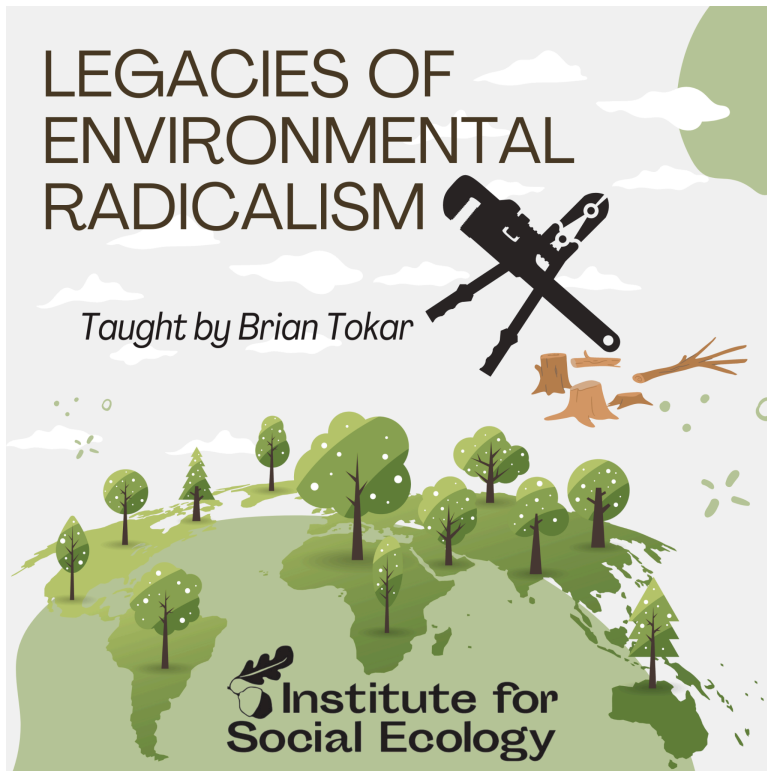


Legacies of Environmental Radicalism



Credits (available from Vermont State University): 3 Graduate or Undergraduate

Instructor: Brian Tokar, briant@pshift.com

Course Description:

Over nearly six decades, radical ecologists with widely varied outlooks and philosophies have begun to transform the field – frequently a tool of colonialism and corporate resource management in its earlier years – and developed modes of thought and action that are aimed toward the radical transformation of society. This ten-week class will examine that evolution in depth, and illustrate how social ecologists and many others have helped advance the story of environmental radicalism from the 1960s to the present. We will explore a variety of perspectives both in theory and praxis, many of which were influenced by social ecology and also helped shape its own development. We will also examine recent trends toward nihilistic and apocalyptic views in the environmental movement and how social ecology and a broadly internationalist perspective can help us reach beyond those tendencies.

Course Goals:

This course aims to offer a comprehensive overview of many philosophical and activist approaches that have shaped environmental radicalism from the 1960s to the present, such as social ecology, deep ecology, environmental justice, ecofeminism, eco-socialism, animal liberation and more. We will examine several of these perspectives in depth, drawing from both historical and contemporary sources and a wide range of unique examples. How have each of these perspectives broadened our understanding of human societies and our relationships with the natural world? What modes of thought and action have proved effective in challenging a status quo that tends to relegate ecological concerns to the margins of politics? How has mainstream environmentalism evolved in response to these radical challenges, and how can we move beyond despair in response to current ecological and political challenges?

Course Schedule:

[Please note: Several PDFs of readings contain annotations to help guide students in a version of this class offered at the University of Vermont to the "assigned" portions of various chapters. Please feel free to follow or ignore those recommendations as you wish.]

Week 1: Early environmental outlooks: From colonization to revolution

Core readings:

- Carolyn Merchant, "Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History," *Environmental History* Vol. 8 (2003)
- Brian Tokar, "Ecology and Revolution," from *Earth for Sale* (1997)

Additional readings:

- Murray Bookchin, "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought" (1964, from *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*)
- Excerpt from Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*

Week 2: The outlook and contributions of social ecology

Core readings:

- Dan Chodorkoff, "Social Ecology: An Ecological Humanism," from *The Anthropology of Utopia*
- Brian Tokar, "On Bookchin's Social Ecology and its Contributions to Social Movements," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* (2007)

Additional readings:

- Murray Bookchin, "What is Social Ecology?" from *The Modern Crisis*
- Murray Bookchin, "Libertarian Municipalism: A Politics of Direct Democracy," and "The Meaning of Confederation," from *The Next Revolution*
- Debbie Bookchin, "How My Father's Ideas Helped the Kurds Create a New Democracy," *New York Review of Books*, June 2018
- Chaia Heller, "Illustrative Opposition," from *The Ecology of Everyday Life*

