

**GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE PROPOSAL**  
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **EXISTING** courses for review. If this course will be submitted for review in more than one category, submit a separate proposal for each category.

<b>COURSE NUMBER:</b>	FSEM 100??		
<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	RADICAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM		
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Jason Matzke	<b>DATE:</b>	1/23/08
<i>This course proposal is submitted with the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			<b>X</b>
<i>If part of a science sequence involving two departments, both departments approve.</i>			

**THIS COURSE IS PROPOSED FOR (check one).**

<b>First-Year Seminar</b> <i>(indicate in the rationale if this will also count for major credit)</i>	<b>X</b>
<b>Quantitative Reasoning</b>	
<b>Global Inquiry</b>	
<b>Human Experience and Society</b>	
<b>Experiential Learning</b>	
<b>Arts, Literature, and Performance: Process</b>	<b>or</b>
	<b>Appreciation</b>
<b>Natural Science</b> <i>(include both parts of the sequence)</i>	

**NOTE:** See the report entitled "General Education Curriculum as Approved by the Faculty Senate," dated November 7, 2007, for details about the general education categories and the criteria that will be used to evaluate courses proposed. The report is available at [www.jtmorello.org/gened](http://www.jtmorello.org/gened).

**RATIONALE:** Using only the space provided in the box below, **briefly** state why this course should be approved as a general education course in the category specified above. *Attach a course syllabus.* **Submit this form and attached syllabus electronically as one document to John Morello ([jmorello@umw.edu](mailto:jmorello@umw.edu)).** All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

Radical environmental activists have written widely in defense not only of the environment, but also of their preferred tactics for enacting change (which range widely from tree-spiking to arson). These arguments, varied as they are in style, complexity, and convincing force, are open to careful philosophical evaluation. Because so little has been written on this topic by academic philosophers, students will be exploring new ground, developing their own views as they together discuss the readings. In the process, they will be writing and sharing weekly summaries, writing and presenting preliminary drafts of papers, and collecting news articles on groups such as Earth First!, The Sea Shepherd's Society, and Earth Liberation Front. All of the readings are primary sources.

# ***FSEM 100: Radical Environmental Activism***

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

**Instructor:** Dr. Jason Matzke

**Office:** Trinkle 208

**Office Hours:** TTh 3:15 - 4:45; W 1:00-3:00

**Office Phone:** 654-1113

**E-mail:** jmatzke@umw.edu

**Mailbox:** Trinkle 242

**Class time:** TTh 6:00-7:15

**Class location:** Trinkle 207

---

## **Course Description:**

This course is a philosophical exploration of radical (as opposed to mainstream) environmental activism. We will look closely at the theoretical underpinnings of an activism that often employs controversial tactics to create change in individual, political, and corporate behavior with respect to the environment. The focus of the course will be on groups such as Earth First!, The Sea Shepherds Society, and Earth Liberation Front. We will consider both defenses and objections to activities that range from tree-spiking to arson, the claim that such behavior is merely a form of civil disobedience, and the counter charge that it amounts to “eco-terrorism.”

## **Additional Course Objectives:**

In addition to the substantive goals outline above, this course also aims to help you improve your capacity for critical thinking, identifying and evaluating arguments, active/analytical reading, and writing well-reasoned arguments.

## **Required Texts:**

1. Davis, John, and Dave Foreman, eds. *The Earth First! Reader: Ten Years of Radical Environmentalism*. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1991.
2. List, Peter. *Radical Environmentalism: Philosophy and Tactics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1993.
3. Manes, Christopher. *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1990.
4. Scarce, Rik. *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement*. Chicago: Noble P, 1990.

## **Additional reading:**

News articles collected by the class throughout the semester.

## **Grades (see below for details):**

Participation:	10%
Presentation:	15%
Summaries:	15%
Paper 1:	20%
Paper 2:	20%
Paper 3:	20%

## **Grading Scale:**

95-100:	A
90-94:	A-
87-89:	B+
83-86:	B
80-82:	B-
77-79:	C+
73-76:	C
70-72:	C-
65-69:	D+
60-64:	D
0-59:	F

---

Your **participation** grade will be based on your participation in class discussion, active and respectful listening, in-class work with other students, and collection of news articles relevant to the course. As a seminar, daily participation is expected. Coming to class and paying due attention to your instructor and fellow students will likely result in a 70 (out of 100) participation grade. Higher grades will be given to those who are actively engaged. **Tardiness** is considered behavior that disrupts the class and will negatively affect your participation grade, as will other disruptive behaviors, such as text messaging and the use of laptops for non-class related activities. Disruptive behavior may also lead to the forfeiture of your enrollment in the course. Although this portion of your grade is not based solely on **attendance**, students with poor attendance will naturally receive poor participation grades. After 4 absences, the highest participation grade you may earn is 50; after 6 absences, your participation grade will be 0. Exceptions may be made in cases of *extended and documented serious illness or emergency*.

