Fall 2021

Elemental Relations: Fire & Culture

Daniel Lanza Rivers

San Jose State University, daniel.rivers@sjsu.edu

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Sustainable Futures Assignment Submission

Faculty Name: Daniel Lanza Rivers

Department: Humanities (American Studies) & English

Email: Daniel.rivers@sjsu.edu

Semester taught assignment (if applicable): Fall 2021

Course Title (if applicable): AMS 159: Nature and World Cultures

Assignment Title: Elemental Relations: Fire & Culture

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Context: Provide approximately 100-400 words to contextualize this assignment.

This assignment functions as the capstone task for my course AMS 159: Nature and World Cultures, and it asks students to use textual analysis, external research, and creative teamwork to produce installation material for the SJSU Thompson Art Gallery's upcoming event series "Protecting Home: Sustainable Fire Management and the California Environment." Throughout the third unit of my course, students are reading Stephen J. Pyne's book *Fire: a brief history*. This assignment tracks with our reading of that text, and asks student teams to select a topic, facilitate classroom discussions of a chapter related to their topic, and then use research to compose a piece of installation material on their topic. Alena Sauzade, Director of the Thompson Art Gallery, is actively involved in this project as both a client and a consultant. She will visit our class on 10/19 when the assignment is delivered to students, and she has expressed her excitement and commitment to integrating student work into the gallery opening in 2022. Students working on this project will also take advantage of the Fire and Culture bibliography that I designed as part of the Thompson Art Gallery's AEPG (Artistic Excellence in Programming Grant), which offers a curated set of resources on the topic of fire and culture in California.

Author's Overview of Resources Below:

- 1) Assignment Prompt (Installation Tile, Team Facilitation, Research Summary, and Project Plan)
- 2) Sample Timeline (a schedule of the unit and steps of this assignment, revised based on my reading and project schedule for Fall 2021)
- 3) Class Facilitation Rubric
- 4) Research Summary Rubric
- 5) Installation Tile Rubric
- 6) Reading Response Prompts (1-5, from Stephen Pyne's *Fire: a Brief History*, and supplemental readings on indigenous cultures of prescribed burning, and megafire in California)
- 7) Reading Response Rubric
- 8) Viewing Guide for film *Wilder Than Wild: Fire, Forests & the Future* (2018)
- 9) Fire & Culture Bibliography

[YOUR ASSIGNMENT TEXT HERE]:

AMS 159
Rivers
Fall 2021

Capstone Assignment 3:
Elemental Relations: Fire & Culture

Overview:

This capstone assignment will offer you the opportunity to deepen your knowledge of the historical relationships between fire and culture in California and beyond. Each of you will join one of 7 teams, which will each explore a particular aspect of the relationships among fire, culture, and our global world. The majority of this project will be conducted in your thematic team, but there are some elements (such as the research summary) that you will complete and submit individually. Your research for this project will use Stephen Pyne's *Fire: a brief history* as a foundation text, but you will also consult external texts as part of your research process. Students are encouraged to use [this bibliography](#) of curated materials on fire and culture in their research. The end result of your efforts will be one of a series of installation tiles that will be exhibited in SJSU's Thompson Art Gallery as part of their event series "Protecting Home: Sustainable Fire Management and the California Landscape."

Thematic Teams (3-4 members each):

Urban Fire (2 teams)
Cultural Burning (2 teams)
Pyrotechnics
Industrial Fire
Futures of Fire (2 teams)

Project Learning Outcomes:

This unit deploys assigned readings, classroom discussions, media viewing and listening activities, writing prompts, and external research to achieve the following outcomes:

- a) Examine the ways that fire functions as both a scientific phenomenon and a culturally-mediated technology that has been crucial to the development and organization of human societies and civilizations.
- b) Explore relationships among fire and cultural institutions and industries, including agriculture, architecture, forestry, and firefighting.
- c) Understand the variety of indigenous relationships with fire, as well as the cultural, economic, and ecological impacts that settler colonialism has had on fuels and fire regimes in California and beyond.
- d) Appreciate the human costs of fire, both in terms of its destructive effects on property and memory, and in terms of the reshaping of human spaces of life.
- e) Explore emergent technologies, knowledges, and policy propositions that aim to address the rise in wildfire and megafire in the epoch of climate change.

Elements of the Project:

Installation Material for “Protecting Home: Sustainable Fire Management & the California Landscape” (Rough Draft Due to Class on Thurs 11/18 or Tues 11/23; Final Draft & Artists’ Statement Due in Class on Thurs 12/2)

The ultimate goal of this team project is for your team to design an installation slide that can be displayed in SJSU’s Thompson Art Gallery’s as part of an upcoming series of events that will explore the histories of fire management and domestic environments in California.

