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HS 1990  Embattled Land…and Zombies
This course will explore the environmental potential for apocalyptic futures as well as the potential impact of what has become known as a “zombie apocalypse.” Clearly environmental factors have the potential for changing the ecosystem and society in which our species lives, and we as a species pose an existential threat to our world and own continuity on this planet. We will examine a plethora of scenarios in which mankind faces up to world changing “ecotastrophes,” discuss, analyze and reflect in writing.

LAS 1110  Is Capitalism Good for the Environment?
Markets are powerful. They constantly shape our modern world, and the greed of rampant capitalism carries the blame for some of the planet’s worst environmental disasters. But can capitalism play a different role in society? Can capitalism have a conscience? This course examines that very question by exploring environmental reform through the lens of market-based initiatives. Students will review organizational models that promote the double bottom line of profitability and environmental sustainability, with special attention being paid to the tensions these twin missions create. Ultimately, students will decide if markets can be successfully redirected, answering this all-important question: “Can the invisible hand of the market have a green thumb?”

LAS 1110  The Nature Principle
One of the most pressing challenges we face today is our relationship to the natural world. With more and more of our time spent in technologically mediated environments, our time in nature is seen primarily as recreational. As a result, our attentiveness to the land as a living community, and understanding our place within it, seems to be increasingly beyond our view. Using a multi-disciplinary approach this class will engage readings, documentaries, and the land itself, to better understand what it means to see ourselves as being of nature, not just in it. In doing so, we will consider whether the idea that becoming one with our machines/technologies is just another step in our evolutionary process, one that will allow us to completely transcend our very biology, placing us beyond nature in some way. We will begin, however, with a very different view. Richard Louv, author of The Nature Principle, believes that: “The more high-tech we become, the more we need Nature.” First question – What could he possibly mean?

LAS 1110  The Forest through the Trees
The students in this class will learn to become more attentive to the natural world through an examination of forests, particularly the New England forest. We will explore how humans have interacted with this forested community over the course of history and how, through a multidisciplinary approach, the forest has shaped history, human creative endeavors such as literature and art, and philosophies of nature. Students will learn how to read the forested landscape and the science of the local forest, its inhabitants and the natural processes that shape this community. We will also explore and question our own connections to the forest, how society utilizes this community and the importance of natural areas for humankind.

LAS 1110  Relationship Status: It's Complicated
This course is a philosophical look at the evolution and deconstruction of the subject/object dichotomy between humanity and nature. Through our analysis of this problem, students will engage the thought of some of the most pivotal thinkers in the history of philosophy. The course opens in Ancient Greece at the dawn of the concept of “Nature” and philosophy’s initial attempt to gain dominion over an otherwise chaotic world ruled by the Gods. Through Socrates and Plato, students will trace the early history of humanity’s separation from nature via the soul/body dichotomy. After tracing the evolution of that dichotomy through the Middle Ages and the history of Christianity, the course turns to 17th century thinker, Rene Descartes, who formalizes it as the Subject/Object dichotomy for the modern era. Finally, through Martin Heidegger in the 20th century, students will engage in an existential analysis of our being-in Nature and our rootedness in the World, finally deconstructing the Subject/Object dichotomy and restoring our forgotten relationship between humanity and nature.

LAS 1110  Communicating Nature
In The Nature Principle, author Richard Louv tells us: “The more high-tech we become, the more we need nature.” Does modern life allow us to be in tune with nature? In this high-tech world, how interdepend are we with other humans and the life supporting eco-systems around us? In Communicating Nature, author Julia B. Corbett looks to have us understand that all the message we have been fed through many forms of communication have helped to frame our view of nature. By exploring and analyzing the language used in discussions of the natural world as it streams to us from any sources: news outlets, conservation blogs and websites, poets, writer, corporate mission
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statement, documentaries, soundscape ecology, advertising images we can step back and look critically at our own beliefs. What does it mean to be “Human” within our natural world? This class looks to be a fun, dynamic, and interactive course! We need your participation to help make it great! Using a multi-disciplinary approach this class will engage readings, documentaries, and the exploration of the land itself, to better understand what it means to see ourselves as being a part of nature. To see ourselves as growing to care for the human fulfillment nature may provide. We will consider whether the idea that our rampant use of technologies has caused us to step further away from nature, further than at any other time in our evolutionary process. And is this even a concern to you?

LAS 1110  Humanity vs. Nature: Survival
Through such films as Life of Pi, Into the Wild, Wild, The 33, Everest, Room, Lord of the Flies, The Road, The Martian, Nell, and The Grey, we will endeavor to explore the relationship between our share humanity and the natural world. What do we understand about the natural world around us? Why do we seek it out? How do we survive it? And what do we learn about ourselves in the process? Students will engage in critical thinking, writing and exploration of stories that engage in humanities relationship with the outside world, or complete separation from it.

LAS 1120  Human Rights on the World Stage
The struggle for human dignity, justice, and freedom is universal and timeless; it recognizes neither cultural nor historical boundaries. From Sophocles’ Antigone to the Vanek Plays of Vaclav Havel, theatre and film artists have persistently and forcefully rebelled against tyranny, oppression, and exploitation in all their forms. These themes will be explored through a variety of films and two live theatre productions.

LAS 1120  Democratic Values in a Digitally Connected World
This course is an exploration and an interdisciplinary account of human rights as universal rights and the ways in which developing technologies can and have facilitated action, helping to reveal the inhumane and unfair practices of cultures, dictators, terrorists and their supports, worldwide. Beginning with the principles of democratic values as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the content of this course will examine the role of communication technologies in relation to the principle of free and open sharing of information, necessary for a fully functioning democratic society. Discussions will include how social media has changed how people convey ideas of religious, social, and political freedom, can help to mobilize resistance to shared injustices worldwide, and on-going attempts to control and limit a people's basic and fundamental right to know.

LAS 1120  African American Art & Civil Right
African American art is rich with history, symbolism, defiance and protest. This course will explore the ways in which art speaks to the struggle for civil rights, points to injustices, and celebrates historic events and triumphs. We will begin our study by examining the values and ideals of democratic thought along with developing a greater understanding of our governmental systems and processes. We will explore the civic environment as it relates to African American history and explore the tensions, challenges and triumphs of our democratic values and institutions as they relate to the struggle for equality from Reconstruction through today, with a special emphasis on the 1960s and 1970s.

LAS 1120  Humanity of the Inhumane
"Why do we kill people who kill people in order to show that killing people is wrong?" “The important thing is moral choice. Evil has to exist along with good, in order that moral choice may operate.” (Anthony Burgess) “A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth.” (Tim O’Brien) These are the type of questions/statements we will be discussing, dissecting and questioning as we examine how inhumane acts, ideas, and people represent an essential piece of our shared humanity. We will attempt to identify and define different characteristics of what we label as “inhumane” and in doing so come to recognize how these characteristics play a significant role in the way we, as humans, look at and experience the world. This course introduces students to a myriad of examples, each offering widely different insights into why humans are, above most everything else, inherently fascinated with—and incredibly adamant about—what we should and should not do, think and be.

LAS 1120  Game of Thrones
This course will explore the fundamental political theories that exist in our world today and throughout history. Through an examination of the hit TV series and novel, Game of Thrones, students will apply political thought to
the leadership styles of the different houses/leaders that are depicted. Students will also discuss the Declaration of Human Rights and how that is portrayed (or not) throughout the series. In addition, students will begin to relate the theories to current events.