

Environmental Communication

CMJ 580, Spring 2019

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Tuesdays, 6 pm to 8:30 pm
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Course Description

The book *Rising: Dispatches from a new American shore* by Elizabeth Rush (2018) begins with a quote from John Bear Mitchell, a Penobscot scholar and tribal member. Mitchell says “Within a single human existence things are disappearing from the earth, never to be seen again.” He goes on to describe how places that hold cultural meaning are affected by rising seas, intensifying storms, acidifying oceans and many other effects of climate change and colonial ideologies. In light of these changes, Mitchell highlights the important role of stories and communication in documenting and shaping responses to such change. For example, for the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik, rising seas are increasingly covering their ancient petroglyphs, where “we know the petroglyphs still exist, but now they’re underwater. The change is how we acknowledge them.” Connecting with histories and concepts that circulate in this region, such as those that Mitchell and Rush (2018) describe, this course similarly considers complex relationships between communication and environmental change.

Learning Commitments

In this course, we will examine how communication shapes the development of shared systems of meaning, interpersonal and ecological relationships, mediated messages, decision making and collaboration, and social-environmental justice movements. Through readings, seminar discussions, writing projects and engaged learning approaches, students will explore the interdisciplinary body of scholarship that comprises the field of Environmental Communication (EC) and become prepared to contribute to the growth of EC as researchers and practitioners.

We will practice the following learning commitments:

- Examine dominant ideologies that shape perceptions about environments and explore how these ideologies shape local ecologies and histories;
- Review a history of ideas and diverse orientations to EC, including rhetorical approaches; environmental journalism and news media; climate change communication; social-environmental justice; and public participation, collaboration and resilience;
- Adopt a problem-posing mode of inquiry informed by rhetoric and social-environmental justice perspectives to analyze specific cases;
- Identify course-related interests and advance a semester-long project that allows you to deepen and expand your knowledge in this area

Learning Outcomes

By practicing the above learning commitments, over the course of the semester you will strengthen your ability to:

- Reflect on how communication shapes perceptions of and decision making about the environment, especially within local ecologies;
- Describe core commitments in the field of EC, how scholarship and practice in this field can make a difference, and how you can participate as a scholar and practitioner;
- Apply EC perspectives to produce publishable research and that advances commitments to justice and sustainability.

Texts & Technologies

This course will draw primarily from scholarly and popular books and academic articles. Electronic access is provided to all books except Pezzullo and Cox (2018), and it is recommended that students purchase or borrow this foundational textbook. We will also be working extensively with Elizabeth Rush's (2018) book introduced above and students may want a physical copy, as electronic access is limited to one user at a time. All other books have unlimited electronic access:

Bullard, R. D. (1990). *Dumping in Dixie: Race, class, and environmental quality*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. **Electronic Access:** <http://ursus.maine.edu/record=b7383397>

Doyle, J. (2016). *Mediating climate change*. London, UK: Routledge. **Electronic Access:** <https://ursus.maine.edu/record=b5788054~S1>.

Pezzullo, P.C. & Cox, R. (2018). *Environmental communication and the public sphere* (5th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rush, E. A. (2018). *Rising: Dispatches from the new American shore*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions. **Electronic Access:** <http://ursus.maine.edu/record=b7383395> (one user at a time)

Schneider, J. J., Schwarze, S., Bsumek, P. K., & Peeples, J. A. (2016). *Under pressure: Coal industry rhetoric and neoliberalism*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. **Electronic Access:** <http://ursus.maine.edu/record=b7383396>

We will use two online platforms to organize our work this semester: [Google Classroom](#) (access code k5yn04) and a [Google Drive Folder](#) will help organize, share, and download articles and assignments and facilitate collaboration on in-class activities and group projects. Blackboard will be used to upload all assignments and to keep track of grades. We will also use a Google Group for group e-mails: ecspring2019-group@maine.edu. Please feel free to use this group e-mail to share information, news articles, events, and other details with the class.

