

 Environmental Journalism, Fall 2018
JOU 4930-0029/MMC 6936-2569

Tuesdays 1:55 to 4:55 p.m./Weimer Hall Room 3020

Instructor: Cynthia Barnett

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Office Hours for Students:

234 Pugh Hall @ the Graham Center Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9:30 to 11:30

3326 Weimer Hall @ the J-School, Tuesdays 11:45 to 1:45

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

Environmental Journalism, the craft: 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 Environmental Journalism 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.

 **EJ 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.

EJ COURSE READINGS, PARTICIPATION & 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 reportage, ideally *The Gulf: The Making of An American Sea*, the 2018 Pulitzer Prize-winning book by UF environmental historian Jack Davis, who is one of our guest speakers. However, if you would like 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. You may want to join (\$25 for students) if considering EJ as a career.

PARTICIPATION: Being engaged in this class, both in person and online – is part of your grade. Class time will consist of discussion, with each other and some terrific guest speakers. It's essential that you keep up with the readings, come to class prepared and participate: Share your insights, ask questions, challenge respectfully. 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. TA Joan Meiners and I will tweet (from @beecycles and @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.

GRADES

- Attendance & Engagement in EJ class: **200**
- EJ presentations: **100**
- Greenwashing analysis: **100**
- Pitch, semester project: **100**
- Creative field essay: **100**
- First draft, EJ project: **200**
- Final draft, EJ project: **200**

Total points possible: 1,000

Grading 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

EJ COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

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. 16th; 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. **Due midnight Sun Oct. 7th.**

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. 21st.**

EJ Assignment 4: CREATIVE FIELD ASSIGNMENT

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. 4th.**

EJ Assignment 5: EJ SEMESTER PROJECT, 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. The story should include at least two additional elements – photos; audio or video clips; graphics; timelines or other elements to draw people in.

The first draft is due midnight Sun Nov. 18th. Note that the first draft is not a rough draft!! Now and in the future, the first draft your editor sees should be the best possible work you can do. You'll be graded on your effort to make this draft as excellent and complete as possible. I will get these back to you quickly; please plan to spend considerable time in the last two weeks working through edits and polishing with me to ready the final draft for publication.

The final draft is due midnight Sun Dec. 2nd. A polished, fact-checked, final story with all my questions answered and edits completed and any additional elements ready for publication.

Overnight field trip to Seahorse Key! Saturday and Sunday Oct. 27th and 28th

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 creative field assignment a key part of your grade. On Saturday morning Oct. 27th 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 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 15 class meetings – no questions asked.**

DETAILED EJ CLASSTIME AGENDA & WEEKLY READINGS

Week 1, Tues August 28th Introductions to the course, to the syllabus and to each other, **including** our mutual interests in the environment and the place(s) most important to you. **Introduction to the craft of Environmental Journalism, and finding the roots of modern EJ** stretching back to 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 foulest 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 watch the docs by Annie Leonard "The Story of Stuff" and "The Story of Bottled Water," if most people haven't seen them and we have time. Many core issues on the EJ beat, from water to energy to food, circle back to over-consumption and waste.

PREPARE: Read the syllabus through to the end and bring any questions you have.

Week 2, Tues September 4th To finish our brief EJ history, we'll devote some time to the 20th Century environmental writing that changed America's (and Florida's) environmental ethos and helped give rise to modern environmental protection, including a look at Florida's **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. **Special guest speaker: UF environmental historian Jack E. Davis**, Douglas's biographer and winner of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea* (WW Norton, 2017).

PREPARE: 1) Aldo Leopold, "Thinking like a mountain," essay from *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949. 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>. **And!** 5) Excerpts from Chapters 9 & 12 of *The Gulf* by Davis. (On Canvas.)

Week 3 Tues September 11th Telling scientific stories in a post-truth world: Facts, risk communication and statistical understanding, a special guest lecture with #EJUF TA Joan Meiners. Joan will begin class with a tutorial on scientific journal article searches. For your project stories, if you're having trouble locating scientific articles, please rely on Joan to help. She is also our data maestro!

PREPARE:

(On [People's reactions to facts they don't like](#))

Read Joan's [feral cat story and the comments](#). **Question:** Knowing what you now know about feral cat advocates(!), how would you approach trying to communicate these concerns?

(On [the challenges of risk communication & statistical understanding](#))

Read [this piece from The Outline](#) about Trump's anti-science messaging. **Question:** What are the consequences of this type of rhetoric? How might we combat it?

Read “[The Supreme Court Isn’t Equipped to Judge Harvard’s Discrimination Lawsuit](#),” by Irineo Cabrerros, Slate, August 20th 2018. **Question:** What is the role of the journalist in such a dilemma?

Skim [this piece from WaPo](#) about flood risk assessment in Houston, and damages from Harvey. **Question:** Who is responsible for these people losing their homes because they didn't understand flood risks?

Skim [this piece](#) (Joan’s) about the effort to educate the public about consequences of Louisiana coastal erosion, and click on links to the state's story maps. **Question:** Do you think these story maps will work to get more Louisianans on board with coastal protection efforts?

