

Environmental Communication

During the last half of the Twentieth Century American political culture has been marked by a steady rise in environmental consciousness. While prior generations largely viewed the world around them as a collection of resources to use and exploit, ethical and pragmatic issues of sustainability now create a counterpoint to this view. This class will explore the complex web of governmental, advocacy group and corporate interests that shape how we see the environment. By studying the environment as a product of ideological discourse, we come to understand how our perception of the natural world is defined by this discourse. In recent years this political contest has been framed as a tension between globalism and local sovereignty. As more and more people across the globe move toward a consumer model that taxes natural resources, the discourse of environmentalism becomes even more significant to future generations. Here are some of the goals that we will address during the course of the semester:

- Understand the historical evolution of environmental consciousness
- Explore how the environment has been manipulated as a symbolic construct
- Examine the contest between environmental and corporate interests
- Understand the role of communication in environmental debates
- Develop a knowledge of research in the field of environmental communication