website, The Whole Story, at <https://www.thestateofthegulf.com/the-whole-story/>

Class story meeting: Brainstorm ideas for your greenwashing assignment, due Sunday night.

Week 7, October 3rd

Energy: Coverage blends the old-fashioned skill of following the money and the modern challenge of reporting on the sustainability of our energy choices and sources. As we transition to the low-carbon future, part of the journalist's watchdog role involves reporting on the feasibility of new technologies and being able to spot hype.



Guest speaker: David Biello, science curator at TED Ideas, contributing editor at Scientific American and author of *The Unnatural World: The Race to Remake Civilization in Earth's Newest Age*.

Prepare for class: 1) Read some of The Guardian's award-winning multi-media investigation, "Big Carbon," story links below. It is not necessary to read all of this, but definitely get to: "The Truth Behind Peabody's Campaign to Rebrand Coal as a Poverty Cure."

1. "The Real Story Behind Shell's Climate Change Rhetoric"
  2. "Shell Accused of Strategy Risking Catastrophic Climate Change"
  3. "Where There Is Oil and Gas There Is Schlumberger"
  4. "Coal Giant Exploited Ebola Crisis for Corporate Gain, Say Health Experts"
  5. "The Truth Behind Peabody's Campaign To Rebrand Coal As a Poverty Cure"
  6. "Revealed: BP's Close Ties with the UK Government"
  7. "BP Ditched Arctic Concerns for Strategic Deal with Russia"
  8. "Colombian Takes BP To Court in UK Over Alleged Complicity in Kidnap and Torture"
  9. "Gilberto Torres Survived Colombia's Death Squads. Now He Wants Justice."
- 2) Scroll through and get the gist of the Climate Central series "Pulp Fiction," parts 1, 2, and 3, a five-month investigative series by reporter John Upton on the global trade in wood pellets, revealing renewable energy doesn't necessarily mean clean energy. 3) Read our guest speaker's story, "Electric Cars are Not Necessarily Clean" (your battery-powered vehicle is only as green as your electricity supplier, by David Biello, May 11th 2016, Scientific American).

Class story meeting: Complete class project story budget and assignments.

Week 8, October 10th

The Oceans Sea stories are among the best read in Environmental Journalism because audiences often already care about beaches, charismatic creatures like dolphins and their favorite seafood dinner. What if the story doesn't involve a dolphin with a cute name, rather, complexities such as ocean acidification and red tides, or highly politicized issues such as the Apalachicola oyster collapse?

Prepare for class: 1) "Sea Change: The Pacific's Perilous Turn," 2013 Seattle Times series on the global impacts of ocean acidification, by reporter Craig Welch and photographer Steve Ringman. Scroll through the seven stories online at the Seattle Times's main link

<http://apps.seattletimes.com/reports/sea-change/> so you can view the videos and interactive graphics. 2) "How Virtual Reality Can Help Us Feel the Pain of Climate Change," Randy Reiland's story in Smithsonian.com about VR as a way to show people the future acidifying sea.

Class story meeting: Class project.

For your calendars! Thursday October 12th, 2 to 4:30 p.m., Reitz Union's Rion Ballroom: UF's 3rd annual Climate Communications Summit: "Diving Deeper, Immersive Storytelling for Climate Science," will explore virtual reality and other types of immersive storytelling that hold promise for helping people visualize the climate-changed future. The keynote is Jeremy Bailenson, founding director of Stanford's Virtual Human Interaction Lab, behind the ocean acidification VR. {If you would like to go, please sign up at the link. It's free.}

Week 9, October 17th

Environmental Health and Chemicals Are chemicals behind the plunging sperm counts of western men (by more than half) over the past forty years, and other "modern ills"? Understanding epidemiology & risk, and more investigative reporting on the environmental beat. Chemical pollution lies at the major intersection of environmental, health, and science reporting.

Guest speaker: Joe Delfino, UF Professor Emeritus of Environmental Engineering Sciences.

Prepare for class: 1) "Welcome to Beautiful Parkersburg, West Virginia," Mariah Blake's multimedia narrative on a town devastated by the chemical C-8, an ingredient in the making of Teflon. <http://highline.huffingtonpost.com/articles/en/welcome-to-beautiful-parkersburg/> 1) This excerpt from Theo Colborn's *Our Stolen Future*, Chapter 6, "To the Ends of the Earth." And this short biography of Theo Colborn by Lizzie Grossman.

Class story meeting: Q&A with Dr. Delfino & brainstorming on class project.

Week 10, October 24th

Environmental Justice: We know by now from the class project data that the poor have higher burdens for energy, transportation and other costs. Low-income, minority neighborhoods also tend to bear the brunt of environmental threats such as exposure to chemical plants, Superfund and other toxic waste sites. A growing body of research “suggests that the chronic stressors of poverty may fundamentally alter the way the body reacts to pollutants, especially in young children,” according to the Environmental Health News Network.

Prepare for class: 1) “Toxic City,” the Philadelphia Inquirer investigation that uncovered thousands of poor children poisoned by lead – all preventable by landlords – in Philly, [http://www.sej.org/sites/default/files/SEJ\\_ToxicCity.pdf](http://www.sej.org/sites/default/files/SEJ_ToxicCity.pdf). 2) The interactive story “Cancer Alley: Big Industry, Big Problems,” Photography by Matt Black, Writing by Trymaine Lee, published on MSNBC, funded by the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting.

Class story meeting: Ensure everyone has their story idea ready to craft their pitch. Share story ideas, strengthen pitches before they are due Sunday night.

Week 11, October 31st

Nature writing

Environmental journalists are journalists working to cover the environment and not environmentalists trying to practice journalism. Still, nature writing has an important place in EJ. Lyrical descriptions of sea or forest, personal narratives, sense of place pieces and adventure tales all can help draw new readers to environmental stories. This week we take a break from issues-based research and storytelling to think about how to help people connect to and contemplate Earth's awe and wonder.

Prepare for class: 1) Read Chapter 6, “Cedar Keys,” in John Muir's 1,000 Mile Walk to the Gulf. 2) Sy Montgomery, “Deep Intellect,” Orion magazine, October 2011. 3) Mark Cocker, “Death of the naturalist: Why is the ‘New Nature Writing So Tame?’” New Statesman, June 2015. 4) Robert Macfarlane, “Why We Need Nature Writing,” New Statesman, September 2015.  
Class story meeting: Details, preparations for field trip, go over Seahorse Key story assignment.