Week 4 Tues September 18th Agriculture and food, our possible semester project, and a sprawling and complex issue 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.? **Special guest speaker Anna Prizzia, UF campus food systems coordinator and co-founder, Alachua County’s Forage Farm.**

PREPARE: 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, particularly, “The Mississippi River and the Making of a Dead Zone.”

Week 5 Tues September 25th Water week in #EJUF! Freshwater & the oceans are 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. Meanwhile sea stories are among the best read in EJ because audiences often already care about beaches, charismatic creatures like dolphins and their favorite seafood dinner. But 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: 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 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. Pay special attention to the sea-animal icons.

2) Go through the 2016 EJ class project, Blue Ether, for an overview of freshwater issues in our region and as a jumping off point to talk about this semester's project and what we want to do better/differently. <https://www.wuft.org/specials/water/>.

3) Finally, it's worth your time to read this August 2018 collaboration between *Quartz* and the *Texas Observer*, funded in part by a grant from the [Center for Cooperative Media](#). The series is called [Shallow Waters](#). Please read all nine parts and pay special attention to the site and graphics and what draws you in.

Week 6 Tues October 2nd 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.

PREPARE: 1) "A Century of Domination: As America's Carbon Wars Rage, Oil and Gas Industry Influence Grows" by Jie Jenny Zou, Jamie Smith Hopkins, Kristen Lombardi, Jim Morris, Chris Young and Sasha Khokha (with partner KQED) for The Center for Public Integrity:

1. "[The United States of Petroleum](#)"
2. "[Oil's pipeline to America's schools](#)"
3. "[The fear of dying' pervades Southern California's oil-polluted enclaves](#)"
4. "[A California regulator's curious crusade to remake the Clean Air Act](#)"
5. "[Natural gas building boom fuels climate worries, enrages landowners](#)"

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.

Week 7 Tues October 9th 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. **Special guest speaker Jasper Fessmann, UWVa professor of public interest communications, who will help us identify and counter the greenwashing PR strategies and tactics used to manipulate journalists and the public.**

PREPARE: If you haven't seen it, please watch the documentary film *Merchants of Doubt*, Robert Kenner. Read: 1) 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/>

Week 8, Tues October 16th **Women in conservation history/journalism/#scicomm – from the Three Marjories to #MeToo:** Florida’s Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Marjorie Harris Carr make a good prism through which to view the influence of women on environmental writing and change: Rawlings the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, Carr the activist and Douglas, who balanced those two worlds to save the Everglades. **Special guest speaker historian, author, journalist and CJC alumnus Dr. Leslie Kemp Poole**, professor of environmental studies, Rollins College, and the author of *Saving Florida: Women’s Fight for the Environment in the Twentieth Century*. Following Dr. Poole’s lecture, will continue with some of the modern perils facing women who work to communicate science to the general audience.

PREPARE: (These will both be on Canvas) “The Three Marjories, Rachel and the Rise of Ecology,” pp 88-103 in *Saving Florida*. “Trees for Tomorrow,” by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Collier’s* magazine, May 8th 1943. And: “ ‘Ugly fake scientist.’ Women say sexist attacks on the rise,” *E&E News*, August 21st 2018.

Week 9, Tuesday October 23rd **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. **Our special guest speaker is conservation photographer Dr. Jennifer Adler, a National Geographic Explorer and #EJUF alumnus** who last year earned her doctorate in interdisciplinary ecology from the University of Florida.

PREPARE:

- 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) View Jenny’s TEDx talk, “Illusions: A Lens into Our Fragile Freshwater” (http://bit.ly/TEDx_JenniferAdler).
- 3) Explore Jenny’s National Geographic project, Walking on Water. (<https://walkingonwaterfl.org>).
- 4) “Assignment Earth: How Photography Can Help Save the Planet, *American Photo* magazine Sept.-Oct. 2007, pages 58-83. (Available on Google Books.)
- 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>
- 6) “[A photographer’s work ‘explores the increasingly complex relationship between people and the environment’](#),” by Natalie Fobes, Neiman Reports.

Week 10, Tuesday October 30th **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. **Special guest speaker**

Roger Witherspoon, longtime energy reporter and board member, the Society of Environmental Journalists.

PREPARE 1) Read *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.

Week 11, Tues November 6th Election Day! and more on climate communications and reporting on weather as a way into climate change with special guest speaker Dr. J. Marshall Shepherd, American meteorologist, director of the University of Georgia’s atmospheric science program, former president of the American Meteorological Society and weather/climate columnist, *Forbes* magazine.

PREPARE: 1) ["The Media’s Failure to Connect the Dots on Climate Change,"](#) by Emily Atkin, *the New Republic*, July 25th 2018. 2) “TV Meteorologists Unite for Climate Change on the Summer Solstice,” by Marshall Shepherd, *Forbes*, June 19th 2018. 3) “Why was my race relevant to a disagreement about climate change?” by Marshall Shepherd, *Forbes*, June 20th 2018.

Week 12 Tues November 13th Environmental Justice: Low-income, minority neighborhoods often 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: 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. 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.