Your installation material should be roughly 400-500 words in length, and should use Stephen Pyne’s *Fire: a brief history*, class texts, and external research to inform its work. While some teams may choose to compose a straight-forward summary for this assignment, you are encouraged to think of creative ways to use text and formatting to approach your installation tile. Samples of innovation can include: a glossary of terms related to your topic; an encyclopedia entry; a recipe; a timeline; a comic strip, etc. Alternative format requests will be reviewed by your instructor and our by Alena Sauzade, the Director of the Thompson Art Gallery. Your team will probably conduct more research than you need for this assignment, so part of the task for this team project will be deciding collectively what to prioritize in your installation material.

Alena Sauzade will join our class on Tuesday 10/19 to discuss the project and outline some of the parameters of what the gallery is looking for.

Working Draft: A working draft of this installation material will be due to Canvas by 9AM on the day your team is scheduled for peer review: either Thurs 11/8 or Tues 11/23

Artists’ Statement: Your final tile submission should be accompanied by a 150-200 word artist’s statement, which discusses your team’s intellectual process for designing and revising your tile. This artist’s statement should identify any key quotes or insights that informed your approach to your topic (from class readings and external research), and it should outline your team’s goals in designing this tile and presenting it to a public audience with little knowledge about fire.

Class Facilitation (Rolling deadline, Due in Class on Your Assigned Day):

Each thematic team will be assigned a corresponding chapter of Stephen Pyne’s book *Fire: a brief history*, which you will be expected to develop an expertise in. During the class session that corresponds to your chapter, your team will be asked to facilitate discussion of the chapter **and also** offer a short presentation to the class (roughly 7-10 minutes), which identifies key terms, questions, insights, and/or passages for discussion. Your team may choose to prepare all-class or breakout activities, and may also choose to bring in excerpts of relevant media (images, infographics, video, podcast, etc.).

This in-class element of this assignment will be graded on creativity, engagement, class participation, and depth-of-engagement with the chapter and/or its main ideas. The team will also submit an outline to Canvas by 12PM (noon) on the day following your presentation. This outline should include any discussion activity, media, quotes, questions, etc. that you used for your facilitation. Team members will also submit a brief, confidential assessment of how the workload was balanced on

this team-activity. *Teams that are doubling up on days (urban fire and cultural burning) should communicate with each other to ensure that you are covering different material.*

Research Summary (Due by 8:00 AM on Tues, 11/16):

Each student will be responsible for finding and analyzing at least 2 external sources related to your topic. **One of these sources should be written**, such as a longform article from a reputable magazine (The Atlantic, New Yorker, LA Times, SF Chronicle, Orion, High Country News, etc.), an institutional or organizational report, a book chapter (from a text with research citations), etc. **The other source can be a written text (as above), or it can be a piece of media**, such as a documentary film, a podcast, or a recording of an event or lecture. **Please note:** Blogs, encyclopedia entries, and videos or podcasts under 10 minutes will not count toward the minimum research requirements of this assignment this assignment, but can be used as supplemental material. **Also note:** Team members should coordinate on their research selections, as no members of the same team will be allowed to use the same source for their research summary. Students are encouraged to use [this bibliography](#) of curated materials on fire and culture in their research.

Your research summary should include three elements:

- 1) A brief summary paragraph (300-400 words) which discusses what your research has contributed to your understanding of your topic, as well as what connections you can draw between your research and your corresponding chapter in Stephen Pyne's *Fire*.
- 2) A full and proper bibliographical citation for each of your sources (in MLA or Chicago Style).
- 3) A critical analysis paragraph about each source, which spends 250-350 words summarizing the key moments, takeaways, concepts, and insights from this source that help you build out your understanding of your topic. You can use quotations here, but you will want to use them sparingly and focus instead on precise paraphrases that capture the nuance and key moments of your source.

Project Plan (Due by 12PM (noon) on Wed 11/17):

Each team will submit one copy of this document, which will include the names of all team members. The goal of this document is to offer a precise overview of the ways that your team is conceptualizing your topic or sub-topic. For example. If your team is looking at Fire & Technology (the pyrotechnics chapter), you will want to identify a subtopic that will focus your team's work (fire-fighting technology, for example).

