

 **Environmental Journalism, Spring 2020**
Undergrads/JOU 4314 Grads MMC 6905
Tuesdays 3-6, Matherly Hall 0004

Instructor: Cynthia Barnett

Email: clbarnett@jou.ufl.edu

Phone: 352-376-4440 (call or text)

Twitter: @cynthiabarnett

Class hashtag: #EJUF

Office Hours for Students:

234 Pugh Hall @ the Graham Center, Tuesdays 10:30 to 2:30

3326 Weimer Hall @ the J-School, Thursdays 1-4

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: 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 *The Gulf: The Making of An American Sea*, the 2018 Pulitzer Prize-winning book by UF environmental historian Jack Davis, one of our guest speakers. Undergraduate students are not required to review *The Gulf*, but you do have chapters assigned for the week Professor Davis visits.

For all students, our weekly assigned articles and essays are available free online, or through UF's electronic databases. Please also do your best 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 will 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. I will tweet from **@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; 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. Jan. 26; undergrads, turn in text on Canvas. Grad students should turn in text, + slides for an approx. 15-min. class presentation.

EJ Assignment 2: CREATIVE FIELD ASSIGNMENT

A 500-word, descriptive story reported during our field trip. The format is flexible; consider trying out 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 Feb. 9th.**

EJ Assignment 3: 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 Feb. 23rd.**

EJ Assignment 4: YOUR PROJECT STORY PITCH

A reported, 500-word story pitch (plan) for our class project on climate change and public health. This is the skeleton of your story – the angle; the data on which the story is based; the sources you’ll interview (5 minimum); places you’ll visit and describe; and story-form you envision. I will get these back to you quickly so you can dive into your story. **Due midnight Sun March 8th.**

EJ Assignment 5: EJ SEMESTER PROJECT, DUE IN TWO PARTS

Your project story should be between 1,200 and 1,500 words unless we agreed during the pitch on a video story, 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.

First draft due midnight Sun March 29th. 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 following two weeks working through edits and polishing with me to ready the final draft for publication.

Final draft due midnight Sun April 12th. 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! Sat & Sun Feb 1st & 2nd

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 Feb. 1st 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 should be able to keep to \$50, 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 January 7th 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.

Week 2, Tues January 14th 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.

Guest speakers: (Skype) **Meera Subramanian**, president of the Society of Environmental Journalists, will meet with us on the state of Environmental Journalism and opportunities in the field. (In person) **Steve Katz**, publisher of *Mother Jones*, a legacy magazine with a reputation for environmental reporting that is growing audience, revenue, and reporting staff in an era when most news magazines downsized and many more closed.

PREPARE: To finish EJ history: 1) "[Marjory Stoneman Douglas, 'Voice of the River,'](#)" by Tim Collie, the *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel*, 1998; 2) "[Silent Spring Turns 50,](#)" by Elizabeth Grossman, 2012, The Atlantic. 3) 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>.

To introduce modern EJ and reporting on climate change:

- 1) "[In Georgia's Peach Orchards, Warm Winters Raise Specter of Climate Change,](#)" by Meera Subramanian, InsideClimateNews, August 2017; [As Snow Disappears, a Family of Dogsled Racers in Wisconsin Can't Agree Why,](#)" by Meera Subramanian, InsideClimateNews, December 2017.
- 2) "[The Media's Failure to Connect the Dots on Climate Change,](#)" by Emily Atkin, *the New Republic*, July 25th 2018.
- 3) Browse *Mother Jones*, particularly the climate desk, to prepare for our meeting with Publisher Steve Katz: www.motherjones.com/topics/climate-desk/.

Week 3 Tues January 21st **Environmental Journalism & 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. Meanwhile the environmental movement and Environmental Journalism alike have faltered in both cultural sensitivity and work on vulnerable communities; hopefully the tide is turning.

Guest speaker: (in person) Imani Jackson, Law, Environment & Society Fellow at UF's Brechner Center for Freedom of Information. Imani researches the impacts of government secrecy on vulnerable groups, and as a journalist specializes in justice issues such as “Graves of the Enslaved,” her award-winning story for 2018 EJ class.

