



SYLLABUS VERSION 1.0
ARTH 3399/ESCI 4315: Art and the Critical Zone
University of Texas at El Paso
Spring 2022

CRNs: 27149 (ARTH 3399) and 28342 (ESCI 4315)

Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-2:50 p.m.

Classroom: Fox Fine Arts A458 (4th floor)

Professors: Dr. Thomas Gill (ESCI) and Dr. Melissa Warak (ARTH); course is co-taught

Dr. Gill

Email: tegill@utep.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 3:00- 5:00 pm; these will be held on Zoom through the class Blackboard page (link to weekly office hours will be in Blackboard under Course Tools)

Office: Geology 401A

Office Phone: (915) 747-5168

Dr. Warak

Email: mcwarak@utep.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays from 3:00-5:00 pm; until further notice, these will be held via Zoom or by telephone. Sign up for online office hour meetings here: <https://calendly.com/warakofficehours/15min>.

Office: Fox Fine Arts A454

Office Phone: (915) 747-7849

Please email your lead professor (Gill if registered for ESCI and Warak if registered for ARTH) ASAP if you are unable to complete course requirements or need temporary accommodations due to COVID-19. Your faculty reserve the right to move the course online for temporary periods of time in the case of COVID exposure in the classroom.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS. Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or otherwise feeling ill. If you are feeling unwell, please let your lead professor (Warak for ARTH students, Gill for ESCI students) know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. **The Student Health Center provides COVID-19 testing; additionally, UTEP runs a larger testing site with the city of El Paso on campus.** For more information, go to <https://www.utep.edu/resuming-campus-operations/testing/>.

WEARING MASKS IN CLASS: We cannot mandate that you wear a mask while in class, but we request that you do so given the highly contagious nature of the Delta and Omicron variants of COVID-19. Many vaccinated persons are currently experiencing high rates of breakthrough infections; for this reason the CDC recommends that we ALL wear masks in indoor public spaces. A simple single cloth mask or surgical mask is no longer recommended given the new variants of COVID: a KN95 or N95 mask, or double masks, are recommended. If you are not yet vaccinated, please visit <https://www.epcovidvaccine.com>. Being vaccinated (with booster shots), wearing masks, and social distancing are the most effective measures we have to keep one another safe. We recommend that you space yourselves out from each other in the classroom. FYI: your professors are both vaccinated and will deliver lectures in a mask.

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSORS

Dr. Thomas E. (Tom) Gill is Professor of Geological Sciences and Environmental Science and Engineering. His scientific work focuses on the connections between the different parts of the earth system and the environment, especially the relationship between the solid Earth and the atmosphere, and the geology and environment of deserts and drylands. Dr. Gill earned a B.S. in Atmospheric Science and a Ph.D. in Earth Sciences and Resources from the University of California at Davis. Growing up in Northern California as the son of two artists, he gained his love for landforms and the environment through frequent childhood trips with his parents to sketch and draw the landscapes of the mountains, desert, and Pacific coast. Dr. Gill's primary research emphasis is the study of dust storms, their characteristics, their effects on the environment and people, and the use of remote sensing (satellite technology) in detecting the formation and transport of dust clouds. He has published approximately 70 peer-reviewed papers in scientific journals, and his work has been funded by grants and contracts from NASA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and other agencies.

Dr. Melissa Warak is Assistant Professor of Art History and specializes in the relationship of music and sound to art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Dr. Warak earned a B.A. in English literature and art history from Vanderbilt University, an M.A. in art history from the University of Texas at Austin, and a Ph.D. in art history from the University of Texas at Austin. Her current research focuses on the ways that visual artists from the mid-fifties to late sixties employed musical models in their work and she is writing a book about contemporary sound art. Other research interests include the history of abstraction, spirituality in modern and contemporary art, science and technology in modern and contemporary art, and astronomy in art. Her research has been supported by grants and fellowships from the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, the Getty Research Institute, the Royal Music Association of the United Kingdom, The Menil Collection in Houston, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Kress Foundation, the Yale University Art Galleries, the Tate Modern, and the Grand Palais (Paris), among others.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course uses interdisciplinary approaches to study intersections between art and science related to the Critical Zone, which is a National Science Foundation designation for the earth's "skin" of the ground water to the tree canopy. UTEP is leading a National Science Foundation study of the Critical Zone in drylands (deserts and other dry regions). Topics will range from the Renaissance to the present, with some exploration of modern contact with ancient and prehistoric phenomena. With a focus on the Earth and the desert environment in the U.S. Southwest, students will examine visual and material implications of the following themes: landscapes; water; nutrients and soil; carbon and biology; technology; environmental

changes; agricultural practices in the desert; weather; the built environment; and the past and future of the Anthropocene. Each unit of the course focus on particularly meaningful intersections of art and environmental science, focusing on what science learns from art and vice versa. Guest lectures from the UTEP Dryland Critical Zone grant team will illuminate current research on the environment, and students will visit various sites to analyze aspects of the critical zone on UTEP's campus. The course is divided into seven units with the following themes: Introduction; Sky and Air; Carbon (life); Water; Land (soil and nutrients); Past and Future; and the Anthropocene and Living in a Critical Zone in a Time of Climate Change.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

During this course, students will acquire skills essential to both art historians and scientists, including the following:

1. Developing interdisciplinary writing skills.
2. Learning to find and use resources for answering research questions and problems.
3. Analyzing and critically evaluating ideas and arguments.
4. Developing synthetic thinking skills and understanding methodologies related to interdisciplinary study.

TEXTS FOR CLASS

Selected scholarly articles will be posted to the course's related Blackboard page (see schedule). Students are responsible for downloading these from Blackboard. All readings need to be completed BEFORE the class period for the day.

