

Sample Syllabus

COLT 70.08 [crosslist with SPAN/LACS/FILM]

Professor Martina Broner

martina.broner@dartmouth.edu

Fall 2025, TTh 10:10-12:00, X-Hour F 3:30-4:20

Distributive: ART



Media and Environment

Patricia Domínguez, from *Matrix Vegetal*, 2022

At a time of increasing reliance on technology to enhance and even transform the environment, how do media shape our perception of the world around us? This course introduces students to environmental media studies methods and concepts through a focus on contemporary Latin America. As we work comparatively across a range of media—including film, photography, visual art, and virtual reality—we will consider the specific ways in which each can reveal or reformulate conceptions of the environment. Among key topics, we will discuss the stakes of defining nature as media, the ecological materiality of media formats, and the role of environmentalist media in present-day Latin America. The course culminates in a project that asks students to simultaneously analyze and create media. Conducted in English; no previous media experience required.

Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will:

- become acquainted with media studies concepts and methods
- practice textual analysis across various media formats
- gain exposure to a range of environmental media from 21st century Latin America
- develop an understanding of key environmental questions in contemporary Latin America

Teaching Approach

This seminar-style course will be structured around discussions in which students actively participate. Although you will generally view films and other media outside of class, we will use clips and images to organize our conversations. This format welcomes students who have previously taken film, media, or visual studies courses as well as those for whom analyzing these kinds of objects is a new skill. Discussions will emphasize collaborative thinking, and in-class writing exercises will provide informal opportunities to generate new ideas. Our multi-sited approach to environmental humanities questions, grounded in methods from the field of comparative literature, will address a range of Latin American geographies while aiming for depth rather than coverage. That is, we will focus on fewer objects and think about them more carefully, contextualizing them and considering their specificity.

Participation

Participation is essential to your success in this seminar, which is structured around the notion of co-creation of knowledge, and you are expected to come to our sessions prepared to actively contribute to discussions. Assignments will guide you in this task.

Assignments

A number of exercises, which are graded complete/incomplete, will prepare you to participate in class discussions and provide opportunities for reflection. These include, but are not limited to two modalities:

1) Annotated Screen Captures

When we view a film, you will choose a meaningful image from it and upload a screen capture to Canvas. A sentence explaining why you selected it will accompany the image.

2) Discussion Questions

You will write analytical questions that show that you have thoughtfully read critical texts. We will use these to structure in-class writing exercises and draw on them for discussions.

Each student may choose to skip one assignment over the course of the term.

In-Class Essay

This alternative to a midterm exam asks you to write for an hour in response to a question, with the support of notes you have prepared in advance.

Essay

In this 4-page essay, you will work comparatively with two of the media objects in the course and incorporate critical readings.

Media Project

The course culminates in a project that employs the analytical tools we will develop throughout the term to reflect on the relationship between media and environment. You may work individually or in teams of 2-3 students to produce a media object of your choosing that analytically and creatively answers two key questions from the course in regard to one of the objects we have studied:

How does it construct an environment?

What does this environment ask of me?

Responding to these questions will entail engaging in research and developing an appropriate methodology. The project consists of three steps whose objective is to provide you with feedback throughout the process of completing your project:

1) Proposal

A one-page proposal that formulates your initial idea and includes a preliminary bibliography. This step is graded complete/incomplete, and you will workshop your proposal in class.

2) Methodological Presentation

Structured around images, your presentation will introduce your approach to the project and outline how it incorporates your research.

3) Media Object and Curatorial Statement

You may produce any type of media we have studied, such as a video, a series of photographs, or visual art. A curatorial statement will accompany it to present its aims to viewers/spectators.

Grading breakdown

Participation	15%
Assignments	15%
In-class essay	15%
Essay	15%
Project Proposal	5%
Methodological Presentation	15%
Media Object and Curatorial Statement	20%

Grading Scale

A	94.5 - 100	A-	89.5 - 94.49		
B+	86.5 - 89.49	B	83.5 - 86.49	B-	79.5 - 83.49

C+ 76.5 – 79.49

C 73.5 – 76.49

C- 69.5 – 73.49

Expectations

Class climate

Inclusion will be the priority in each of our meetings. We will treat each other with respect and engage everyone's ideas with care, and I will ask for your input about generating an inclusive classroom experience.

Attentive Viewing and Technology

This course demands you view media and read with attention and focus, while consciously eliminating distractions. While computers and tablets are allowed in class, using a device for any activity not related to the course will result in an immediate reduction of your participation grade.

Generative AI

While you may use ChatGPT and other AI generators as research tools, you must not present their work as your own. This will be considered plagiarism. If you choose to use these tools, you must include proper citations and be aware of their limitations, including biases.