Week 3: Ecofeminism and environmental justice

Core readings:

- Ynestra King, "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology," from J. Plant, ed., *Healing the Wounds*
- Asmae Ourkiya, "Queering Ecofeminism: Towards an Anti-Far-Right Environmentalism," *Network in Canadian History & Environment* (2020)
- Laura Pulido, "Geographies of race and ethnicity: Environmental racism, racial capitalism and state-sanctioned violence," *Progress in Human Geography* 41(4): 524-533 (2017)

Additional readings:

- Noël Sturgeon, "Ecofeminist Movements," from C. Merchant, ed., *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory*, 2nd edition
- Bina Agarwal, "The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India," *Feminist Studies*, Spring 1992, especially pp. 119-127 and 145-153
- "The Negative Effects of Chemical Contamination," and "The Eyes and Ears of the Community," from Chad Montrie, *The Myth of Silent Spring: Rethinking the Origins of American Environmentalism*
- Julie Sze, "Environmental Justice Encounters," from *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*
- Ashley Dawson, "Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor: An Interview with Rob Nixon," from *Social Text* online, August 2011

- Robert Bullard, "Environmental Justice in the 21st Century," from R. Bullard, ed., *The Quest for Environmental Justice*

Week 4: Ecosocialism and ecological Marxism

Core readings:

- Ian Angus, "Ecosocialism and Human Solidarity," from *Facing the Anthropocene*
- John Bellamy Foster, "Marx and the Rift in the Universal Metabolism of Nature," *Monthly Review* December 2013

Additional readings:

- Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams, "Living in an Ecological Society," from *Creating an Ecological Society: Toward a revolutionary transformation*
- More from J.B. Foster on Ecology and Marxism:
<https://monthlyreview.org/2023/06/01/engels-and-the-second-foundation-of-marxism/>;
<http://monthlyreview.org/2012/12/01/the-planetary-emergency>;
<https://monthlyreview.org/2014/12/01/paul-burketts-marx-and-nature-fifteen-years-after>. The first of these is mainly theoretical and historical; the second starts with current ecological science and is a rare instance where Foster briefly acknowledged Murray Bookchin's contributions; the third is Foster at his most polemical, attacking "first-stage" ecosocialists who held a more skeptical view toward Marx and ecology.
- Andreas Malm, "For a Fallible and Lovable Marx: Some Thoughts on the Latest Book by Foster and Burkett," *Critical Historical Studies*, Fall 2017
- Kohei Saito, "Marx's Ecological Notebooks" (On ecological outlooks from Marx's personal notebooks): <https://monthlyreview.org/2016/02/01/marxs-ecological-notebooks>

Week 5: Animal rights and animal liberation

Core readings:

- Josephine Donovan, "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory," from G. Gaard, ed., *Ecofeminism*
- Dayton Martindale, "The Social Ecological Case for Animal Liberation: Towards an Interspecies Communalism," *Harbinger: A Journal of Social Ecology*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2019)

Additional readings:

- Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal," from M. Zimmerman, ed., *Environmental Philosophy*
- Tom Regan, "The Struggle for Animal Rights," from A. Linzey & P.B. Clark, eds., *Animal Rights*
- L. Schleifer and D. Fischer, "Animal Liberation is Climate Justice," *New Politics* 18:4 (2022)

Week 6: The rise of environmental direct action

Core readings:

- Paul Wapner, "In Defense of Banner Hangers: The Dark Green Politics of Greenpeace," from Bron Taylor, ed., *Ecological Resistance Movements*
- Keith Makoto Woodhouse, "Direct Action" and "Redwood Summer," from *The Ecocentrists: A History of Radical Environmentalism*
- Judi Bari, "The Feminization of Earth First!," from *Timber Wars*

Additional readings:

- Ric Scarce, "Earth First!: Cracking the Mold," from *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement*
- Judi Bari, "Revolutionary Ecology: Biocentrism & Deep Ecology," Mendocino Environmental Center, 1997
- Andreas Malm, "When Does the Fightback Begin?" from versobooks.com, May 2021

Week 7: What is deep ecology, actually?