Week 12 November 7th

This land is our land: America's national parks

Dubbed “America's best idea,” the national parks celebrated their 100th anniversary last year but face unprecedented threats between climate change, oil and gas drilling and budget cuts. Meanwhile President Trump has ordered a major review of national monuments to determine if they should be rescinded, resized or otherwise changed. The parks embody the ideal that the nation's magnificent natural wonders should be available to everyone – but does it really mean everyone, and can the ideal survive the troubled times?

Guest speaker: Western park ranger turned environmental journalist Jordan Fisher Smith, author of *Engineering Eden: The True Story of a Violent Death, a Trial and the Fight Over Controlling Nature*.

Prepare for class: 1) “It All Began with Conservation,” by Wallace Stegner, *Smithsonian* magazine, v. 21 n1, p. 35-43, April 1990. 2) “America's National Parks, By Definition,” the first essay in Terry Tempest Williams's *The House of Land: A personal topography of America's national parks*. 3) “What if I'm not white?” A former sports writer tries to find a place for himself in the outdoors,” by Glenn Nelson, *High Country News*, June 27th 2016. 4) “From Glacierless National Park to the Neveglades: Meet your future national parks” by Kate Yoder, *Grist*, August 23rd 2016.

Class story meeting: Class project.

Week 13 November 14th

Wildlife & biodiversity: Connecting audiences with the web of life. Earth is losing species 100 to

1,000 times faster than natural extinction, a rate that has not occurred since the dinosaurs and many other species disappeared 65 million years ago. Scientists say habitat degradation is the main cause. What are some ways to report on the biodiversity crisis, and make endangerment of Florida's frosted flatwoods salamander as interesting as our charismatic Florida panther?

Guest Speaker: Dr. Tom Hctor, UF Center for Landscape Planning, on Florida Wildlife corridors, and efforts to predict and mitigate the effects of sea-level rise and land-use changes on Florida's imperiled species.

Prepare for class: 1) Watch "We Are the Asteroid," a video by Peter Sinclair, Yale Climate Connections. 2) "The Sixth Extinction: A Conversation With Elizabeth Kolbert," by Robert Kunzig, National Geographic, February 18th 2014. 3) View on-line interactive report, "Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition," by conservation photographer Carlton Ward Jr. and National Geographic, <http://www.floridawildlifecorridor.org/geostory/>.

Class story meeting: Class project.

Week 14 November 21st

International Environmental Reporting: 21st Century globalism means we're all connected to life, water, and land on other continents, from toxic chemical pollution in China linked to our products and companies to the dumping of our digital waste in Ghana. Climate change, species extinction, water strife, and all major environmental issues are at once local and global. Making the international connections offers great opportunities for journalists and also requires overcoming lots of assumptions about the rest of the world. (Including assumptions about the p-word, population growth. For example, many studies indicate the developed world's consumption trumps population growth when it comes to contributing to climate change.)

Prepare for class: 1) "The Poacher's Pipeline" by Deborah Davies for Al Jazeera Media Network (47-minute documentary, this fresh and powerful investigative angle on the familiar subject of rhino poaching focuses not only on the poachers and the consumers, but the middlemen. 2) "Famine is a feminist issue," by Lisa Palmer, Slate, April 10th 2014. 3) View, "China on the Brink: Photographer Sean Gallagher on an Environmental Crisis," available on Sean's website.

Class story meeting: International reporting and resources, grants available for international environment, climate, population and health journalism.

Week 15 November 28th

Agriculture and food: A sprawling and complex topic covering everything from pollution and water/land use to genetically modified crops and the question of how to feed the world. Americans' renewed interest in organic food and urban farming, and their perpetual interest in healthful eating, can make these some of the best-read stories on the environmental beat. How can environmental journalists accurately and fairly report big trade-offs like food vs. fuel, subsidies vs. groundwater extraction, the most productive corn region in the world vs. the Gulf of Mexico dead zone, etc?

Guest speaker, Anna Prizzia, UF campus food systems coordinator and co-founder, Alachua County's Forage Farm.

Prepare for class: 1) "A Race to Save the Orange by Altering its DNA," Amy Harmon, The New York Times, July 27th 2013. 2) "Pointed talk: Michael Pollan and Amy Harmon Dissect a GMO controversy," by Nathanael Johnson, GRIST, August 2013. 3) "A Journalist and a Scientist Break Ground in the GMO Debate," by Amanda Little, The New Yorker, April 25th 2014. 4) Check out some of the infographics produced by the Food & Environment Reporting Network, [thefern.org](http://thefern.org), particularly, "The Mississippi River and the Making of a Dead Zone."

Class story meeting: {Anna Prizzia is coming to speak @ 11 so our class story meeting will start at 9:35 and we can work on anything you still need help with before final drafts are due Sunday night.}

Week 16 December 5th

Sustainability and success stories: Humans have turned around major environmental crises, including acid rain at the global level; littering at the national level; the clean-ups of severely polluted water bodies from the Hudson River to Tampa Bay. Reporting on both steady progress and success is crucial to give people a sense of solutions – and hope for the future.

Prepare for class: 1) Lest we don't talk enough about the importance of humor: View this frank video of Chip Giller, founder of Grist, on helping create the "future that doesn't suck." <https://vimeo.com/121081128>. 2) "Envision 2050: The Future of Cities," By Todd Reubold, *Ensi* magazine. June 16th 2014. 3) "In Kenya, a Transformation in Shades of REDD," by Amy Yee, *Undark* magazine, July 28th 2017.

Class story meeting: Getting Published, Promoting Your Work and Careers in Environmental Journalism. The good, the bad, and the ugly of making EJ a career. Also: pitching your story to professional outlets; building your brain trust; finding and keeping professional mentors; social media and how to promote your work without being insufferable.

