

White Paper

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Sustainability Infusion Project

Title of Module/Activity

Creative Projects: How Can the Humanities Help?

Course Name and Course Number

FREN/ENGL/ENVR/GLST 387: Environmental Literature of the French-speaking World

Length of Module/Activity

This entire course focuses on environmentally engaged literatures of the French-speaking world; thus, sustainability and resilience ideals nestle in quite naturally with every project or activity throughout the semester. This particular project/activity is one on which students work all semester long, but is really only *presented* in the last week. It builds on every activity we do and every reading we have over the course of the four months.

Primary Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to...

- Interpret French and francophone literature through an ecocritical lens
- Critique/analyze critical and theoretical articles (ecocriticism, contemporary literary theory, etc.)
- Articulate and synthesize the relationship between environmental and social justice in various communities of the Francophone world
- Create an end-of-semester creative project that envisions what role the humanities plays in the ideals/goals of sustainability and resilience

Resilience and/or Sustainability Connections

Sustainability Coordinator Prabs Shrestha will be attending one of our class sessions to discuss sustainability and resilience with students. Students will be encouraged to engage with UNL Sustainability and to think through the ways they can become more sustainable stewards of the earth on a personal level, as well as think about how, as whole, the humanities can participate. Students have also created an “Environmental Dictionary” in class. It is a Googledoc that lives on our Canvas course page, which includes the terms “sustainability” and “resilience.” The

Creative Project described here promotes engagement with the interactions of economics, science, and societal issues by encouraging students to focus on the human, moral, and ethical issues in relation to the scientific issues that face the world.

Identify One or More of the Key Sustainability Competencies Addressed

Values Thinking, or **Normative Competence**, will be the principle sustainability competency addressed in this course. Students will be able to explain justice, fairness, and responsibility with regard to the environment and French speaking communities, and analyze and consider ethical and moral claims when it comes to environmental justice issues. The creative project will also address the **Strategic Thinking** or **Action-Oriented Competence**, as students are asked to consider what the humanities' role is in the sustainability equation. They will be developing a project that imagines transition strategies toward sustainability.

Instructional Strategies

The formal assignments/activities in this course are (excluding participation):

1. Ethnographies (students will observe human interactions with the environment in various locations across Lincoln)
2. Reports on ethnographies (students will inform myself and their colleagues about their ethnographic observations 4 times throughout the semester)
3. Reading responses (students will turn in 3 responses to readings; 1 of these must be a response to a theoretical/critical article on ecocriticism)
4. Final paper (students will be writing 7-10 page papers that analyze one or two works from the course through an environmental/ecocritical lens)
5. Creative projects (finally, students will be completing a creative project that ideally has an outreach component; they are to pose the question "How can the humanities help in the quest for sustainability?")

The Creative Projects (from my syllabus): During the last week of the semester, you will present a creative project with a partner to demonstrate your ability to think critically and creatively with regard to course material. The questions at the heart of this project are: How can the humanities help? What is literature's (and specifically, literature from the French-speaking regions we will be examining) role in responding to the environmental questions of the present? The creative project may or may not correspond to your ethnographic studies. You should begin thinking about your creative project early! Check out [UNL Sustainability's programs](#) - they are doing great things, and you can get involved! This project can get as large as you want, and I hope you'll get excited about possibly making a lasting impact on campus and in the local community. **On the final day of class, you will turn in a 1-2 paragraph justification of your project that demonstrates to me that you've thought through how the course material relates to your project (one justification per pair).**

Students will be engaged in independent thinking by using their acquired awareness of environmental problems in French-speaking communities to address local issues in the Lincoln community (or more broadly). They will need to use their creativity to come up with possible

ways of communicating complex social and environmental issues. An example of previous work for this project is a mural using eco-friendly art products that students designed that tells the stories of the environmental battles some French-speaking communities face. The students wrote to LPS to obtain permission to paint the mural on a building, intending to use the mural to teach elementary school students about environmental issues and sustainability.

Assessment Strategy

Throughout the course, students are assessed formatively by their participation in in-class activities (close readings, an intersectional reading worksheet, “Minute Papers,” etc.) Summative assessments include ethnographies observing human interaction with an environment, reading responses, a final research paper, and the creative project (with a written justification), all of which have rubrics and detailed guidelines provided on their Canvas site.