



IMAGES OF NATURE AND CULTURE

GREEN MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

PROFESSOR: AMY C. MURPHY, PH.D.

FALL 2016

UTA WILL COWLING

LOCATION: DUNTON 112

TIME: TUESDAYS 9:30-12 AND THURSDAYS 9:30-10:45

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY: 11-12 AND 1:30-2; TUESDAY 1:30-2; WEDNESDAY: 1-2;

THURSDAY: 11-12 AND 1-2; AND ALSO BY APPOINTMENT

First-Year Writing and Thinking Seminars:

ELA 1000 Images of Nature and Culture: Catalogue Description

This variable topics four-credit course develops students' critical thinking, writing, and oral communication skills, and orients new students to the community of college learning at Green Mountain via a topic designed to interest both students and faculty members. In evaluating a range of ideas from various disciplines and mediums, students learn how to think, read, write, and speak from the perspective of an intellectual life. The first few weeks of the course utilizes a common bioregional approach aimed at helping students to transition to the college curriculum, to campus life, and to the local community. Finally, students will participate with their classmates in an adjoining first-year-interest group in which a peer mentor works with faculty to introduce unique features of the college such as field experiences, community engagement, and resources focused on facilitating their academic success.

Professor's Course Description:

What does it mean to make an argument? Before emails, tweets, and Facebook postings and as early as the beginning of the written word, people have sought to persuade others through their writing. This subsection of Images of Nature and Culture will examine how the essay has persuaded, amused, angered, informed, and touched readers over the course of its long history, from ancient times to the present. In this course, students will examine the evolution and practice of argument, from Aristotle's formalizing of the discipline of argument in his *Rhetoric*, to Martin Luther King's "A Letter from Birmingham Jail," in which he makes a case for the validity of the philosophy of the non-violence as social resistance, and Peter Singer's "Animal Liberation," a manifesto dedicated to the championing of animal rights. In addition to studying essays such as these and others, students will also investigate extra-literary arguments: advertisements, paintings, photographs, tourist brochures, pamphlets, etc. In considering documents that are not essays per se, students develop a capacity to recognize the use of rhetorical devices and persuasive strategies in a variety of contexts and media. Finally, students will explore the art of argument through the electronic media such as Facebook and Twitter.

ELA Assessment Goals:

Course Learning Goals:

II. Critical Thinking and Communication

Students will develop and apply strong problem-solving skills and communication skills.

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate complex issues and ideas to diverse audiences in a variety of media.
2. Students will demonstrate information literacy through the ability to access, understand, apply, and evaluate sources of information critically and to distinguish fact from opinion.

III. Environmental Awareness

Students will understand the factors contributing to our domestic and global ecological challenges and demonstrate the ability to evaluate proposals for creating a more sustainable future.

1. Students will understand the history of land use and the changing relationship between humans and nature over time

IV. Reflective Self Awareness and Responsibility

Students will demonstrate ethical responsibility, aesthetic sensitivity, and multicultural awareness.

2. Students will demonstrate empathy for others and the ability to entertain multiple perspectives.

Professor's application of course goals to the section of Images of Nature and Culture:

II. 1-2 Critical Thinking and communication--Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate complex issues and ideas to diverse audiences. Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate reasoning and to create effective arguments that address complex problems. Students will read a range of texts and learn to evaluate texts for clear relationships between assertions and evidence, as well as recognize patterns of development in texts, and the use of particular strategies or methods for various audiences and situations. They will learn to evaluate texts for credibility. Students will both recognize and criticize writers' use of a variety of rhetorical strategies. They will analyze rhetorical situations and compose their own texts for diverse audiences and purposes. They will develop an understanding of various genres of writing and learn to compose texts within the conventions of those genres. Throughout the course, students will conduct research to help them develop solid arguments through the use of evidence. They will learn to differentiate reliable and credible sources of information from those that are not. They will also learn to incorporate and use information appropriately to demonstrate their own points effectively and ethically. Furthermore, they will observe how other writers conduct research and ascertain the effectiveness and appropriateness of their choices, given their target audiences.