### **Links and Policies**

*Consult the syllabus policy page for a list of required and recommended links to add to the syllabus. Please list the links and any additional policies that will be added to the course syllabus.*

*Please see: [syllabus.ufl.edu](http://syllabus.ufl.edu) for more information*

Response:

Academic Honesty is expected at all times. As a UF student, you've agreed to comply with the University Honor Code. Please make sure you understand the code and consequences, which are here: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. Any violations of this code in Environmental Journalism class will be reported to the Dean of Students. You must also pay special attention to journalistic ethics and issues of plagiarism and copyright; please read and understand UF's College of Journalism and Communications statement on these matters: [www.jou.ufl.edu/academics/bachelors/journalism/academic-honesty/](http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academics/bachelors/journalism/academic-honesty/)

Class attendance: Requirements for class attendance and other work fall under UF policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Any reason for absence from regular class that does not appear on this list of excused absences will result in an automatic 25-point deduction per missed class. Late assignments: Meeting deadline is crucial to your future success and relationship with bosses/editors, whether in journalism or any other field. On all assignments, your grade will drop one full letter grade for each day overdue.

Student Health and Wellness: Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime/ weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 911.

Students with disabilities: All reasonable accommodations will be made. Should you need them, please register first with the Disability Resource Center (352-392- 8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) and provide appropriate documentation. Once registered, you'll receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Please follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Class Sustainability Policy: Please, no bottled water or any beverages in throw-away bottles. Beverages in durable, reusable containers are fine. Starting with this syllabus, I will distribute all course materials/hand-outs electronically, either through email or Canvas. All assignments should be turned in via Canvas. Regarding the nonfiction books graduate students and some undergrads

will read: As a reader and author, I do not consider printed books waste, especially if you enjoy keeping favorite books, hand-writing your impressions in them, or collecting author signatures/inscriptions. This semester, you'll have the opportunity to spend some meaningful time with several authors on our syllabus, so if you'd like David Biello, Jeff Goodell or Jordan Fisher Smith to autograph your book, buy the printed text. Otherwise, e-readers or used copies are both great ways to read more sustainably and cut down on accumulations.

Course and instructor evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last weeks of the semester; you'll be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available for students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

### **Grading Scheme**

*List the types of assessments, assignments and other activities that will be used to determine the course grade, and the percentage contribution from each. This list should have sufficient detail to evaluate the course rigor and grade integrity. Include details about the grading rubric and percentage breakdowns for determining grades.*

Response:

ASSIGNMENTS (You have five of them, due over the course of the semester.)

EJ Assignment 1: ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM PRESENTATIONS.

A 500-word critique of a work of Environmental Journalism you choose + informal class presentation on the strengths and weaknesses of the piece. It could be a long-form story; conservation film; conservation photography project; multimedia story; one of the nonfiction books listed above for grad students; or other EJ work. Please get my approval for your piece.

EJ Assignment 2: GREENWASHING ANALYSIS.

A 500-word critique and informal class presentation on a corporate press release, website, or green campaign. You may feature a campaign that really is making a difference or expose one that is greenwashing or pink-washing, ie, pink-ribbon-promoting companies whose products are linked to increased risk of breast cancer, see [thinkbeforeyoupink.org](http://thinkbeforeyoupink.org). Due midnight Sun Oct. 1st.

EJ Assignment 3: YOUR PROJECT STORY PITCH

A reported, 500-word story pitch (plan) for your project story. This is essentially the skeleton of your story – the angle; the data on which the story is based; the sources you'll interview (5 at minimum); any places you'll visit and describe; and the outline you envision. I will get these back to you quickly so that you can dive into your stories. Due midnight Sun Oct. 15th.

EJ Assignment 4: SEAHORSE KEY STORY

A 500-word, descriptive story reported during our field trip. The format is flexible, so that you can challenge yourself to use a new story form. You may tackle place, ecological biography, botany, climate, environmental history, a wildlife or ocean story, a clam-aquaculture story, a work of nature writing, anything goes. Each piece should include a compelling storyline; detailed descriptive writing; and credible sources, among other tenets of good journalism, storytelling and observation that we'll talk about on the island. Video/audio/other formats OK with my approval. Due midnight Sun Nov. 12th.

If a student is unable to attend the field trip, see the instructor for an alternative field assignment.

EJ Assignment 5: PROJECT STORY, DUE IN TWO PARTS

Your project story should be between 800 and 1,200 words unless we agreed during the pitch phase on a nontraditional story such as a documentary video, NPR-style audio story, data

visualization, interactive graphic or photojournalistic essay. A first draft of your story – text only – is due midnight Tues 11/21. Note: A first draft is not a rough draft! You'll be graded on your effort to make this draft as complete as possible. I need this opportunity to edit your piece so during the last two weeks you can polish it for publication. The final draft of your class project is due midnight Sun 12/3. A polished, fact-checked, final story with my questions answered and edits made from the first draft and at least two added elements – photos; audio or video clips; graphics; timelines or others to draw people in.

GRADES: Your final grade is made up of assignments and participation as follows:

- Environmental Journalism presentations, due Sun 9/17, 100 points.
- Critique and class presentation on a corporate press release or green campaign, due Sun 10/1, 100 points.
- Pitch/plan (as if you are making a pitch to an editor) for your project story, due Sun 10/15, 100 points.
- Seahorse Key story, due Sun 11/12, 100 points.
- First draft class project (text only; let me know what added elements you plan), due Tues 11/21, 200 points.
- Final draft class project (text + elements), due Sun 12/3, 200 points.
- Class and field trip attendance, discussion of weekly readings, engagement w/ guest speakers and online w/ hashtag #EJUF, 200 points.

Each class missed for reasons outside those listed in the UF attendance policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>), will result in automatic deduction of 25 points per absence. If I've marked you present 16 times, and if you do the required readings, participate and engage w/ speakers and at least once a week on social media (through the semester – not 16 Tweets in the final week!), you'll earn all 200 participation points.

