Syllabus (tentative)
Loyola University New Orleans
Cyber-activism and Ecology in Latin America – LAS-X294-WZ1
March 11th – May 9th 2019.

Instructor: Dr. Pedro Morán-Palma
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Course call number: 11926
Credits: 3

Course overview

Why Cyberspace and Ecology?
Cyberspace has very rapidly acquired an increasing importance in our everyday lives. Although the Internet is a virtual space its effects are real and affect every facet of our lives, including the environmental realm. Renewable and non-renewable natural resources are sold and bought instantly through cyberspace. In fact, the items and services that we buy or sale every day on the Internet have the potential to impact the environments in which we live, across the planet. While social media largely aim to generate social connections among individuals, the power of the Internet—due to its extensive reach and speed—vigorously govern the way we live our lives and connect with others, locally and globally. In addition, cyberspace facilitates the formation of advocacy groups around a variety of topics transcending geographical location, language barriers, and national identities. These groups are able to instantaneously disseminate information, generate new contacts and expand the influence of that group’s discussion exponentially. Debates on ecological issues have also been permeated by the massive reach and impact of the Internet. We can find online debates on ecology produced by accredited scientific sources, as we can find online advocating groups formed by regular citizens who gather around environmental concerns.

Ecology is the science that studies the relationships between and among organisms (including humans) as well as the relationships between organisms and the environment in any ecosystem. Ecology has become an important tool for evaluating the quality of our present and future life as individuals and as a society. Global warming, habitat fragmentation, pollution, the use of pesticides, protection and creation of national parks, endangered species, environmentally friendly new technologies, antibiotic resistance, and organic agriculture are some of the many environmental issues that preoccupy citizens all over the world. We humans depend on the quality of services provided by ecosystems, such as air, water, food production, and recreational and spiritual benefits, among others. However, the use, availability, benefits and quality of such services are not equally distributed among all citizens. Such inequalities are marked by ethnicity, social class, gender, national and regional borders, economics, national and international politics, and political ideologies and agendas.

During this course, students will analyze how citizen-led groups in Latin America are presently using cyberspace to disseminate information and gain support locally and globally to protect
ecosystems, habitat, species and other natural resources. These groups range from civilians in large cities to indigenous peoples in the Amazonia and they all utilize the multiple tools provided by the Internet to establish new connections with other groups and individuals across regions, nations, and continents. They have developed webpages, social networks, texting and chatting groups, Instagram, interactive fora, and even cellular phone apps as vehicles for their activism with the goal of constructing a better society that will eventually make a better use of natural resources.

Required readings
No textbook is required for this course. Readings will come from book chapters, academic journals, accredited newspapers and activists’ websites, film and/or documentaries, videos, and other web related resources. Book chapters and articles from academic journals will be available as PDF documents.

Course workload expectations
This is an 8-week course. It is expected that you dedicate about 14 hours each week to the course.

Terms of use
Students are required to read this syllabus. Continued enrollment in this course implies acknowledgment of, and agreement with the statements, disclaimers, policies, and procedures described within this syllabus and in the Blackboard environment. Some elements of the course (e.g. dates, reading or media material, but no policies) may be changed at the discretion of the professor.

Learning outcomes
The goals for this course are designed to align with Loyola University’s Online Course Guidelines:
http://researchguides.loyno.edu/c.php?g=731171
And The Standing Committee on Online Education Course Review Rubric:
http://researchguides.loyno.edu/instructorsupport/Rubric

The course is designed to prepare students to:
1. Describe the principles of scientific reasoning in the humanities.
2. Recognize how inequalities across the Americas impact the environment.
3. Identify some key citizen-led advocacy initiatives online related to the conservation of natural resources in Latin America, ranging from civilians in large cities to indigenous populations in remote rural areas
4. Apply theoretical and conceptual frameworks from Ecology to analyze those initiatives.
5. Apply theoretical and conceptual frameworks from Cultural Studies to analyze those initiatives.
6. Apply theoretical and conceptual frameworks from Environmental activism online to analyze those initiatives.
Grades & Assessments: TOTAL 218 points

Discussion board entries and comments.
Every week you will be asked to submit one post (190 to 210 words) and two meaningful responses to two of your classmates’ posts. Every post is worth 4 points, and every response is worth 2 points. Subtotal 48 points

Reflection papers.
You will have to write 4 short papers during the course (2 pages not including literature cited, double space, 11-point font, Times New Roman). Every paper is worth 20 points. They have to be emailed as Word document. Subtotal 80 points

Quizzes
There will be two quizzes during the first week of classes, and two quizzes during the second week. Each quiz will be worth 10 points. Subtotal 40 points

Final paper
Final paper will be worth 50 points (5 pages not including literature cited, 12-point font, Times New Roman). It has to be emailed as Word document. Subtotal 50 points

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Communications:
- I will respond to email messages within 48 hours Monday to Friday. Weekend responses may take up to 72 hours.
- Grades will be posted in the Blackboard grade book.
- I will send regular announcements and emails to coordinate weekly work. Announcements will be posted in the announcement area of our Blackboard course and will be send via Loyola email.
- Communication via Skype, if necessary.