PREPARE: READ: 1) Letter from SouthWest Organizing Project to the president of the National Wildlife Federation, March 16th 1990: <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/swop.pdf>;

2) Imani Jackson, “[Graves of the Enslaved](#),” wuft.org Peak Florida project, December 2018.

3) Energy Burden, Part I, Energy comes at a much greater cost for Gainesville’s poor: <https://www.wuft.org/news/energy-burden/>

4) Energy Burden Part II, the Power of Irma: www.wuft.org/news/energy-burden/the-storm/

PERUSE: 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 4 Tues January 28th Nature Writing! (in preparation for the weekend’s field trip)

Environmental journalists are journalists working to cover the environment and not environmentalists trying to practice journalism. Still, nature writing has an important place in EJ. Lyrical descriptions of sea or forest, personal narratives, sense of place pieces and adventure tales all can help draw new readers to environmental stories. This week we take a break from issues-based research and storytelling to think about how to help people connect to and contemplate Earth’s awe and wonder.

Guest speaker: (In person) Environmental historian **Dr. Jack E. Davis**, winner of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for *The Gulf: The Making of An American Sea*, and co-editor of University Press of Florida’s forthcoming nature-writing anthology.

PREPARE: 1) Chapters 9 & 12, *The Gulf* by Professor Davis. 2) John Muir, Chapter 6, “Cedar Keys,” in *1,000 Mile Walk to the Gulf* (On Canvas.) 3) Sy Montgomery, “Deep Intellect,” *Orion* Magazine. 4) Drew Lanham, “9 Rules for the Black Birdwatcher,” *Orion* Magazine.

Week 5 Tues February 4th Climate Change and Public Health, Part I From the expanded reach of disease-carrying bugs, to the public health threat of sewage back-flows in extreme rains, climate change is impacting Florida as a major public health issue. More than 70 major medical groups in the U.S. released a call to action last year declaring climate change a “true public health emergency.”

Helping the 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. Our

class project on climate change and public health aims to help Floridians understand the issue more personally. Holly Wilson from the CDC will visit class to show us how to access CDC's Environmental Health database and visualization tools.

Guest speaker: Holly Wilson, health communications specialist, Environmental Public Health Tracking Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

PREPARE:

- 1) Samantha Harrington, "[How climate change threatens public health](#)," Yale Climate Connections," Aug 2019. (Also please read link the Call to Action.)
- 2) Samantha McCann, "[Reporting on Climate Change from a Solutions Lens](#)," Medium, Sept 2019.

Week 6 Tues Feb 11 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.

Guest speaker Dr. 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 7 Tues February 18th Climate Change and Public Health, Part II:

Guest speaker (in person): Dr. Song Liang, professor in environment and global health, UF Emerging Pathogens Institute, will speak with us about water-, food-, and vector-borne diseases and other environmental hazards associated with climate change.

PREPARE: 1) Familiarize yourself with the National Climate Assessment (most recent version is the [Fourth National Climate Assessment](#), updated in 2018. Read in entirety [Chapter 19 on the Southeastern United States](#), which includes Florida impacts.

Week 8, Tues February 25th **How to localize a planetary topic:** This special class is devoted to localizing climate change, and brainstorming our semester project with the help of a member of the Florida Climate Reporting Consortium.

Guest speakers (in person): **Jenny Staletovich** is environmental reporter at South Florida public radio station WLRN, where her beat includes the rising seas and costs of climate change in South Florida. She previously covered environment, climate change and hurricanes for the *Miami Herald* for five years, and reported for the *Palm Beach Post* for a decade. Jenny’s state and national reporting awards include the Scripps Howard National Journalism Award for Distinguished Service to the First Amendment as well as Green Eyeshades and Sunshine State Awards. In 2019, she received the Hoeveler Award from the University of Miami, and Tropical Audubon’s Polly Redford Award for her environmental reporting. She was named one of *Audubon* magazine’s national “women greening journalism,” and *Miami New Times* “Best Herald’ reporter in 2016 for being an “informed, impassioned, and steady voice” as South Florida charts its future in the face of rising seas.

