

 **Environmental Journalism, Fall 2020**  
**Undergrads/JOU 4314 Grads MMC 6905**  
**Tuesdays 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.**

**Instructor: Cynthia Barnett**

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**Class hashtag:** #EJUF

**Office Hours for Students:** Phone; Zoom; or Walk & Talk on campus or in the Florida Park neighborhood. Please 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.



**EJUF 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 research.
- 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.



## EJUF 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. 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](http://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 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. **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, and to connect with our guest speakers. I will tweet from [@cynthiabarnett](https://twitter.com/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](https://twitter.com/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**
- Study story: **100**
- Place-based story: **100**
- Greenwashing analysis: **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



## EJUF 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 September 20th; undergrads, turn in text on Canvas with link to story or trailer etc. Grad students should turn in text, + slides for an approx. 15-min. class presentation. We will schedule the presentations over the next few weeks in class.**

### **EJ Assignment 2: STUDY STORY**

The “study story” is a basic of science and environmental journalism; a new study publishes and you translate the research into a story that draws in your audience and helps them understand what’s important. Sometimes you’ll get a head’s up about a study from a scientist you’ve gotten to know, but you can also follow journals in your area of interest and sign up for email alerts. We’ll talk about how to find research; how to access journals and avoid scammy ones; and how to write the story—including interviewing not only one of the study’s authors, but at least one independent expert who was not involved in the research. **350-500 word written story or 2-3 minute audio or video story.**

**Due midnight Sun October 11<sup>th</sup>; Please provide me a PDF of the study when you turn in your story. If your story is audio or video, please also provide a transcript.**

### **EJ Assignment 3: PLACE-BASED STORY (500 words or 3-min video or audio story)**

Since covid prevents the regular #EJUF field trip, I’d like everyone to start with a place-based story—something that gets you outdoors, safely. 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. **Due midnight Sun Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>.**

#### **EJ Assignment 4: 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](http://thinkbeforeyoupink.org).

**Due midnight Sunday November 15<sup>th</sup>; please include link to company or ad etc., and be prepared to present these over the next few weeks.**

#### **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 on a video story, NPR-style audio story, interactive graphic, or other form. The story should include at least two additional elements—photos; audio or video clips; data visualizations; a timeline or other elements to draw people in.

**First draft due midnight Sun Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>.** 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 Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>.** A polished, fact-checked, final story with all my questions answered and edits completed and any additional elements ready for publication.



### DETAILED EJ CLASSTIME AGENDA & WEEKLY READINGS

**Week 1, Tues Sept 1<sup>st</sup>** 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 fowlest 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 Sept 8<sup>th</sup>** To finish our introduction to EJ and its history, we'll devote some time to the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 EJ 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 speaker:** Meera Subramanian, president of the Society of Environmental Journalists.  
@MeeraTweets

**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 16<sup>th</sup> 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; "[Fly-Fishing on Montana's Big Hole River, Signs of Climate Change Are All Around,](#)" by Meera Subramanian, InsideClimateNews, June 2018.

**Week 3 Tues Sept 15<sup>th</sup>** **The Story of Our Time:** Helping the public understand global-to-local anthropogenic warming and its impacts to the Earth and its life is one of the great challenges of our time and one of the great stories of our time.

**Guest speaker:** Alex Harris, climate change beat reporter for *The Miami Herald* and former #EJUF student! @harrisalex

**PREPARE:** Read by our guest speaker:

1. "[Feds Consider a Plan To Protect Miami-Dade From Storm Surge: 10-Foot Walls by the Coast](#)"
2. "[As Seas Rise, Your Coastal Home in Florida Could Lose Value. One Report Says 15% by 2030](#)"
3. "[A Town's Pioneering Plan To Fund Retreat From Sea Rise: Have New Development Pitch In](#)"
4. "[Adapting to Climate Change Is Going To Cost Florida a Lot. Who's Going To Pay for It?](#)"
5. "[At \\$60 Million a Mile, The Keys May Abandon Some Roads To Sea Rise Rather Than Raise Them](#)"

**ALSO:** 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.

**AND READ:** Some of Vox's David Roberts' reporting on climate change: "The Green New Deal, Explained"

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

**Week 4 Tues Sept 22<sup>th</sup> Reporting on science in a post-truth world: Facts, communicating risks, and understanding statistics.**