Your project plan should include a short paragraph summarizing your topic, the key concepts each team member explored, and how they inform your overall approach (200-300 words). The rest of this document should outline the steps your team will take to complete your installation entry by the due date, Thursday 12/2 with a working timeline of who is completing what at what time (who is drafting, revising, fact-checking, etc.)

Sample Timeline:

This timeline is based on an actual syllabus

		UNIT 3: Elemental Relations: Fire Management & the Cultures of Colonialism in California
10	Tue 10/19	Reading Due: Stephen J. Pyne, <i>Fire: a Brief History</i> , Intro & Ch 1 “Fire and Earth,” (pgs. XV-XVII, 3-26,: 26p) In-Class Activity: Discuss Capstone Assignment 3 and Pick Groups Assignment Due: <i>Fire</i> Reading Response 1 (Due to Canvas by 8AM)
10	Thurs 10/21	ASYNCHRONOUS DAY: Watch <i>Wilder Than Wild: Fire, Forests, & the Future</i> on Kanopy (53min) & Submit Viewing Response by 11:59PM on Fri 10/22 Kanopy Link: https://sjsu.kanopy.com/video/wilder-wild-fire-forests-and-future
11	Tue 10/26	Reading Due: Stephen J. Pyne, <i>Fire: a Brief History</i> , Ch. 6, “Urban Fire” (p. 102-118: 17p); & Selections from Brian Fies graphic novel, <i>A Fire Story</i> In-Class Activity: Fire Group Presentation, “Urban Fire” Assignment Due: <i>Fire</i> Reading Response 2 (Due to Canvas by 8AM)
11	Thurs 10/28	Reading Due: Marissa K. Nelson, “Wrestling with Fire: Indigenous Women’s Resistance & Resurgence” (13p); Bill Tripp, “Our Land Was Taken, But We Still Hold the Knowledge to Stop Mega-Fires” In-Class Activity: Fire Group Presentation, “Cultural Burning” Assignment Due: <i>Indigenous Perspectives on Wildfire</i> Reading Response (Due to Canvas by 8AM)
12	Tue 11/2	Reading Due: Stephen J. Pyne, <i>Fire: a Brief History</i> : Everyone Reads: “Fire in the Mind” (6p), Then Choose either: Ch 7, “Pyrotechnics” (119-129, 11p) or Ch 9, “Industrial Fire” (p155-165, 12p) In-Class Activity: Fire Group Presentations, “Pyrotechnics” & “Industrial Fire”
12	Thurs 11/4	Reading Due: Stephen J. Pyne, <i>Fire: a Brief History</i> , Ch. 10 “Future of Fire” (172-178, 184-186, 11p) In-Class Activity: Fire Group Presentation, “Future of Fire” & Listen to <i>The Bay</i> , “Our Fire Conversation Needs to Change” Assignment Due: <i>Fire</i> Reading Response 3 (Due to Canvas by 8AM)

13	Tue 11/9	<p>Reading Due: Stephen J. Pyne, <i>Grist Magazine</i>, “Welcome to the Pyrocene” & Umar Irfan, <i>Vox Magazine</i> “We Must Burn the West to Save It”</p> <p>In-Class Activity: <i>Living Downstream</i>, “Firing Forests to Save Them”</p> <p>Assignment Due: Final <i>Fire</i> Reading Response Due to Canvas by 11:59PM (midnight) on Wednesday 11/10</p>
13	Thurs 11/11	NO CLASS MEETING: CAMPUS CLOSED FOR VETTRAN’S DAY
		UNIT 4: INTERSPECIES FUTURES ON A CHANGING PLANET
14	Tue 11/16	<p>Assignments Due to Canvas by 8AM</p> <p>Research Summary (One Per Group Member) & Group Project Plan (One Per Group)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Team planning session on</p>
14	Thurs 11/18	Reading Due & In-Class Activity: Groups 1-4 Bring Installation Material for In-Class Sharing and Work Shop Session
15	Tue 11/23	In-Class Activity: Groups 5-8 Bring Installation Material for In-Class Sharing and Work Shop Session
15	Thurs 11/25	NO CLASS: CAMPUS CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING
16	Tue 11/30	In-Class Activity: Semester Overview Discussion
16	Thurs 12/2	<p>Assignment Due: Capstone Assignment 3 (final)</p> <p>In-Class Activity: Capstone Assignment 3 Showcase</p>
17		Finals Period: Intellectual Journey Essay Due by 11:59PM, Wed 12/8

