

Art, Water, Ecology: Visibility Forever?

ARH 4930 section 4D95

ARH 6918 section 4F85

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Office Hours: Wednesday: 3rd period (10:45- 11:45) and by appointment).

Telephone: 374-4087 (home)

Class Time and Place: T/R 2-3rd per. (9:30-12), W 2nd per. (9:30- 10:45) FAC 201

Required Textbooks:

Cynthia Barnett, *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), 2008: 191 pp. (ebook, UF library)

Required Articles:

Most articles are posted on Ares. Download pdfs here: <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/>

*Note: the alphabetical ordering is not always uniform on ARES. You may have to search by both first name and last name, even for the same author.

Problems? Don't use Safari as your browser. Be sure to log into the UF VPN client.

UF Computing Help Desk: 392-HELP.

Articles from *Artful Ecologies: Art, Nature and Environment Conference* (2006):

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/28521016/Artful-Ecologies-Papers>

Excerpts from Sue Spaid, *Ecovention: Current Art to Transform Ecologies:*

<http://greenmuseum.org/c/ecovement/>

Required Springs Science Resource:

Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute: <http://floridaspringsinstitute.org>

Recommended (not required) Reading:

Cynthia Barnett, *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press), 2011: 286 pp.

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press Books), 2010: 200 pp. (ebook)

Rick Kilby, *Finding the Fountain of Youth: Ponce de León and Florida's Magical Waters* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press), 2013: 120 pp. (on reserve)

Robert Knight, *Silenced Springs* (The Howard T. Odum Springs Institute) 2015 (on reserve)

Peggy Macdonald, *Marjorie Harris Carr: Defender of Florida's Environment* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida) 2014: 272 pp.

Margaret Ross Tolbert, *Aquiferious*, 2010: 176 pp. (on reserve)

Lu Vickers: *Weeki Wachee, City of Mermaids: A History of One of Florida's Oldest*

Roadside Attractions (Gainesville: University Press of Florida) 2007: 320 pp. Lu Vickers,

Remembering Paradise Park: Tourism and Segregation at Silver Springs (Gainesville:

University Press of Florida) 2015: 240 pp.

Additional Resources: Women Environmental Artists Directory: <http://weadartists.org>

Recommended Grammar Guide: Hacker: The Bedford Handbook.

Assignments and Grading Undergraduate Students:

100% of the final grade will result from one group presentation with an annotated bibliography (30%); one research paper 10-15 pages (up to 4000 words) with several lead-in assignments (50%); and attendance/discussion/homework/participation (20%). Note: Late papers are not accepted and result in a score of zero, and there are no make-up quizzes or presentations.

Assignments and Grading Graduate Students:

100% of the final grade will result from one group presentation with an annotated bibliography (30%); one research paper 15-20 pages (up to 5000 words) with several lead-in assignments (50%); and attendance/discussion/homework/participation (20%). Note: Late papers are not accepted and result in a score of zero, and there are no make-up quizzes or presentations.

Warning:

If you do not like to attend class, do regular reading assignments, and have participation required of you, you should either not take this course or settle for a lower grade than your work might otherwise warrant.

Course Rationale:

In 1974 the famous undersea explorer Jacques Cousteau visited Ginnie Springs, a site about 30 miles northwest of Gainesville, Florida. Marveling at the beauty and clarity of the water, he praised it as “visibility forever,” a reference to both time and distance. But the system that feeds these springs, the mighty Floridan Aquifer, is, for the most part, *invisible*.

Wending its way silently under four states and 100,000 square miles of sand, gravel and porous limestone rock, the Floridan ebbs and flows daily beneath our feet, rising and falling in syncopated rhythms of declining rainfall, increasing public use and saltwater intrusion. Florida is home to the largest concentration of freshwater springs in the world. As premier places for recreation, springs are fundamental to Florida’s identity and economy, it’s brand on the global tourism market. But perhaps more importantly, springs are also the “eyes of the aquifer,” windows into the underground layers of freshwater that nourish our lakes, rivers and wetlands, supporting diverse and numerous ecosystems of plants, animals and people.

