



MAEEC 503 2011 Course Outline

School: Environment and Sustainability

Program: Master of Arts in Environmental Education and Communication

Course Title: Communication for Environmental Communicators

Course Number: EECO 503

Credits: 3

Calendar Description: EECO 503: Communication for Environmental Communicators

Introduces theory development and testing, as well as a range of interpersonal, group/organizational and mass communication theories. Explores the theories from the context of what they practically offer environmental communication campaigns and intellectually offer our understanding of how we form notions about the environment in the first place.

Instructor Name: Dr. Liza Ireland Email: liza.ireland@royalroads.ca	Course Administrative Contact Dr. Rick Kool MAEEC Program Head Rick.kool@royalroads.ca
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Course Start:

Sunday July 03, 2011 – on campus residency

Course End:

Saturday July 23, 2011

Delivery Method

This course will comprise of collaborative learning activities, personal learning, and reflection during an on-campus residency.

Co-requisites

EECO 500

Pre-requisites

None

Course Overview

This course will introduce you to environmental communication, influencing how we see the environment and our relationship to it. It encompasses how the environment speaks to us and how we communicate about it. The course will weave together the specifics of various communication theories and the ways in which these theories are used in environmental communication. Throughout the course we will ground our study in the context of our environmental work, our questions, and our desires for change.

Course Goals

I believe that the most valuable learning takes place when an experience allows us to understand our relationship with the world – at whatever level – in a new way that addresses issues or questions with which we have struggled (perhaps not even realizing we were struggling). Along these lines, I would hope that by the end of the course you would:

1. Explore our personal experiences of the intersection of communication and the environment.
2. Provide a forum in which the opportunities and obstacles afforded by environmental communication can be explored;
3. Become aware of and critically analyze metaphorical frameworks and worldviews;
4. Investigate a range of communication theories from the perspective of what they “practically” offer us in our everyday environmental work/lives and “intellectually” offer our understanding of how we form notions about the environment in the first place;
5. Be able to draw on a number of communication theories and apply those theories in a wide range of

contexts;

6. Have a sense of empowerment and energy that comes from having thought about the world – and our myriad relationships with the world – from fresh perspectives.

Major Topics to be Addressed in Class and through Readings

- Evolution of environmental conceptualization and communication
- Worldviews, root metaphors, and environmental communication
- Communication theories
- Methods of communication: implicit communication, mass media, images
- Effective communication strategies
- Target audiences
- Consumerism & Social marketing
- Social Activism
- New communication technology
- Communication Networks

Required Text:

McDonough W., Braungart, M. (2002). *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the way we make things*. New York: North Point Press.

Required Readings:

Tuesday July 5th

Worldviews and Communication

- Text Ch. 1, 2 McDonough, W. & Braungart, M. on *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*
- Lakoff (2010) 'Why it Matters How we Frame the Environment'

Ecological Metaphors

- Text Ch. 3, 4 McDonough, W. & Braungart, M. on *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*
- Benyus and Biomimicry: http://www.ted.com/talks/janine_benyus_biomimicry_in_action.html (17:23 minutes)
- Holling's Adaptive Cycle: <http://sigeneration.ca/resilience.html>
- Resiliency Project: <http://www.geog.mcgill.ca/faculty/peterson/susfut/rNetFindings.html>

Thursday July 7th

Communication Theories and Worldviews

- http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/Levels_of_theories/
- Verhagen, Frans (2008) 'Worldviews and Metaphors in the Human-Nature Relationship': An ecolinguistic exploration through the ages. *Language and Ecology* 2:3. http://www.ecoling.net/worldviews_and_metaphors_-_final.pdf

Friday July 8th

Communicating Ecological Metaphors

- Text Ch. 5, 6 McDonough, W. & Braungart, M. on *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*
- Wals, A.E.J., Geerling-Eijff, F., Hubeek, F., van der Kroon, S., & Vader, J. (2008). All mixed up? Instrumental and emancipatory learning toward a more sustainable world: considerations for EE policymakers. *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, 7(3), p. 55-65. Retrieved from <https://ezproxy.royalroads.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eih&AN=35651128&site=ehost-live>

Monday July 11th

Implicit Communication and Images (Semiotics)

Tuesday July 12th

Progress & Materialism

- The Happy Planet Index: http://www.ted.com/talks/nic_marks_the_happy_planet_index.html
- The Happy Planet Index: An index of human well-being and environmental impact <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>
- Sustainable Happiness <http://www.sustainablehappiness.org>

Greenwashing

- http://www.futerra.co.uk/downloads/Greenwash_Guide.pdf

Wednesday July 13th

Effective Communication

- http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action.html
- <http://www.futerra.co.uk/downloads/sellthesizzle.pdf>