Participation expectations
You need to access Blackboard regularly because the course is organized by week. Each week includes an evaluation (quiz, or short paper), posting(s) on the Discussion board and comments to postings of your classmates. Timeliness of discussion postings is critical for creating an engaged and meaningful discussion experience for course participants, so please be respectful of fellow participants and follow the due dates. Due dates are clearly established in the course schedule and late work will be assessed a 10 percent penalty per day (including weekends).

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE
Learning objectives
The student will:
- introduce himself/herself.
- describe the objectives of the course.
- explain the organization of the course.
- describe the grading rubric.
- review nettiquette rules that will be followed during the course.
- familiarize himself/herself with the format of the course.
- recognize cyber-activism.
- illustrate examples of cyber-activism.
- identify different type of media used by cyber-activists.

Readings
- Syllabus
- Cyber-protest Environmental Activism Online. Pickerill, Jenny, p 1 to 14.
- It’s easy to click, but just as easy to disengage. The Guardian https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2014/mar/14/online-activism-social-media-engage

Media
- Introductory video
- Youth activism in Latin America https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEQBD5Q9m5U

Discussion prompt
Cyber-activism: netiquette rules. Your post is due before 11:59 pm on Thursday. Your responses are due before 11:59 on Sunday.

Assessments
- Quiz about syllabus and netiquette rules.
- Post in discussion board: When netiquette rules are not followed, problems can occur. Describe a personal experience in which problems were generated because netiquette rules were not followed. Your experience can be related to a job, business, or a commercial transaction situation. Indicate how it was solved (if solved) and how you think it could have been avoided.
- Post at least two meaningful comments about two of your classmates’ posts.

WEEK 2: Cyberactivism and Ecology
Learning objectives
The student will:
- identify types of ecosystem services.
- describe how ecological effects are mediated by inequality
- list examples of environmental activism in his/her community, state or country.
- describe citizens response to cyber-activists.
- describe examples of political and state responses to cyber-activism.

Readings
- Cyberprotest Environmental Activism Online. Pickerill, Jenny. 27 to 33.
- Cyberprotest Environmental Activism Online, Pickerill, Jenny, p. 167-181.
- Protests over resource extraction. https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/protests-over-resource-extraction-peru-0
- Ecosystems and their services (PDF). https://yosemite.epa.gov/SAB/sabcvess.nsf/e1853c0b6014d36585256dbf005c5b71/8f5869f2c957655d85256f1200524ffcc/$FILE/MA_CF_chap2_p4c_final.pdf

Media
- Introductory weekly video
- Even the Rain, Film, 2010.

Discussion prompt
Cyber-activism and natural resources. Your post is due before 11:59 pm on Thursday. Your responses are due before 11:59 on Sunday.

Assessments
- Quiz about ecosystem services.
- Quiz about features of cyber-activism.
- Post in discussion board a description of an example of cyber-activism in your community, state, or country. Indicate cyber tools that were used to reach a wider audience (include two links with reliable information about the issue).
- Post at least two meaningful comments about two of your classmates’ posts.

WEEK 3: Cyber-activism and Ecology

Learning objectives
The student will
- analyze two cases of cyber-activism.
- summarize the environmental problems addressed by cyber-activists.
- Explain the significance of the defense of indigenous territories and the protection of natural resources.
- recognize the role of Indigenous activists, and citizens’ organizations.

Readings
- UN Declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples, UNDRIP. Articles 26 and 32 (to be posted in Blackboard).
- Protected areas and indigenous territories. [http://wwf.panda.org/knowledge_hub/where_we_work/amazon/vision_amazon/living_amazon_initiative222/protected_areas_and_indigenous_territories/](http://wwf.panda.org/knowledge_hub/where_we_work/amazon/vision_amazon/living_amazon_initiative222/protected_areas_and_indigenous_territories/)

**Media**
- Introductory weekly video
- The International Day of the World’s Indigenous people (duration 1 min 19 sec). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLtimjdkenc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLtimjdkenc)

**Discussion prompt**
Cyber-activism, natural resources, social justice, and political and economic issues. Your post is due before 11:59 pm on Thursday. Your responses are due before 11:59 on Sunday.

