

Chesapeake Project 2016 Report  
Michele Mason

I will be teaching *The Atomic Bomb in Literature and Memory* (JAPN425) in Spring 2017. My plan for integrating discussions on sustainability in this course focuses on three units. In each case, I will devote more time on the topic than I have in the past, pair sustainability “big ideas” with existing readings/resources, and add newly conceived homework assignments.

**WEEK SEVEN**

**March 10 (TU) *The Water of Life***

“Water is Life,” from *Choices for Sustainable Living*, Osprey Orielle Lake

*Witness to Hiroshima*, Dir. Kathy Sloane (Canvas streaming)

Visit the Ecological Research and Development Group website and read short entries under Natural History tab: Evolution, Anatomy, Protecting Health, and Conservation. (Link on Canvas)

In the past, I have assigned the short, documentary film, *Witness to Hiroshima*, which I co-produced with Kathy Sloane, along with other readings. This film features a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, who later devoted his life to the study and conservation of the incredibly unique creature called the horseshoe crab. The horseshoe crab is often called a “living fossil” and predates dinosaurs. In the film, Mr. Tsuchiya articulates how he links his lifetime of activism for atomic survivors *and* horseshoe crabs in a profoundly moving way. His emphasis on the affinity between humans and horseshoe crabs (both are dependent on water) and the need to protect all life on the planet dovetails nicely with notions of **Environmental Stewardship** (caring for the environment that supports all life).

In Spring 2017, I’ll devote an entire day to a unit focused on the film and add a homework assignment that requires students to do preliminary research on the horseshoe crab at the Ecological Research and Development Group (ERDG) website ([www.horseshoecrab.org](http://www.horseshoecrab.org)). ERDG is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization that has a particular focus on horseshoe crabs. I will invite Glenn Gauvry from ERDG (based in Delaware) to visit my class in person or via Skype to talk about horseshoe conservation in the Chesapeake Bay and Japan. Glenn has been a big supporter of the film and hosts viewings of it every August. I have never had him participate in my class before. The unit will be crowned by a journal exercise that will ask students to reflect on how the message of the film and the work of ERDG evoke the principles of environmental stewardship so students can become familiar with the vocabulary and principles of this concept.

**WEEK THIRTEEN**

**April 28 (TU) What to do with a Problem like Nuclear Power? (5)**

*Nuclear Power Explained: Climate of Hope*, Parts 1, 2, and 3 (Link on Canvas, 30 min)

Visit Beyond Nuclear website and read “An Introduction to Beyond Nuclear,” which can be found under the “Pamphlets” tab (Link on Canvas)

“The Change in Sustainability Framework,” “Biological and Technical Nutrients” (PDFs)

Toward the end of the course, we study the nuclear fuel cycle, and I stress the problems of “managing” nuclear waste, the use of fossil fuels to support the system, and the hidden costs. I believe this is the perfect time to introduce the notion of “**Cradle-to-Cradle**” **Design** (Products, services, or systems designed for a life cycle that is effective and lasting in terms of resources use and quality of life). In addition to the videos I’ve used before, I will have students study sections of the Beyond Nuclear website. This advocacy group is based in Takoma Park and “aims to educate and activate the public about the connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the need to abandon both to safeguard our future.” A new homework assignment will ask students to identify the specific ways the nuclear fuel cycle, as a system, is currently not nor could ever be considered a cradle-to-cradle design, specifically using the animated explanation of each step of the cycle in Part 2. I will also invite Kevin Kamps from Beyond Nuclear to speak on his work as a “radioactive waste watchdog.”

#### **WEEK FOURTEEN**

##### **May 7 (TH) Injustice to and Inspiration from Indigenous Communities**

*Poison Wind*, Dir. Norman Patrick Brown and Jenny Pond (Canvas Streaming)

TED Talk: “Reclaiming the Honorable Harvest,” Robin W. Kimmerer

Bonus: “The Intelligence in All Kinds of Life.” Extended conversation with Dr. Kimmerer on TEK and the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment on the *On Being* podcast. (Link on Canvas)

In this unit, we will turn our attention to various historical injustices that indigenous communities struggle with, including illnesses related to unsafe nuclear mining occupations, the negative health effects on families and communities caused by radioactive tailings sold to native peoples to make their adobe houses, and the desecration of sacred sites with nuclear waste dumping. The film *Poison Wind* will give us a concrete example with personal testimonies. Building on the earlier unit that addresses the ecological pollution and risk connected to the nuclear fuel cycle, students will be asked to consider how ethical concepts from Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) can help us shape compelling critiques of the nuclear industry. This unit is founded on the **Cultural Diversity and Indigenous/Traditional Knowledge** (The human asset of traditional knowledge in areas such as medicine, the arts, language, economy, and family) and **Intergenerational Thinking** (Considering the impact of each action on the seventh generation ahead) “big ideas.”

Finally, in the last homework of the semester I ask students to find an organization they can imagine supporting that endeavors to making positive change in the world (local or global). They must write up their motivations and speak to specific volunteer opportunities. I would like to add the short reading “You are Brilliant, and the Earth is Hiring” by Paul Hawken to this final assignment for inspiration.