AMS/ENV/HUM 159: Nature & World Cultures

Capstone 3 Facilitation Rubric

<i>Team:</i>	<i>Topic:</i>	1	½	0
The team's engagement with the reading is substantial, using key quotes, concepts, and insights to draw connections between the text and the larger themes of the unit.				
The team's facilitation is creative and engaging, drawing the audience in with thought-provoking questions, audio and/or visual media, presentation software, or interactive activities.				
Presentation feels organized and polished. Information is communicated in a clear and professional manner.				
The facilitation meets the technical requirements of the assignment, including presentation time, integration of text, and follow up document.				
TOTAL				/4

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Capstone 3 Research Summary Rubric

<i>Student:</i>	<i>Team:</i>	1	½	0
<i>Summative Comments:</i> The general summary section of this assignment evidences a clear depth-of-engagement with the cited sources below, drawing broader conclusions and illustrating connections to the topics and themes of the unit				
<i>Engagement with Source 1</i> The summary includes a critical analysis paragraph for source 1 (textual), which spends 250-350 words summarizing key moments, takeaways, concepts, and insights from this source with a level of depth and nuance that evidences full engagement with the source.				
<i>Engagement with Source 2</i> The summary includes a critical analysis paragraph for source 1 (textual, documentary, or podcast), which spends 250-350 words summarizing key moments, takeaways, concepts, and insights from this source with a level of depth and nuance that evidences full engagement with the source.				
<i>Execution</i> The research summary meets the technical requirements of the assignment, including text type, word count, and MLA citation format				
TOTAL				/4

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Capstone 3 Installation Rubric

<i>Student:</i>	<i>Team:</i>	2	1& ½	1	½	0
<i>Engagement with Team's Topic</i> The completed installation tile offers creative and research-based, insight into the significance, ecology, and/or cultural dynamics of the team's topic—or an aspect thereof.						
<i>Audience Engagement</i> The tile presents its insights in a clear, instructive, and accessible manner that is well targeted to a general audience who is unfamiliar with critical, scientific, and/or cultural discussions of fire, fire management, etc.						
<i>Evidence of Polish & Revision</i> The team participated in in-class workshops, and the final product evidences a polish, nuance, and clarity of vision that is suitable to a culminating project from this unit.						
<i>Creativity and/or Innovation:</i> The installation tile uses a creative and engaging approach to the topic (or sub-topic). This may be evidenced by formal experimentation with the presentation of information, or it may take the form of eloquent and engaging writing.						
<i>Professionalism & Execution:</i> The tile satisfies the technical requirements of the assignment, including word count, submission timeline, etc. The team member in question contributed equitably to the completion of this project, as evidenced by team member reports and personal reflection.						
TOTAL						/10

Fire Reading Response Prompt 1: Stephen Pyne, “Introduction,” “Chapter 1,” & “Touched By Fire”

Instructions [Estimated time to complete 1-1.5 hours]:

Please answer the two questions below. Your answer to question 1 and 2 should each be roughly 1 short paragraph in length, and should use a mix of direct quotations and paraphrase to support its analysis.

In total, your report should use ***at least 3 quotes*** from this reading. Together, *your paragraphs should demonstrate that you have completed all of assigned reading, and that you are able to analyze this novel at the level of character, plot, and cultural importance.*

Your quotes must include accurate MLA style citations for full credit. Example: "This is my brilliant quote" (27).

[Pro Tip: Your response will be evaluated for its ability to respond to the prompt while also demonstrating your "completion" of the assigned reading. Responses that do not work across most of the assigned reading due by today will not earn full credit for this assignment]

Question 1: Fire as a Cultural and Environmental Phenomenon

What stands out to you from Pyne's discussion of a) humans' relationships with fire, b) fire's relationship with humans, and c) the relationship between fire and the evolution and ecology of particular landscapes and species? Along with identifying some broader trends, please also discuss examples or particular insights that stood out to you.

Question 2: Anatomy and Types of Fire:

Please use *your own words* to describe how Pyne defines and uses at least 3 of the following key terms. Please also identify why this world is important to a discussion of the nature of fire.

First Fire

Spark

Fuels and/or biomass

Second Fire

Combustion

Question 2: One more thing! (2pts)

Please select and include a quote that you do not discuss above, and discuss why it stands out to you. This could be anything from a single sentence, to a phenomenon or insight. You do not need to present a fully-realized analysis of this quote or moment, but please spend 1-2 sentences discussing why and/or how it stood out to you, and why it might be significant.

Fire Reading Response Prompt 2: Pyne, “Urban Fire” & Brian Fies, “A Fire Story”

Instructions [Estimated time to complete 1-1.5 hours]:

Please answer the two questions below. Your answer to each question should each be roughly 1 short paragraph in length, and should use a mix of direct quotations and paraphrase to support its analysis.

