

WINTER 2016

**ENVS 411**

**ARMED CONFLICT and ENVIRONMENT :  
An interdisciplinary consideration of militarism & nature**

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Instructor: Julie Bacon

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course aims to explore the relationship between the natural environment and armed social conflict. This is a multi-directional relationship, which is to say that there are conflicts over the environment (battles for land, water, minerals etc...) and environmental effects produced by the act of human conflict (warfare, the building and maintenance of military infrastructure, displacement of people etc...).

We will utilize materials from a wide range of sources (theater, law, film, sociology, public health etc...) in order to attempt to understand the way armed conflict and ecology intersect.

**COURSE GOALS:** Students will consider the complex relationship between armed conflicts over ecology and the ecological impacts of armed conflict. Students will be asked to think critically about narratives of scarcity, security, and nationalism in the context of globalization, neo-colonialism, and transnational capitalism. Students will generate research a final project based on bringing together their professional / intellectual aspirations and their new understanding of armed conflict and the environment.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the course students will (1) be familiar with historical and contemporary patterns of environmentally motivated conflict, (2) be familiar with critical theory approaches to thinking about conflict and the environment, (3) be familiar with the ecological impacts of militarism, (4) students will develop and complete a project relevant to this topic.

**UNITS OF THE COURSE**

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Armed Conflict and Resource Extraction – Case Study: Elsipogtog  
Theories of Environmental Conflict/Conflict and Environment  
Nuclear Weapons, Testing, and Waste  
Militarized Responses to Environmental Movements  
Soldiers, Environmental Health and Justice  
Military to Wildlife Conversions

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

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Debriefing Elsipogtog: The Anatomy of a Struggle by Miles Howe  
Burning Vision by Marie Clements  
Proving Grounds: Militarized Landscapes, Weapons Testing, and the Environmental Impact of U.S. Bases Edwin A. Martini (Editor)

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## **ADDITIONAL READINGS**

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- Argueta, Manlio. *One Day of Life*. New York: Vintage, 1983. Print.
- Brugge, Doug, and Rob Goble. "The history of uranium mining and the Navajo people." *American Journal of Public Health* 92.9 (2002): 1410-1419.
- Cohn, Jeffrey P. "New defenders of wildlife." *BioScience* (1996): 11-14.
- Dimitrov, Radoslav S. *Water, Conflict, and Security: A Conceptual Minefield*. Society & Natural Resources Vol. 15, Iss. 8, 2002
- Foucault, Michel, and Paul Rabinow. "Right of Death and Power Over Life." *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon, 1984. 258-73. Print.
- Foucault, Michel, and Paul Rabinow. "The Carceral." *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon, 1984. 234-39. Print.
- Hooks, Gregory, and Chad L. Smith. "The treadmill of destruction: National sacrifice areas and Native Americans." *American Sociological Review* 69.4 (2004): 558-575.
- Horwitz, Joshua. *War of the Whales: A True Story*. N.p.: Simon & Schuster, 2014. Print
- Libiszewski, Stephan. *What is an Environmental Conflict?*, ENCOP Occasional Paper No. 1, (Zurich: Center for Security Studies)
- Raleigh, Clionadh, and Henrik Urdal. "Climate change, environmental degradation and armed conflict." *Political Geography* 26.6 (2007): 674-694.
- Riess, Michael. "Actually, We Did Start the Fire, and It Keeps on Burning: The Environmental Health Effects of Military Burn Pits in Afghanistan and Iraq." *Vill. Envtl. LJ* 23 (2012): 117.
- Schlesinger, Stephen C., and Stephen Kinzer. *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982. Print.
- Seager, Joni. "Patriarchal vandalism: militaries and the environment." (1999): 163-88.
- Timura, Christopher T. "'Environmental Conflict' and the Social Life of Environmental Security Discourse." *Anthropological Quarterly* 74.3 (2001): 104-113.

## **GRADE BREAKDOWN**

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- Major project – 40%
- Midterm – 20 %
- Participation – 25%
- Homework – 15%

## **MAJOR PROJECT**

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The form and content of the final project is flexible in order to accommodate the variety of student interests and ambition. Form may be academic, professional, or creative. Students may work alone or in teams of 2-3 people (project expectations will be adjusted for groups).

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ALL projects will include:

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1. A literature review of relevant materials (completed in week 7)
2. An "Introduction" that uses at least 8 readings from our course to explain what the connections are between militarism (armed conflict) and the environment and why it is important. This part of the project is basically like a final essay showing what you've learned in the course.
3. A complete works cited.
4. Creative projects will also need to include a 3-4 page artist's statement.

#### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

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##### Week 1

Explore what environmental issues / organizations are of interest to you. Where do you see yourself going with this degree? What kinds of solutions are you hoping to be a part of?

Due: in class writing throughout the week

HW 1 due by Friday of week 1

##### Week 2

Brainstorming how might your interests intersect with issues of armed conflict?

Due: in class writing throughout the week

HW 2 due by Friday of week 2

Office Hour meetings (about 10-15 minutes each)

##### Week 3 & 4

Researching how your interests intersect with armed conflict. During this time period you will gather both academic and popular sources relating to your interests & armed conflict.

Due: HW 3 due Friday Week 3

Office Hour meetings during week 3 (about 10-15 minutes each)

Annotated Bibliography of 10-15 sources (min. 8 academic/professional) due by Friday of week 4

##### Week 5

Midterm Exam taken this week. NO PROJECT WORK

##### Week 6 & 7

Preparing a lit review that summarizes how your interests intersect with armed conflict.

Due: 2-4 page lit review of your bibliography materials due Friday of week 7

Office Hours not required by strongly recommended during this phase

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##### Week 8

Pitching final project concept.

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Due: 1-2 page explanation of your final project form due by class on Thurs

Week 9 & 10

Creating the project. Nothing due, but it is smart to check in with me.

Finals Week

Due: During our university assigned Final Exam period you will present your final project.

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Major Project Component Worth

Meetings – 10%

Lit Review – 15%

Introduction – 25 %

The Project – 40%

Presentation – 10%

Rubrics will be designed once project forms have been determined.

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