

Writing 111
**Thinking Like a Mountain: Environmental Sustainability in an Age of Mass
Distraction**

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TR: 12:30 – 1:45
Location: South 127
TR: 2:00 – 3:15
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Overview: As of 2013, one of Brazil’s last surviving indigenous tribes, the Awá, remains un-contacted by Western society and has been observed only from a protective distance. Living comfortably deep within remote sections of the Amazon rainforest, some Awá tribal members have had no interaction with—and know nothing about—the modern world. Their histories, their cosmologies, and indeed their very lives are inseparable from the natural environment upon which they rely for sustenance, for shelter, and for meaning. Simply put, the Awá’s sense of reality is so far removed from our own that it is virtually incomprehensible. In the twenty-first century, then, perhaps what most divides us from the Awá is our profound alienation from the natural world. How has our separation from nature fundamentally altered how we think about our own lives? What specific values do we attach to culture and how do we relate those values to the environment? If we do not accept the premise that all life is interdependent, as ecologist Aldo Leopold suggests, are we endangering the future of our species? Given the chance, how might the Awá perceive us and our connection to nature?

In this course we will critically examine our own relationships to the environment on individual, cultural, and national levels. We will explore problematic terms, such as “nature” and “the natural world,” while interrogating their historical and cultural contexts. We will think critically about the purpose of higher education and the role of ecology and ecological thinking in all of our actions. Finally, we will explore the concepts and the practices behind “sustainability” while closely examining the numerous sustainability initiatives underway on the Reynolda campus.

Throughout the course, we will focus intently upon the rhetorical strategies various writers use to present sophisticated arguments about their environmental concerns. We will discuss genre and its relationship to audience, purpose, and rhetorical convention. We will write, then revise—then revise again—substantive essays in the service of lucid, well-organized, argumentative prose.

Required Texts (available in the campus bookstore)

Abbey, Edward. *Desert Solitaire*.
Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous*.
Krakauer, Jon. *Into the Wild*.
McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*.
Graff and Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*.

NOTE: Other texts and readings will be available through Sakai. It is your responsibility to print and annotate these readings.

Course Purpose and Outcomes

A few general mandates of the **Writing Program**:

1. Students will write 5000 words of expository prose (about 20 typed, double spaced pages).
2. Students will develop close reading habits, critical thinking skills, and rhetorical awareness.
3. Students will write for a variety of rhetorical purposes and contexts that prepare them to perform increasingly complex intellectual tasks as the semester progresses.
4. Students will learn the various conventions of academic discourse and gain facility in reading and writing in different genres.
5. Students will learn to write for discovery, analysis, and communication in a variety of rhetorical situations and for a variety of audiences.

A few additions to this list from **Dr. Stottlemyer**. In this class we will . . .

6. Uncover, explore, discuss, and write about long-held (perhaps *life-long* held) fears of, frustrations with, and dislike for writing and the writing process;
7. Explore the power of writing as a path toward self-discovery, as a tool to develop logical, emotional, and spiritual thinking, and as a means for profound personal, social, and global reflection;
8. Write expressively to an audience of one or one million without fear of reprisal or repercussion;
9. And most importantly, learn to love writing, and to develop a life-long passion for it.

Grading Policy

I will distribute grading rubrics for each of these writing projects and for the final portfolio before they are due. Please visit me during my office hours if you would like additional assistance with any aspect of the writing process. The Writing Center is also available to you and is an invaluable resource for any help you might need. Please do make use of it.

Preparation, Attendance, and Workshop / Class Participation:	15%
Weekly Journal and Outdoor Writing Exercises:	10%
Essay #1:	10%
Micro Argument Essay #1:	5%
Micro Argument Essay #2:	5%
Micro Argument Essay#3:	5%
Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography:	5%
Draft of Research Essay:	5%
<u>Revised Portfolio:</u>	<u>40%</u>
Total:	100%

Grading Scale

93-100: A	73-76: C
90-92: A-	70-72: C-
87-89: B+	67-69: D+
83-86: B	63-66: D
80-82: B-	60-62: D-
77-79: C+	below 60: F

Preparation and Class Participation

Your active participation in this course is crucial and it will contribute to a substantial portion of your final grade. Participation means coming to class on time having read, annotated, and mentally prepared yourself to discuss at length the texts I have assigned for that day. Many of the readings for this course will be available on Sakai, and it is your responsibility to print and read them before our class discussion begins. On that note, creating a safe classroom environment that promotes rigorous intellectual engagement requires respect for, and commitment to, your peers. You should feel free to discuss your ideas openly and candidly, but please be respectful of the perspectives and opinions of everyone in the class.

Weekly Journal

Starting in week two, you will write and maintain an online, bi-weekly journal of about 350 words per entry (about 700 words per week). For some of the entries, especially at the outset of the course, I will provide suggestions or writing prompts; others will be more open in terms of subject or topic. **One stipulation: journal entries must relate in some way to course materials, course readings, class discussions, or major writing assignments.** How you write these journal entries, however, is entirely up to you, and you should use the journal as an opportunity to practice the craft of writing without worrying about a grade. I will read your entries to ensure that you are completing them, of course, but you will receive full credit as long as you complete them. We will spend some class time during the first week of the semester setting up your journal through the blog site on Sakai.

Outdoor Writing Exercises

A beloved favorite for students, I will provide some suggestions for how to complete these as we do them. Throughout the course of the semester, we will complete four outdoor writing exercises, two of which we will work on during class and two of which you will be responsible for as homework. At least one of these exercises must involve one of the Wake Forest University sustainability initiatives.