In total, your report should use **at least 4 quotes** from this reading. Together, *your paragraphs should demonstrate that you have completed all of assigned reading, and that you are able to analyze this novel at the level of character, plot, and cultural importance.*

Your quotes must include accurate MLA style citations for full credit. Example: "This is my brilliant quote" (27).

[Pro Tip: Your response will be evaluated for its ability to respond to the prompt while also demonstrating your "completion" of the assigned reading. Responses that do not work across most of the assigned reading due by today will not earn full credit for this assignment]

Question 1: Fire as a Cultural and Environmental Phenomenon (4 pts)

What stands out to you from Pyne's discussion of a) humans' relationships with using fire in human-dominant landscapes (including "the hearth"), b) the history of fire exclusion & management in urban environments, and c) the "social ecology of fire"?

Question 2: Surviving Fire & its Aftermath (3 pts)

Please use *your own analysis* to identify and discuss at least 2 key moments, quotes or insights from today's excerpt from Brian Fies' graphic novel *A Fire Story*. These could be anything from a single sentence, to a panel or interview. Please spend 1-2 sentences per moment discussing why and/or how it stood out to you, and why it might be significant.

Fire Reading Response Prompt 3: Indigenous Perspectives on Wildfire & Colonialism

Instructions [Estimated time to complete 1-1.5 hours]:

Please answer the two questions below. Your answer to question 1 and 2 should each be roughly 1 short paragraph in length, and should use a mix of direct quotations and paraphrase to support its analysis.

In total, your report should use ***at least 3 quotes*** from this reading. Together, *your paragraphs should demonstrate that you have completed all of assigned reading, and that you are able to analyze this novel at the level of character, plot, and cultural importance.*

Your quotes must include accurate MLA style citations for full credit. Example: "This is my brilliant quote" (27).

[Pro Tip: Your response will be evaluated for its ability to respond to the prompt while also demonstrating your "completion" of the assigned reading. Responses that do not work across most of the assigned reading due by today will not earn full credit for this assignment]

Question 1: Fire, Colonialism, and Resurgence (4 pts)

What insights does Nelson offer into the colonial and national histories of fire management (or "pyrophobia")? What stands out to you about the way that Nelson uses terms like minobimaadaziwin, resurgence, decolonization, survivance, etc. to acknowledges and build on the work of other thinkers (esp in p. 69-72)? What is Nelson's broader argument as you understand it? Quote and analyze to share your interpretation.

Question 2: Fire & Karuk Cultural Sovereignty (2 pts)

How does Bill Tripp's Op-ed help you further understand the relationship between colonialism and the environment? Please select and include a quote, insight, or moment that stands out to you and spend 1-2 sentences discussing why and/or how it relates to his broader argument, and why it might be significant.

Fire Reading Response Prompt 4: “Pyrotechnics” or “Industrial Fire” and “The Future of Fire”

Instructions [Estimated time to complete 1-1.5 hours]:

Please answer the two questions below. Your answer to question 1 (either option a or b) and question 2 should each be roughly 1 short paragraph in length, and should use a mix of direct quotations and paraphrase to support its analysis.

In total, your report should use ***at least 3 quotes*** from this reading. Together, *your paragraphs should demonstrate that you have completed all of assigned reading, and that you are able to analyze this novel at the level of character, plot, and cultural importance.*

Your quotes must include accurate MLA style citations for full credit. Example: "This is my brilliant quote" (27).

[Pro Tip: Your response will be evaluated for its ability to respond to the prompt while also demonstrating your "completion" of the assigned reading. Responses that do not work across most of the assigned reading due by today will not earn full credit for this assignment]

Question 1: Fire and/as Human Technology (4 pts)

Option A: Pyrotechnics: or Option B: Industrial Fire

Please use a mix of quotations (2) and paraphrase to recap the key ideas and takeaways of your chapter, and be sure to answer the following questions: how does your chapter contribute to our understanding of the history of humans use of fire as technology. How has fire played an essential role in human societies? What are some of the environmental and cultural consequences of that use?

Question 2: The Future of Fire (2 pts)

What stands out to you about the areas that Pyne labels as "places with too much fire" or "too little fire"? What cultural, political, and/or economic factors have reshaped these environments?

Question 3: One more thing! (2pts)

Please select and include a quote that you do not discuss above, and discuss why it stands out to you. This could be anything from a single sentence, to a phenomenon or insight. You do not need to present a fully-realized analysis of this quote or moment, but please spend 1-2 sentences discussing why and/or how it stood out to you, and why it might be significant.