**Assessments**
- Post in discussion board your thoughts about the relevance of citizen’s participation on a campaign for the protection of natural resources, based on the movie “Even the rain” and explain why.
- Post at least two meaningful comments about two of your classmates’ posts.

**WEEK 4: Case Study 1: Mexico- Wixárika**
**Learning objectives**
The student will:
- Summarize environmental/ecological issues defended by Wixarika indigenous communities and cyber-activists.
- Summarize social issues that Wixárika indigenous communities claim to support their fight.
- Summarize economic issues argued by indigenous communities and cyber-activists to support their struggle.
- Identify cybermedia used by cyber-activists.
- Summarize counterarguments used by opposers to the indigenous communities’ claims.
- Assess arguments and counterarguments.

Readings

- Huichol route through the sacred sites of Huiricuta (Tatehuari Huajuye).
  
  NOTE: *Huichol Is a former word used to identify Wixárika people.*
  

- Sustainable mining, indigenous rights, and conservation: conflict and discourse in Wirikuta/Catorce, San Luis Potosi, Mexico.
  

- First majestic Silver Corp https://www.firstmajestic.com corporate/about-the-company/

- Wirikuta in imminent danger, peasant resistance grows for its protection.

- Battle in the Mexican desert, silver mining against peyote and indigenous spirituality

- A Canadian mining company prepares to dig up Mexico’s Eden.
  https://this.org/2011/09/15/first-majestic-silver-wirikuta/

- Summing the Wirikuta defense (December 2011 – February 2013).


Media

Introductory video

- Wirikuta no se vende, se ama y se defiende (Wirikuta is not for sale, it is loved and is defended: duration 4 min 35 sec. This video includes the participation of well-known Mexican and other Latin American musicians in support of Wixárika indigenous communities struggle to defend their territory against First majestic Silver Corp.
  https://youtu.be/ApkwvG9Ula4

- Wixarika Message Defending Wirikuta (2 min 30 sec)
  https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=wirikuta+activism&qpvt=wirikuta+activism&view=detail&mid=E9136EF29C8B5EE68ADCE9136EF29C8B5EE68ADC&&FORM=VRDGAR

Discussion prompt

Cyber-activism and natural resources: case study I - Wixárika. Your post is due before 11:59 pm on Thursday. Your responses are due before 11:59 on Sunday.
Assessments
- Short paper. Analyze this case from three different perspectives (ecological, local economy, indigenous rights, social justice, or rights of Canadian companies to exploit mineral resources, historic) and draw conclusion(s) regarding the right of the Wixarika indigenous community to the territories they want to protect. Your paper is due before 11:59 on Sunday.
- Post in discussion board your opinion(s) about how cyberspace and other media was used to defend Wirikuta. Elaborate.
- Post at least two meaningful comments about two of your classmates’ posts.

WEEK 5: Case Study 2: Central America
Learning objectives
The student will:
- Summarize environmental issues defended by indigenous communities lead by Bertha Caceres.
- Summarize social issues argued by Bertha Caceres and indigenous communities in support of their struggle.
- Summarize economic issues claimed by indigenous communities in support of their struggle.
- Evaluate the role of cyberspace and of cyber-activists.
- Assess the role of government in the protection of natural resources affected by the construction of these dams.

Readings
- Justice for Berta Cáceres. This website contains lots of information. You do not need to click on every link, but you can use your own criteria to determine what information may be useful for your paper or your participation in the discussion. http://bertacaceres.org/

Media
- Introductory weekly video
- Berta Cáceres’ fight continues: Group sues Dutch bank (duration 1 min 43 sec).
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgKgaF_hyA8
- Berta Cáceres, acceptance speech 2015 Goldman Prize ceremony (duration 3 min 19 sec).
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR1kwx8b0ms

Discussion prompt
Cyber-activism and natural resources: case study II. Bertha Cáceres. Your post is due before 11:59 pm on Thursday. Your responses are due before 11:59 on Sunday.

Assessments
- Short paper. Analyze Berta Cáceres fight for protecting indigenous lands in Honduras and draw conclusion(s) regarding the role and importance of cyber media before and after her death. Your paper is due before 11:59 on Sunday
- Discussion board: Analyze the role of international cyber-activism in this particular case and post your thoughts in the discussion board. Elaborate.
- Post at least two meaningful comments about two of your classmates’ posts.

