

THREE GORGES DAM  
FYEC 178  
Spring 2009  
Dr. Benjamin Huff  
Office - 240 Copley  
benjaminhuff@rmc.edu 752-7216

*Office Hours:* 3-4pm M-Th, or by appointment, or most of the time if I am in my office.

*Class Times:* 11:30 – 1:40 pm, T, Th in Copley 214 (Copley 100 on joint meeting days)

*Texts:* Deirdre Chetham, *Before the Deluge*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2002.  
Mencius, *Mencius*. Penguin, 2003.  
L. P. Van Slyke, *Yangtze*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1988.  
Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*. Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2006.  
Other readings to be distributed in class and/or by Moodle— enrollment key  
“Three Gorges”

*GIS Data:* Available at H:classes\EVST\Three Gorges

*A reminder about the big picture*

Recall that last semester we examined what the Yangtze watershed was like before the dam, and the history and culture of the area from a human perspective. This semester we will address the main goal the course: examining the effects of the dam on the ecosystem and the people. We will also introduce a new wrinkle by paying particular attention to whether what is happening to the people and fish is ethical. This might sound like it is strictly a question of philosophy, but there is a long history of asking this type of question in environmental science. We will be getting into the philosophical and science literature on the topic, and at the end of the class, we will ask you to answer one simple question: “Was building the dam ethical?”. The question is simple, but the answers are very complicated.

*What happens this semester?*

The semester is broken into five major sections. In the first, we introduce three major ethical paradigms. Each provides insight into ways to judge whether a human action, like building a dam, is ethical. When you've become acquainted with these three paradigms, we'll ask you to evaluate how each paradigm helps us determine whether building the dam was ethical or not. This won't be a detailed analysis because, although you will understand the paradigms in some detail, you will not really know exactly what the dam is doing to the environment and people. Without that knowledge, your conclusions about whether the dam is ethical will be tentative. This will all be individual work and it will total 10% of your course grade. You will complete it in about 2.5 weeks.

The second phase of the course is where you develop the detailed information about what the dam is doing to the people and the environment. This will be individual work, and it will comprise about 35% of your grade. We'll complete it in about four weeks.

In the third phase of the work, you will be in a team of four (two from each class) that is devoted to examining the dam from one particular ethical paradigm, but at this point you will be infusing the ethical analysis with details about what the dam is doing to people and the environment. This part of the course will be worth 25% of your grade. It will start right after spring break and continue for about 3.5 weeks. A major group report will be the culmination to the process.

The fourth phase is the most fun. Drs. Huff and Gowan will be presenting their own ethical analysis of the dam, but with a twist: we will be playing the role of the Chinese government. In short, we will be making the case for why the dam is such a fantastic, wonderful, ethical idea. We'll do this during an oral presentation we'll make on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. You will then work with your group to evaluate where the Chinese government is ethically right and ethically wrong from the perspective of your group's paradigm. This work will worth 10% of your grade, and it will take about 1.5 weeks to complete. Your grade will be based on a 1-hour group presentation that you make during the week of May 4<sup>th</sup>.

The final phase of the work is where you digest all the information from the course and provide a final and definitive answer to the question, "Was building the dam ethical?" You will examine this question from the perspective of all four paradigms. You will write an individual final report worth 20% of your course grade and you will have about two weeks to complete it.

#### *Your pledge to us*

You've chosen to take this course. Understand that you are making several promises to us. First and foremost, you are promising to make this course a central part of your first year at college. You have to take charge of this course personally because at several points nobody is telling you exactly what you have to do and exactly what you have to know. All we have asked is that you get a job done. The job will seem vague and ill-defined at first. And then it will seem overwhelmingly complex. And then it will seem overwhelmingly difficult. You have to be ready to put in the time, effort, and mental power needed to make this class work. The nature of the job will require that you produce something *prior to* most every class (a brief writing assignment based on a reading, a major written report, research to share with your group, a presentation, etc.), and each will take 2-15+ hours to complete. By taking the course, you are promising to put in the time.

Second, you are promising to come to class every day and to be prepared. If you don't produce information between classes, we don't have anything to do during class. Therefore, *we do not accept any late assignments, and we expect perfect attendance*. Late assignments will receive an "F", and we reserve the right to fail you in the course if you miss more than two classes for any reason. This is not permission to miss two classes; it is recognition of the fact that illness or other circumstances may make it impossible for you to make every single class. If you are on a sports team, please carefully review your schedule. We completely support your participation in athletics and will work with you and your coaches to resolve conflicts, but you still must attend almost every class.