Core readings:

- Bill Devall and George Sessions, "Deep Ecology," from *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*
- Joanna Macy, "Awakening to the Ecological Self," from Judith Plant, ed., *Healing the Wounds*
- Ramachandra Guha, "Radical Environmentalism: A Third World Critique," from C. Merchant, ed., *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory*, First edition

Additional readings:

- Thomas Berry, "Human Presence," from *The Dream of the Earth*
- Bill Devall, "The Ecological Self," from A. Drengson & Y. Inoue, *The Deep Ecology Movement*
- Dave Foreman, "Putting the Earth First," from J. Dryzek & D. Schlosberg, eds., *Debating the Earth*

Week 8: Eco-nihilism: Sabotage, anti-civilization and state repression

Core readings:

- Noel Molland, "A Spark that Ignited a Flame: The Evolution of the Earth Liberation Front," from S. Best & A. Nocella, eds., *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth*
- P. Kingsnorth & D. Hine, "Uncivilization: The Dark Mountain Manifesto," from dark-mountain.net
- Articles on the roots of ecofascism by Bernard Forchtner and Susie Cagle from *Open Democracy* and *The Guardian*
- Elizabeth King, "The New Green Scare," *The Progressive* (October 2019)

Additional readings:

- John Zerzan, "Future Primitive," from *primitivism.com*
- Will Potter, "Naming Names," and "Red-Baiting," from *Green is the New Red: An Insider's Account of a Social Movement Under Siege* (+ brief addenda)
- Randall Amster, "Perspectives on Ecoterrorism: Catalysts, Conflations, and Casualties," *Contemporary Justice Review*, Sept. 2006
- Video: *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, at youtube.com/watch?v=qwQoi0DoOKM

Week 9: Critical international perspectives

Core readings:

- Philip McMichael, "The Development Project," from *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary* (A. Kothari, et al., eds.)
- Ivan Illich, "Development as Planned Poverty," from M. Rahnema, ed., *The Post-Development Reader*
- Malcolm Ferdinand, "A Decolonial Ecology: Rising Up from the Hold," from *Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World*

Additional readings:

- Gustavo Esteva, "A Path to Freedom," from *Radical Ecological Democracy* (2017)
- Vandana Shiva, "Development, Ecology and Women," from *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*
- Larry Lohmann, "Visitors to the Commons," from B. Taylor, ed., *Ecological Resistance Movements*

Week 10: Is an ecological future still possible?

Core readings:

- David Graeber, "Hope in Common," from *Revolutions in Reverse*

- Ole Martin Sandberg, "Climate Disruption, Political Stability, and Collective Imagination," *Radical Philosophy Review* (2020)

Additional readings:

- David Graeber, "The Shock of Victory," from *Revolutions in Reverse*
- Brian Tokar, "On Utopian Aspirations in the Climate Movement," from *Toward Climate Justice: Perspectives on the Climate Crisis and Social Change*
- *Inhabit: Instructions for Autonomy*, from *Inhabit.global*

Some further recommended readings:

Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*

Chad Montrie, *A People's History of Environmentalism in the United States*

Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*

L. A. Kauffman, *Direct Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism*

Douglas Bevington, *The Rebirth of Environmentalism*

Robert Bullard, ed., *The Quest for Environmental Justice, Confronting Environmental Racism, Unequal Protection, Dumping in Dixie*

Irene Diamond & Gloria Orenstein, eds., *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*

Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (Updated in 2023 as *Animal Liberation Now*)

Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*

Frank Zelko, *Make it a Green Peace: The Rise of Countercultural Environmentalism*

Darren Speece, *Defending Giants: The Redwood Wars & the Transformation of Environmental Politics*

Steven Best & Anthony Nocella: "Behind the Mask: Uncovering the Animal Liberation Front" (online)

Tom Mertes, ed., *A Movement of Movements*

Andreas Malm, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*

Information for those seeking credit through Vermont State University:

Course Code: EDU 5515 C21 / EDU 4515 C02

Expectation: Students enrolled in this course will complete a series of activities, readings, and reflections before, during and/or after any scheduled face-to-face or synchronous sessions. This will assure that Carnegie expectations for a credited course, both new learning and hours of outside preparation, are sufficiently met.

Course Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Critically examine the emergence of a variety of radical environmental tendencies, in both their philosophies and modes of action.
- Understand the historical evolution of radical environmentalisms, and how they have drawn upon each other's strengths and critiqued each other's shortcomings.
- Examine the potential for a future-oriented ecological outlook that reaches beyond the limitations of contemporary politics and the pessimistic predictions of many environmental scientists.

Course Assignments:

The course entails an average of nine hours of weekly engagement, consisting of the following elements: (1) attending a weekly 1.5-hour online lecture/webinar over the course of ten weeks, (2) participating actively in online discussion forums and/or submitting weekly commentaries on the course material, and (3) developing and submitting a final paper/project. Students are expected to keep up with assigned readings and view any related multimedia content. Engagement with course content will be demonstrated through weekly participation in class discussions and online forums and commentaries.