WEEK 6: Case study 3: South America- Mapuches
Learning objectives
The student will:
- Describe the geographical location of Mapuche indigenous communities.
- Describe territorial claims by Mapuches.
- Analyze social and economic problems faced by Mapuche communities.
- Analyze the use of cybermedia by Mapuche and their supporters to defend their territorial claims.
- Identify difficulties do Mapuche communities face in their struggle.

Readings
- United against Benetto: Argentina’s Mapuche fight against the clothing corporation.
  http://thepolitic.org/united-against-benetton-argentinas-mapuche-fight-against-the-clothing-corporation/
- Mapuche beyond borders. The Mapuche’s cross border struggle for freedom and autonomy
  https://intercontinentalcry.org/mapuche-beyond-borders/
- A Nation Divided: Building the Cross-Border Mapuche Nation in Chile and Argentina.
American studies/article/nation-divided-building-the-crossborder-mapuche-nation-in-chile-and-argentina/ED6F71E3A042781139AC7E702C07F0DE


**Media**
- Introductory weekly video
- Italia – Argentina: Benetton vs. Mapuche Indigenous (duration 8 min 24 sec). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFQYNBDaaQg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFQYNBDaaQg)
- Life and resistance in Wallmapu [https://hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu/exhibit/life-resistance-wallmapu/](https://hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu/exhibit/life-resistance-wallmapu/)
- Native community fights to defend their secret river from dam. National Geographic (duration 2 min 11 sec). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXrq5CDTy84](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXrq5CDTy84)

**Discussion prompt**
Cyberactivism and natural resources: case study III – Mapuches. Your post is due before 11:59 pm on Thursday. Your responses are due before 11:59 on Sunday.

**Assessments**
- Short paper: What are the social and economic situation of present day Mapuches in Argentina and Chile. Describe how and why Mapuches have been dispossessed of their ancestral lands. Analyze the use of cyberspace in support of the Mapuche fight. What do you think about the information contained by the Mapuche websites you visited? Did you like their design? Your paper is due before 11:59 on Sunday.
- Post in discussion board what you think about Benetton’s position in Mapuche’s territories in Argentina.
- Post at least two meaningful comments about two of your classmates’ posts.

**WEEK 7: Compare and contrast previous three study cases.**

**Learning objectives**
The student will:
Compare and contrast the struggle of Wixárika, indigenous communities in Honduras (Berta Cáceres), and Mapuches.
- Analyze the role of cybermedia.
- Describe the ecological implications of the indigenous struggles.
- Evaluate citizen’s participation and organization.
- Describe success or lack of it.
- Describe national or international impact of cyber-activists’ campaign.

Readings
You may need to look for extra information on Internet or the Library to complete your short paper and refer to previous readings:

Media
- Introductory weekly video

Discussion prompts
Importance of cyber-activism. Your post is due before 11:59 pm on Thursday. Your responses are due before 11:59 on Sunday.

Assessments
Short paper: Answer the following questions to compare and contrast the indigenous struggle of Wixárika, Honduran indigenous communities and

1. What ecological, economic, social, and religious issues do all of these three cases have in common? What are the differences?
2. Were they successful? Why do you think they were successful or why they were not?
3. Evaluate the role of cyber-activists: How important was their role? Was it important to have international support? Were the cybercampaigns successful? Why?

Your paper is due before 11:59 on Sunday.

- Post in discussion board your thoughts about how to determine whether or not cyber-activism is important?
- Post at least two meaningful comments about two of your classmates’ posts.

WEEK 8: Final Report: Case study in your community, state or country.
Learning objectives
The student will:
- Select one example of cyber-activism in his/her community, state, country that is related to the protection or conservation of natural resources
- Describe environmental issues discussed by activists.
- Describe economic and social issues argued by cyber-activists in support of their struggle.
- List media used by cyber-activists.
- Describe counterarguments used by opposers to cyber-activists and list media they are using.
- What recommendations do you have for the citizens involved in this campaign? Do you think it is successful? Why?
- What is your position regarding this situation? Elaborate.

Readings
Instructions for the final paper.

Media
- Introductory video

Discussion prompts
Final reflection(s) about the course. Your post is due before 11:59 pm on Thursday. Your responses are due before 11:59 on Sunday.

Assessments
Final paper. Your final paper is due before 11:59 on Sunday.
- Post in discussion board your final reflection(s) about the course.
- Post at least two meaningful comments about two of your classmates’ posts.