Finally, you are promising to do the work honestly. We are partners in this endeavor. You're trying to achieve hard goals, and we're trying to help you get there. If you cheat, you are telling us that you don't take our partnership seriously. We will handle the situation as described in the Code of Academic Integrity (see Fishtales), and we will recommend that you fail the course.

*Important* Please note that the two courses you are taking as this First-Year Colloquium (FYC)—FYEC 177 and FYEC 178—can be used to help you meet some of Randolph-Macon's collegiate requirements, including one lab course in the Natural Science and Mathematics Area of Knowledge (AOK), one Philosophy course in the Civilizations AOK, and one cross-area requirement in the Non-western category. However, you must pass both courses to receive all this credit. If you fail the first semester, you will not be permitted to take the second.

*Special Needs* The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other Federal laws require R-MC to provide a reasonable accommodation to any individual who advises us of a physical, psychological, or learning disability. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please register with the Office for Disability Support Services, located in the Higgins Academic Center. Arrange a meeting with me to discuss your needs and I'll be happy to make the necessary accommodations.

### Percentage of Your Grade for Each Task

Topic	% of grade
<i>Common Tasks (65% of total grade)</i>	
“Up the Yangtze” assignment	2% (individual)
First paradigm assignment	8% (individual)
Reports	
Paradigm Group milestones	5%
Paradigm Group Written report	20% (1/2 individual grade, 1/2 group grade)
Paradigm Group Presentation	10% (1/2 individual grade, 1/2 group grade)
Paradigm Individual report	20%
<i>Huff's Section (35% of total grade)</i>	
Class Participation (Feb-Mar)	12%
Philosophical Essay 1	6.5%
Philosophical Essay 2	6.5%
Exam	10%

Date	Tentative Class Schedule Topic	Reading or assignment*
FEB	10 <i>Joint class</i> : intro to the semester.	
	12 <i>Joint class</i> : view and discuss “Up the Yangtze”	<i>Before the Deluge</i> chap. 1 & 10 <i>Up the Yangtze</i> writing assignment (due 2/17)
	17 <i>Joint class</i> : the Maoist/Marxist paradigm; “Up the Yangtze” assign. due	Reading to be distributed
	19 <i>Joint class</i> : the Confucian/Leopold paradigm	Mencius 1A; Leopold, “The Land Ethic”
	24 <i>Joint class</i> : the Rolston/Taoist/Buddhist paradigm	Paradigm assignment (due 3/3) Reading to be distributed, incl. Rolston 1998 Mencius selections, <i>Before the Deluge</i> chap. 8 Philosophical essay 1 (due 3/10)
MAR	3 <i>Joint class</i> : form paradigm teams. Paradigm assignment due	<i>Before the Deluge</i> chap. 11 Paradigm group report assignment (due 3/18) Mencius selections; readings to be distributed Philosophical essay 2 (due 3/17)
	5 Confucianism, continued; Deng era policy	
	10 Taoism, continued; kinship and community in China. Philosophical essay 1 due	<i>Cadres and Kin</i> selections; readings to be distributed
	12 Condition of new working class; concept of social capital	Ngai, “State Meets Capital”; <i>Habits of the Heart</i> selections
	17 Effects of the dam; prospects for raising standard of living Philosophical essay 2 due	<i>Before the Deluge</i> chap. 11; Mies, “Myth of Catching-Up Development”
	19 <b>Exam</b> ; excerpts from “People’s Republic of Capitalism”	
	24 SPRING BREAK 26 SPRING BREAK	
APR	31 Paradigm Groups work	
	2 Paradigm Groups work	
	7 Paradigm Groups work	
	9 Paradigm Groups work	
	14 Paradigm Groups work	
	16 Paradigm Groups work (Gowan gone)	
	20 Paradigm group reports due at 5pm	
	21 Debate: Huff and Gowan present the case for the dam	Final paper assigned (due 5/22); Final presentation assigned (due week of 5/11)
	23 Paradigm Groups work	
	28 Paradigm groups work 30 Paradigm groups work	
MAY	4 Debate: Paradigm rebuttals (2 groups) ( <b>requires ENGL185 agreement</b> )	
	5 Debate: Paradigm rebuttals (2 groups)	
	7 Debate: Paradigm rebuttals (3 groups)	
	12 Review and Reflection	
	14 Review and Reflection	

**Final paper due by Thursday, May 22 at 5 pm. This is the culminating experience in the course, and so you are required by college policy to be physically present when you turn in the paper. Do not plan to leave campus before this time.**