III. 1. Environmental Awareness—One unit of the course will use Vermont as a case study for arguments about place and its significance for our culture. In this unit students will read texts that take up the idea of the meaning of land to humans--from the real to the ideal. As a class we will explore our own relationship to place and try to discover how our sense of place is governed by a particular set of ideals or values, depending on our background. In this unit, students will write the Making Place essay. In reading essays about the environment and different perspectives about land use, we will consider ideas about nature handed down to us from the Transcendentalists, and read work by Thoreau and Emerson. What sorts of arguments get made about nature and land? How does our notion of ourselves as humans drive these arguments? In examining essays like the

“Land Ethic” by Leopold and integrating field trips to places like Hicks Orchard and Larsen Farms, I hope to enlarge students’ understanding about the meaning of place and what place might mean in a state like Vermont, with its own dream of nature and a culture that serves that vision. I am also interested in having students look at examples from pop culture connected to notions of bioregionalism: from bumper stickers with word “Native” ensconced in a visual representation of the state of Vermont, to the “Eat Local” credo, to brochures with pictures of covered bridges adjacent to rolling green hills, with captions that promise to lull readers/tourists back to a simpler time.

IV.2 Reflective Self Awareness—Students will gain experience examining their own writing in a recursive context, and develop multiple drafts of their writing. As part of a community of writers, they will gain an understanding of the social dimension of writing, the relation between writing and the community, and their own position within it. In developing their voices as writers, they will gain experience in developing critiques by examining their own work and that of their peers. In dialogue with the members of a writing community, students will hone the capacity to reflect on their growth as writers, as well as understand the responsibilities inherent in belonging to an academic community. By analyzing audience, developing audience awareness, and creating audience inventories for each essay they write or project they present, students will learn the importance of the connection between reader and writer and how fundamental the understanding of the audience’s point of view is to the creation of valid and persuasive arguments. They will become adept at recognizing the use of rhetorical appeals, which are wedded to a writer’s sense of his or her audience’s identity and point of view. Furthermore, through class discussion, students will learn to develop valid, respectful arguments, use nods to the opposition, and become practiced in the art of civil discourse.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

One of the most important ways you will communicate your ideas in college is through writing. In this course, you will develop your writing skills through a variety of written assignments. **You will be expected to produce a minimum of 20 pages of formal writing.** All formal writing assignments for this course will be assessed on how well students focus and structure their ideas, use an appropriate style to address different audiences, integrate supporting evidence and sources, and abide by standard conventions of English. All formal written assignments must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced (so I can write in comments and feedback), with standard margins and fonts. Please bring hard copies of all your assignments to class on (or before) the day it is due AND place a copy in the appropriate dropbox in Moodle. Writing assignments will include the following:

Formal Response Shorter Essays: These are typically 2-3 page assignments in which you will analyze and interpret course readings and class-related experiences. These papers are to be typed and carefully proof-read. These assignments will give you an opportunity to explore a variety of rhetorical modes such as: persuasion, description, definition, process, and analysis. These papers also provide relevant material to be selected and revised for inclusion in the longer essays: Making Place and Problem/Solution.

Journals: This is writing we do in class, in the field, or at home. These entries will provide opportunities for you to freely reflect on readings and class activities, and help you make important connections between ideas from class and experiences in the field. These assignments need not be typed; handwritten work is fine. These writings may be shared in class and will often serve as inspiration for more formal writing. Journals will

periodically be collected, and read by me and/or the UTA. You will need to write in your journal regularly, and the reader must be able to read your handwriting. Please bring your journal to each class meeting.

Your journal will also contain **nine reflection exercises**, a minimum of 250 words each, connected to the **Images reflection workshop**. These reflection exercises will be written in response to nine events that you attend on campus or in the surrounding community. There are three categories of events and you should select three events to attend from each category: three from speakers/lectures/arts/theater/music category, three from personal development/health/wellness, and three from student life/athletics. To find out about events, use the event calendar on the GMC website: http://www.greenmtn.edu/news_events/events-calendar.aspx, which provides an up to date schedule of events. You can view it as a list or look at it as a month. In responding to events, reflect on some significant aspect and its affect on you, using enough detail to demonstrate that you attended. This should not be a summary, but a critical response to the event. In order to assure that you are responding critically, apply one of the questions below (or a question you come up with yourself in a similar vein) to guide your response:

- How did the experience change your thinking about [choose a topic or issue]?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- What thoughts (if any) does this experience give you about issues in your local community? The nation? The world?
- How have your assumptions or stereotypes (about people, a community, the world, etc.) been challenged by the experience?
- What did you learn about yourself from this experience?

In addition, put your descriptive writing skills to use--provide evocative details that make use of the five senses--touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound.

Making Place Paper: This 5-6-page paper will provide you with an opportunity to write an environmental/social history of a place that is meaningful to you. The place you write about can be any place that you have some connection with—your hometown, the pizza shop where you work, a nature preserve where you like to hike. You will be required to not only spend time observing your place with fresh eyes and reading the landscape with ideas and techniques discussed in class, but you will also use research to support their final analysis of how and why that landscape came to exist as it does today. Please see attached assignment sheet.