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE 1,000. SCALE:

930-1,000 points: A

900-929: A-

880-899: B+

830-879: B

800-829: B-

780-799: C+

730-779: C

700-729: C-

680-699: D+

630-679: D

600-629: D-

599 or below: E

**Instructor(s)**

*Enter the name of the planned instructor or instructors, or "to be determined" if instructors are not yet identified.*

Response:

Cynthia Barnett

**Environmental Journalism**  
**Undergraduates: JOU xxxx**  
**Tuesdays, periods 3 to 5**

**Weimer Hall (UF's College of Journalism & Communications) Room 3324**

**Instructor: Cynthia Barnett**

**Email:** clbarnett@jou.ufl.edu

**Phone:** 352-376-4440 (call or text)

**Twitter:** @cynthiabarnett, Class hashtag: #EJUF

**Office:** 3326 Weimer Hall

**Office hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Sometimes I am traveling on a story so best to make an appointment.**

**Environmental Journalism, the challenge:** Living in what some scientists term the Anthropocene Era (*anthropo*: man, and *cene*: new), in which human activities have ever-more serious impacts on our local regions and the planet, it is increasingly important to report on and improve public understanding of climate change; freshwater scarcity; the decline of our oceans, fish, and wildlife; environmental health; sustainable energy, agriculture, and food systems; and more. But complex science and uncertainty, public apathy and politics, well-funded counter-narratives, zealous stakeholders, and what can (incorrectly) appear a lack of news hook for stories playing out slowly in the decades of a comp plan or two centuries of CO2 emissions make EJ one of the most challenging specializations in our craft.

**Environmental Journalism, the course:** This course will introduce you to Environmental Journalism and elucidate the roles and differences between journalism and communications; help you find the most accurate, credible and timeliest information on science and issues; and ground you in the essentials of environmental reporting – discerning uncompromised expert sources, using human narratives and descriptive storytelling to relate real-world impact, and tapping the databases, records and other tools commonly used by environmental reporters.

## **COURSE OUTCOMES**

**By the end of the course, you will:**

- Understand the specialization of Environmental Journalism and its role in an informed citizenry, including both watchdog and storytelling roles.
- Evaluate pressing environmental issues with objectivity and fairness.
- Analyze sources and differentiate among them, including ranges of scientific, policy, activist and corporate sources and their press releases; and including the

ability to discern manipulation such as greenwashing from scientifically valid solutions.

- Critique a range of nonfiction environmental communications, from film to photography and from activist to scientific communications.
- Demonstrate ability to communicate in-depth environmental issues in journalistic form to lay audiences in compelling ways.

Each weekly class is divided into two parts. The first half is lecture/discussion: We'll delve into the craft of Environmental Journalism and its promise and challenges through a topical theme in EJ, often with a guest speaker. The second half will be devoted to our class project and practicalities of the profession: hands-on reporting, developing, funding, crafting and publishing environmental stories.

### **COURSE READINGS, PARTICIPATION, ASSIGNMENTS and GRADES:**

**READINGS:** Undergraduates are not required to buy any books. Please read the assigned works of journalism each week before class. Most are here on the syllabus and some will be added based on news of the day; look for my Thurs eve emails for updates. Graduate students are required to read and review one work of nonfiction environmental reporting, preferably either *The Unnatural World: The Race to Remake Civilization in Earth's Newest Age*, by David Biello; *The Water Will Come: Rising Seas, Sinking Cities and the Remaking of the Civilized World* by Jeff Goodell (out 10/24/17); or *Engineering Eden: The True Story of a Violent Death, a Trial, and the Fight Over Controlling Nature* by Jordan Fisher Smith. Biello, Goodell and Smith will all visit campus this fall and you'll have an opportunity to meet them. However, if you are hankering to read and review a different EJ book that will inform your own work, run it by me for OK.

For all students, our weekly assigned articles and essays are available free online, or through UF's electronic databases. All are also expected to keep up with the Environmental Journalism of the day. This is best accomplished by checking the Society of Environmental Journalists' "EJ Today," a well-chosen collection of top headlines from the beat updated every weekday morning. You do not have to be a member of SEJ to access the daily links, here: [www.sej.org/headlines/list](http://www.sej.org/headlines/list). You may want to join (\$25 for students) if considering EJ as a career.\

**PARTICIPATION – both in person and online – is part of your grade.** Since we meet in person only once a week and we need everyone to make our published project excellent, **class attendance is mandatory, as is social-media engagement, with a minimum of one Twitter post a week.** Twitter has its pros and cons, but is worth



trying this semester for its vigorous discussion of the environment. I will tweet (from @cynthiabarnett) about Environmental Journalism and our class using the hashtag #EJUF. For a good overview of EJ on Twitter, also follow the Society of Environmental Journalists @SEJORG. If you are on Facebook, please “like” UF Environmental Journalism for yet more insights & connections.

### **Overnight field trip to Seahorse Key! Sat and Sun Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>**

Getting your boots muddy in the field is perhaps the most important element of environmental storytelling. So, our field experience is a key part of class, and the related assignment a key part of your grade. On Saturday morning Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>, we’ll head an hour’s drive west of Gainesville by car, then another mile into the Gulf of Mexico by boat, to the Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge, a chain of rare undeveloped barrier islands. We’ll share a potluck dinner and spend the night in an old lighthouse on the island of Seahorse Key. There is a field trip fee that I will keep to less than \$100, due just before the trip. Please let me know early in the semester if this will be a financial hardship, and I will work on funding for those who need it. Details, directions and contacts in class and by email. **Everyone who comes on the field trip can miss one of the 16 class meetings – no questions asked.**

**ASSIGNMENTS** (You have five of them, due over the course of the semester.)

### **EJ Assignment 1: ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM PRESENTATIONS.**

**Undergrads:** A 500-word critique of a work of Environmental Journalism you choose + informal class presentation on the strengths and weaknesses of the piece. It could be a long-form story; conservation film; conservation photography project; multimedia story; one of the nonfiction books listed above for grad students; or other EJ work. Please get my approval for your piece.

**Grad students:** A 500-word analysis + formal class presentation on a special problem or issue in Environmental Journalism. This could relate to your graduate study or a special interest you have, and ideally should teach the rest of us something. Here are just a few possibilities; feel free to come talk to me about others, and get my approval for your topic: The lack of diversity in environmental journalism; “junk science”; battling climate denial; covering GMOs; environmental journalism in the Trump Administration; the problem of doomsday climate reporting; digital security for journalists and researchers; etc. **Due midnight Sun. Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>; undergrads, turn in text on Canvas. Grad students should turn in text, + slides for an approx. 15-min.**

class presentation.

