

Environmental Messages and Messengers: Silent Spring and An Inconvenient Truth

Description. Biologist Rachel Carson and her best-selling book about the environmental risks of chemical pesticides, *Silent Spring* (1962), have received credit for inspiring the modern environmental movement and changing government policy. The legacy of *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), former Vice President Al Gore's movie about the risks of human-caused global warming, is yet to be determined. This tutorial will compare and contrast *Silent Spring's* history with the ongoing reception of *An Inconvenient Truth*, analyzing the science, public reception, and political impact of the messages and their messengers.

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Office hours: Monday 9-11; Tuesday 1-3, or by appointment.

Setting. Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30-9:50 OR 8:00-9:30; Science 1302.

Required texts. Carson R (2002 special edition, originally published 1962) *Silent Spring*. Houghton-Mifflin, NY. Kolbert E (2006) *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*. Bloomsbury, NY. Graff G, Birkenstein C (2006) *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing.*, Norton, NY. We also be watching some video (*An Inconvenient Truth*, of course) and reading primary and secondary scholarly literature, and popular and news sources.

Objectives. All sections of the tutorial, the only required course for entering Grinnell College students, share common objectives (<http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/dean/tutorial>).

1. To help students plan their academic program in the liberal arts through an individualized tutor/student advising relationship.
2. To give special attention to critical thinking and analysis by focusing on writing, close reading of texts and analysis of materials, and speaking and discussion skills.
3. To develop information literacy.
4. To explore a topic which illuminates methods of inquiry and not necessarily the mastery of a particular discipline.

Tutorials also must: (a) require at least four formal writing assignments; (b) work with librarians to develop students' information literacy; and (c) require students to complete an exercise demonstrating that they can apply principles of academic honesty.

The shared features of the tutorial may sound rather dull and one-size-fits-all, but here's a hint. If you want to get the most from this tutorial, make sure you are doing *your* part to meet these objectives. If you feel like you are falling behind on one of them, or that I have not done as much as I should on *my* end, let me know.

Given the long list of things tutorials share, what makes each tutorial distinctive? Three things: the topic; the actual activities and assignments; and the unique set of participants and how they engage the topic, activities, assignments, and each other. Note that the third point of distinction is up to us, and most of "us" is you.

In-class activities. Most class meetings will involve discussion of readings, focused on questions assigned beforehand and/or generated by the students, but there also will be a substantial variety of in-class structure (e.g., data analysis, role-playing, discussions with visitors, student oral presentations).

Major assignments. Throughout the ages (here's a hint: NEVER start an essay with a phrase like this), tutorial instructors have shared ideas about effective and engaging assignments. Your assignments represent a collection of ones adapted from other instructors (i.e., the good ideas) and assignments I invented (i.e., the untested ideas).

Major assignments

- First essay, 1 p., composed in class 30 August (for comments)
 - Revised first essay, 11 September (for grade)
- Anatomy of a research paper: statement of research interest, 1 p. 27 September
- Second essay, 2-3 pp., 9 October (for comments)
 - Revised second essay, 1 November (for grade)
- Anatomy of a research paper: Thesis statement and annotated bibliography, 13 November
- Third essay, 3-4 pp., 20 November
- Complete portfolio of “anatomy of a research paper”, presented orally, 4 or 6 November

Evaluation. Your grade will come from a total of 400 points, allocated as follows.

Participation 100 points

- Quality (and quantity) of contributions to in-class activities such as discussion

Minor assignments 50 points total

Major assignments 250 points

- First essay, 1 p. (25)
- Second essay, 2-3 pp. (50)
- Third essay, 3-4 pp. (75)
- Anatomy of a research paper (100)
 - Statement of research interest, 1 p. (25)
 - Annotated bibliography and thesis statement (25)
 - Introduction 1-2 pp. (25)
 - Oral presentation of findings (25)

Schedule details. Readings and other activities will be determined from week to week, as informed by our interests and our progress. I will distribute (and post) weekly schedules. What follows is a tentative view, with somewhat more detail before fall break.

