

## **A DELICATE BALANCE**

ELA 4000, FALL 2005

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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**Office Hours :** Mon. 1-3 pm; Tue.12-1:45 pm; Thur. 1-3 pm; or by appointment.

### **Course Overview:**

*A Delicate Balance* is the capstone course of your general education program. In *Images of Nature* and *Dimensions of Nature* we examined literary views of nature and the history of scientific thought about nature. Here, we will examine a number of contemporary environmental issues that tend to be global in scope. Specifically, we will attempt to examine these issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives in an effort to better understand how humans relate to nature. The focus of the course will therefore encourage discussion and analyses from the social sciences, physical sciences and humanities. The ultimate purpose will be to find creative and effective ways of informing public policy in order 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, 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 scholars and policy makers play in addressing contemporary environmental problems.
- ? To develop your ability to listen, question, and discuss.
- ? To develop your ability to write and research independently.
- ? to refine and enhance your research, writing, and public speaking skills.

## Description of Course Requirements:

1. Throughout the semester, you must prepare two-to-three page topic précis addressing the issues raised by the seven invited speakers. Each topic précis is a summary and critical discussion of the issues raised by the seven speakers, with only six of the submitted memos counting toward a grade. A separate handout will be provided with detailed instructions and expectations for the topic précis.
2. Three one-to-two-page synopses (article analyses) of articles used in the literature search for the semester paper. The synopsis will summarize the article's main points and describe the relevance to the thesis of the semester paper. A separate handout will be provided with detailed instructions and expectations for the synopses.
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 (synopses)

25% Six Topic Précis of the Speakers' assigned articles

10% Project Proposal (Week 5)

Full Bibliography and Outline (Week 10)

Full Draft for Peer Review in hard copy (Week 13)

10% Project Presentation

25% Project Paper

15% Participation

**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.

## Class Schedule

**Week #1:** Aug. 29, Sept. 1

- Course introduction; library resource presentation

**Week #2:** Sept. 5, 8

- Library resource presentation continued, Research topic & methods discussion
- Assignment: **Précis #1** on assigned article is due Thursday.

**Week #3:** Sept. 12, 15

- Monday: **Topic #1** – Speaker: Dr. Dafydd Roberts. “...TBA on slate quarries and cultural conservation ...”
- Thursday: Class discussion of Roberts’ presentation. **Précis #2** is due.

**Week #4:** Sept. 19, 22

- Monday: **Topic #2** – Speaker: Prof. Jacob Park. “Biodiversity and the Global Marketplace”.
- Thursday: Class discussion of Park’s presentation. **Précis #3** is due. **First Synopsis** on outside article due.

**Week #5:** Sept. 26, 29

- Monday: **Topic #3** – Speaker: Dr. Conrad Reining. “The Northern Appaliachians Wildlands Project”
- Thursday: Class discussion of Dr. Reining’s presentation. **Précis #4** is due.

**Project Proposal Due (Thurs. Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>)**

**Week #6:** Oct. 3, 6

- Monday: **Topic #7** - Speaker: Prof. Rebecca Purdom. "Future of the Endangered Species Act"
- Thursday: Discussion of Prof. Purdom's presentation.

**Mid-term break** (our class resumes Oct. 13th)

**Week #7:** Oct. 13

- Thursday: Discussion of state of the students' research. **Précis #5** is due. .

**Week #8:** Oct. 17, 20

- Monday: **Topic #5** – Speaker: Prof. Linda Weintraub. “Art as a Catalyst for Environmental Reform”
- Thursday: Discussion of Prof. Weintraub's presentation. **Précis #6** is due.

**Week #9:** Oct. 24, 27

- Monday: Discussion of state of students' research. **Second Synopsis** due on outside article.
- Wednesday: **Topic #6** -- Speaker: Adam Werbach, conservationist and former Sierra Club president. 7 p.m. at Castleton State College gym. Transportation will be provided.
- Thursday: Discussion of Werbach's presentation. **Précis #7** is due.

**Week #10:** Oct. 31, Nov. 3

- Monday: **Topic #7** - Speaker: Prof. Robert (Bob) Manning. “Solitude Among the Multitude: How Many is Too Many in the National Parks?”
- Thursday: Discussion of Prof Manning' presentation. **Third Synopsis** due on outside article

**Bibliography and Outline Due (Mon, Oct. 31)**

**Week #11:** Nov. 7, 10

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

**Week #12:** Nov. 14, 17      Final Project Overview & Discussion (evaluations, assessment)

**Week #13:** Nov. 21    **Full Draft Due for Peer Review (Mon., Nov. 21st)**

### **Thanksgiving holiday**

**Week #14:** Nov. 28, Dec. 1                      Presentations

**Week #15:** Dec. 5, 8                              Presentations

### **Final Paper Due in Class (Monday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>)**

**Final Exam: Dec. 12, Mon, 10:30-12:30**                      Presentations, Course Wrap-up