Attendance and Buddy System

Each student will get one “free” unexcused absence, and there is no need to notify me if you decide to use it. Each unexcused absence beyond this one will result in a 1-point reduction of your final grade. During the first week, you will be in touch with a classmate who will be your contact person in the case of an absence. This buddy system is meant to build community and encourage collective responsibility. If you are experiencing an illness but feel well enough to attend class remotely, reach out to your buddy. They will help you be present through their phone, computer, or tablet. In this case, you do not need to let me know that you will not attend in person, since I will see you remotely. If you do not feel well enough to attend class virtually, let me know. We will make sure you do not fall behind; please stay in touch if problems of any kind arise.

Office Hours and Communication

I encourage you to stop by my office hours and to contact me if you are unavailable during those times so we can coordinate a meeting. There is no need to schedule an appointment during my office hours; you can simply meet with me on Tuesdays from 12:15 to 1:15 pm at 205 Dartmouth Hall. I also encourage you to contact me any time via email with questions or comments—I generally respond to messages within 48 hours. We will include time in each of our sessions to address any questions or concerns about the course, assignments, and materials.

X-Hours

We may use X-hours to schedule meetings or for any other needs that arise during the term. I expect you to keep this time open each week.

Deadlines and Extensions

Although deadlines for the three components of the final project are firm, each student has the right to take a 2-day extension on any of the other work for the course. You may also choose to take two separate one-day extensions for different assignments. You do not need to let me know in advance if you decide to use any of these extensions.

Course Materials and Financial Difficulty

While one of our films is on Netflix, all other materials will be available on Canvas. This course should not pose a financial challenge for you in any way—please do not hesitate to let me know if it does.

Learning Resources

You may want to take advantage of learning resources such as the Academic Skills Center (<https://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/>). I can help you locate any other resources you may need.

Other Policies and Statements

Diversity and inclusion statement

I would like to create a learning environment for students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this: if you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official records; if you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class; or if something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please let me know or anonymously send a written message to me through Hinman Mail at HB 6072.

Student Accessibility and Accommodations

Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Apply for Services webpage](#); student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its [Testing Center](#) may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Statement on Mental Health

The academic environment is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including: the [Counseling Center](#), which allows you to book triage appointments online, the [Student Wellness Center](#) which offers wellness check-ins, and your [undergraduate dean](#). The student-led [Dartmouth Student Mental Health Union](#) and their peer support program may be helpful if you would like to speak to a trained fellow student support listener. If you need immediate assistance, please contact the counselor on-call at (603) 646-9442 at any time. Please make me aware of anything that will hinder your success in this course.

Religious Observances

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Academic Honor Principle

The Academic Honor Principle depends on the willingness of students to maintain and perpetuate standards of academic honesty. Students may not ask anyone other than the professor of their course to correct written work for this course. Students may not use AI to draft their assignments. Students must rely on their judgment and conscience to determine whether a specific question might be addressed to a classmate or a friend, but in any case, such aid must be minimal, occasional, and acknowledged. Outside proofreading/correcting changes the student's work, gives the professor an inaccurate idea of the student's skills, and as such violates the Dartmouth College honor principle. You are also expected to familiarize yourself with [what constitutes plagiarism and to cite sources properly](#). As a Dartmouth Student you are required to comply with the [Academic Honor Principle](#).

Dartmouth's Anti-Hazing Policy

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese is a firm supporter of Dartmouth's Anti-Hazing Policy. We reject hazing in all of its manifestations. In order to promote a safe environment for all students and not interrupt the learning experience at Dartmouth College, evidence of hazing-related practices, as defined by the Dartmouth College Anti-Hazing Policy, will not be considered appropriate in the classroom, virtual or otherwise.

Title IX

At Dartmouth, we value integrity, responsibility, and respect for the rights and interests of others, all central to our Principles of Community. We are dedicated to establishing and maintaining a safe and inclusive campus where all have equal access to the educational and employment opportunities Dartmouth offers. We strive to promote an environment of sexual respect, safety, and well-being. In its policies and standards, Dartmouth demonstrates unequivocally that sexual assault, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating

violence, and stalking are not tolerated in our community. The [Sexual Respect Website](#) at Dartmouth provides a wealth of information on your rights with regard to sexual respect and resources that are available to all in our community. Please note that, as a faculty member, I am obligated to share disclosures regarding conduct under Title IX with Dartmouth's Title IX Coordinator. Confidential resources are also available, and include licensed medical or counseling professionals (e.g., a licensed psychologist), staff members of organizations recognized as rape crisis centers under state law (such as WISE), and ordained clergy (see https://dartgo.org/titleix_resources). Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dartmouth's Title IX Coordinator or the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for the Guarini School. Their contact information can be found on the [Sexual Respect website](#).