**Guest speaker:** #EJUF alumnus Dr. Joan Meiners, now covering water issues in Utah for Report for America. @beecycles

**Prepare:** "Polluter's Paradise" by Tristan Baurick, Joan Meiners, Gordon Russell and Sara Sneath, The Times-Picayune and The Advocate, and Claire Perlman, Al Shaw and Lylla Younes, ProPublica, October 2019:



The Eastman Chemical Company in St. Gabriel. (Chris Granger/The Times-Picayune & Advocate)

1. "Welcome to "Cancer Alley," Where Toxic Air Is About To Get Worse"
2. "In a Notoriously Polluted Area of the Country, Massive New Chemical Plants Are Still Moving In"
3. "How Oil Companies Avoided Environmental Accountability After 10.8 Million Gallons Spilled"
4. "In "Cancer Alley," Toxic Polluters Face Little Oversight From Environmental Regulators"
5. "Chemical Companies Are Building Their Plants Overseas and Shipping Them Back In. They Still Get State Tax Breaks."

**Read** this piece from The Outline about President Trump's anti-science messaging.

**Read** Joan's story from Massive Science, "It will take over one billion dollars to protect one small Louisiana town from climate change," and skim some of the 2,000 comments from when it went viral on Reddit.

**Skim** this piece from WaPo about flood risk assessment in Houston, and damages from Harvey.

**Question:** If people didn't understand flood risks, who is responsible when they lose their homes?

**Week 5 Tues Sept 29<sup>th</sup> The Environment and Public Health:** An introduction to reporting on chemicals that persist in our environment, and to the semester's assignment, due in December. (Some of you will be reporting on the "forever chemicals" known as PFAS, and some of you will choose other long-term stories for your class project.)

**Guest speakers:** UF water-chemistry professor John Bowden and award-winning journalist Sharon Lerner, author of *The Intercept's Bad Chemistry* series. [@fastlerner](#)

**Prepare:** Read some of our guest speaker's stories on PFAS chemicals:

1. "[3M Knew About PFAS Food Contamination in 2001](#)"
2. "[EPA Move To Phase Out Animal Experiments Could Mean the End of Toxics Regulations](#)"
3. "[EPA Allowed Companies To Make 40 New PFAS Chemicals Despite Serious Risks](#)"
4. "[Toxic PFAS Chemicals Found in Artificial Turf](#)"
5. "[Top U.S. Toxicologist Was Barred From Saying PFAS Cause Disease In Humans. She's Saying It Now.](#)"

**Week 6 Tues Oct 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Journalism & Justice: Low-income, minority neighborhoods bear the brunt of environmental threats** such as exposure to chemical plants, Superfund and other toxic waste sites. A growing body of research shows that the chronic stressors of poverty fundamentally alter the way the body reacts to pollutants, especially in young children. Meanwhile the environmental movement and Environmental Journalism alike have faltered in inclusion, cultural sensitivity and work on vulnerable communities.

**Guest speaker:** Lyndsey Gilpin, Founder and Editor-in-Chief, *Southerly Magazine* [@lyndseygilpin](#)

**PREPARE:** 1) "[The rural South's invisible public health crisis](#)," by Lyndsey Gilpin, *Southerly*, July 5<sup>th</sup> 2018.

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

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/](http://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](http://www.sej.org/sites/default/files/SEJ_ToxicCity.pdf).

**Week 7 Tues October 13<sup>th</sup>** 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:** Conservation photographer Dr. Jennifer Adler, a National Geographic Explorer and #EJUF alumnus. [@jadlerphoto](#)

**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](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 8, Tues October 20<sup>th</sup>** The art & power of environmental filmmaking: Shorts & documentaries, dead-serious or hilarious, environmental films can raise awareness, expose wrongdoing, promote solutions, inspire action.

**Guest speaker:** Environmental filmmaker Eric Flagg, director and producer, Jellyfish Smack Productions, coordinator, Digital Media Technology Program, Santa Fe College,

**PREPARE:** 1) Watch [Terra Blight](#), by Eric Flagg and Isaac Brown, a documentary exploring America’s consumption of computers and the hazardous waste we create in pursuit of the latest technology. 2) [Guardians of the Forest](#), by Max Baring and Karla Mendes, Reuters, on Guajajara Indians’ battling illegal logging in the Amazon rainforest. (30 min.)

- 2) (On short form): Read: “[What Defines a Meme?](#)” by James Gleick, *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 2011.
- 3) Watch: Fritz Grobe and Stephen Voltz: “[Unlocking Viral Video for Social Good](#),” frank gathering 2018.