### **EJ Assignment 2: GREENWASHING ANALYSIS.**

A 500-word critique and informal class presentation on a corporate press release, website, or green campaign. You may feature a campaign that really is making a difference or expose one that is greenwashing or pink-washing, ie, pink-ribbon-promoting companies whose products are linked to increased risk of breast cancer, see [thinkbeforeyoupink.org](http://thinkbeforeyoupink.org).

**Due midnight Sun Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>.**

### **EJ Assignment 3: YOUR PROJECT STORY PITCH**

A reported, 500-word story pitch (plan) for your project story. This is essentially the skeleton of your story – the angle; the data on which the story is based; the sources you'll interview (5 at minimum); any places you'll visit and describe; and the outline you envision. I will get these back to you quickly so that you can dive into your stories. **Due midnight Sun Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>.**

### **EJ Assignment 4: SEAHORSE KEY STORY**

A 500-word, descriptive story reported during our field trip. The format is flexible, so that you can challenge yourself to use a new story form. You may tackle place, ecological biography, botany, climate, environmental history, a wildlife or ocean story, a clam-aquaculture story, a work of nature writing, anything goes. Each piece should include a compelling storyline; detailed descriptive writing; and credible sources, among other tenets of good journalism, storytelling and observation that we'll talk about on the island. Video/audio/other formats OK with my approval. **Due midnight Sun Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>.**

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edits made from the first draft and at least two added elements – photos; audio or video clips; graphics; timelines or others to draw people in.

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### **TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE 1,000. SCALE:**

**930-1,000 points: A**

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**630-679: D**

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## COURSE POLICIES

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graduate students and some undergrads will read: As a reader and author, I do not consider printed books waste, especially if you enjoy keeping favorite books, handwriting your impressions in them, or collecting author signatures/inscriptions. This semester, you'll have the opportunity to spend some meaningful time with several authors on our syllabus, so if you'd like David Biello, Jeff Goodell or Jordan Fisher Smith to autograph your book, buy the printed text. Otherwise, e-readers or used copies are both great ways to read more sustainably and cut down on accumulations.

**Course and instructor evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last weeks of the semester; you'll be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available for students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

**Your instructor: Cynthia Barnett** is Environmental Journalist in Residence at the UF College of Journalism and Communications. She is author of the water books *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.* (2007); *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis* (2011); and *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History* (2015), long-listed for the National Book Award and a finalist for the PEN/E.O. Wilson Award for Literary Science Writing. She's written on the environment for *National Geographic*, the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *the Atlantic*, *Discover*, *Salon*, *Politico*, *Orion*, *Ensi* and many other publications. She earned her bachelor's in journalism and master's in environmental history, both from UF, and spent a year as a Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan specializing in freshwater.

**DETAILED COURSE AGENDA, WEEKLY READINGS AND SEMESTER PROJECT** (Please look for my Thursday evening email prior to Tuesday's class for updates/substitutions.)

**Week 1, August 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Course intro and policies; philosophy and history of EJ:** Modern

Environmental Journalism has roots in the seventeenth century, when **John Evelyn** writes "[Fumifugium, or the Inconvenience of the Aer and Smoake of London Dissipated](#)" (1661), proposing remedies for London's choking black air: *The immoderate use of, and indulgence to, sea-coale in the city of London exposes it to one of the fowlest inconveniences and reproaches that can possibly befall so noble and otherwise incomparable City. Whilst they are belching it forth their sooty jaws, the City of London resembles ... the suburbs of Hell [rather] than an assembly of rational creatures.* We'll take a look at the history of this vigorous field from Evelyn to Florida's own **Marjory Stoneman Douglas** – a journalist and author long before she became an environmental activist at age 76 – and **Rachel Carson**, whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* remains one of the best-known works of Environmental Journalism for its profound impact. *Silent Spring* helped launch the modern environmental movement, spurred the federal government to ban DDT, and helped bring about a remarkable recovery of eagles, falcons and other fish-eating birds then at the brink of extinction.

**Prepare for class:** 1) Read the syllabus through to the end and bring any questions you have! 2) "Marjory Stoneman Douglas, 'Voice of the River,'" by Tim Collie, the *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel*, May 18<sup>th</sup> 1998. 3) "Silent Spring Turns 50," by Elizabeth Grossman, June 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, *Atlantic*. 4) *Silent Spring Part I* – Carson's first excerpt in the *New Yorker*, published in the June 16<sup>th</sup> 1962 issue: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/06/16/silent-spring-part-1>.

**Class story meeting: Introductions:** To each other, including your interests in the environment and the place(s) most important to you. To the syllabus and course mechanics. **In-class documentary films:** Annie Leonard's "The Story of Stuff" and "The Story of Bottled Water." Many core issues on the EJ beat, from water to energy to food, circle back to over-consumption and waste. First part of Mark Kitchell's "Fierce Green Fire" if we have time.

**Week 2, August 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Environmental Journalism, the beat:** We'll launch into the profession at the local level: Even given the global problems of climate change, deforestation and emptying seas, the best place to help people understand what's happening to the environment is to show them in their own backyards, drinking water supplies, etc.

**Guest speaker:** Dinah Voyles Pulver of the *Daytona Beach News Journal*, who has won the prestigious Waldo Proffitt Award for Excellence in Environmental Journalism not once, twice, or three times, but four!

**Prepare for class:** 1) Dinah's five-part multi-media series [Troubled Water: The Indian River Lagoon in Peril](#). 2) Click around "**Losing Ground,**" **interactive on vanishing Louisiana** by Bob Marshall, Jacobs and Al Shaw, for ProPublica & The Lens; 3) Review some of Climate Central's [computer-animated stories](#): including "[This is how climate change will shift the world's cities](#)," by Brian Kahn

**Class story meeting: Introduction to our class project on energy and poverty. Review some multiplatform projects.**

### **Week 3 September 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Covering Freshwater:** Water lies at the heart of all the planet's biggest environmental stories – climate change, and human and ecosystems health, along with the competition among water, food and energy. Reporting on freshwater encompasses both quality – nitrates and other pollutants; and quantity, which involves the sustainability of water extraction for human use and equity among different users from ag to utilities (us) – and ecosystems.

