

Prompt and Grading Rubric

Essay assignment 2: Environment and Society in Film and Television

Due Monday, February 18th, 2016

In GEO 103, we have studied the numerous and complex relationships between environment and society. **Using the concepts and perspectives covered in class, this essay assignment asks you to explore how a particular fictional television series or movie depicts the relationship between environment and society.** How is “the environment” or “nature” represented and how is it related to “society” or “civilization”? How are individuals, groups, and societies shaped by their environmental circumstances and vice versa? How might these circumstances reflect, challenge, or reproduce social and spatial inequalities?

Choose a movie or television show from the list included with this assignment (you may choose a movie or television show not listed, however, you must clear it with Professor Huber or your TA first). As you watch the movie or television series, take critical note of how issues of environment and society are represented. What role do environment and society play in the movie or television series? How does it shape the experiences of the characters and their interactions with one another and their world? How are the conditions surrounding environmental and social dynamics represented visually and through dialogue? Where is the movie or television series set, and how does geography influence the storyline and representation of the environment and society nexus?

Your paper should briefly describe the movie or television series, but we are not interested in only a simple description or summary. **Your primary assignment is to critically analyze the film or series using concepts and perspectives we have discussed in lectures, discussions, and course readings on environment and society.** Possible topics or themes include, but are not limited to: environmental justice, resources and scarcity, biodiversity, energy, environmental degradation, urban ecologies, animal geographies, the social construction of nature, colonialism and imperialism, capitalist contradictions, and others.

Be sure your paper includes the following two components:

1. A **clear and concise argument** and **roadmap paragraph** in the introduction. An argument and roadmap paragraph might read: *“In this paper, I will argue that...First, I will...Then, I will...to show how...”* Your roadmap should outline (briefly) how your paper will be structured in order for you to make your argument. Then flesh out this argument in the rest of your paper.
2. An **explicit link between your analysis of the movie/television series and course concepts and other materials** (lectures, discussions, and course readings). Show *how* concepts and perspectives from this course can be used to critically analyze your movie or television series; do not just review the plot. No outside sources are necessary but be sure to cite lectures, discussions, and course readings. You may not only want to analyze what is in the film or series, but also what is missing; what is ambiguous; what ways it “obscures” or “complicates” real political and economic relations of power.

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Scoring

This paper is worth 15% of your final grade for the semester. Papers will be evaluated by the following criteria:

Submission Standards (5 points)

Y N The paper is stapled.

Y N The paper is 4 to 5 pages.

Y N The paper is double-spaced.

Y N The paper uses a standard 12-point font and has 1 inch margins.

Y N The pages are numbered.

Y N The paper has an original and academic title.

Y N The paper includes your name and section number or day and time.

Y N The paper is properly cited. All quotations, paraphrases, lectures, and references to others' ideas are cited using the author-date system – e.g. (Huber 2013) – and include a page number if they are specific quotations or paraphrases of particular passages – e.g. (Huber 2008, 10). When citing lectures, please use the month, day, and year – e.g. (Huber 1/27/16).

Y N The paper contains a full bibliography, even if there is only one entry in it. The bibliography must maintain a standard (APA, Chicago, etc.) format for all sources.

5 4 3 2 1

Content (25 points)

How well does the paper critically analyze the movie or television series with specific details (e.g., dialogue, visual elements, character descriptions, etc.), as opposed to just describing it?

5 4 3 2 1

How well does the paper use and connect the readings and lectures/discussions to analyze the movie or television series?

5 4 3 2 1

Does the paper provide enough descriptive detail about the movie or television series so that the reader understands what is being analyzed?

5 4 3 2 1

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Mechanics

Does the paper have a clear, logical, and convincing thesis statement? Does the paper have an introduction, roadmap, and conclusion?

5 4 3 2 1

Is the paper free of typos, spelling mistakes, and grammatically incorrect sentences?

5 4 3 2 1

Total Points Possible: 30

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Possible Movies

127 Hours
2001: A Space Odyssey
The Andromeda Strain
Armageddon
Australia
Avatar
Beasts of the Southern Wild
Blood Diamond
Castaway
Children of Men
Chinatown
A Civil Action
Congo
The Constant Gardener
Dances with Wolves
Dante's Peak
The Day After Tomorrow
The Day the Earth Stood Still
Deep Impact
An Enemy of the People
Erin Brockovich
Even the Rain
Fast Food Nation
Fern Gully
Finding Nemo
Free Willy
Gattica
Gorillas in the Mist
Grizzly Man
The Grapes of Wrath
The Grey
Happy Feet
The Happening
Idiocracy
Interstellar
Into the Wild
Jarhead
Jurassic Park
Kings of Summer
Lake Placid
The Last Winter

The Lorax
Mad Max
Madagascar
Michael Clayton
Never Cry Wolf
October Sky
The Omega Man
Outbreak
Perfect Storm
Pocahontas
Promised Land
The Road
Salt of the Earth
Sharknado
Soylent Green
Syriana
There will be Blood
Twister
To Walk with the Lions
Wall-E
Waterworld
We Bought a Zoo

Possible Television Shows

Bones
Dallas
Deadwood
Enlightened
Family Guy
House of Cards
Meerkat Manor
Parks and Recreation
Pit Bulls and Parolees
Portlandia
The Simpsons
The Sopranos
South Park
Star Trek
Third Rock from the Sun
Treme
Twin Peaks