Course Schedule

Please check Canvas regularly for any modifications.

Week 1: Mediating Environments

- 9/16 Course introduction
"Unselfie" exercise
- 9/18 Denilson Baniwa, *Colheita Maldita (Children of the Corn)*, (2022)
Jamille Pinheiro Dias, "Environmental Thinking and Indigenous Arts in Brazil Today"
Raymond Williams, "Media" and "Mediation" in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*

Week 2: Nature as Media

- 9/23 Roberto Huarcaya, images from *Amazogramas* (2014)
John Durham Peters, from *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*
André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image"
- 9/25 Suwon Lee, images from *Crepuscular* (2011)
Walter Benjamin, "A Little History of Photography"
James Nisbet, "Atmospheric Cameras and Ecological Light in the Landscapes of Eadweard Muybridge"

Week 3: Reframing Landscape

- 9/30 *Distancia de rescate (Fever Dream)*, dir. Claudia Llosa, (2021)
Jens Andermann, from *Entranced Earth: Art, Extractivism, and the End of Landscape*

- 10/2 Debashree Mukherjee, "The Aesthetic and Material Force of Landscape in Cinema: Mediating Meaning from the Scene of Production"
 Ashley Brock, "The Ethnographic Pastoral Re-imagined: Embodiment and Inhabitation in *Aboio* and *Sweetgrass*"
 → In-class essay

Week 4: Liquid Technologies

- 10/7 Seba Calfuqueo, *Fluir como cascadas* (*Flowing Like Waterfalls*, 2022)
 Lisa Blackmore, "Water"
 Melody Jue, from *Wild Blue Media: Thinking through Seawater*
- 10/9 *Odisea amazónica* (*Veins of the Amazon*, dirs. Álvaro Sarmiento, Diego Sarmiento, and Terje Toomistu, 2021)
 Art by Rember Yahuarcani
 Giuliana Borea and Rember Yahuarcani, "Amazonian Waterway, Amazonian Water-Worlds: Rivers in Government Projects and Indigenous Art"

Week 5: Vegetal Visions

- 10/14 Teresa Castro, "The Mediated Plant"
 Edward Casey and Michael Marder, from *Plants in Place: A Phenomenology of the Vegetal*
 Patricia Dominguez, *Matrix Vegetal* (2022)
- 10/16 Art by Sheroanawe Hakihiwe and Abel Rodríguez
 Eduardo Kohn, "Forest Forms and Ethical Life"
 Pedro Neves Marques, "Mimetic Traps: Forests, Images, Worlds"

Week 6: Virtual Environmentalisms

- 10/21 Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective"
 Verónica Gago and Liz Mason-Deese, "Rethinking Situated Knowledge from the Perspective of Argentina's Feminist Strike"
- 10/23 Virtual Reality Session: Milica Zec and Winslow Porter, *Tree* (2016)
 Lisa Nakamura, "Feeling good about feeling bad: virtuous virtual reality and the automation of racial empathy"
 → Essay due

Week 7: Mining Materialities

- 10/28 Photography from Júlia Pontés, *Ó Minas Gerais* (2017)
Film clips: *The Salt of the Earth* (dirs. Wim Wenders and Juliano Ribeiro Salgado, 2014) and *Jaar, el lamento de las imágenes* (*Jaar: the Lament of the Images*, dir. Paula Rodríguez Sickert, 2017)
Siobhan Angus, from *Camera Geologica: An Elemental History of Photography*
- TBA Required Lecture: Siobhan Angus discusses *Camera Geologica*
- 10/30 Bruno Latour, "Anti-Zoom"
Amparo Dávila, "The Houseguest"
Verónica Gerber Bicecci, excerpt from *La compañía* (*The Company*, 2018)

Week 8: Environmental Pasts and Futures

- 11/4 *Araya* (dir. Margot Benacerraf, 1959)
Carolyn Fornoff, from *Subjunctive Aesthetics: Mexican Cultural Production in the Era of Climate Change*
- 11/6 Media Project Workshop
→ Proposal due

Week 9: Unraveling Media

- 11/11 Elvira Espejo Ayca, "Yanak Uywaña: The Mutual Nurturing of the Arts"
Alexander Galloway, "Weaving," from *Uncomputable: Play and Politics in the Long Digital Age*
Analia Saban, "Copper Tapestry (iSBX 275 Graphics Card, Intel, 1983)"
La libertad (*Freedom*, dir. Laura Huertas Millán, 2017)
- 11/13 Methodological Presentations

Week 10: Conclusions

- 11/18 Methodological Presentations
Course conclusions

Finals Week

Media Projects due