

## **A DELICATE BALANCE**

ELA 4000, SPRING 2006

MR 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

<b>Instructor:</b>	<b>Office:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Classroom:</b>
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**Course website (check here for updates to course materials)**

<http://campus.greenmtn.edu/faculty/gregbrown/ELA4000/ela4000SP06.htm>

**Office Hours :** Mon. 12:30-1:30 pm; Tue.12-1:45 pm; Thur. 12:30-1:30 pm; or by appointment.

### **Course Overview:**

*A Delicate Balance* is the “capstone” course of your general education program. In *Images of Nature*, we looked at literary images of nature and examined how peoples in different cultures and times viewed nature. In *Dimensions of Nature*, we read about the history of scientific thought and learned how people in different times and cultures measured nature. In *A Delicate Balance*, we will examine several contemporary complex environmental issues that tend to be global in scope in an effort to get a feel for the “delicate balance” it takes to address these concerns. Specifically, we will attempt to understand these issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives in an effort to better understand how humans relate to nature. The course will place an emphasis on the role of the social sciences in helping to develop policy remedies to address these pressing environmental concerns.

*A Delicate Balance* is a seminar; a group of students, guided by the instructor, engaged in scholarly discussion and research. Throughout the semester, we will listen to a series of presentations from individuals with knowledge or expertise in a variety of environmental topics. We will meet to discuss and debate the ideas they present, as well as the content of the readings related to each presentation. In addition, students will conduct research on each topic to provide the class with a broader understanding of the issues presented.

Student research will be emphasized throughout the semester. Each student will complete a research project investigating an environmental issue of interest to him or her. Whatever topic you choose, you should conceive of the project as the culmination and expression of your personal interest and involvement with the environmental mission of Green Mountain College. Your project should demonstrate the skills you have acquired during your college career to this point, and should become a permanent part of your portfolio, which you could show to prospective employers or graduate school admission committees.

### **Course Objectives**

- To develop your understanding of the role that social scientists and policy makers play in addressing contemporary environmental problems.

- To develop your public speaking skills.
- To refine your ability to understand and critically assess complex readings as learned in *Dimensions*
- To refine and enhance your ability to listen, question, and discuss as learned in *Images, Voices* and *Dimensions*.
- To refine and enhance your ability to write and research independently as learned in *Voices*.

### **Description of Course Requirements:**

1. Throughout the semester, you must prepare two-to-three page topic précis addressing the issues raised by the invited speakers. Each topic précis is a summary and critical analysis of the issues raised by the speakers. A separate handout will be provided with detailed instructions and expectations for the topic précis.
2. Three one-to-two-page analyses of articles used in the literature search you're your semester paper. The analysis will summarize the article's main points and describe the relevance to the student's proposed research project. A separate handout will be provided with detailed instructions and expectations for the article analyses.
3. The senior capstone project must include an oral presentation. Your oral presentation will be scheduled between November 28 and December 8. A separate handout will be provided with detailed instructions and expectations for the research project.
4. Class participation is an important and required feature of *A Delicate Balance*, and will constitute 15% of your final grade for the course.

### ***Summary:***

15% Three Analyses of Journal Articles (due 2/16, 2/23, 3/2)

25% Four Topic Précis of the Speakers (due beginning of class following the talk)

5% Project Proposal (Week 4)

5% Full Bibliography and Outline (Week 8)

5% Full Draft for Peer Review in hard copy (Week 12)

10% Project Presentation (Weeks 14, 15 & Final exam period F 5/5 10:30-12:30)

25% Project Paper (due 4/24)

10% Participation and attendance

**\*\*No late work will be accepted\*\***

**Class Etiquette:** A class is not the equivalent of a television program. It is a professional performance staged for the benefit of active participants, and as such, it demands a certain amount of formality from all concerned. This means that you should arrive on time, and not distract the professor or your classmates by coming in after the class has already begun. If you need to use a restroom, eat, or get a can of soda or cup of coffee, do so either before or after class, but do not leave the classroom to do so (exceptions to this general rule, of course, apply in case of illness). Do not read the newspaper or a textbook for another class while you attend mine. Sleeping in class is either a sign of illness or extreme fatigue, in which case you should be in bed; or a gesture of complete indifference, in which case you should not be enrolled in the course.

**Note:** All the speakers will present their talks in the East Room of Withey Hall to the combined sections of Delicate Balance.

### Class Schedule

**Week #1:** Jan. 19

- Course introduction; Intro to research methods

**Week #2:** Jan. 23, 26

- Research topic & methods discussion
- Library resource presentation (meet in Griswold 01).

**Week #3:** Jan. 30, Feb. 2

- Monday 1/30: Topic #1: Educating for Environmental Virtues, William Throop (Withey East Room)
- Thursday: Class discussion of presentation. **Précis #1** is due.

**Week #4:** Feb. 6, 9

- Monday: Discussion of research topics.
- Thursday: Research proposals are due.

**Project Proposal Due (Mon. Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>)**

**Week #5:** Feb. 13, 16

- Monday: Research Skills.
- Thursday: Research Skills.

**Journal Article Analysis #1 Due (Thurs. Feb. 16)**

**Week #6:** Feb. 20, 23

- Monday 2/20: Topic #2- Environmental Health: Malaria & DDT in Developing Countries, Nancy Nichols (Withey East Room)
- Thursday: Class discussion of presentation. Précis #2 is due

**Journal Article Analysis #2 Due (Thurs. Feb. 23)**

**Week #7:** Feb. 27, Mar. 2

- Monday: Research & Presentation Skills
- Thursday: Research & Presentation Skills

**Journal Article Analysis #3 Due (Thurs. Mar. 2)**

**Spring break Mar 6-10** (our class resumes Mar. 13th)

**Week #8:** Mar. 13, 16

- Monday 3/13: Topic #3– A Local Perspective on Global Water Commodification, Annette Smith (Withey East Room)
- Thursday: Discussion of presentation. Précis #3 is due.

**Week #9:** Mar. 20, 23

- Monday: Research & Presentation Skills
- Thursday: Research & Presentation Skills

**Bibliography and Outline Due (Thurs Mar. 23)**

**Week #10:** Mar. 27, 30

- Monday 3/27: Topic #4: Fire Management on Public Lands, Kathy Doyle & Ron Steffens (Withey East Room)
- Thursday: Discussion of presentation. Précis #4 is due.

**Week #11:** Apr. 3, 6

- Monday: Research discussions, scheduled interviews, library work.
- Thursday: Research discussions, scheduled interviews, library work.

**Week #12:** Apr. 10, 13

- Monday: Research discussions, scheduled interviews, library work.
- Final Project Overview & Discussion (evaluations, assessment)

**Full Draft Due for Peer Review (Mon. April 10)**

**Week #13:** Apr. 17, 20 No class on 17th (Easter Break)

- Monday: No class on 17<sup>th</sup>
- Presentations

**Week #14:** Apr. 24, 27 Presentations

**Final Paper Due in Class (Monday April 24<sup>th</sup>)**

**Week #15:** May 1 Presentations

**Final Exam:** May 5, Fri, 10:30-12:30 Presentations, Course Evaluation