This course is an introduction to a wide-ranging set of artistic practices that have come to be known as “Eco-art.” Given that much of this work foregrounds the artist’s or group of artists’ personal engagement with particular sites, ecologies and communities, we’ll examine Eco-art through the lens of a local issue with statewide and far broader impact: the degrading conditions of our springs and the Floridan Aquifer, the primary source of drinking water for 90% of Floridians. In other words, we’ll explore some of the history, conundrums and strategies of Eco-art from the inside out, like an Eco-artist, by immersing ourselves in a local ecological issue with wide ranging social, environmental and political impact.

Beginning with Ponce de León's fabled search for the Fountain of Youth as a metaphoric and aesthetic guide, students will start to examine the historical intersection of water and tourism in Florida. Although historically inaccurate, the myth points not only to the value of Florida's springs from the Paleo-Indian era on, but also the importance of water to the identity, branding and marketing of the state. More importantly, perhaps, this myth has informed how Floridians conceptualize our relationship to water, a history outlined more specifically in social, political and economic terms in Cynthia Barnett's *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.*

As part of our toolkit, we'll thread through some of the historical questions and issues that inform the development of Eco-art, situating it within a lineage of responses to Modernism that include a number of overlapping trajectories: Minimalism, Earth Art, Feminist and Activist Art, Public Art, and Social Practices/Relational Aesthetics. Taking our initial cue from American expansion in the 19th century, we will examine how aesthetics, often in concert with science and politics, play a crucial role in conceptualizing, representing and shaping relations between natural resources, local and national identities, and public policy.

We will also consider how art-making may be a form of research just as valuable as other forms (i.e. traditional "science-based" methods) for creatively engaging the complex nexus of social issues and environmental conditions. We do so, in part, as a way to consider how artists, as conceptual as well as perceptual innovators, may engage the public, particularly as citizens and policy makers here in Florida begin to grapple with the effects of climate change, the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf, and the declining health and flow of our fresh water resources throughout the state.

One goal of this course, then, is to offer students a place-based experience analogous to that of many eco-artists, who often collaborate across disciplines, drawing from history, aesthetics and community wisdom as well as scientific data to develop their work. In the process, students will explore the capacity of aesthetics to produce forms of representation that may shape our future, inspiring citizens to imagine and translate between environmental conditions, scientific data, community identity and public policy. In turn, students will be offered a critical and historical framework for beginning to think about art that addresses ecological and social issues as they develop their own forms of creative engagement, problem-solving and citizenship.

Consider:

"We are finally out of this strange idea of a nature that could remain infinitely distant from the fragile life-support system that we are slowly making explicit. Art and nature have merged, folding into one another and forming a continuous sensorium." Bruno Latour

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introductions

June 28 (Tues.) Syllabus; Introductions

June 29 (Wed.) Defining terms: What is Eco-art?

June 30 (Thurs.) Systems, Cycles and an Introduction to Florida's Springs and Aquifer

Week 2: Bodies of Water: Nature as Metaphor and *Naturans*

July 5 (Tues.) Early Env. Art: Myths, Metaphors, Quests and Compoundings

July 6 (Wed.) 19th c Landscapes: Nature, Culture and American Identity

July 7 (Thurs.) 19th c. Landscapes: Nature, American Identity and Public Policy
VISITING LECTURER: Peggy Macdonald, author and Executive Director of the Matheson History Museum, will discuss the museum's collection of 19th c. springs postcards and some of her research on Silver Springs.

Week 3: 20th c Environmental Art: Responses to Modernism

July 12 (Tues.) Responses to Modernism; Introduction to Process Art, Earth Art

July 13 (Wed.) Responses to Modernism con't.

July 14 (Thurs.) Responses to Modernism con't.

Week 4: Living as Form: Feminism, Poetics and Social Practice Art

July 19 (Tues.) Feminism, Social Practice, Eco-art and Life-Support: Suzanne Lacy, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Betsy Damon and Ana Mendieta

July 20 (Wed.) Social Practice Art, Remapping Social Relations as Ecological Ties

July 21 (Thurs.) Public Art and Poetics: Buster Simpson, Maya Lin, Olafur Eliasson

Week 5: Eco-art, Science and the Rights of Nature

July 26 (Tues.) Moving Water, Damming Water

July 27 (Wed.) VISITING LECTURER: artist **Margaret Ross Tolbert** discusses her springs paintings, her book *Aquiferious*, and her current projects, including the Lost Springs of the Ocklawaha River.