**Week 9, Tues Oct 27<sup>th</sup>** Nature Writing Week! {Breathe ... get outside!} 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:** 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. [@jackedavisfl](#)

**PREPARE:** 1) Chapters 9 & 12, *The Gulf* by Professor Davis. 2) Sy Montgomery, "Deep Intellect," *Orion Magazine*. 3) Drew Lanham, "9 Rules for the Black Birdwatcher," *Orion Magazine*.

**Week 10, Tues Nov 3rd 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. [@JasperFessmann](#)

**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 11<sup>th</sup> 2015.

**Week 11, Tues Nov 10<sup>th</sup> 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*. [@hannah\\_o\\_brown](#) & [@dabeccaburton](#)

**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 21<sup>st</sup> 2018.

**Week 12 Tues Nov 17<sup>th</sup>**: UF'S 6<sup>th</sup> annual climate communications conference! #EJUF students will be a key part of the conference and attend in lieu of class this day.

**Week 13 Tues Nov 24<sup>th</sup> International Environmental Reporting:** 21<sup>st</sup> 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. **We'll also spend time on travel grants available for international environment, climate, population and health journalism.**

**Guest speaker:** Gloria Dickie, award-winning international environmental journalist, has reported from five continents and on topics as diverse as maggot farming and giant pandas for *The New York Times*, *National Geographic*, and many other publications. Her forthcoming book, *Bear by Bear*, explores our relationships with the eight species of bears. @GloriaDickie

**PREPARE:** 1) Read some of our guest speaker's favorite stories:  
[How to Make Peace with the World's Deadliest Bears](#), National Geographic (grant funded)

[Green Glove, Iron Fist](#), Biographic Magazine

[These scientists created a 'cloud curtain' in Peru's tropical forests to mimic the future](#), PRI's The World

[Amid High-Tech Options, a Reckoning for Iceland's Glacier Keepers](#), Undark

[India Sees Coronavirus Threat to Fragile Population: Tigers](#), The New York Times

2) Jeremy Hance, "The Great Rhino U-Turn," Mongabay, September 2018. 3) "[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. 4) "[The Amazon Is the New Frontier for Deadly Wildlife Tourism](#)" by Natasha Daly and Kirsten Luce for *National Geographic*.

**Week 14 Tues Dec 1<sup>st</sup> Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, & other emerging story forms.**

**Prepare:** 1) Check out our guest speaker's [Ghost Bikes](#) augmented reality experience. 2) [Bear 71 VR](#) explores the intersection of humans and bears. 3) Sol Rogers, "[How Extended Reality Can Bring Climate Change Front of Mind](#)," Forbes, April 21<sup>st</sup> 2020; explore the Augmented Reality projects linked in the story.

**Guest speaker:** Dr. Madison Jones, professor of rhetoric and natural resources science, University of Rhode Island. @poetrhetor

**Week 15 & last day of class, Dec 8<sup>th</sup>** **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 in this covid semester: View this [frank video](https://vimeo.com/121081128) 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, *Ensia* magazine. 3) “In Kenya, a Transformation in Shades of REDD,” by Amy Yee, *Undark* magazine, July 28<sup>th</sup> 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*, *Ensia* 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.



## 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](mailto: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/](http://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/](http://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.

**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.

**Diversity & Inclusion:** The College of Journalism and Communications is committed to an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We expect each of our journalism courses to help foster an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

Our classrooms are places where you will be treated with respect. We welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability—and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

**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. Otherwise, e-readers or used copies are both great ways to read more sustainably and cut down on accumulations.

**Storytelling Sources: Diversity and Conflicts of Interest:** For our class and always, 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.

### **Special COVID-19 Class Policies:**

**Zoom professionalism:** Please, be mindful of maintaining a professional appearance and conduct via our remote lecture meetings. Consider your wardrobe and hygiene just as you would were we all in the same room, as well as your audio and visual backgrounds.

For our small, interactive class, we expect you to keep your camera on during Zoom sessions. If you go to black screen for a significant amount of time, points may be deducted from your

attendance/participation score. Note that lectures will be recorded for educational purposes. If you have extenuating circumstances or concerns about Zoom, please talk with me.

Your full, synchronous participation in class is crucial given that we only meet 15 times. That said, our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for any enrolled students who become ill. In such a case, students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally agree to have their voices recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile, video image, or voice recorded, or please discuss this with me so that we can come up with a solution. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

**If we're able to meet in person**, the following policies and requirements are designed to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions:

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.](#)
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies.](#)

**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/>