Major Assignments

I will distribute prompts and grading rubrics for each of the major assignments as we begin working on them. Please see the tentative schedule below.

Revised Portfolio

As you will learn over the course of our semester together, I am a fan of the writing portfolio. The revised portfolio not only allows you to display some of your best written work, it also gives you an opportunity to demonstrate any improvements you might have made to your craft. I will distribute some guidelines for your portfolio as we approach the end of the course, but **be sure to save all of your written work from this class.**

Attendance Policy

Because the work in this course is cumulative, regular attendance is very important. Each unexcused absence will lower your course grade. (Absences for university-sponsored events are excused.) If you know you are going to miss a class, please send an email to me as soon as possible. We can make arrangements regarding homework and due dates if I know you will be absent ahead of time, but it is very hard to do so after the fact. Please be aware that you are responsible for making up all missed work. **More than six absences will result in an automatic failure of the course.**

Revision Policy

Good writing is revised writing. Develop good writing habits early; give yourself the gift of time and revise multiple drafts of each essay before submitting it to me for a grade. You may revise a graded essay, but you must meet with me to develop a revision plan no later than one week after I have returned the graded essay to you.

Late Work

I do not accept late homework. For major essays, I will lower the mark by one full letter grade for each day that it is late. Extenuating circumstances might apply, of course. If you know you will have difficulty meeting a deadline, it is critical that you communicate with me ahead of time as soon as possible so that we can make other arrangements.

Electronics

Periodically, we will use our laptops in class. I will let you know which days we will need them, but be sure you have all the necessary equipment before class begins. **Cell phone** use is not acceptable at any point in class and will result in a marked absence for the day. **Please see the attendance policy.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of claiming as your own, deliberately *or accidentally*, the work of another writer. As such, it is a serious offense and an egregious violation of academic conduct. We will talk about what constitutes plagiarism, but ultimately the student is responsible for all submitted work. Violations of this code can result in the cancellation of enrollment in this course, failure on specific assignments, failure of the entire course, dismissal from the University, or other penalties.

Disability

If you have a disability that may require an accommodation for taking this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (758-5929, Building and Room) within the first two (2) weeks of the semester.

Fall 2013 Schedule

Please note that this schedule is tentative and is subject to change.

8/27

Introduction to the course.

8/29

Reading for Analysis

Read: David Orr's "What Is Education For" and Bill McKibben's "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math" (links in Sakai)

9/3

Reading for Analysis Continued

Review: Wake Sustainability Tour (Sakai)

Read James J. Farrell's "The Moral Ecology of Everyday Life" (Sakai)

9/5

Strategies for Composition

Discussion: Abram / Outdoor writing

Read: Abram Ch. 1: The Ecology of Magic

9/10

Relative perception / Reality as ""Reality"" / What is this life?

In Class Collaborative Writing: Abram Precis

Read: Abram: 57-62; 183-93; 199-201

9/12

Peer-Review Workshop

Draft of Essay #1 Due

9/17

Revision Strategies

Discussion: Leopold's Sentient Mountain / Abram

Read Abram: "Coda" 261-74; Leopold: "Mountain"

9/19

Film: Grizzly Man, Part I

Essay #1 Due: Submit to Drop Box in Sakai

9/24

Writing Strategies

Read: Abbey: Author's Intro up to page 59

9/26

The Cantankerous Luddite and a Heavy Dose of Reality

Read: Abbey: 137-150

Read: Smail (sakai)

Due: MicroEssay #1: Submit to Sakai

10/1

Writing Strategies

Read: Abbey: 196-216

10/3

Scientific Perspectives

Read: Carson: "No Birds Sing" (Sakai)

Due: MicroEssay #2: Submit to Sakai

10/8

Writing Strategies

Peer-Review Workshop

Read: Dillard

Due: Draft of MicroEssay #3

10/10

WLA Conference: NO CLASS

Start Reading Krakauer or McCarthy

10/15

Film: Grizzly Man, Part II

Due: MicroEssay #3: Submit to Sakai

10/17

Library Research Day

Discussion: Krakauer's *Into the Wild*

10/22

Alexander Supertramp and Wild Ferocity

Read: Krakauer, Chapters 1-10

10/24

Alexander Supertramp and Wild Ferocity

Read: Krakauer, Chapters 11-Epilogue

10/29

Writing Strategies

Project Proposal Workshop

10/31

The "Apocalypse": Prescient Vision or Alarmist Malarkey?

Read McCarthy's *The Road*: 0-143

11/5

Writing Strategies
Annotated Bibliography Workshop
Read McCarthy's *The Road*: 143 - End
Due: Annotated Bibliography

11/7

Postmodernism Collides with Native America
Read: Castaneda (Sakai)
Comp strategies workshop / Outdoor writing

11/12

Revisiting Sustainability
WFU Building Dashboard
Review: Rev. Billy (Sakai)

11/14

Rethinking Sustainability
Responses to Reverend Billy
Project: Group Sustainability Assessment

11/19

Film: If a Tree Falls . . .
Due: Draft of Research Essay

11/21

Portfolio Revisions / Conferences

11/26

Portfolio Revisions / Conferences

11/28

Thanksgiving Holiday. No Class

12/3

Portfolio Revisions / Conferences

12/5

Final Thoughts / Reflections