**Prepare for class:** 1) Check out ACLU of Michigan's Curt Guyette's coverage of the Flint Water Crisis. 2) "In Flint Crisis, a New Model for Environmental Journalism," by Cynthia Barnett, *Yale Environment 360*. 3) (Scroll) USA Today's investigative series "[Beyond Flint](#)." 4) Project: Blue Ether, the 2016 Environmental Journalism class project, stories at <https://www.wuft.org/specials/water/>.

**Class story meeting:** Hal Knowles and Lynn Jarrett of UF's Program for Resource Efficient Communities will come talk with us about the local data and findings we'll be using in our 2017 class project. Begin to brainstorm project.

### **Week 4 September 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Climate Change, the story of our time:** Just as the science of climate change –

and the tangible impacts around us – become increasingly clear, the United States is retreating from years of work to try and lower emissions and to make the nation more resilient. Helping the general public understand the global-to-local story of Earth’s warming and its impacts has become more important than ever before – as has making the climate change story engaging. **In-class documentary film:** *Before the Flood*, Leonardo DiCaprio.

**Prepare for class:** 1) *The New York Times*’s interactive three-part series, “Antarctic Dispatches,” May 2017. 2) David Wallace-Wells controversial cover story on climate change in *New York Magazine*, [The Uninhabitable Earth](#), July 9<sup>th</sup> 2017. 3) “Goodbye Miami,” by Jeff Goodell, *Rolling Stone*, June 2013.

**Class story meeting:** We’ll look at emerging multimedia, graphics, mapping and reporting platforms that can help audiences visualize climate change. Members of Gainesville’s Community Weatherization Coalition will visit to further help us brainstorm the stories in our class project.

### **Week 5, September 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Conservation photography** tells a purposeful story. “The images exist for a reason,” explains *National Geographic* photographer [Joel Sartore](#). “To save the earth while we still can.” We’ll dig into this dynamic form and how it differs from traditional nature or landscape photography; the key role of imagery in environmental storytelling; and strategies for shooting photos that help audiences understand environmental issues and their personal connection.

**Guest speaker:** Conservation photographer Jennifer Adler, National Geographic Explorer and UF doctoral candidate in Interdisciplinary Ecology.

**Prepare for class:** 1) “Conservation Photography Art, Ethics, and Action,” published in the *International Journal of Wilderness*, by Cristina Mittermeier, founder of the International League of Conservation Photographers. (On Canvas.) 2) “Assignment Earth: How Photography Can Help Save the Planet, *American Photo* magazine Sept.-Oct. 2007, pages 58-83. (Available on Google Books.) 3) Explore our guest speaker’s National Geographic project, Walking on Water. (<https://walkingonwaterfl.org>) 4) View Jenny’s TEDx talk, “Illusions: A Lens into Our Fragile Freshwater” ([http://bit.ly/TEDx\\_JenniferAdler](http://bit.ly/TEDx_JenniferAdler)). 5) View this short video on Joel Sartore’s Photo Ark project: <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/ng-live/151208-sartore-photo-ark-lecture-nglive>



**Class story meeting: Project story ideas, reporting strategies, begin building our story budget and assignments.**

### **Week 6, September 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Greenwashing and spin:** Is that new housing development really green? How much water will the proposed organic beef operation pump? Is phosphate feeding the world or depleting the Earth? Asking the questions and the follow-up questions... reporting with sophistication and fairness ... and recognizing greenwashing vs. effective corporate social responsibility/sustainability programs.

**In-class documentary film:** *Merchants of Doubt*, Robert Kenner.

**Guest speaker:** Jasper Fessmann, UF doctoral candidate in Mass Communications with a specialization in Public Interest Communications, who will help us identify and counter the greenwashing PR strategies and tactics used to manipulate journalists and the public.

**Prepare for class:** 1) Read Part I of the series “Exxon: The Road Not Taken,” by Neela Banerjee, Lisa Song and David Hasemyer, September 2015, reporting for the Pulitzer Prize-winning nonprofit news site Inside Climate News. 2) “BP Labors to Cast Doubt on Spill Study It Dislikes,” by Bryan Gruley and Bradley Olson, Bloomberg Business, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2015. 3) Click around BP’s Gulf spill website, The Whole Story, at <https://www.thestateofthegulf.com/the-whole-story/>

**Class story meeting:** Brainstorm ideas for your greenwashing assignment, due Sunday night.

### **Week 7, October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Energy:** Coverage blends the old-fashioned skill of following the money and the modern challenge of reporting on the sustainability of our energy choices and sources. As we transition to the low-carbon future, part of the journalist’s watchdog role involves reporting on the feasibility of new technologies and being able to spot hype.

**Guest speaker:** David Biello, science curator at TED Ideas, contributing editor at Scientific American and author of *The Unnatural World: The Race to Remake Civilization in Earth’s Newest Age*.

**Prepare for class:** 1) Read some of *The Guardian’s* award-winning multi-media

investigation, “Big Carbon,” story links below. It is not necessary to read all of this, but definitely get to: “The Truth Behind Peabody’s Campaign to Rebrand Coal as a Poverty Cure.”

1. ["The Real Story Behind Shell's Climate Change Rhetoric"](#)
2. ["Shell Accused of Strategy Risking Catastrophic Climate Change"](#)
3. ["Where There Is Oil and Gas There Is Schlumberger"](#)
4. ["Coal Giant Exploited Ebola Crisis for Corporate Gain, Say Health Experts"](#)
5. ["The Truth Behind Peabody's Campaign To Rebrand Coal As a Poverty Cure"](#)
6. ["Revealed: BP's Close Ties with the UK Government"](#)
7. ["BP Ditched Arctic Concerns for Strategic Deal with Russia"](#)
8. ["Colombian Takes BP To Court in UK Over Alleged Complicity in Kidnap and Torture"](#)
9. ["Gilberto Torres Survived Colombia's Death Squads. Now He Wants Justice."](#)

2) Scroll through and get the gist of the Climate Central series “Pulp Fiction,” parts 1, 2, and 3, a five-month investigative series by reporter John Upton on the global trade in wood pellets, revealing renewable energy doesn’t necessarily mean clean energy. 3) Read our guest speaker’s story, “Electric Cars are Not Necessarily Clean” (your battery-powered vehicle is only as green as your electricity supplier, by David Biello, May 11<sup>th</sup> 2016, *Scientific American*).

