

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 7

IMAGES OF THE FUTURE
Fall, 1977

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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

(subject to radical revision)

(blanks to be filled in as the class & circumstances dictate)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading to be Finished</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
Tues Sept. 20		
Thurs Sept 22		the most probable future
Tues Sept. 27		
Thurs Sept. 29	<u>Brave New World</u>	questions
Tues Oct 4		the most desirable future
Thurs Oct. 6		
Tues Oct. 11	<u>Walden 2</u>	questions
Thurs Oct. 13		
Tues Oct. 18	<u>1984</u>	questions
Thurs Oct. 20	"Politics and the English Language"	
Tues Oct. 25		
Thurs Oct. 27	<u>The Limits to Growth</u>	questions
Tues Nov. 1	"Limits to Growth Revisited"	
Thurs Nov. 3		
Tues Nov. 8	<u>The Next 200 Years</u>	How do you know who to believe?
Thurs Nov. 10	Daly: "Tragedy of the Commons" "Leviathan or Oblivion"	
Tues Nov. 15	Daly: "Buddhist Economics" "Steady-State Economy"	
Thurs Nov. 17	Book about the future--your choice	Book review
Tues Nov. 22		
Tues Nov. 29	<u>Zen & The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance</u>	questions
Thurs Dec. 1	Daly: "Introduction" "The Abolition of Man"	The Future Dartmouth

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Please look ahead on this schedule and start each book far enough ahead so you will be finished with it on the day listed. Class discussion of the book will begin on this day. If you haven't read the book, you will not learn from the discussion and, worse, the rest of

us will not learn from you. Class discussions are the essence of this course. Your reaction to the book and your ideas are valuable to us all. If you don't intend to keep up and to contribute your own thoughts, please enroll in some other course.

On the day each book is listed for discussion, bring to class a list of (written) questions about the book that you would like to put to your colleagues. Don't make them the factual have-you-read-this-book type questions you might expect on a pop quiz. ("What is Lenina doing the last time we see her in Brave New World?") Instead, make them questions you'd really like to know the answers to, questions you're not sure you can answer yourself, questions that occur to you as you are reading the book. It might be a good idea to jot some questions on the margins as you read and then assemble them later. Pick the best three (3) to hand in to the class. The questions need not dwell narrowly on the content of the book itself. They could be about the author, the writing style, comparisons to other books we read, or just interesting questions that the book triggers in your head. (Try to avoid "What is the Meaning of Life?")

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Freshman seminars are really English courses in disguise, and therefore professors are expected to require regular writing assignments, and to be concerned about the quality of your writing. Unfortunately for you, I take this charge very seriously.

Your writing in this course will be judged not by high school or even college standards, but by professional standards. Therefore your grammar and spelling will be expected to be perfect. You will be expected to avoid subtle errors such as split infinitives and dangling participles. And each paper you write should deliver a clear message in interesting, precisely-chosen language. To help you meet these standards, we will have class discussions on writing, we will criticize each other's work (including the professor's), and we will read and discuss some good and not-so-good examples of writing during the term.

The following are requirements for every paper you write for this course (and the only requirements):

1. Indication of audience. At the top of each paper indicate in a few words the kind of people you are intending to reach with the paper. In a few cases the audience will be dictated by the assignment. In most cases, however, the choice will be yours. For example, you could choose to direct your message to other college students, to subscribers of Time magazine, to the President of the United States, to sour-faced academics, to fifth graders, or to viewers of daytime soap operas. In each case, your style and choice of words should be different. Your paper will be judged by its appropriateness for the selected audience.

2. Indication of main message. In no more than three sentences write down as clearly as you can the primary idea you want to get across in your paper. The idea need not be, and probably should not be, very complicated. No one can absorb many different profound ideas at one sitting. If you find that you want to cram 5 or 15 major ideas into one opus, do some serious thinking about which one is really important, and save the others for another time. Ideas are cheap. Well-expressed, effectively-communicated ideas are rare as jewels.

3. Outline. Make a short outline of your paper, listing at least the basic structure or order of points you will use to get across your main message. This outline need not be elaborate or detailed, and it need not contain complete sentences. However, it should lay out clearly the general direction of your paper and the logical flow of your argument. Again, this step is important. About half of you will ignore it and write the outline last, after the paper is done. The quality of the paper will show it.

4. The paper itself. The only restriction on your paper is that it conform to the three steps listed above; that is, it should address the audience you have chosen, it should get across the main message, and it should follow your outline. Any format you feel you need to do that job is acceptable--fiction or nonfiction, poetry or prose, academic formality or colloquial dialogue. Imagination, creativity, and nonconformity will be welcomed. There will be no particular length requirement on any paper. Short papers are preferable to long ones. Above all, please do not fill the paper with high school blather just to use up space. Say only what you need to say and then stop.

It is usually easier for others to read and comment on your papers if they are typed. Typed papers also make a better subliminal psychological impression on professors. Handwritten papers will be accepted in this course, however, if they have plenty of space in the margins and between the lines for nasty comments.

LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

No excuses, please, and no exceptions. Due dates will be announced far enough in advance for you to meet them. You don't have to write the paper the night before it's due, and it will be a better paper if you don't.

Your papers will be graded on a scale from 0 to 100. The grading will be weighted as follows:

Appropriateness of language and ideas for the intended audience	10
Over-all effectiveness in communicating message	10
Clarity--general organization, logical development, paragraphing	25
clearness of language, structure of sentences and choice of effective words	25

Correctness of grammar	10
Originality, charm, passion, genius (a totally subjective judgement--a search for a "spark" of something unusual	10
Legibility	10

AN ASSURANCE AND A CHALLENGE

Note that among the requirements listed above is not the requirement that your paper be about the assigned topic. It is impossible to write well if you have nothing to say. In this course you should be writing at your best, and that is more important than that you be writing about what I dictate. If a topic doesn't turn you on, or if you really have no ideas about it, pick another topic. Write about anything at all that interests you, but write as well as you can.

You will find that this course is not only about the future and not only about writing. It is mainly about thinking for yourself. That, above all, is what I am looking for in your papers and in your class comments. You may find this emphasis difficult to deal with; much of your training so far has taught you to think what the textbook writer thinks or what the teacher thinks. It will be quite obvious in this course what the teacher thinks. You will even read one of my books. But you don't have to think what I think to get a good grade. I mean that. I will be much more impressed by a sincere attempt to question, to reason things out, to see all sides of a controversy, or even to fight it out all term, than I will by obvious flattery or obsequiousness. Use this course to challenge yourself and to experiment. Decide for yourself what thoughts you would like to explore and how you would like to explore them, and then tell me, so I can help you, or so the rest of us can explore with you.

There are no right or wrong answers in this course. There are no experts. You know as much about the future as I do. Let's learn together.