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Week	Topics	Readings	Activities and Assignments
<i>i</i> 26 Aug Sunday 1:00	- Who are we? - Where are we doing here? - How should you and I plan for Registration?	- Selections from Grinnell College catalogue (read during and after) - Mission Statement Core Values A Grinnell Education History Location Nondiscrimination Policy Education in the Liberal Arts	- Introductions - Preview the tutorial and Grinnell - Discuss. . .discussions - Address the questions at left - Prepare for advising appointments (Mon-Tues., 27-28 August)
1	Issues → Science → Communication → Attitudes → Policy. Is <i>that</i> how it works?	30 Aug - Carson Intro, chs 1-2 - Kolbert Preface - In-class readings	- Discuss how Registration went - Discuss course themes - What do you know? think? want to know? What should citizens know? - First essay: (in class) Explain what persuade <i>you</i> to take a position on an environmental issue.
2	“Elixirs of Death” CO2: pollutant? essential resource? both?	4 Sept - Carson ch. 3 6 Sept. - Kolbert ch. 2	4 Sept - Discussion of student questions - Evaluation of data: pesticide exposure and toxicology; 1950s v. today 6 Sept 8:00 AM - Movie: An Inconvenient Truth
3	Collateral damage	11 Sept - Carson ch. 8 - Graff and Birkenstein Preface and Introduction 13 Sept - Carson ch. 9 - Graff and Birkenstein chs 1-2	11 Sept. 8:00 - Revised first essay due - Library skills I (Kevin Engel, Librarian) - Research questions 13 Sept - Preliminary reports on library findings - Citation/collaboration (Writing Lab?)
4	Systemic application “The Human Price”	18 Sept - Carson chs.10, 12 20 Sept - Graff and Birkenstein chs 3-5	18 Sept - Discussion of research findings - Evaluating risk 20 Sept - Brainstorming for “anatomy” projects - Writing exercises / academic honesty
5	“The Human Price” II	25Sept - Carson chs. 13-14 - Readings from Carson’s critics 27 Sept - Graff and Birkenstein chs 6-7	25 Sept 8:00 - Library skills II (Kevin Engel) - Second writing assignment given 27 Sept - Statement of research interest due - Writing exercises
6 2-4 Oct	“Nature Fights Back” “The Other Road”	- Carson ch. 15-17	- Data on the evolution of pesticide resistance
7 9-11 Oct	What road did we take?	- selections to be determined	- Pesticide use and policy 2007 - Second essay due
8 16-18 O	Climate change I		-Data analysis on climate/climate change

FALL BREAK

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9 30 0-1 N	Climate change science II	IPCC Summary for Policymakers	- Third essay assigned - Revised second essay due - Professor may be away 1 Nov. - That movie as a re-run?
10 6-8 Nov	Preparation for second semester	No classes	- Individual advising conferences
11 13-15 N	Climate change science III	Kolbert chs. 3, 4, 7 The Wedge Strategy	- Thesis statement and annotated bibliography due
12 20 Nov	Making it personal	Kolbert chs. 1, 5, 6	- Third essay due
13 27-29 N	Critics and policies	To be determined	
14 4-6 Dec	Student presentations of research		- Oral Presentations of AORP portfolios
15 11-13 D	Mitigating effects of pesticides and climate change	To be determined	- Scenario-building exercises - Evaluations - Party like it's 1999, but make 2099 a better year

There's space here, so I'll include a copy of "Dates to remember" (for incoming students).

- Wednesday, August 29 Registration
- Thursday, August 30 First Day of Classes
- Friday, September 21 Last day to add a course or an audit.
 - Last day to drop a course without transcript entry.
 - Last day to change to or from S/D/F grading.
 - Last day to change a course from credit to audit.
- Monday, September 24 - A course may be dropped with W transcript entry.
- Friday, October 5 Last day to add a "plus-2".
- Monday, October 15 Last day to declare major before preregistration
- Friday, October 19 Last day to drop credits in excess of 18 without paying overload fees.
- Saturday, October 20 Fall Break Starts
- Monday, October 29 Classes Resume
- Monday, Nov 5 - Thursday, Nov 15 Preregistration
- Friday, November 9 Last day to drop a course with W transcript entry.
- Friday, December 14 Last day of classes
- Friday, December 14 Last day to request an incomplete.