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| ENVS 4500  Senior Seminar: The Flint Water Crisis  Fall 2018  Dr. Daniel Macfarlane |

Class location: 3715 Wood Hall (and ENVS suite)

Class hours: Wednesday 12:30-3:30

Office location: 3930 Wood Hall

Office hours: Wednesday 3:30-4:30; and by appointment

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Phone: 387-5870

Course website: Elearning site

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| **REQUIRED MATERIALS** |

-Anna Clark, *The Poisoned City: Flint’s Water and the American Urban Tragedy* (2018)

-Mona Hanna-Attisha, *What the Eyes Don’t See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City* (2018)

-Susan J. Masten, Simon H. Davies, and Shawn P. McElmurry, “Flint Water Crisis: What Happened and Why?”: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5353852/>

-NPR, “Lead-Laced Water in Flint: A Step-By-Step Look at the Makings of a Crisis”:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/04/20/465545378/lead-laced-water-in-flint-a-step-by-step-look-at-the-makings-of-a-crisis>

-Michigan Civil Rights Commission, The Flint Water Crisis: Systemic Racism Through the Lens of Flint: <https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdcr/VFlintCrisisRep-F-Edited3-13-17_554317_7.pdf>

-Flint Water Crisis: Laws and Regulations: <http://libguides.wmich.edu/flintwater/laws-reg>

-Flint Water Crisis: Info from the Government: <http://libguides.wmich.edu/flintwater/gov-info>

-Principles of Environmental Justice: <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>

-Chris Lewis, “Does Michigan’s Emergency Manager Law Disenfranchise Black Citizens?”

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/05/does-michigans-emergency-manager-law-disenfranchise-black-citizens/275639/>

-Jacob Lederman, “Flint’s Water Crisis Is No Accident. It’s the Result of Years of Devastating Free-Market Reforms”: <http://inthesetimes.com/article/18794/flint-water-crisis-neoliberalism-free-market-reforms-rick-snyder>

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| **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES** |

This seminar focuses on the Flint Water Crisis. We will cover the long-term historical and structural antecedents, and then delve into the specific events, actions, decisions, and processes between 2014-present, that created this crisis. The emphasis will be on: water policies and laws; water security and the right to water; urban environmental issues; public health and toxins; governance and democracy; environmental justice, racism, and ethics; the role of the media; and scientific uncertainty, citizen science, and the politicization of expertise. This is a reading- and writing-intensive course in which students are expected to complete the assigned readings, come to class prepared for discussion, and submit a substantial research project.

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| **COURSE POLICIES** |

**Courteous behavior**

Given that this is a seminar, class time will generally consist of class discussion. Strive for professionalism and courtesy during our time together. Please do not do outside homework, read other material, or use electronic devices inappropriately (e.g., texting, emails, videos, etc.) during class. Do not talk or interrupt while someone has the floor. You will have many opportunities to speak or listen to your classmates present an idea. If you take issue with what someone is saying, then speak up after they have spoken in a respectful way.

Without a verifiable, documented emergency – i.e., a catastrophic event, illness, or injury – or prearranged circumstances, late work will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day. Failure to complete all course components can result in an incomplete mark for the course. The format for all formal written assignments will be 12 point Times New Roman font, 1.5 spaced, 1 inch margins. Please submit all assignments using Word or Open Office (not in PDF or Pages format). Citations must be used, though you may use Chicago or MLA references (if using Chicago, I prefer footnotes over endnotes).

The academic policies addressing Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=974>. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s) and if you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test. In addition, students are encouraged to access the Code of Honor, as well as resources and general academic policies on such issues as diversity, religious observance, and student disabilities:

·        Office of Student Conduct [www.wmich.edu/conduct](http://www.wmich.edu/conduct)

·        Division of Student Affairs [www.wmich.edu/students/diversity](http://www.wmich.edu/students/diversity)

·        Registrar’s Office [www.wmich.edu/registrar](http://www.wmich.edu/registrar)

·        Disability Services for Students [www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices)

You avoid plagiarism by attributing other people’s ideas, words, and data to the place where you found them. This simply means citing the author(s) by name, title, and date at the moment you use their work in your own writing, and by putting their actual words within quotation marks, or paraphrasing suitably and attributing with a reference.

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy, religious obligations, or varsity sports. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me, or come see me in person, with any requests for academic accommodation as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

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| **COURSE GRADES** |

Attendance and Participation: 35%

Book Review: 10%

Flint Media Analysis: 15%

Research Project Presentation: 5%

Research Project: 35%

A = 93%-100%

B/A = 88%-92.9%

B = 83%-87.9%

C/B = 78-82.9%

C = 70-77.9%

D/C = 68-69.9%

D = 60-67.9%

E = below 60%

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| **COURSE COMPONENTS** |

**Attendance & Participation:** Your frequency in attending this course, completion of assigned readings, and quality of your participation will determine your mark for this component. The total mark for this component is weighted more heavily (60/40) towards participation; this means that a student would not receive a passing mark for this component if they attend every class but never participate. If it appears that enough students are not completing the readings and are not sufficiently engaging in discussion, the instructor reserves the right to institute ‘reading reflections’ as part of the attendance & participation mark. If you need to miss a class for a verifiable, documented emergency or other circumstances please promptly bring this to the instructor’s attention.