Fire Reading Response Prompt 5: “Welcome to the Pyrocene” & “We Must Burn the West to Save It”

Instructions [Estimated time to complete 1-1.5 hours]:

Please answer the two questions below. Your answer to question 1 be roughly 1 short paragraph in length, and should use a mix of direct quotations and paraphrase to support its analysis.

In total, your report should use ***at least 3 quotes*** from this reading. Together, *your paragraphs should demonstrate that you have completed all of assigned reading, and that you are able to analyze this novel at the level of character, plot, and cultural importance.*

Your quotes must include accurate MLA style citations for full credit. Example: "This is my brilliant quote" (27).

[Pro Tip: Your response will be evaluated for its ability to respond to the prompt while also demonstrating your "completion" of the assigned reading. Responses that do not work across most of the assigned reading due by today will not earn full credit for this assignment]

Question 1: The Future of Fire (4 pts)

What further insights do Pyne's and Ifran's articles offer to your understanding of the histories and futures of fire management in the U.S.? Please analyze and discuss key moments and insights from these articles, and explain how they have further refined your understanding of the cultural, historical, and/or economic dynamics of megafire, cultural burning, and histories of forest management. Please also discuss what they might reveal about the status of contemporary discourse about fires in U.S. alternative media.

Question 2: Sharing What You Know (3 pts)

Using your own voice, and informal references to our readings from this unit, please identify a family member or friend, and then write a short paragraph explaining your understanding of the roots and cultural dynamics of contemporary mega fires to them. You don't need to cite page numbers, but you should be able to address at least a few common questions and/or misunderstandings about the emergence of megafires, the strategies that are being used to address them, and the ways these fires have different impacts on different communities. Thinking back to Fies, Tripp, and the early chapters of Pyne may be helpful here.

AMS/ENV/HUM 159: Nature & World Cultures

Fire & Culture Reading Response Rubric

<i>Student:</i>	2	1& ½	1	½	0
<i>Analysis of argument</i> The paper effectively responds to the prompt while developing a set of interpretive positions on the text's relevance to the study of culture, fire, ecology, and the environment (1 Point)	—	—			
<i>Evidence</i> The writer uses relevant and effective examples to support their interpretation. No quotes or excerpts are read out of context. The report strikes an effective balance among quotation, paraphrase, and analysis.					
<i>Analysis & Significance</i> The writer engages in precise and original analysis of the assigned text, including key passages, quotes, context, and/or argument. The writer engages the given text and its author on their own terms. The writer clearly demonstrates the significance of their analysis.					
<i>Completion/Coverage</i> The report demonstrates a clear depth of engagement with the analyzed text. The writer's work demonstrates that they have completed and reflected on all of the assigned reading.					
TOTAL					/7

Viewing Guide: *Wilder Than Wild* (2018)

Please use the headings below to organize your notes on the following segments of the documentary. Your notes should identify and define key terms while also capturing specific insights into the history, science, and cultures of fire in California. You can also take these notes on a separate piece of paper and upload an image of your notes if you prefer.

- 1) Rim Fire in the Sierra Nevada**
- 2) Fire & the 19th Century History of Yosemite**
- 3) Forest Service, Fire Suppression, & Smokey Bear**
- 4) Forest Fire & Climate Change**
- 5) Cultural Burning**
- 6) Wine Country Wildfires to Present (2017 – 2018)**

Response Questions

Please use complete sentences and specific references to the film to answer these questions.

- 1. Please write a discussion question about this film. This shouldn't be a yes/no question, but rather should be something that will suggest a particular way of approaching or analyzing a key aspect of the film.**
- 2. The film ends with the assertion that "just as landscapes have to become more resilient, so do we." What insights does the film offer into the strategies we have at hand that could make California more resilient?**

AEPG Fire & Culture Bibliography

Books, Chapters, and Articles About Fire:

Stephen J. Pyne, *Fire: a brief history* (University of Washington Press, 2019 [revised]), ISBN: 978-0295746180

An author of multiple books on the histories of fire, Pyne composed this book as a brief but comprehensive overview of the scientific and historical dynamics of fire and human societies. This book is global in scope, with chapters on urban fire management, fire & technology, industrial fire (& its contributions to climate change), and the “pyrocene,” Pyne’s term for the shifting global dynamics of fire in the epoch of climate change.