Week 13 Tues November 20th 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. **Special guest speaker Dr. Joe Delfino, UF Professor Emeritus of Environmental Engineering Sciences.**

PREPARE: 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/>

2) [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.

3) "Invisibles: The Plastic Inside Us" by Christopher Tyree and Dan Morrison for www.orbmedia.org, The Guardian, Public Radio International, the Irish Independent, Bild, Deutsche Welle, SVK (Slovakia), La Repubblica, Cadena SER radio (Spain, Panama, Colombia, Argentina), El Universal (Mexico), Folha de Sao Paulo (Brazil), the East African, the Indian Express, Dhaka Tribune/Bangla Tribune, and Koran Tempo (Indonesia):

1. [Multimedia](#)
2. [Text](#)
3. [Audio](#)
4. [Data](#)
5. [Orb Community](#)

Week 14 Tues November 27th 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.) **We’ll also spend time on travel grants available for international environment, climate, population and health journalism.**

PREPARE: 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) “[The Amazon Is the New Frontier for Deadly Wildlife Tourism](#)” by Natasha Daly and Kirsten Luce for *National Geographic*. 3) “Famine is a feminist issue,” by Lisa Palmer, Slate, April 10th 2014. 4) View, “China

on the Brink: Photographer Sean Gallagher on an Environmental Crisis,” available on Sean’s website.

Week 15 & last day of class, Tues December 4th 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. **Also! Getting Published, Promoting Your Work and Careers in Environmental Journalism.** The good, the bad, and the ugly of making EJ a career; 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.

PREPARE: 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.

YOUR INSTRUCTORS

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. Cynthia spent this summer in Palau, Hawaii and Florida’s panhandle working on her new book, a story of humanity and seashells that draws on one of nature’s most-beloved objects to deepen understanding of our impact to the seas. Read some of her writing here: <http://www.cynthiabarnett.net/articles.html>.

Joan Meiners is a PhD candidate in Interdisciplinary Ecology at UF, and “interdisciplinary” well describes her interests and experience: Joan’s done field research on native bee and flower communities in California (her dissertation topic); sea turtles and oysters in North Carolina; carnivorous beetles in the Rocky Mountains; pollinators in Israel; Canada Lynx in Colorado; and kangaroo rats in the remote Arizona desert. When she’s not collecting, curating or analyzing data about ecosystems, she loves exploring them by foot, bike or boat—from high Himalayan peaks through the red-rock trails of Utah to the murky mysteries of Florida waterways. Whatever the adventure, her steady companion (besides her dog, Laila) has been her compulsion to write. She’s blogged about bees, rodents and travel; freelanced for *New Scientist*, NPR, the *Gainesville Sun* and

Cycling Utah; and spent this summer as an environmental reporter at the Times-Picayune in New Orleans as an AAAS Fellow. Read her NOLA work here: <https://www.aaas.org/person/joan-meiners>

COURSE POLICIES

Student Health and Wellness: Your well-being is important to me, and to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging everyone in our community to look out for one another and reach out for help if anyone is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact 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/) 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.

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/

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. Students who come on the field trip earn a no-questions-asked absence.

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.

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 book 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 time with the author of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*. So if you'd like Jack Davis to inscribe your book, buy a printed copy. Otherwise, e-readers or used copies are both great ways to read more sustainably and cut down on accumulations.

Sources, Diversity and Conflicts of Interest: Please pursue storytelling that is fair, accurate and complete – and based on information gathered from a variety of diverse sources. A greater understanding of the cultural and ethnic differences in our society will enhance learning, and help students develop habits and sensitivities that will be of great value in their workplaces and communities. This emphasis on diversity of sources shall not focus just on race and ethnicity or sexual orientation, but also age, education, gender, geography, occupation, politics, religion, socioeconomics, etc.

Avoid conflicts of interest at all times. Students in this course shall not be used as sources for your assignments. The same applies to relatives, roommates, friends (from campus or back home), sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, or members of any other co-curricular or extracurricular organizations to which you belong. Interviewing UF faculty, staff, or employees may be allowed provided they and the student do not have a prior relationship – and only with prior approval from the instructor.

Sources must be interviewed either in person or on the phone. Email interviews are discouraged and permitted only with my permission in advance of that interview. Sometimes a source will want you to let her read a story before it's submitted or published. Do not do so. It may be appropriate – sometimes, depending on the story, even ideal – to call the source back to confirm facts or context, or, in the case of complex science, to read a sentence back to ensure you've accurately translated the science. Be wary, however, of allowing someone else to steer, censor or otherwise undermine your reporting or story approach.

Multiple sourcing is required – and “sources” means interacting with real human beings, not simply relying on organizational statements, news releases or websites. This also involves contacting as many people or obtaining as much related documentation as you can. It's wise to interview as many sources as possible, so you have more than you need for your story.

All facts and opinions in your story must be attributed to sources. Anonymous or off-the-record material is not acceptable any more than fictional people. If there's a compelling reason to not use a source's full name in a story, you must run it by me before agreeing.

Assignments not abiding these sourcing, diversity and interview mandates will lose points.

Course and instructor evaluations: Finally, please 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/>