July 28 (Thurs.) Eco-art, Science and the Rights of Nature

Week 6: Lens and Immersion

***ANNO. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FIRST PAGE DUE MONDAY AUGUST 1st**
(email on Monday, bring hard copy to class on Tuesday)

Aug. 2 (Tues.) Discussion of Projects

Aug. 3 (Wed.) Discussion of Projects

Aug. 4 (Thurs.) **FINAL PAPERS DUE IN CLASS**

Additional information:

*****Class Attendance Policy**

1. Each class will begin with a **short one or two question quiz** on something obvious in the reading. If you answer correctly, you get full credit for attending that day; if you answer incorrectly you receive half credit, and if you are absent you receive no attendance credit for the day. Note: Double period absences count as two. Early departures from class count as an absence. After three unexcused absences I will begin to drop your **FINAL GRADE** one increment for every absence. Any student with five or more absences will automatically receive a D or lower for a final grade for the course.

2. You will also turn in **three questions from the readings due for the day** at the beginning of each class. This should help you prepare for discussion.

3. Brief **homework** assignments and **class participation** will also count toward attendance.

****Electronics and Cell Phone Policy:**

No computer, pager, internet, or cell phone activity is permitted in class. Be sure to turn all electronics off and put them away before entering the classroom.

Academic Honesty Policy:

Evidence of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failing grade for this course, and may result in further penalties. An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. Familiarize yourself with the Academic Honesty Guidelines at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>

as well as the Student Honor Code regulation 6C1-4.017 at:

<http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter4/4017.pdf>

Grading:

A = 94-100 = 4

A- = 90-93 = 3.67

B+ = 87-89 = 3.33

B = 84-86 = 3

B- = 80-83 = 2.67

C+ = 77-79 = 2.33

C = 74-76 = 2

C- = 70-73 = 1.67

D+ = 67-69 = 1.33

D = 64-66 = 1

D- = 60-63 = .67

E = 59 and below

Services for Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability you must be registered with the Dean of Students Office for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations.

Harassment and Discrimination Policy:

The University of Florida prohibits any form of discrimination or sexual harassment among students, faculty and staff. For further information, refer to the UF Human Resources Policies website at:

<http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexualharassment.htm>

University Counseling Center:

The Counseling Center provides counseling and consultation services to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students and their spouses/partners. The Center offers brief counseling and therapy to help students confront personal, academic, and career concerns. The primary goal of counseling is to help students develop the personal awareness and skills necessary to overcome problems and to grow and develop in ways that will allow them to take advantage of the educational opportunities at the university. See:

<http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/base.asp?include=generalInfo.inc#aboutCC>

General Education Learning Outcomes:

Humanities

The humanities requirement enables students to think critically about what artists and thinkers (past and present) have to teach us about the nonmaterial qualities of human beings and human values. In courses in the humanities, students become acquainted with the enduring products --in words, sounds, paint, stone, metal, and many other media -- in which thoughtful and gifted human beings have attempted to meet our individual and collective needs for emotional, spiritual, or intellectual fulfillment. Humanities courses address major intellectual, cultural, and aesthetic achievements. Students consider questions of ultimate meaning and study human activities, artifacts, and values in the context of the ages in which they were produced.

Diversity

Diversity courses provide instruction in the values, attitudes and norms that create cultural differences within the United States. These courses encourage students to recognize how social roles and status affect different groups and have an impact on society. These courses guide students to analyze and to evaluate their own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures, and to distinguish opportunities and constraints faced by other persons and groups.

(detach and return) ☒ -----

Contract:

I have read this syllabus thoroughly. I understand and agree to all the terms set forth in it.

I understand that it is my responsibility to keep track of my attendance and grades.

I understand that I can always avail myself of help and assistance from the instructor during the semester by using her posted office hours or making separate appointments, and that failing to do so in the face of some personal problem or crisis regarding the course is not the liability of the instructor.

I will abide by the Academic Honor Code passed by the Student Senate and "neither give nor receive unauthorized aid" in the preparation of any assignment or in the taking of any exam.

Date: _____

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

UF ID number: _____