You will write a one page **summary** of one of the reading assignments for each week. This will require you to identify the author's main point and supporting arguments. You must also develop one strong and interesting question raised for you by the reading. Grades will be based on clarity, accuracy, depth, and general readability. Each week two of you will share your summaries with the class.

You will write three **papers** during the term. You will be expected to lay out a position with respect to a question posed from topics discussed in class and use the readings assigned to develop your view. This must include critical evaluation of alternatives and the anticipation of objections. Details, including more specific grading criteria, will be distributed prior to each assignment. The first paper will be approximately 4-6 and the second and third 6-8 pages in length.

In addition to regular reports on your research progress, you will **present** a draft of your final paper to the class. This will require you to develop your paper in presentable form and to field questions from your peers. You will receive further details later in the semester.

Cases of **academic dishonesty** (i.e., violations of the University Honor Code) will be taken very seriously and promptly turned over to the Honors Council. Examples of academic dishonesty most relevant to this course include representing someone else's ideas or work as your own in your papers and signing in *or having someone sign you in* falsely on the attendance record.

**Unsatisfactory midterm grades** will be reported for students whose course average is below a C- at that point in the semester (see grading scale above). Participation grades will not be included in the midterm calculation.

**Note:** This class requires consistent and conscientious attention; falling behind in the reading assignments can be detrimental to your grade. Preparation includes not only reading assignments but also coming to class having thought about the material and being ready to question, explore, and share your ideas with others. Your views will be respected and you will not be penalized for disagreeing with your classmates or instructor—thinking critically involves developing your own views.

---

## Schedule

**NOTE 1:** The assigned readings should be read prior to the class meeting for which they are listed.

**NOTE 2:** It is very likely that we will deviate from the schedule as we follow through various ideas and readings in more depth. If you miss a class, please check with a peer or the instructor to insure that you are properly prepared for the next meeting.

In addition to the assigned readings listed below, we will be slowly moving through *The Earth First! Reader*. Rather than assigning particular pages for you to read each day, you should read one chapter for each two weeks of class (there are seven chapters). This will provide us with some rich background against which to discuss our assigned texts.

### WEEK 1

T: Course Introduction

R: List: *Greenpeace, Warriors of the Rainbow*, pp. 133-148

### WEEK 2

T: Continued

R: List: *Edward Abbey and the Monkey Wrench Gang*, pp. 149-166

### WEEK 3

T: List: *The Sea Shepherd Society, Direct Action on the High Seas*, pp. 167-184

R: Continued

### WEEK 4

T: List: *Earth First!*, pp. 185-200

R: List: *Earth First!*, pp. 201-212

### WEEK 5

T: List: *Ecofeminist Activism*, pp. 213-229

R: Continued

PAPER 1 DUE

### WEEK 6

T: List: *Responses*, pp. 247-265

R: Continued

### WEEK 7

T: Scarce: *Part One: Towards an Understanding*, pp. 1-46

R: Continued

### WEEK 8

T: [no class: Fall Break]

R: Scarce: *Part Two: Who Would Dare?*, pp. 47-114

### WEEK 9

T: Scarce: *Part Two: Who Would Dare?*, pp. 115-162

R: Continued

**WEEK 10**

T: Scarce: *Part Three: Environmental Activism in Practice*, pp. 163-200

R: Scarce: *Part Three: Environmental Activism in Practice*, pp. 201-238

PAPER 2 DUE

**WEEK 11**

T: Scarce: *Part Four: Inspiration and the Future*, pp. 239-268

R: Continued

**WEEK 12**

T: Manes: *Green Rage*, pp. 3-44

R: Manes: *Green Rage*, pp. 45-83

**WEEK 13**

T: Manes: *Green Rage*, pp. 84-138

R: Thanksgiving Break

**WEEK 14**

T: Manes: *Green Thoughts*, pp. 139-164

R: Manes: *Green Thoughts*, pp. 165-193

**WEEK 15**

T: Manes: *Reaction*, pp. 193-224

R: Manes: *The Unmaking of Civilization*, pp. 225-248

**FINALS WEEK**

PAPER 3 DUE