Reading Response Questions Coming Soon for Selected Chapters

Brian Fies, *A Fire Story* (Abrams ComicsArt, 2019), ISBN: 978-1419735851

A graphic memoir chronicling Fies’ own experience with the Santa Rosa Complex Fire of 2017. Expanded from the webcomic Fies wrote during his family’s experience of displacement, the graphic novel incorporates testimonials from members of his community. **You can also find his original webcomic [here](#).** Also of note: Fies will be visiting SJSU in the Spring of 2022!

Kari Marie Norgaard, “Ecological Dynamics of Settler-Colonialism: Smokey Bear and Fire Suppression as Cultural Violence,” from *Salmon and Acorns Feed Our People: Colonialism, Nature, and Social Action* (Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 72-128, ISBN: 978-0813584195

Emerging from almost two decades of collaborative fieldwork with the Karuk people on the Klamath River Basin, Norgaard’s chapter explores histories and dynamics of Karuk forest management, including forest stewardship, cultural burning, and indigenous relationships to the environment. It also examines how settler violence and the US Forest Service’s policies of fire exclusion exacerbated colonial dispossession while disrupting the knowledge and culture systems of the Karuk people and the wellbeing of tribal members.

Bill Tripp, “Our Land Was Taken, But We Still Hold the Knowledge to Stop Mega-Fires,” *The Guardian*, Sept 2020, [Stable-link](#)

Op-ed on prescribed fire, colonialism, and histories of cultural burning by Bill Tripp, the Director of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy for the Karuk Tribe.

Umar Irfan, “We Must Burn the West to Save It” *Vox Magazine*, July 2021, [Stable-link](#)

Investigative journalism exploring the potential for equity and resilience that can come of embracing cultural burning and prescribed fire in California. Discusses Karuk tribal movements for cultural revitalization and political responses to wildfire by the governor’s office.

Melissa K. Nelson, “Wrestling with Fire: Indigenous Women’s Resistance & Resurgence” *American Indian Culture & Research Journal*, 43.2, 2019, 69-84.

Nelson’s article locates wildfire and cultural burning within a broader consideration of Native women’s activism and the politics of sovereignty and decolonization during the time of climate change. **Reading Response Questions Coming Soon.**

Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Burning Cascade Head," from *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* (Milkweed Editions, 2013), p. 241-253, ISBN: 978-1571313560

Kimmerer's essay reflects on the connections among indigenous practices of cultural burning, histories of tribal stewardship of the salmon run, and the ethics of reciprocity. Kimmerer is a trained botanist, and this essay also incorporates a reflection on ecological research on restoring salmon populations.

Phillip Connors, *Fire Season: Notes from a Wilderness Lookout* (Ecco, 2012), ISBN: 978-0061859373

Connors' book offers a personal and intellectual perspective on fire and culture informed by a decade of seasonal work as a fire look out in the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. Working in the tradition of nature writers such as Annie Dillard and Edward Abbey, Connors' text has been noted for its lyrical and thought-provoking meditations on the natural world.

Kurtis Alexander, "Let it Burn? Forest Service's new all-out fire-suppression policy a dangerous move, critics say," (San Francisco Chronicle, August 2021), [stable-link](#)

Discusses California's current moratorium on controlled burns: explores recent, Biden-era appointments to the US Forest Service, criticisms, and political tensions about Cal Fire's approach to a recent wildfire near Markleeville, south of Lake Tahoe. "Under the (new) directive, the Forest Service is no longer allowing small fires to burn, nor lighting prescribed fires of its own, which both clear out thick, overgrown forests and reduce the intensity of future fires. They say this is the real danger."

Films on Kanopy (Free Through SJSU Library):

Wilder than Wild: Fire, Forests, & the Future (Kevin White, 2018, 57 mins) [Stable-link](#)

California-based documentary that explores the contemporary phenomenon of mega-fires while locating them within the historical context of climate change. Includes interviews with Stephen J. Pyne and Cal Fire, as well as discussions of the history of the U.S. Forest Services' fire-exclusion policies, and the resurgence of cultural burning by the Yurok Tribe of present-day Northern California. [Viewing Guide Link](#)

Paradise Burning (PBS: Frontline, 2019, 54 mins) [Stable-link](#)

Investigative journalism that uses interviews, testimony, and footage from the Camp Fire of 2018 to recount the timeline of the event while exploring the infrastructural and procedural factors that contributed to the loss of life and property--including aging PG&E infrastructure, and the town's evacuation plan.