The Problem/Solution Paper In this formal, 6-8 page paper, you will identify a problem connected to an idea or issue you have an interest in exploring. The first part of the essay will identify the problem and describe it fully, using evidence to support its documentation. In the second part of the essay, you will propose a solution to the problem and make an argument that addresses how it might best be solved. This essay should be directed toward a particular audience, who is positioned to enact the solution you propose. Your sense of audience is should be evident throughout the paper, in the way you tailor your use of reasoning and selection of sources, as well as evidence. You are required to have a minimum of 5 sources for this essay and must include a works cited page in MLA style.

OTHER ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Attendance & Participation: Our class is a community of learners. The success of our course depends on the time and energy all of its members invest in it. Your presence and active participation is important. Active participation in the course--coming prepared to class with texts and having done the assigned reading is also expected. Your participation grade will remain strong if you come prepared and actively participate. I encourage you to attend every class and participate in every field trip. After 3 absences, I will dock your final grade 1 point for each additional absence. Substantial and repeated lateness will also count as absences. If you miss five classes, I will ask you to drop the course. There are no excused

absences, except for officially recognized religious holidays, for example, and except for deaths in the family or serious illness, which also must be documented.

All Images of Nature and Culture classes will embark on at least four field labs throughout the semester. These may involve a walk to a local cemetery, a visit/tour of a local farm, or an extended trip to a state park or museum. The field experiences in this part of the class are central to your learning in this course. They are designed to help you develop deeper understandings of the local bioregion, and to think about connections between ideas from the readings and the landscapes that surround Green Mountain College. To do well in this class, you must come prepared to the field labs and actively participate in these out-of-class experiences. **You are required to bring your journal and the assigned reading material with you on all field trips. Also, please dress appropriately. This means wearing shoes appropriate to the activity and clothes appropriate to the weather and occasion.**

Discussion Leading: Students will work in pairs to lead class for at least one day during the semester. We will sign up for discussion-leading days during the first week of class. The purpose of having students lead discussion is to provide opportunities for you to engage the material in creative and different ways, and for students to take more ownership of the class discussions. You must be present on the day assigned, or you will not receive credit for the activity.

Peer Reviews

During the semester we will meet several times in collaborative writing groups to read one another's drafts and offer constructive, productive feedback. Because writing is a recursive process, peer reviews give us one way to see how our writing is structured and what might improve it. It also helps us understand how an audience might respond to our voice, and stance in a piece of writing. Certain class days are set aside for peer review during the semester and they are activities which require both your physical presence and a draft of your essay. If you are not there, or do not have a draft, your grade will be impacted.

One on One Conferences-- At least twice during the semester for the Making Place essay and the problem/solution essay, you will sign up for a one on one conference with me. These conferences are mandatory and an important part of your engagement with the course--the conferences give us a unique opportunity to assess your learning through writing together.

Integration Exercise: This assignment is designed to help you synthesize the information and ideas you learned about throughout the semester in a way that best suits your particular learning style. This could be some kind of visual representation, a research paper, a screenplay—whatever demonstration of knowledge and understanding will help you learn information for the final exam. These projects may be publicly displayed and you will be required to present your ideas to your classmates who will review your work. We will talk more about the integration exercise in class.

Final Exam: The final exam will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate what they've learned throughout the semester. It will focus on the second half of the course and be administered as a take-home. You will be required to submit in Moodle on our final exam date, which is December

Late Assignments: I will not accept late work, whether essays, journals, or another assignment. In my years of teaching, I have found that accepting late work adversely affects the performance of the student and the class as a whole. Completing assignments on time helps students and professors alike and contributes to an atmosphere of shared responsibility in the class. Essays must be turned in both through Moodle and to me in

hard copy form no later than the beginning of class. Please plan ahead and both have your paper in Moodle and in hard copy form. Planning ahead will help to ensure you can turn your work in on time. IF you are absent due to a college-sanctioned activity you must still turn the work in on time. Illness, unless it is profound and substantiated by a doctor's note, is also not an excuse for late work.

Missed Exams or Quizzes: Exams or quizzes cannot be made up unless your absence is directly related to a college activity. Acts of God will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For more information, see the College's formal Attendance Policy in the College Catalog.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a specific learning, physical, or psychiatric disability and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Calhoun Learning Center. The Calhoun Learning Center is located on the 3rd floor of Griswold Library. If you have questions, please contact Meaghan Boedemer, Assistant Director of Academic Support Services at x8812.

