What is nature? What is civilization? How can the two co-exist? Art has been proposing a series of answers to these questions since long before the crisis of climate change.

This course, focusing on Europe and North America since the advent of industrialization, studies art as an important means by which human beings produce and understand such fundamental concepts as nature, wilderness, the human being, civilization, cities, and the world. Looking especially at paintings, photographs, sculptures, films, and songs that represent the landscape, the course will consider the history of these key concepts as they pertain to the sustainability of life on earth. How has art ended up enabling environmental degradation and hastened climate change? How might it model a more sustainable set of relationships between the human and the non-human? Our work will include in-person study of, as well as research essays about, art in the Phillips Collection. The course includes five units: What Does Art Have to Do with the Environment?; Modernity, Modernism, and Nature; Deserts and Desertification; Cities and Suburbs; and Sustainability Now. This class is a supporting course for the Sustainability Minor and for the College Park Scholars program in Environment, Technology, Economy.

ARTH488G Special Topics in Art History - Art and the Environment

Meets: Fridays, February 1-May 10, 2019 | 1:00-3:30 pm
Location: The Phillips Collection, 1600 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC
Instructor: Professor Joshua Shannon
Contact: shannon1@umd.edu | (301) 405-1485 | Office: 4204 Art-Sociology Building

Enrollment: November 1, 2018 to January 24, 2019  To learn more, visit oes.umd.edu/phillips-collection.