Inside the Mega-Fire (PBS: NOVA, 2019, 54 mins), [Stable-link](#)

This film starts with the Camp Fire of 2018, but focuses on the developing science of weather and wildfire to explore how fire spreads, and what impacts it leaves, in the time of climate change. Topics of discussion include the emergence of the U.S. Forest Services' fire exclusion policy in 1910, and the contemporary wildfire research being conducted at the Missoula Fire Sciences Lab in Montana.

Burning Ojai: Our Fire Story (HBO Documentary Films, 2017, 40 mins) [Stable-link](#)

Autobiographical account of a filmmaker's experiences with the Thomas Fire of 2017, which incorporates interviews with Ventura County Fire and local Ojai residents. Much more of a narrative, personal reflection on the experience and legacy of surviving

wildfire than a scientific or historical exploration. Strengths include an attention to the afterlives of fire for those who lose homes and loved ones.

Podcast Episodes:

Living Downstream: the Environmental Justice Podcast, “Firing Forests to Save Them: Could Native Traditions Save Lives?” (Northern California Public Media, June 2019, 23 mins) [Stable-link](#)

This program uses narrative journalism to explore histories and practices of cultural burning in relation to indigenous societies, settler colonialism, and U.S. policies of fire exclusion. Particularly engaging interviews with members of the Pomo nation and fire ecologist Frank Lake (Yurok). ***Listening Guide Coming Soon.***

Then There's California, “Surviving Wildfire & Climate Change: Senator Henry Stern” (46 mins) [Stable-link](#)

“State Senator Henry Stern, the Chair of the Senate Natural Resources & Water Committee, candidly reflects on the emotional and psychological impact of evacuating & surviving a wildfire, and explains how the record-breaking wildfires of 2020 remind CA about the work still to be done to confront the economic and environmental consequences of climate change.”

The Bay, “How Tahoe Protected Itself from the Caldor Fire” (15 mins) [Stable-Link](#)

“The Caldor Fire came very close to burning thousands of homes and businesses in South Lake Tahoe. But in the end, while the wildfire has done a lot of damage, the city was largely spared. That’s no accident. South Lake Tahoe was protected from the Caldor Fire thanks to the hard work of firefighters, some favorable wind shifts, and years of forest preparation.”

The Bay, “Our Fire Conversations Need to Change” (19 mins) [Stable-Link](#)

A thoughtful reconsideration of how fires are talked about in contemporary media, politics, and journalism, and how the postures of this discourse shape our thinking about responses to fire, and what’s possible moving forward.

The Bay, “The PG&E Fire Trust Owes Billions to Survivors--and Most are Still Waiting” (18 Mins) [Stable-Link](#)

A look at the Trust in charge of distributing funds to the 70,000 survivors of the Camp Fire. While many of these survivors are unhoused and/or dipping into retirement savings, this Trust has racked up over \$51 Million in operating costs. This episode takes a closer look at the structure and economics of recovery for wildfire refugees.

Series: *California Burning: Solutions to California's Wildfire Problem* (North State Public Radio/NPR, 2019), 5 Episodes, 52mins each, [Stable-link](#)

Episode 1: “Our History With Fire”

“Smokey Bear is arguably the most effective advertising campaign in American history—but Smokey’s message created a fear in many of us that has led to a misunderstanding of fire. In this first episode of *California Burning*, we explore what Smokey got wrong, and we learn how a series of unprecedented wildfires in the early twentieth-century started forest management policies that have contributed to the catastrophic wildfires we’re experiencing today.”

Episode 2: “Native Intelligence”

“Native Californians used fire to maintain the forests that surrounded them for more than 14,000 years. This prevented future wildfires and supported many plants and animals that need fire to thrive. On the second episode of California Burning , Matt shadows a pyrogeographer and learns how the Yurok Tribe on the Klamath River and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Santa Cruz are bringing fire back to the land.”

Episode 3: “One Foot in the Black”

“Fire behavior is complicated, but can often be predicted. In the third episode of California Burning , we dive into the science of fire by visiting a wildland fire lab and a sustainable timber operation. We also hear from firefighters, forest rangers, and the "Helltown Hotshots" who risked it all to save their town during the Camp Fire.”

Episode 4: “The Wildland Urban Interface”

“Wildfires are no longer isolated to our forests in California. They now also threaten our cities. In the fourth episode of California Burning , we focus on where urban and wild spaces meet and hear from people who have experienced some of the most tragic fires in California's history.”

Episode 5: “Our Future With Fire”

“How can we address all the different factors associated with the wildfires plaguing California? On the fifth and final episode of California Burning, we seek solutions. We learn about alternative building materials that can withstand fire, and we go to a fire-resistant house that was the only in its neighborhood to survive the 2018 Carr Fire.”