Though not required, I also recommend joining the International Environmental Communication Association (IECA). As a member, you receive immediate access to a weekly list of resources and discounted rates on conferences and other events. The student member fee is \$60: <https://theieca.org/membership>. You are also welcome to join the Department of Communication and Journalism's Environmental Communication Community of Practice (EC Coop), more information on our group here: <https://sites.google.com/maine.edu/ec-coop/home>

Grading and Assignments

1. Participation	15%
2. Reading Analysis	20%
3. Social-Environmental Justice Case Analysis.....	15%
4. Environmental Communication Research Project.....	50%
Prospectus	10%
Complete Draft.....	10%
Presentation.....	10%
Final paper	20%

Grade scale: A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 60-66; F 0 -59

1. Participation

Attendance and active participation in discussion and class activities is essential for meaningful learning. Active participation means coming to class prepared to discuss, ask questions about, and engage the themes introduced in the readings. Active participation also means respectful listening and helping to create spaces where all people have an ability to express their voices. We will engage interdisciplinary differences and promote shared learning across disciplines. For communication students, this may mean drawing from your previous courses to help those new to the field learn about what communication as a discipline offers. For those trained in social and natural sciences and humanities disciplines, this may mean helping communication students understand the theoretical and practical commitments in your own fields and how these compare with those in communication. When approached in a thoughtful and deliberate way, interdisciplinarity can enrich collective learning and we will work to realize this value to the full extent.

2. Reading Analysis

Environmental communication has been described as both a crisis discipline (Cox, 2007) and a discipline *of* crisis (Schwarze, 2007). The former requires attention to the urgent problems that shape our world and the latter to how problems themselves are “interested” and constituted through discourse. In this course, we will train in the critical skills to strengthen our ability to analyze the material and discursive construction of “crises” and craft meaningful responses to change. The Reading Analysis prompts are intended to help hone these skills and support the development of the social-environmental justice case analysis and your semester-long research project described below.

Reading analyses should be two pages (max.), double-spaced, with references in APA style. When you refer to places in the text, please try to include the exact page numbers or ranges.

Reading Analysis #1, Due 2/5/19: Choose at least one theoretical perspective or concept described in Pezzullo and Cox (2018), including but not limited to communication as symbolic action, environmental and climate justice, terministic screens and naming, climate change as a rhetorical situation, image events, trope of uncertainty, or environmental rights and voice. Apply this perspective to analyze a chapter, scene, theme, or argument in Rush’s (2018) work. How does environmental communication as a field provide equipment for

making sense of climate change patterns and narratives like those depicted in *Rising*? What rhetorical strategies (tropes, metaphors, practices, imagery) does Rush (2018) use and to what effect? For this prompt, you may also explore the following question, posed by Dr. Steve Depoe, to his class this semester: “In the intro, Rush states, ‘Sometimes a key arrives before the lock’ (p. 7). What does that mean for you as a reader of this book and/or student in this class” (Depoe, personal communication) and how might this concept apply to the work of EC as a field?

Reading Analysis #2, Due 2/19/19: Identify an example from news media, corporate advertising, political discourse, or a related artifact that illustrates one or more of the rhetorical strategies identified in *Under Pressure*. This may be related to corporate rhetoric about coal or, preferably, another natural resource extraction issue like oil/gas, hydraulic fracturing for natural gas, deforestation, mineral mining, wind or tidal energy, etc. Write an analysis that applies one or more concepts from Schneider et al.’s (2016) corporate rhetoric lens to the artifact and bring an example of your artifact to class (either electronically on a PPT slide or printed out to pass around) for discussion.

Reading Analysis #3, Due 3/26/19: Drawing from Bullard (1990), Di Chiro (1996), Endres (2009), or Gomez-Barris (2017) apply one or more key concepts in social-environmental justice (disparate impact, sacrifice zones, toxic colonialism, decolonization, intersectionality, community, etc.) to analyze the environmental justice case you are presenting to the class. How does this case demonstrate, challenge, or extend our understanding of this concept? How does the concept you are applying influence your understanding of this case?

Reading Analysis #4, Due 4/16/19: The fourth and final reading analysis will focus on your peers’ work to provide a review of their Completed Draft. I will assign partners for peer review based on shared topics. The goal of the peer review is to provide edits to improve the overall argument, organization, and analysis. Reviews should also focus on strengthening the connections to environmental communication concepts. I encourage you to practice writing the peer review as if you are reviewing an article as a reviewer for a journal, using a narrative approach and constructive tone. You do not need to provide line edits. Instead, aim to share focused overarching recommendations about how to strengthen the work. An added benefit of peer review processes is that it can also inform and strengthen your own writing, so keep your own project in mind as you review as well.

3. Social-Environmental Justice (SEJ) Case Analysis, due 3/26/19

You will work in a small group (n=3) to describe and analyze a case example of environmental justice. Groups will work together to identify specific cases, describe key environmental justice issues in the case, and highlight how communication helped address and potentially transform injustices. The use of engaged teaching approaches and/or multi-media is encouraged. The case analyses will be presented using a modified World Café discussion model. World Café is a discussion style that is intended to focus on questions that matter and conversations that build over time to produce new and synthetic insights about an issue or context. Using this approach SEJ groups will each host three rounds of 20-minute discussions focused on their case.