**Book Review:** Students will complete a critical review essay of the two required books by Clark and Hanna-Attisha. Both books should be assessed on their own merits, but should also be critically compared. Length: 1,500 words. Due **October 5.**

**Flint Media Analysis**: Students will compare the newspaper pieces available from the WMU Flint Water Crisis website (<http://libguides.wmich.edu/flintwater/news-media>) with one other newspaper over the same set of dates (September 1, 2015 to February 28, 2016). For the latter, students will each choose a different local, regional, or national newspaper (Flint Journal; Battle Creek Enquirer; Detroit Free Press; The Detroit News; Chicago Tribune; Washington Post, New York Times; USA Today) which can be easily accessed here: <http://libguides.wmich.edu/ENVS1100>. Provide critical analysis of the ways that newspapers reported on and wrote about the Flint Water Crisis and the type and quality of language, perspective, logic, sources, and evidence, as well as analyze how a particular newspaper’s scope and perspective (i.e., whether it is local, regional, or national; does it tend to have a certain political slant) influences its presentation and interpretation of information. Other relevant questions: do the newspapers agree on the facts, or what facts are important? Are they consistent? Whom or what did the papers blame or hold responsible? What were the identified social and ecological impacts? Did the papers prescribe solutions? Length: 1,500-2,000 words. This analysis is due **October 23 by noon** and should be submitted via Dropbox.

**Research Project Proposal**: For your research project (see below), every student needs to submit a research project proposal. This proposal should be approximately 500-700 words (not including a bibliography, which should also be included) and follow the format described in the Course Policies. The proposal should introduce the topic and necessary background, provide a central research question and a tentative thesis, outline the potential methodology and approach, discuss research sources, and identify the relevant secondary literature on the topic. This proposal is not something to be dashed off the night before it is due – the proposal requires serious thought and research. The research topic may evolve and shift after the proposal is submitted and the instructor provides feedback, which is fine, but students should consult the instructor about their proposed topic *before* completing this research project proposal. This proposal is due **November 6 by noon** and will be submitted via Dropbox. Failure to complete this proposal on time will result in a 5% deduction from your grade for the research project.

**Research Project Presentation**: During the last class of the semester **(December 5)**, students will present their in-progress research project (see below) at the “Capstone Colloquium”. This presentation will have the characteristics of a research workshop in which each student discusses their research project in a 15-20 minute presentation. These presentations are open to other ENVS students and professors, and the audience has the opportunity to provide feedback.

**Research Project**: Rather than a final exam, students will complete a major research project on some aspect of the Flint Water Crisis or some other water policy or water security issue in our region (e.g., PFAS in southwestern Michigan; lead pipes in Kalamazoo or other cities; water shutoffs in Detroit; Nestle in Michigan; algal blooms in the Great Lakes; Toledo water problems; pollution in the Chicago River; etc.). You are encouraged to design a research project that suits your interests, other academic majors, and your future career plans. This can be a traditional social sciences research paper, but it could be in the form of a report suitable for various disciplines and sectors (e.g., in the form of a report for the EPA or DEQ, or an environmental impact assessment, or a landscape architect’s report). Your project could incorporate GIS software, remote sensing, or other digital technologies. The form and length of this research project is fluid, forgive the pun, depending on the type of research: as a guideline, a written paper or report should be 4,000-5,000 words, while a GIS-based project might utilize a website or poster format. Regardless, the form, length, and type of research topic will need to be worked out with and approved by the professor through the project proposal and meetings. During the last month of the semester you will have no other responsibilities for this class aside from your research project and presentation, with class time in the latter half of the semester used for professor feedback about your research project. This much freedom – both in terms of content and time management – can be challenging, however, and your success will require you to proactively design and execute your research project. The research project is due **December 7.**

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| **COURSE CALENDAR** |

Aug 29 Course Introduction

Sept 5 Discussion

Readings: -Flint Water Crisis: What Happened and Why?

-The Flint Water Crisis: Systemic Racism Through the Lens of Flint

-Lead-Laced Water in Flint: A Step-By-Step Look at the Makings of a

Crisis

Sept 12 Discussion

Readings: -*The Poisoned City* (Parts I & II)

-Flint Water Crisis: Laws & Regulations (skim)

Sept 19 Discussion (Anna Clark class visit)

Readings: -*The Poisoned City* (Part III)

-Flint Water Crisis: Info from the Government (skim)

Sept 26 Discussion

Readings: -*What the Eyes Don’t See* (up to Chapter 10)

-Principles of Environmental Justice

Oct 3 Class Trip to Flint (led by Noah Hall and community leaders)

Readings: -*What the Eyes Don’t See* (remainder of book)

**\*Book Review due October 5**

Oct 10 Discussion

Readings: -Protecting Drinking Water in the Great Lakes

-Does Michigan’s Emergency Manager Law Disenfranchise Black

Citizens?

-Flint’s Water Crisis Is No Accident. It’s the Result of Years of

Devastating Free-Market Reforms

Oct 17 No Class: Fall Recess

Oct 24 Discussion on Flint Media Analysis

**\*Flint Media Analysis due October 23 (by noon)**

Oct 31 Meetings about Research Projects

Nov 7 Meetings about Research Projects

**\*Research Project Proposals due November 6 (by noon)**

Nov 14 Meetings about Research Projects

Nov 21 No Class: Thanksgiving

Nov 28 Meetings about Research Projects

Dec 5 Presentations on Research Projects

**\*Research Projects due December 7**