COMM 499: Environmental Communication  
Fall, 2008

Professor:          Dr. Randy Lake
Office:             ASC 206C
Hours:              TBA (Typically, I will be in the office four days a week, so appointments should be fairly easy to obtain.)
Telephone:          (213) 740-3946
E-mail:             rlake@usc.edu (This is the most efficient way to reach me. I check my e-mail regularly during the weekday, when I am in the office. However, weekends and evenings are much more sporadic so, if you e-mail me at these times, please do not expect an immediate reply.)

Objectives:
- to understand the environment as both an object and result of communication processes;
- to understand the major variables involved in these processes and dominant forms that give them shape;
- to learn about significant contemporary environmental controversies; and
- to put theories into practice by intervening strategically in the public aspects of an environmental controversy

Websites:
There is a course website, located at blackboard.usc.edu. All students enrolled in this course have access to the website through their USC username and password. This website is an official place for posting information relevant to the class, such as announcements, assignments, and grades, for discussing lecture materials, and so on. You are as responsible for knowing any material posted to the website as you would be responsible for material distributed or discussed during class. Because the University does not unequivocally recognize material placed on this website as the intellectual property of its creator, copies of my lecture notes, etc., will not be made available here.

The Center for Health and Environmental Communication Research at the University of Cincinnati has an extremely valuable website at: http://www.artsci.uc.edu/communication/cher/about/index.html

Readings:
- Robert Cox, Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere (Sage, 2006) [REQUIRED]
- Other readings as assigned

Readings should be completed before class on the day assigned. Lectures will not cover all portions of the assigned readings, and will cover additional materials not in the assigned readings; nonetheless, you are responsible for all materials, both in the readings and in lecture, on the exams.

Assignments: Detailed instructions for all assignments will be provided in due course. Due dates are noted on the tentative daily syllabus, below:
- Class Project, 50%. This project may take several forms, including: (A) a traditional research
paper, 20-25 pages, on a topic approved in advance; (B) participation in an environmental organization or campaign that includes a written, analytical diary applying class concepts to your experience and activities; and (C) an online project, such as a website that gathers together resources in order to facilitate public understanding and involvement in an environmental controversy. Projects may be individual or group (approved in advance).

- Midterm Exam, 20%
- Final Exam, 20%
- Participation, 10%

All assignments must be the original work of the student and cannot have been used previously or concurrently in any other course. All assignments must be attempted and turned in to pass the course.

**Academic Integrity:**

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code as detailed in the *SCampus* guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the academic integrity code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor.

If you have any doubts about what is and is not an academic integrity violation, please check with me. The University presumes that you are familiar with its standards and policies; should you be found to have committed a violation, ignorance of these standards and policies will **not** be accepted as an excuse.

**Disabilities:**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please have the letter delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. DSP’s phone number is (213) 740-0776.

**Tentative Daily Schedule:**

It may be necessary to modify this schedule a bit. Assigned readings should be completed before class on the day listed.

Week 1: Conceptual Perspectives, Part I: The Study of Environmental Communication  
Cox, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-36)

Week 2: Conceptual Perspectives, Part II: Rhetorically Shaping the Environment  
Cox, Ch. 2 (pp. 37-80)

Week 3: Conceptual Perspectives, Part II: Rhetorically Shaping the Environment, continued  

Week 4: Citizen Voices and Public Forums, Part I: Public Participation in Environmental Decisions
Cox, Ch. 3 (pp. 81-124); Craig Waddell, “Saving the Great Lakes: Public Participation in Environmental Policy,” Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Bown, eds., *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996, pp. 141-165)

Week 5: Citizen Voices and Public Forums, Part II: Conflict Resolution and Alternative Forms of Participation
*Guest: Dr. Colleen Keough*

Week 6: Media Coverage of the Environment, Part I: Media and Environmental Journalism
Cox, Ch. 5 (pp. 161-204)

Week 7: Media Coverage of the Environment, Part I: Media and Environmental Journalism, continued
*Guest: Professor K. C. Cole*

Week 8: Review and Midterm Examination

Week 9: Media Coverage of the Environment, Part II: Risk Communication: Nonexpert Publics and Acceptable Risks

Week 10: Voices for Change, Part I: Environmental Advocacy Campaigns
*Guest: Dr. Anne Marie Todd*
Cox, Ch. 7 (pp. 241-288)

Week 11: Voices for Change, Part I: Environmental Advocacy Campaigns, continued
*In-class film: “30 Frames a Second: The WTO in Seattle”*
Week 12: Voices for Change, Part II: Environmental Justice: Voices From the Grassroots
Cox, Ch. 8 (pp. 289-328); Phaedra C. Pezzullo, “Performing Critical Interruptions: Stories, Rhetorical Invention, and the Environmental Justice Movement,” *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (2001): 1-25

Week 13: Environmental Discourses of Science and Industry, Part I: Science and Symbolic Legitimacy

Week 14: Environmental Discourses of Science and Industry, Part I: Science and Symbolic Legitimacy, continued
*In-class film: “An Inconvenient Truth” (and critiques)*

Week 15: Environmental Discourses of Science and Industry, Part II: Green Marketing and Corporate Campaigns
Cox, Ch. 10 (pp. 367-410)
*Class Projects Due*

Final Examination