4. Environmental Communication Research Project

The goal of the final paper or project is to provide an opportunity to connect the course content to support the development of your graduate work. There are two primary options, though others may be considered if you have a specific project or learning objective:

Option 1

Environmental Communication Research Paper: Write a 15-page paper in APA style that seeks to contribute new knowledge to the field of EC and could be submitted for conference presentation. This option is best suited to those who have an existing research program related to environmental communication and where you could use this as an opportunity to make progress and get formative feedback on a key component of it. Options may include but are not limited to a research proposal, literature review, thesis or dissertation chapter, or an earlier stage draft of empirical or critical analysis from primary research.

Option 2

Case Study in Coastal Change and/or Social-Environmental Justice: Write a 15-page paper in APA that will apply one or more environmental communication perspectives to a case example of coastal change and/or social-environmental justice. For this option, you will select a case that demonstrates some of the features of rapid coastal change described in *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore* or you can expand the SEJ case analysis into a full research paper.

This assignment requires assembling a diverse archive of materials such as photographs, news reports, scientific studies, technical reports, interviews, etc. that provide multiple forms of evidence about coastal change or disparate impact. Drawing from assigned as well as supplemental readings from your own research, the case analysis should address one or more of the following questions:

- What are the details of this case and how do environmental communication perspectives and concepts help make sense of social-environmental justice issues you identify?
- How does this case demonstrate issues of disparate impact, colonialism, environmental racism, and other forms of systemic oppression?
- To what extent does this case demonstrate how racism, colonialism, sexism, ableism, and other patterns are expressed environmentally?
- What, in this context, might it mean to advance justice and sustainability? To what extent do environmental communication concepts help identify ways to address and transform the contributing factors in this case? What is the transformative potential here and how can this potential be realized through communication?

Prospectus, due 3/5/19: This is a 3-page paper that details what you plan to do for your final paper and provides a summary of key concepts from literature that will shape your analysis. If space allows, you may also comment on how this proposal connects with your own personal/professional learning goals.

Complete Draft, due 4/2/19: The complete draft is an opportunity for you to get in-depth feedback about the development of your final paper or project. This should be developed enough to provide Dr. McGreavy with a strong sense of what the final version of your paper or

project will be. The Complete Draft will be graded based on the expectations for a draft at this stage and thorough revisions will be required of all drafts.

Final Presentation, due 4/23/19 & 4/30/19: The final presentation will be in a panel presentation style. The panel will be composed of 8 panelists who will each have 7 to 10 minutes to describe their work. No more than three slides may be used, and panelists are encouraged to talk extemporaneously about their work, highlighting key insights related to environmental communication. Following panel presentations, panelists will help lead and respond to a discussion session with the audience.

Final Paper, due 5/7/19: This will be the culmination of your semester's work and is designed to meaningfully connect with your broader graduate research program and your new or enhanced expertise in Environmental Communication.

University Policies

Respect for Diversity and Inclusive Dialogue

In this course, we will work to promote dialogue to examine and discuss complex issues, such as those at the nexus of ideology, oppression, and resistance/resurgence. We will likely have different views and life experiences related to the course content, and as a group we will work to include and respectfully discuss all perspectives. In the first week of class, we will develop shared expectations for how to create an inclusive, equitable, and respectful community. Further, it is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs are addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be approached as a resource, strength and benefit. It is also my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions and feedback about how to do this are encouraged.

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Student Accessibility Services, 121 East Annex, 581.2319, as early as possible in the term. Students who have already been approved for accommodations by SAS and have a current accommodation letter should meet with me privately as soon as possible.

Sexual Discrimination Reporting

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity. If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

- For confidential resources on campus: Counseling Center: 207-581-1392 or Cutler Health Center: at 207-581-4000.
- For confidential resources off campus: Rape Response Services: 1-800-310-0000 or Partners for Peace: 1-800-863-9909.

- Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:
- For support services on campus: Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207-581-1406, Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409, University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911. Or see the OSAVP website for a complete list of services at <http://www.umaine.edu/osavp/>

Course Schedule

Date	Questions & Topics	Readings & Assignments
Weeks 1-3 Grounding in environmental communication (EC)		
Tue. 1/22	Orienting within EC	Read: Pezzullo & Cox (2018), pp. 1-48 (Ch. 1 & 2); Cox (2007); Schwarze (2007)
Tue. 1/29	Attending to change close to home	Read: Pezzullo & Cox (2018), pp.51-117 (Ch. 3-5); Rush (2018), pp. 1 to 111
Tue. 2/5	Applying EC perspectives to understand communication about coastal change	Read: Pezzullo & Cox (2018), pp. 121-146 (Ch. 6), 257-281 (Ch.11); and 285-308 (Ch. 12); Rush (2018) pp. 113 to 261 Due: Reading analysis #1
Weeks 4 & 5 Critical commitments in environmental rhetoric		
Tue. 2/12	Rhetorical perspectives in EC Guest speaker: Dr. Pete Bsumek	Read: Schneider, Schwarze, Bsumek, & Peeples (2016), pp 1 to 76
Tue. 2/19	Case study of coal and corporate rhetoric	Read: Schneider, Schwarze, Bsumek, & Peeples (2016), pp 77 to 179 Due: Reading analysis #2
Week 6 & 7 Communicating climate change		
Tue. 2/26	Constructions of nature, vision, and time in climate change	Read: Doyle (2014), pp. 1 to 73; Moser (2010)
Tue. 3/5	News media, global climate deliberations, and imagining alternatives	Read: Boykoff & Boykoff (2004); Nisbet, 2010; Doyle (2014), pp. 102 to 122 (Ch. 5) and 145 to 155 (Ch. 7) Due: Prospectus
Week 8 Environmental racism and toxic colonialism		
Tue. 3/12	Focus on disparate impact	Read: Bullard (1990); Endres (2009)
Week 9 Spring Break 3/18/2019-3/22/2019		
Week 10 Social-environmental justice (SEJ) case analyses		
Tue. 3/26	World Café style presentations of SEJ cases	Read: Di Chiro (1996); Gomez-Barris (2017), pp. 1 to 38 (Preface, Intro and Ch.1) Due: Reading analysis #3

Week 11 Voice, justice and care

Tue. 4/2 **Guest speakers:** Jan Paul and Angie Reed; Visit Water Resources Program, Natural Resources Department of the Penobscot Nation **Read:** Carbaugh (1999); Milstein (2008), Senecah (2004); Quiring, McGreavy & Hathaway (Under review) **Due:** Complete draft

Week 12 Articulating resilience

Tue. 4/9 **Guest Speaker:** Elizabeth Rush **Read:** Druschke (2007); McGreavy (2016); Rush (2018) (review)

Week 13 Flex date

Tue. 4/16 The flex date will allow us to adjust for weather cancellation or explore an emergent interest. **Due:** Reading analysis #4, Peer review

Week 14 Synthesis

Tue. 4/23 Panel presentations **Due:** Final presentations

Week 15 Synthesis

Tue. 4/30 Panel presentations **Due:** Final presentations

Week 16 Final papers due Tue. 5/7/19 (No class)

Extended References

*Assigned

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- Endres, D. (2009). The rhetoric of nuclear colonialism: Rhetorical exclusion of American Indian arguments in the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste siting decision. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 6(1), 39-60. *
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Appendices

SEJ Case Analysis Guidelines

Due: Tuesday, March 26th at 5 pm

- Reading Analysis #3
- In-class case discussion

There are two related parts to this assignment, including the Reading Analysis #3 and the in-class facilitated discussion about the SEJ Case. Both assignments focus on applying environmental communication concepts to understand the social and environmental justice issues and actions in the identified case.

First, the reading analysis should draw from Bullard (1990), Di Chiro (1996), Endres (2009), or Gomez-Barris (2017) to apply one or more key concepts in social-environmental justice (disparate impact, sacrifice zones, toxic colonialism, decolonization, intersectionality, community, etc.) to analyze the environmental justice case you are presenting to the class. How does this case demonstrate, challenge, or extend our understanding of this concept? How does the concept you are applying influence your understanding of this case? These questions should also form the basis for your case discussion to help focus the information you share to guide the conversation.

Second, for the case discussion, you will work in a small group (n=3) to describe and analyze a case example of environmental justice. Groups will work together to identify specific cases, describe key environmental justice issues in the case, and highlight how communication has or can help address and potentially transform injustices. The use of engaged teaching approaches and/or multi-media is encouraged.