**Class story meeting: Complete class project story budget and assignments.**

### **Week 8, October 10<sup>th</sup>**

**The Oceans** Sea stories are among the best read in Environmental Journalism because audiences often already care about beaches, charismatic creatures like dolphins and their favorite seafood dinner. What if the story doesn’t involve a dolphin with a cute name, rather, complexities such as ocean acidification and red tides, or highly politicized issues such as the Apalachicola oyster collapse?

**Prepare for class:** 1) “Sea Change: The Pacific’s Perilous Turn,” 2013 *Seattle Times* series on the global impacts of ocean acidification, by reporter Craig Welch and photographer Steve Ringman. Scroll through the seven stories online at the *Seattle Times*’s main link <http://apps.seattletimes.com/reports/sea-change/> so you can view the videos and interactive graphics. 2) ["How Virtual Reality Can Help Us Feel the Pain of Climate Change,"](#) Randy Reiland’s story in *Smithsonian.com* about VR as a way to show people the future acidifying sea.

**Class story meeting: Class project.**

**For your calendars!** Thursday October 12th, 2 to 4:30 p.m., Reitz Union's Rion Ballroom: [UF's 3rd annual Climate Communications Summit](#): "Diving Deeper, Immersive Storytelling for Climate Science," will explore virtual reality and other types of immersive storytelling that hold promise for helping people visualize the climate-changed future. The keynote is Jeremy Bailenson, founding director of [Stanford's Virtual Human Interaction Lab](#), behind the ocean acidification VR. {If you would like to go, please sign up at the link. It's free.}

### Week 9, October 17<sup>th</sup>

**Environmental Health and Chemicals** Are chemicals behind the plunging sperm counts of western men (by more than half) over the past forty years, and other “modern ills”? Understanding epidemiology & risk, and more investigative reporting on the environmental beat. Chemical pollution lies at the major intersection of environmental, health, and science reporting.

**Guest speaker: Joe Delfino, UF Professor Emeritus of Environmental Engineering Sciences.**

**Prepare for class:** 1) “Welcome to Beautiful Parkersburg, West Virginia,” Mariah Blake’s multimedia narrative on a town devastated by the chemical C-8, an ingredient in the making of Teflon.

<http://highline.huffingtonpost.com/articles/en/welcome-to-beautiful-parkersburg/>

1) [This excerpt](#) from Theo Colborn’s *Our Stolen Future*, Chapter 6, “To the Ends of the Earth.” And [this short biography](#) of Theo Colborn by Lizzie Grossman.

**Class story meeting:** Q&A with Dr. Delfino & brainstorming on class project.

### Week 10, October 24<sup>th</sup>

**Environmental Justice:** We know by now from the class project data that the poor have higher burdens for energy, transportation and other costs. Low-income, minority neighborhoods also tend to bear the brunt of environmental threats such as exposure to chemical plants, Superfund and other toxic waste sites. A growing body of research “suggests that the chronic stressors of poverty may fundamentally alter the way the body reacts to pollutants, especially in young children,” according to the Environmental Health News Network.

**Prepare for class:** 1) “Toxic City,” the Philadelphia Inquirer investigation that

uncovered thousands of poor children poisoned by lead – all preventable by landlords – in Philly, [http://www.sej.org/sites/default/files/SEJ\\_ToxicCity.pdf](http://www.sej.org/sites/default/files/SEJ_ToxicCity.pdf). 2) The interactive story “[Cancer Alley: Big Industry, Big Problems](#),” Photography by Matt Black, Writing by Trymaine Lee, published on MSNBC, funded by the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting.

**Class story meeting:** Ensure everyone has their story idea ready to craft their pitch. Share story ideas, strengthen pitches before they are due Sunday night.

### **Week 11, October 31<sup>st</sup>**

#### **Nature writing**

Environmental journalists are journalists working to cover the environment and not environmentalists trying to practice journalism. Still, nature writing has an important place in EJ. Lyrical descriptions of sea or forest, personal narratives, sense of place pieces and adventure tales all can help draw new readers to environmental stories. This week we take a break from issues-based research and storytelling to think about how to help people connect to and contemplate Earth’s awe and wonder.

**Prepare for class:** 1) Read Chapter 6, “Cedar Keys,” in John Muir’s *1,000 Mile Walk to the Gulf*. 2) Sy Montgomery, “Deep Intellect,” *Orion* magazine, October 2011. 3) Mark Cocker, “Death of the naturalist: Why is the ‘New Nature Writing So Tame?’” *New Statesman*, June 2015. 4) Robert Macfarlane, “Why We Need Nature Writing,” *New Statesman*, September 2015.

**Class story meeting:** Details, preparations for field trip, go over Seahorse Key story assignment.

### **Week 12 November 7<sup>th</sup>**

#### **This land is our land: America’s national parks**

Dubbed “America’s best idea,” the national parks celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year but face unprecedented threats between climate change, oil and gas drilling and budget cuts. Meanwhile President Trump has ordered a major review of national monuments to determine if they should be rescinded, resized or otherwise changed. The parks embody the ideal that the nation’s magnificent natural wonders should be available to everyone – but does it really mean everyone, and can the ideal survive the troubled times?

**Guest speaker:** Western park ranger turned environmental journalist [Jordan](#)

**Fisher Smith**, author of *Engineering Eden: The True Story of a Violent Death, a Trial and the Fight Over Controlling Nature*.

**Prepare for class:** 1) “It All Began with Conservation,” by Wallace Stegner, *Smithsonian* magazine, v. 21 n1, p. 35-43, April 1990. 2) “America’s National Parks, By Definition,” the first essay in Terry Tempest Williams’s *The House of Land: A personal topography of America’s national parks*. 3) “What if I’m not white?” A former sports writer tries to find a place for himself in the outdoors,” by Glenn Nelson, *High Country News*, June 27<sup>th</sup> 2016. 4) “From Glacierless National Park to the Neverglades: Meet your future national parks” by Kate Yoder, *Grist*, August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

**Class story meeting: Class project.**

### **Week 13 November 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Wildlife & biodiversity: Connecting audiences with the web of life.** Earth is losing species 100 to 1,000 times faster than natural extinction, a rate that has not occurred since the dinosaurs and many other species disappeared 65 million years ago. Scientists say habitat degradation is the main cause. What are some ways to report on the biodiversity crisis, and make endangerment of Florida’s frosted flatwoods salamander as interesting as our charismatic Florida panther?