GRADING POLICY

This course will have **three exams**. In addition, students will complete **one research** project and four small assignments. We will have **eight short quizzes** throughout the semester. There will be no makeup quizzes, but the lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

This course will be graded on a **scale of 500 points**.

Quizzes (8, but one dropped):	105 points
Exam 1:	90 points
Exam 2:	90 points
Exam 3:	90 points
Research Project Prospectus:	5 points
Research Project:	80 points
Centennial Plaza Worksheet:	10 points
Leonardo Assignment:	10 points
Desert Gardens Worksheet:	10 points
Water/Ways Worksheet:	10 points

Therefore, here is the point breakdown for grades:

448 – 500 points:	A
397 – 447 points:	B
347 – 396 points:	C
297 – 346 points:	D
000 – 296 points:	F

TAKING NOTES IN CLASS

Note that laptops and tablets are only allowed for use in taking notes. Students caught using devices in distracting ways will have the privilege revoked.

Exam material will come from both ideas discussed in class and the readings that supplement lectures and discussions. Completing the readings is necessary, but will not take the place of attendance and participation in class. It is critical that students take notes in class. Using bullet points will help you write down more information. Vocabulary and important terms will be written on the PowerPoint presentation slides and you should pay special attention to these terms and the works of art where they may be applicable. Basic identifying information for each work will also be provided on the PowerPoints (artist name, title, date); these will be uploaded to Blackboard for your use. It is a good idea to date your notes so you know what we covered each day. It is also a good idea to take notes on the class readings for the quizzes and exams.

EXAMS

Exams will be open note and administered online, so make sure to take notes extensively. Students are expected to use the following resources on the exams: 1) notebook/notes; 2) quizzes; and 3) readings (which you may highlight and annotate). The exams are **not** cumulative. See your professors during office hours for help improving your note-taking skills.

QUIZZES

Students will take short reading quizzes at the beginning of each class on quiz days noted in the syllabus. **Quizzes are open note.** Be sure to arrive to class on time. There are no makeup quizzes. The quizzes may be on one or all of the readings assigned for the week and will likely be short answer, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, and/or true/false questions. To prepare for these, you should make sure to read the texts carefully and take notes on them in your notebook (this will also help with preparing for the exams). You may find it useful to skim the readings once for the larger issues at stake and then take notes during a second more careful reading. Be sure that you can identify the author's arguments and the primary evidence used to support them. As you read, think critically about what might be useful about the texts for our course topic. We encourage you to discuss the readings and topics with your classmates.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance will be taken daily. Students get three absences without penalty and do not need documentation unless the absence relates to COVID-19 infection or quarantine. Each unexcused absence beyond three will decrease your overall class grade by twenty points. **Absences due to COVID-19 illness or quarantine will be excused but will require documentation.** Students who are late will receive a half absence. **DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE INFECTIOUS OR DO NOT FEEL WELL, EVEN IF IT FEELS LIKE A COLD OR ALLERGIES.** Students who are visibly ill may be asked to leave class without penalty.

Students are responsible for acquiring notes and announcements made during missed classes, so make a friend and exchange contact information. Your professors will keep a running tally of absences in a column on the Gradebook section of Blackboard. You will be able to access the attendance record on Blackboard to see which days you have missed or were marked late. The professors reserve the right to drop students

after six absences, but will notify students by email to discuss the situation.

EMAIL POLICY

Your professors will email you through Blackboard. Make sure that you are receiving emails through Blackboard and that you have your UTEP email address on file. Please note that, due to FERPA regulations, your professors will not email with students about specific grades but may be able to discuss performance more generally. If you have a question or concern about a grade, please visit office hours or make an appointment. Additionally, if you have a question that requires a long answer, please make an appointment to save time. Please direct emails to the professor in charge of your section (Dr. Warak for ARTH and Dr. Gill for ESCI).

PHONES

Cell phones should be silent and kept out of sight. You will be reprimanded if you are caught using your phone in the classroom; repeat offenses will result in being asked to leave class with an absence penalty.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please be respectful of other students in the classroom. The classroom door will be open for five minutes after class begins; after that, tardies will be given. There are outlets for charging devices in the classroom, but please come to class with a charged laptop. Inappropriate behavior includes coming late, using phones or electronic devices for any reason, passing notes, excessive whispering with friends, and packing bags before class is over. Use the restroom BEFORE class, as entering or leaving the room is very distracting. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with UTEP policy. **A note on bags:** please make sure your bag is small enough to fit fully under your chair. If not, you will be asked to put it to the side of the classroom. Art supplies, gym bags, and other items will need to be stored on the shelves in the classroom.

MAKEUP POLICY

Each assignment sheets will explain a late work policy. There are no makeup quizzes, but makeup exams may be scheduled at the faculty's discretion with advance notice. Plan your semester accordingly.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

All instances of suspected academic misconduct in this course will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution and may result in failure in this course. All students are expected to engage in their academic pursuits in a professional manner and to maintain honesty and integrity. Students are responsible for knowing the requirements of academic honesty set forth by UTEP. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty. See the UTEP policy on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty:

<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>

POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities who are registered with the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) and use the proper documentation: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass> (telephone: (915) 747-5148). Students with documented disabilities should make sure that the professor receives the appropriate paperwork from CASS within the first week of class. Please

note that CASS is available to help students with any disabilities, documented illness (including anxiety, depression, and PTSD), and in the case of short-term disability (broken bones, etc.).

POLICY FOR STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” See your professors at least a week in advance if you intend to miss class in observance of a religious holy day.