Thursday July 14th

Engaging in Local Issues

- Caron, Rosemary M. and Serrell, Nancy(2009) 'Community Ecology and Capacity: Keys to Progressing the Environmental Communication of Wicked Problems', *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, 8: 3, 195 — 203
- Zachariou, Aravella and Symeou, Loizos. (2008) 'The Local Community as a Means for Promoting Education for Sustainable Development', *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, 7: 4, 129 — 143

Communication Networks

- http://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas_christakis_how_social_networks_predict_epidemics.html

Friday July 15th

Environmental Communication in Politics

- Olsson, P., Gunderson, H., Carpenter, S., Ryan, P., Lebel, L., Folke, C. & Holling, C. (2006). Shooting the Rapids: Navigating Transitions to Adaptive Governance of Social-Ecological Systems. *Ecology and Society* 11(1), 18-38.
<http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol11/iss1/art18/> OR: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/articles/1595.html>

Monday July 18th

Implications of Information Technology

- Luov, R., Nature Deficit Disorder: <http://www.education.com/topic/nature-deficit-disorder/>
- Good, J. (2006). Internet use and environmental attitudes: A social capital approach. *Environmental Communication Yearbook Volume III*, 211-233.

Tuesday July 19th

Social Marketing

- Social Marketing http://learningforsustainability.net/tools/social_marketing.php
- Westley, F., M. Holmgren, and M. Scheffer. 2010. From scientific speculation to effective adaptive management: a case study of the role of social marketing in promoting novel restoration strategies for degraded dry lands. *Ecology and Society* 15(3): 6. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss3/art6/>

Wednesday July 20th

Mass Communication & Journalism – Journalist Guest lecture

- Cooper, Caren B. (2011). Media Literacy as a Key Strategy to Improving Public Acceptance of Climate Change Science. *BioScience*, March 2011, Vol. 61 No. 3, p. 231-237.
<https://ezproxy.royalroads.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=59236298&site=ehost-live>
- Brossard, D., Shanahan, J., & McComas, K. (2004). Are issue-cycles culturally constructed? A comparison of French and American coverage of global climate change. *Mass Communication & Society*, 7(3), p. 359-377.
- www.desmogblog.com

Course Evaluation

Assignment 1: Applying Communication Theories and Ecological Metaphors 20%

(Draft Due: July 10th) Final Paper Due: July 17th

In this written assignment you will need to show how you can apply a communication theory and one or more ecological metaphors to help educate/explore a topic of interest. This assignment will require some research on communication theories. This assignment also taps into the environmental communication theories we all hold, and use in our lives as environmental educators and communicators, but have perhaps never recognized as theories. The assignment will require critical thinking skills, integrative thought, creativity, and clear writing. In class we will be looking at a number of communication theories. Your task with this assignment is to make the connection between those communication theories and our attitudes and behaviours regarding the natural environment. In some cases, research on these communication theories has made explicit connections between communication and the environment. For other theories, you will have to make the connections in the absence of such explicit research.

Your paper on communication theory and ecological metaphors should include:

- An explanation of the communication theory you chose – and why you chose it
- The ecological metaphors you are teaching
- A practical example of applying this environmental communication to your chosen topic.
- References

Length: four and six double- spaced pages. Please use APA referencing.

Learning Outcomes for assessment:

1.1 Communicate effectively in writing using several media and techniques as specified in each course.

4.1 Apply critical thinking to the integration of knowledge and practice.

5.1 Be able to utilize a working fluency with a range of theoretical and practical understandings of EEC based on both historic and current literature and/or examples of innovative programs.

6.3 The extent to which practitioners can design specific programs and experiences to enhance inter-relationships between people-community-environment and to allow reflection on those relationships.

Assignment 2: Action Learning Communication Strategy

Due: July 21rd

30%

In developing your group action-learning project you group will need to develop and outline a communication strategy. Integrate learning from this course to identify what you are communicating, why, how and with whom. Your strategy should:

- Identify and show evidence of metaphors to promote systems thinking and sustainable development;
- Identify barriers to change;
- Use at least 3 communication theories;
- Exemplify effective communication (positive, empowering, reframing, inspiring, enable emergence);
- Identify and be appropriate to specific audience(s);
- Clarify and incorporate communication networks (through, in, out and up);
- Show relevance to its application.

***The first 3 points should be clear by July 13th.**

Learning Outcomes for assessment:

1.2 Communicate effectively in person using several media and techniques.

3.4 Demonstrate leadership in synthesizing, articulating and sharing a vision with others.

4.1 Apply critical thinking to the integration of knowledge and practice.

5.3 Apply in a range of contexts a working utilization of communication and education theories or frameworks, including theories of cognition and learning.