Academic Integrity: To plagiarize is "to steal the language, ideas, or thoughts from another, representing them as one's own original work." (Random House Dictionary, Abridged, 1980). Please see the college catalog for a detailed explanation of plagiarism and penalties for academic dishonesty at Green Mountain College. If you didn't say it or think it, you must cite the source of the idea. If you are unsure whether use of a source may constitute plagiarism, please ask me. Plagiarized work will not be accepted and students will be subject to college penalties if they plagiarize work.

Electronic Devices: Most classes will not require any technology except paper and pen. Cell phones and lap tops are not to be in use during class session. I will ask you to turn off your phones and place them in a basket at the beginning of every class. I will ask that you pick them up a few minutes before the session's end.

Where to Get Help: If you are struggling with an essay, a reading, or anything else connected to my class, please come and see me! That's what my office hours are for! If you can't see me during office hours, we can always make an appointment. For small questions, please first consult your syllabus, and then shoot me an email if you still can't find the answer. For extra writing help, please see the friendly and gifted tutoring staff over at the Calhoun Learning Center in the Griswold Library. They can book up quickly, so it's best to make an appointment in advance.

Breakdown of Percentages for Grades:

GRADE BREAKDOWN
Attendance, Participation, & Discussion Leading: 5%
Shorter Essays: 25 % 9/8, 9/29, 11/3, 12/3 (Annotated bibliography)
Quizzes/Journal/Notebook/Reflections: 15%

Major Papers: 40% (Making Place Paper, 20%; Problem/Solution 20%)Due OCT 22 and DEC 1st
Final Exam: 10%: Take home, DUE in MOODLE: THURSDAY, DEC. 17th
Integration Exercise: 5%

TENTATIVE DAILY SCHEDULE (schedule subject to change with notice). All assignments are to be prepared for the date given

Week 1

August 30th, Saturday--Dinner with Images Professor and UTA! Fill out Academic Path survey

September 1st: So Now You're a College Student? Writing Your Academic Path Paper

3rd: Diagnostic Essay;

Over the weekend: Read Chapter 1 in the Bedford Guide to prepare for writing your Academic Path paper--"Writing Processes"

Week 2

September 8th: "Thinking Like a Mountain and the Land Ethic" --from the *Sand County Almanac*; and from *The Bedford Guide*, read Chapter 2:

Reading Process, pp 18-29. Journals due to Paige

Academic Path Essay also due (Shorter essay 1)

10th Discussion of Leopold

Week 3

Over the weekend: Read Thoreau: <http://thoreau.eserver.org/walden02.html> "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" and "Walking": Three Parts:<http://thoreau.eserver.org/walking.html>

September 15th : Challenge course with Adventure Education students and Drew Bentley. Read "Relationships and Diversity" in Moodle

Also due September 15th: (300 words)

17th Thoreau, discussion of selections (see above).

Week 4:

September 22 Deane Preserve Field trip; also read "Seeing" by Annie Dillard in Moodle; Group questions about "Walking" due

Sept 24th Finish Thoreau and Dillard : Thoreau close reading/analysis due

Week 5

September 29th

Hicks Orchard Field trip--Granville, New York; Also read Michael Pollan selection in Moodle; **shorter essay 2 due (comparison essay)** ; journals due to Paige. In preparation for this assignment, read 116-136 in the *Bedford Guide*;

The Making Place Unit

Week 6

October 6 Discussion of "Seeing," by Dillard, selections from 19th century Native Americans: "Red Jacket," and Tecumseh; Rachel Carson's "Fable for Tomorrow." Your essay selections; discussion of Making Place Essay
8 Discussion leaders: __Tate and Trey _Alice Walker, "Everything is a Human Being"

Week 7

13 no class

15 four reflection exercises due; research workshop--Griswold library. Please meet in the PC lab upstairs in the library at 9:30 instead of in Dunton

Week 8

20 Larson Farm field trip--meet in Ames circle at 9:30 a.m.

22 the poems of Mary Oliver: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/mary-oliver#about>: discussion leaders: Yasmeen and Chelsea
Michael Pollan essay--selection from *The Botany of Desire*; discussion leaders: Katelyn and Zoe . Full draft of Making Place essay due for peer review

Week 9

27 Please come to your individual conference (times will be assigned in advance) in our classroom in Dunton. Class cancelled in lieu of conferences--please note that a missed conference counts as an absence

29 Final Draft of Making Place essay due; begin Problem Solution Unit