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Tom Hctor, UF Center for Landscape Planning,** on Florida Wildlife corridors, and efforts to predict and mitigate the effects of sea-level rise and land-use changes on Florida’s imperiled species.

**Prepare for class:** 1) Watch “We Are the Asteroid,” a video by Peter Sinclair, Yale Climate Connections. 2) “The Sixth Extinction: A Conversation With Elizabeth Kolbert,” by Robert Kunzig, National Geographic, February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014. 3) View on-line interactive report, “Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition,” by conservation photographer Carlton Ward Jr. and National Geographic, <http://www.floridawildlifecorridor.org/geostory/>.

**Class story meeting: Class project.**

### **Week 14 November 21<sup>st</sup>**

**International Environmental Reporting:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century globalism means we’re all connected to life, water, and land on other continents, from toxic chemical

pollution in China linked to our products and companies to the dumping of our digital waste in Ghana. Climate change, species extinction, water strife, and all major environmental issues are at once local and global. Making the international connections offers great opportunities for journalists and also requires overcoming lots of assumptions about the rest of the world. (Including assumptions about the word, population growth. For example, many studies indicate the developed world's consumption trumps population growth when it comes to contributing to climate change.)

**Prepare for class:** 1) "[The Poacher's Pipeline](#)" by Deborah Davies for Al Jazeera Media Network (47-minute documentary, this fresh and powerful investigative angle on the familiar subject of rhino poaching focuses not only on the poachers and the consumers, but the middlemen. 2) "Famine is a feminist issue," by Lisa Palmer, Slate, April 10<sup>th</sup> 2014. 3) View, "China on the Brink: Photographer Sean Gallagher on an Environmental Crisis," available on Sean's website.

**Class story meeting:** International reporting and resources, grants available for international environment, climate, population and health journalism.

### **Week 15 November 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Agriculture and food:** A sprawling and complex topic covering everything from pollution and water/land use to genetically modified crops and the question of how to feed the world. Americans' renewed interest in organic food and urban farming, and their perpetual interest in healthful eating, can make these some of the best-read stories on the environmental beat. How can environmental journalists accurately and fairly report big trade-offs like food vs. fuel, subsidies vs. groundwater extraction, the most productive corn region in the world vs. the Gulf of Mexico dead zone, etc?

**Guest speaker, Anna Prizzia, UF campus food systems coordinator and co-founder, Alachua County's Forage Farm.**

**Prepare for class:** 1) "A Race to Save the Orange by Altering its DNA," Amy Harmon, *The New York Times*, July 27<sup>th</sup> 2013. 2) "Pointed talk: Michael Pollan and Amy Harmon Dissect a GMO controversy," by Nathanael Johnson, GRIST, August 2013. 3) "A Journalist and a Scientist Break Ground in the GMO Debate," by Amanda Little, *The New Yorker*, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2014. 4) Check out some of the infographics produced by the Food & Environment Reporting Network,

thefern.org, particularly, “The Mississippi River and the Making of a Dead Zone.”

**Class story meeting: {Anna Prizzia is coming to speak @ 11 so our class story meeting will start at 9:35 and we can work on anything you still need help with before final drafts are due Sunday night.}**

### **Week 16 December 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Sustainability and success stories:** Humans have turned around major environmental crises, including acid rain at the global level; littering at the national level; the clean-ups of severely polluted water bodies from the Hudson River to Tampa Bay. Reporting on both steady progress and success is crucial to give people a sense of solutions – and hope for the future.

**Prepare for class:** 1) Lest we don’t talk enough about the importance of humor: View this [frank video](https://vimeo.com/121081128) of Chip Giller, founder of Grist, on helping create the “future that doesn’t suck.” <https://vimeo.com/121081128>. 2) “Envision 2050: The Future of Cities,” By Todd Reubold, *Ensia* magazine. June 16<sup>th</sup> 2014. 3) “In Kenya, a Transformation in Shades of REDD,” by Amy Yee, *Undark* magazine, July 28<sup>th</sup> 2017.

**Class story meeting: Getting Published, Promoting Your Work and Careers in Environmental Journalism.** The good, the bad, and the ugly of making EJ a career. Also: pitching your story to professional outlets; building your brain trust; finding and keeping professional mentors; social media and how to promote your work without being insufferable.

**AND, WE’LL CELEBRATE FINISHING OUR CLASS PROJECT!**

## FALL 2017 CLASS PROJECT ENERGY POVERTY

Many of America's poorest households pay disproportionately the highest utility bills in the nation, and must spend a significantly higher percentage of their income for electricity. An analysis of census, utility and property records shows that the same holds true for Alachua County. Moreover, African American residents of the county pay the highest utility rates per square foot *and* the most for electricity as a percentage of their household income, while using the least energy overall. (For example, black households served by Gainesville Regional Utilities pay about 19% more for their utilities by square-foot area than the GRU average.)

Working with UF's Program for Resource Efficient Communities, the fall 2017 Environmental Journalism class will report on this data, finding and telling the most compelling human stories behind it. Students will choose their own stories based on our class research and interviews and your reporting. The stories might include investigative pieces on how well or poorly local landlords, including private landlords and public-housing operators, maintain rental properties; human-interest stories on how local families juggle choices such as paying for food vs. utilities; how the energy-efficiency movement seems to have forgotten the poor and how local organizations are working to change that; or the high percentage of black families who live without air-conditioning in one of the hottest regions in the United States. (20% of black households in Alachua County have no mechanical air conditioning, according to Property Appraiser and U.S. Census records.)

This project is designed to give Environmental Journalism students hands-on experience working with data, reporting and crafting human stories, and publishing on professional platforms. Stories spanning narrative writing, photography, videography, audio and graphics, should expose the problems; elucidate their connection to the larger arc of climate change; and most importantly offer solutions -- both those underway and those the community can aspire to. By the end of the semester we hope to help improve student and public understanding of nuances at the cross-section of energy, poverty and race, and to have made a difference in the local community.