6.1 The extent to which practitioners understand, articulate and have the ability to apply a range of strategies and media to the planning, design, development, implementation and evaluation of programs and initiatives in a variety of contexts, using a range of ways of knowing (including, but not limited to, affective, aesthetic and/or spiritual domains), and leading, when intended, to action strategies.

6.3 The extent to which practitioners can design specific programs and experiences to enhance inter-relationships between people-community-environment and to allow reflection on those relationships.

Assignment 3: Analysis of Environmental Communication

Due: July 27th

30%

Analyze an example of environmental communication (newspaper article, NGO campaign, advertisement, textbook lesson, video, etc). You will need to address the following:

What communication theory(ies) are used;

What metaphors and worldviews are being communicated;

What audience(s) is it aimed at;

How effective is it and in what way;

How effective is it in developing a sustainability perspective;

What improvements would you make.

Learning Outcomes for assessment:

1.1 Communicate effectively in writing using several media and techniques as specified in each course.

4.1 Apply critical thinking to the integration of knowledge and practice.

6.1 The extent to which practitioners understand, articulate and have the ability to apply a range of strategies and media to the planning, design, development, implementation and evaluation of programs and initiatives in a variety of contexts, using a range of ways of knowing (including, but not limited to, affective, aesthetic and/or spiritual domains), and leading, when intended, to action strategies.

6.2 Demonstrate through specific exemplars that environmental communications is always about communicating a value laden message to highly diverse audiences with differing environmental perceptions, knowledge sets, values, attitudes, interest levels and contexts.

6.3 The extent to which practitioners can design specific programs and experiences to enhance inter-relationships between people-community-environment and to allow reflection on those relationships.

6.4 The extent to which practitioners demonstrate an understanding of strategies to empower communities, organizations and individuals to engage in behavioural change, constructive dialogue, issue resolution and capacity-building concerning sustainability and community development issues.

Assignment 4: Communication Reflections

Due: July 30th

20%

These are short (up to 1 pg.) critical reflections on 2 communication readings, videos or strategies from the course. Ideas that made you think, you found useful or not, how you might apply them and why.

Learning Outcomes for assessment:

4.1 Apply critical thinking to the integration of knowledge and practice

6.2 Demonstrate through specific exemplars that environmental communications is always about communicating a value laden message to highly diverse audiences with differing environmental perceptions, knowledge sets, values, attitudes, interest levels and contexts.

Assessment Matrix

MEEC Program Goals	1.1	1.2	3.4	4.1	5.1	5.3	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	TOTAL
Assignment 1: Applying Communication Theory	5			5	5				5		20%
Assignment 2: Action Learning Communication Strategy		5	5	5		5	5		5		30%
Assignment 3: Communication Analysis	5			5			5	5	5	5	30%
Assignment 4: Critical Reflections				10				10			20%

**Academic Policies
Grading Guide**

Letter Grade	Percentage Grade	Point
A+	90-100	4.33
A	85-89	4.0
A-	80-84	3.67
B+	77-79	3.33
B	73-76	3.0
B-	70-72	2.67
F	0-69	0.0

Late Policy

Course assignments should be submitted no later than ten working days after the assignment due date. Assignments received later than ten working days after the due date will not normally be accepted and will be given an “INC” (Incomplete) grade. A penalty of 5% per day will normally be applied to assignments submitted after the due date, leading to a maximum late penalty of 50%. Learners who fail to meet the assignment requirements of a course will be assigned a final grade of ‘Incomplete’ (INC) and will normally be expected to acquire the course credits through re-enrollment in order to satisfy the course requirements for the program. Learners wishing an extension for individual assignments should approach the instructor in the first instance. Extensions will only be granted under exceptional circumstances. Instructors will normally consider any application for an extension on a case-by-case basis.

INC Clearance Policy

Learners who are awarded an “INC” grade will be permitted an opportunity to have that grade converted to a “B-” through the writing of a special assignment, or through another mechanism specified by the instructor in the course. All “INC” grades must be removed from the learner transcript before approval to graduate is granted. Learners will be assessed a fee of \$150 to cover additional grading costs. If the outstanding course work is not completed satisfactorily within 30 days of the course end date, a learner will automatically receive a grade of F. If the learner fails to clear an INC or series of INCs, they may be required to withdraw from the MEM Program, at the discretion of the MEM Program Academic Lead.

Grading Policy

See General Academic Regulations in the current version of the RRU Calendar.