

Week 9 Activity: The role of art, creativity, and storytelling in addressing ecological challenges

Part 1

Please listen to/watch *three* of the following (you can also find most of these from your phone apps etc.):

1. Sea Change podcast episode about the Craft of Climate Writing from August 2023. Sea Change is a radio show produced in New Orleans/Baton Rouge, and this episode features a panel discussion with three notable environmental writers, all based in the south and southeast US. <https://www.wwno.org/podcast/sea-change/2023-08-02/the-craft-of-climate-writing>
2. Sea Change podcast episode “We could all use a little creativity”, about the role of artists in tackling the climate crisis. This episode features conversations with artists, historians, and ecologists – all based in and around New Orleans– about the role that all these disciplines can play in framing stories about nature and environmental challenges. <https://www.wwno.org/podcast/sea-change/2023-07-06/we-could-all-use-a-little-creativity>
3. Conversation with Dr. Camille Dungy, author of the 2023 Book “Soil”. In this conversation, Dr. Dungy talks about her efforts to grow a native plants garden at her yard in Colorado, about the writing process, and about her experiences as writing about environmental issues as a Black poet. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5M6aRkfN-E>
4. Patagonia Stories podcast episode about Artistic Knowledge from December 2022. This episode features a conversation with Kentucky-based musicians The Local Honkeys, whose music is inspired by the environmental justice issues they witness in Coal Country. There is also a conversation with Cameron Keller Scott, about his poetry about rivers. <https://www.patagonia.com/stories/artistic-knowledge/podcast-130891.html>
5. New Yorker Radio Hour episode titled *The Origins of “Braiding Sweetgrass”* from August 2023. This episode features a conversation with Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, the author of the book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, a collection of essays about the relationship between humans and land. The book presents the role of indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing for understanding and relating to nature. <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/tnyradiohour/segments/braiding-sweetgrass>

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Part 2

Write a reflective essay about each of the three conversations you listened to. Aim for a length of about 300 words for *each of your three reflections*. I encourage you to reflect broadly, but here are a few questions to help you get started:

- Why did you choose to listen to/watch this conversation?
- What are some of the insights you found more interesting and compelling from the conversation?
- Is there anything from these conversations you disagree, or that you find dubious?
- After hearing this, what (if anything) changed for you about your view on the role of art and storytelling in tackling environmental challenges?
- Does this activity make you think or feel differently about the semester project for this course?
- What are some ways that you think the material we are covering in class - with focuses on “technical” and “scientific” ways of studying nature - relate to these other ways of studying nature?