The case analyses will be presented using a modified World Café discussion model. World Café is a discussion style that is intended to focus on questions that matter and conversations that build over time to produce new and synthetic insights about an issue or context. Using this approach SEJ groups will each host guided discussions focused on their case. The format will depend on the total number of cases, which we will determine before class on March 12th. However, all group members need to be ready to provide a concise but thorough introduction to the case and have a set of questions to help guide conversation that connect with the assigned readings and extend an understanding of key justice-related issues.

SEJ Case Groups

We will use this table (not provided) to identify and sign up for the SEJ cases. We will start to fill this out on Tue. March 5th and will have cases finalized before class on Tue. March 12th. We will use some class time on March 12th to work on case presentations. See below for a summary of this assignment.

Prospectus Guidelines

Due: Tuesday, March 5th at 5 pm

Prospectus: This is a 3-page paper (minimum) that details what you plan to do for your final paper and provides a summary of key concepts from literature that will shape your analysis. If space allows, you may also comment on how this proposal connects with your own personal/professional learning goals. The prospectus encourages you to start thinking about and refining your plan for the final paper or project. This concept can change as you learn more and develop your understanding of environmental communication.

The discussion of environmental communication concepts should be exploratory more than comprehensive. Make sure to cite all of your sources, including references to readings assigned in the course, though there is no expected minimum number of sources for the prospectus.

Format: The prospectus should be written in narrative form and should provide a detailed summary of your project, identify a guiding question or purpose, and describe relevant environmental communication concepts. Please use APA style, 12 point Times New Roman font, double space, and upload in a Word or PDF to Blackboard.

The prospectus is the first step in developing the final paper. The goal of the final paper or project is to provide an opportunity for you to connect the course content to support the development of your graduate work. You may choose from a range of options including, but not limited to, the following:

Option 1

Environmental Communication Research Paper: Write a 15-page paper in APA style that seeks to contribute new knowledge to the field of EC and could be submitted for conference presentation. This option is best suited to those who have an existing research program related to environmental communication and where you could use this as an opportunity to make progress and get formative feedback on a key component of it. Options may include but are not limited to a research proposal, literature review, thesis or dissertation chapter, or an earlier stage draft of empirical or critical analysis from primary research.

Option 2

Case Study in Coastal Change and/or Social-Environmental Justice: Write a 15-page paper in APA that will apply one or more environmental communication perspectives to a case example of coastal change and/or social-environmental justice. For this option, you will select a case that demonstrates some of the features of rapid coastal change described in *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore* or you can expand the SEJ case analysis into a full research paper. This assignment requires assembling a diverse archive of materials such as photographs, news reports, scientific studies, technical reports, interviews, etc. that provide multiple forms of evidence about coastal change or disparate impact. Drawing from assigned as well as supplemental readings from your own research, the case analysis should address one or more of the following questions as posed in the syllabus.

Complete Draft and Peer Review

This Complete Draft is due on **Tuesday, April 2 at 5 pm**. This draft is an opportunity for you to get in-depth feedback about the development of your final paper or project. This should be developed enough to provide a strong sense of what the final version of your paper or project will be. The Complete Draft will be graded based on the expectations for a draft at this early stage of development and thorough revisions should be anticipated for all drafts. Said another way, extensive revisions will likely be required.

Note: this is not intended to be an underdeveloped rough draft or outline. This should be a fully edited early stage manuscript with ample room to grow and polished enough to give a clear sense of where the final version is heading.

Format: The Complete Draft should be written in narrative form and be a 10 to 12 page paper with references adequate to support your review, main arguments, and clearly identify the connection to environmental communication as a field.

Other details: APA style, 12 point Times New Roman, double spaced, uploaded in a Word (preferred) or PDF.

Peer Review: The Peer Review of the Complete Draft is due on **Tuesday, April 16th at 5 pm** and serves as Reading Analysis #4. I will assign partners for peer review based, to the extent possible, on shared topics and/or objectives. The goal of the peer review is to provide edits on the piece to improve the overall argument, organization, and analysis. Reviews should also focus on strengthening the connections to environmental communication concepts.

Peer reviewers will submit a 2-paragraph summary of the (1) key strengths of the paper describing three to five strengths in detail and (2) areas of improvement describing three to five specific recommendations for improving the draft. I encourage you to practice writing this peer review as if you are reviewing an article as a reviewer for a journal, using a narrative approach and constructive tone. You do not need to provide line edits. Instead, aim to share focused overarching recommendations about how to strengthen the work. An added benefit of peer review processes is that it can also inform and strengthen your own writing, so keep your own project in mind as you review as well.

Please upload the Peer Review to Blackboard and e-mail a copy to your writing partner, with a cc to me.