Projects:

In consultation with the instructor, students will design their own final project that integrates theory and knowledge from the course with real-world engagement and action. This will culminate in both a student-designed activity or project and 10-12-page research and reflection paper. Examples of projects include participating in and critically reflecting upon ongoing local activism or advocacy work; applying social-ecological principles to a relevant community project; creating and offering a multimedia presentation that elaborates themes from the class; or developing a wholly unique project that reflects your own inspirations and creativity. This assignment aims to foster your ability to use theory as a lens to ground personal action and transformation, reflecting upon how your own personal history and experience resonate within larger social, economic, political and ecological contexts.

Completion of this project includes a critical reflection and research paper that is due 2 weeks following the end of the VSU semester. The paper will summarize what you have accomplished and learned through the project, and draw upon insights and analysis from the course readings. It should be accurately referenced (using any accepted and consistent format), using a mix of materials from our class readings and your own research materials. This paper will be evaluated by ISE faculty and given careful feedback from the instructor.

Course Evaluation & Grading:

Students will be assessed according to their participation, papers, and work projects, based on the following evaluation guidelines: the ability to think analytically, express ideas effectively through written and communication, exchange ideas effectively through oral communication, bring innovation to their work, envisage and work independently on a project, and to accept and act on criticism. Good papers take time and come in drafts, so start early and ask a friend or colleague to read it – your final project in particular. Research librarians are an excellent resource to help get you started, as is the VSU writing center. Plagiarism is counterproductive and you'll get caught. Here are some tips on how to avoid it: <https://www1.chapman.edu/~babbie/plag00.html>.

If you're stuck or pressed for time ask for help or an extension. Lastly, we recommend checking out this useful short article on active reading strategies that can help you more efficiently identify the main arguments and key evidence in sometimes dense academic texts:

<http://blogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/permanent-features-advice-on-academia/how-to-read-in-college/>.

Vermont State University Academic Policies

Grading Policy:

Grades are indicated by letters with a designated "quality point" value assigned to each as follows:

A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3

A grade of **B- or better** must be achieved to count this course toward a graduate degree at VTSU. For questions on transfer pathways, please contact your contact within VTSU's Department of Education. Additional grading information can be found in the VTSU Graduate Catalog under Academic Policies, Credits & Grading: <https://catalog.vermontstate.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=119>

Academic Honesty Policy

Vermont State University upholds high standards of academic integrity from all community members. Academic integrity encompasses honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and the courage to act on these fundamental values (International Center for Academic Integrity [ICAI], 2021; The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 3rd ed.). A student who fails to uphold these values may experience academic consequences including a grade of F, indicating no credit, for assignments or courses, or dismissal from the University. Examples of failure to uphold academic integrity may include using unauthorized aids to complete or enhance academic work, copying another person's work on exams, quizzes, or assignments, or engaging in other forms of plagiarism. To plagiarize is to use someone else's words or ideas without full and proper citation and to present them as one's own. The sharing of VTSU password and login credentials to misrepresent oneself in online learning is a violation of academic integrity. Violations need not be intentional in nature. All members of the VTSU community are expected to investigate and understand their responsibility to act with integrity, and to seek assistance when uncertain. For more information, please see the VTSU Graduate Catalog Academic Integrity Policy: <https://catalog.vermontstate.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=119#academic-integrity>

Use and Ownership of Copyrighted Materials

For information and guidance, faculty and students are referred to the Vermont State Colleges Manual of Policy and Procedures annual disclosure regarding illegal file sharing and the Higher Education Opportunity Act, accessible online at the following address: <https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/VSC-Annual-Notice.pdf>

Accommodations

It is the policy of Vermont State University to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and any other applicable federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. The university is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities so that no such student shall, by reason of disability, be excluded from participating in or be denied the benefits of services programs or activities at the university. More information is available at <https://vermontstate.edu/academics/student-success/disability-services/>.

Course Drop Policy:

Vermont State University offers courses to educators with the expectation that participants will complete the course. However, the University realizes circumstances arise in one's personal life that may cause disruptions. **The policy for dropping a course is that a participant will notify the instructor in writing of the intent to withdraw from the course. The withdrawal notice should be made within the first week of the course and should include the reason for withdrawing.** After week one, changes in class status will be considered for health, bereavement, and personal or emergency situations only. Those who withdraw without adhering to this policy may receive a failing grade on their transcript and/or be liable for associated course costs. Please direct any drop requests and questions for this course to the VtSU Center for Schools, cfs@castleton.edu

Transcript Request:

www.castleton.edu/transcripts

Please direct transcript request questions to registrar@vermontstate.edu.