In the second half of class, **Journalism Professor Matt Sheehan**, who teaches Art and Science of Story and other CJC classes, will continue our brainstorming session, and talk more about the specifics on how we’ll publish our stories on WUFT.org’s special project platform in April.

PREPARE: I will be emailing you the stories Jenny would like you to read. **Please also bring your initial project story ideas.**

Week 9, Tues March 10th **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.

Guest speaker (in person): **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, Tues March 17th 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.

Guest speaker (Skype): *New York Times* energy reporter Ivan Penn.

PREPARE 1) Ivan Penn, "NAACP tells local chapters: don't let energy industry manipulate you," the *New York Times*, January 2020.

2) David Roberts' VOX reporting on climate change that won last year's beat reporting award from the Society of Environmental Journalists:

"The Green New Deal, Explained"

"What Genuine, No-bullshit Ambition on Climate Change Would Look Like"

"Utilities Have a Problem: The Public Wants 100% Renewable Energy, and Quick"

"Why Conservatives Keep Gaslighting the Nation About Climate Change"

3) Peruse *The Guardian's* award-winning multi-media investigation, "Big Carbon," story links below. It is not necessary to read all of this, but definitely read: "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."

Week 11, Tues March 24th

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) Read “[Ocean Shock](#),” Reuters reveals the climate crisis beneath the waves, first place winner for SEJ’s Outstanding Explanatory Reporting Award in 2019.

2) Peruse the 2016 EJ class project, Blue Ether, for an overview of freshwater issues in our region: <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 12 Tues March 31st Women in conservation history/journalism/#scicomm – from the Marjories to #MeToo: Florida’s Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Marjorie Harris Carr ... along with the dynamic FL journalistic platform *The Marjorie* ... make a great prism through which to view the influence of women on environmental journalism & ethics; sexism in sci-comm; and change. (Rawlings the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, Carr the activist, Douglas, who balanced those two worlds to save the Everglades, and [The Marjorie](#) an independent start-up covering the environment in Florida.) We look at the past, present and future of gender and EJ through several Marjories, including some of the modern perils facing women who work to communicate science to general audiences.

Guest speakers (in person) Dr. Hannah O. Brown (another #EJUF alumnus!) and **Becca Burton**, co-founders, *The Marjorie*.

PREPARE: 1) “The Three Marjories, Rachel and the Rise of Ecology,” pp 88-103 in Leslie Kemp Poole’s book *Saving Florida*. (On Canvas.) 2) [United by Cane](#)—all parts, by Hannah O. Brown, Becca Burton and Anna Hamilton. 3) “[Catching Snakes with Long Nails: How a Herpetology Conference Brought #MeToo to Science](#),” by Hannah O. Brown, and 4) “‘Ugly fake scientist.’ Women say sexist attacks on the rise,” *E&E News*, August 21st 2018.

Week 13 Tues April 7th Agriculture and food, 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.?

PREPARE: “Food and Farming,” a collaborative projects by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism and the Guardian investigating the industrialization of farming and the safety of the food chain: <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/projects/food-and-farming-industry>

Civil Eats: Our best food justice stories of 2019: <https://civileats.com/2019/12/26/our-best-food-justice-stories-of-2019/>.

Week 14 Tues April 14th 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.**

Guest speaker (Skype): Erik Hoffner edits wildlife conservation and other stories for *Mongabay* and also freelances on the environment for *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, and many other publications.

PREPARE: 1) Jeremy Hance, "The Great Rhino U-Turn," *Mongabay*, September 2018. 2) The Great "[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 April 21st 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. 3) "In Kenya, a Transformation in Shades of REDD," by Amy Yee, *Undark* magazine, July 28th 2017.



YOUR INSTRUCTOR

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*, *Ensaia* 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. Her next book is 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>.



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/>