

[WRTG 3020-035 \(17706\)](#)

Topics in Writing (Seminar)

20 MoWe 3:00PM - 4:15PM

EDUC 134 Aug 22, 2011-
Dec 9, 2011

[WRTG 3020-041 \(17719\)](#)

Topics in Writing (Seminar)

20 MoWe 4:30PM - 5:45PM

EDUC 132 Aug 22, 2011-
Dec 9, 2011

ENVIRONMENTAL WRITING

Dr. David Williams

WRTG 3020-035 (17706)

WRTG 3020-041 (17719)

WEBSITES FOR THE CLASS

FA2011:WRTG:3020:B - 035,041: Topics In Writing

<http://writingeco.wordpress.com/>

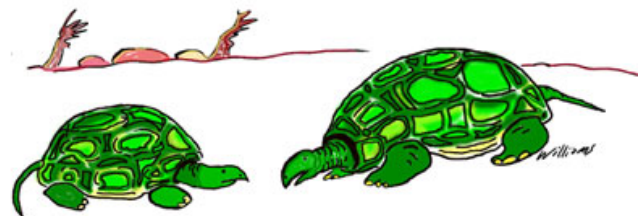
(you must sign into Wordpress, and then give me the email address you signed in with so I can register you)

Communication Policy:

1. My preferred method of contact is through this email address: david.williams@Colorado.EDU
2. My cell phone number is 720-308-0915
3. You should expect a response from me within 24 hours.
4. If no response is received within the suggested time-frame please send a text message to the above phone number.
5. Office hours:

ENVIRONMENTAL WRITING

In this course we will research and discussing a host of environmental topics, everything from the historical debate between Conservation and Preservation, to Eco Worldviews past and present, Global Warming, Wildlife Extinction, Sustainability, and Environmental Ethics. We will also examine our deep connection to nature through evolutionary theory, dealing with issues ranging from DNA to neuroscience to gender, and how all these play into our thinking about ecological



*You live, and live, and live, and live, and live--
and then you die.*

concerns. Students will engage in the rhetorical analysis of writing and media in relation to the environment, and they will create and critique their own work through various papers and media presentations.

The syllabus is subject to changes, as I assign various new readings, or special events and speakers become available.



Well Bucko, we did it--killed off the buffalo, the antelope, and the deer, moved out the Indians we didn't knock off, cut down every single tree mowed down every single blade of grass, plowed up the topsoil before the wind swept it away, mined the hell out of what was underneath--blasted, bulldozed, and pulverized every single scrap that was left--and now just look at it. It's totally clean. Not a darn thing out there, by golly! Kind of makes you think.

Texts

Communicating Nature by Julia B. Corbett

- **Paperback:** 368 pages
- **Publisher:** Island Press; 1 edition (November 6, 2006)
- **ISBN-10:** 1597260681
- **ISBN-13:** 978-1597260688

The Practice of the Wild: With a New Preface by the Author by Gary Snyder

- **Publisher:** Counterpoint; Expanded ed edition (August 17, 2010)
- **ISBN-10:** 158243638X
- **ISBN-13:** 978-1582436388

The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth by Edward O. Wilson

- **Publisher:** W. W. Norton & Company (September 17, 2007)
- **ISBN-10:** 0393330486
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0393330489

Film

The 11th Hour, starring Leonardo DiCaprio

(this DVD can be viewed online from amazon.com for \$2.99 or viewed on Netflix, or purchased for as little at \$3.50 from amazon.com)

Rhetoric websites

writing@CSU (<http://writing.colostate.edu/index.cfm>); Silva Rhetoricae (<http://rhetoric.byu.edu/>); the Purdue OWL (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>)

Themes to be covered in class

Worldview—Myth, Religion, And Science



Origins: Who Are We As Human Beings?

The Body/Brain/Environment/Men/Women

Rhetoric Of Nature—How Our World Is Displayed And Interpreted

Historical and Contemporary Depictions Of The Nature And Wilderness

State Of The World—Wildlife, Habitat, Energy, Population

Sustainability

Politics and Social Change

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There are 3 Media Projects due and a number of writing assignments of various kinds—personal essays, poems, summaries, blogs, and one research paper that involves research and at least 4 outside sources and an additional Works Cited Page.

PROJECT 1=15 points

PROJECT 2=20 points

PROJECT 3=25 points

OTHER WRITING ASSIGNMENTS COMBINED=30 POINTS

CLASS PARTICIPATION=5 POINTS

EXTRA BLOG POSTS=5

GRADING

A 92 -100 B+ 88-89 C+ 78-79 D+ 68-69 F 59--

A- 90-91 B 82-87 C 72-77 D 62-67

B- 80-81 C- 70-71 D- 60-61

PORTFOLIO

Buy a portfolio folder to keep all of the papers you write and all of the papers I hand back to you, and be sure to back up all of your papers on a disc. Something will get lost, inevitably, in the course of the semester, so it's important to keep back-up copies. The portfolio itself will be used in assessing the final grades.

ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE GRADED AS FOLLOWS:

"A" level work reflects excellence in all areas. An "A" suggests that work is not only thought provoking and structurally polished, but that assignments are completed with a high level of stylistic and critical independence. "A" level work presents the reader with fresh and independent thinking, logical organization, and excellent control over mechanics and style.

"B" level work is very good, well above average. This work explores difficult questions in a way that is creative, critical and thought provoking. "B" level work is critically and organizationally sound, is stylistically competent, and contains few errors.

“C” level work indicates that assignments are completed adequately, meeting minimum requirements. This grade indicates that the work is functional at a college level and that all aspects of the assignment have been addressed. However, the work may be hindered by a lack of sufficient critical inquiry, organizational clarity, and control over mechanics and style.

“D” level work is substandard at the college-level. It is usually completed in haste and reflects little thought or attention to detail. A “D” indicates that major portions of the assignment are completed poorly.

“F” level work is incomplete or inadequate. An “F” will also be given if plagiarism has occurred.

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is mandatory. If you miss more than 3 classes without good reason your overall grade will be dropped one point, say from an A to an A-. Each additional miss will drop your grade again one point. If you miss 6 classes you will be dropped from the class or given an F.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

This course will require students to read various articles and books, watch videos, and write a variety of papers and one public service advertisement.

AFTER TAKING THIS COURSE, YOU SHOULD

- have a better background regarding the nature of science
- know something about recent findings in neuroscience and evolutionary psychology
- have a greater understanding of rhetorical strategies and how they affect us
- be much more aware of environmental problems, such as global warming
- see the relationship between the environment and the economy
- understand what is necessary for a sustainable lifestyle
- improve as a writer, designer, thinker, and communicator through various media

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

First Day of Classes	Aug. 22 (Mon.)	Final Exams	Dec. 10-15 (Sat.-Thurs.)
Tuition Due	Aug. 31 (Wed.)	Commencement	Dec. 16 (Fri.)
Labor Day (campus closed)	Sept. 5 (Mon.)		
Fall Convocation	Sept. 30 (Fri.)		
Family Weekend	Sept. 30 - Oct. 2 (Fri. - Sun)		
Fall Break	Nov. 21-23 (Mon.-Wed.)		
Thanksgiving (campus closed)	Nov. 24-25 (Thurs.-Fri.)		
Last Day of Classes	Dec. 9 (Fri.)		



People who need people are the luckiest people in the world

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. I will report all incidents of academic misconduct to the Honor Code Council. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information may be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode>

Students with disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations, submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or www.Colorado.edu/EDL/disabilityservices.

Classroom behavior

Students and faculty each have a responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity, and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and nationalities. See www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

WRITING AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

GREEN=BLOG AND CU LEARN POSTS

YELLOW=WRITING PROJECTS

WEEK ONE—SCIENCE & MYTHOLOGY

AUG. 22-26

MON.

INTRODUCTION. We will also talk about the art of rhetoric and view a video clip:

<http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/394777/august-16-2011/colbert-super-pac--frank-luntz-commits-to-the-pac>

WED.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Have read "Origin Myths" by Robert Carnerio at <http://ncse.com/religion/origin-myths>, as well as James Jeans' essay "The Mysterious Universe," the essay by Albert Einstein "Religion and Science," and Carl Sagan's "The Demon-Haunted World," which I will post on the website.

CLASS

We will talk about the readings, the class blogs, Wordpress, and talk about **PROJECT 1**, which involves creating a 1-minute presentation in imovie, a personal statement about you and your interest in ecology and the environment. This is to be a collage of photos, writings, voice-overs, video clips, and music that you put together to make a personal statement about your view of nature.

UPCOMING PROJECT DUE: PERSONAL VIDEO ESSAY WILL BE DUE ON MONDAY SEPT. 12TH: THEY MUST BE POSTED TO YOUTUBE BY THAT DATE.

GOAL AND RUBRIC: the goal of this assignment is to use a variety of media to tell a story to a wide audience that tells something of about you and your view of the world. The class will help to develop the grading rubric for this assignment.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1

Post a 1-page reaction paper on the class blog for today's class (<http://writingsci.wordpress.com/>); also post in ASSIGNMENTS at CU LEARN, giving your view about myth and science. This should be entirely in your own words, without footnotes, references, or a Work Cited page. Read 3 statements from others in the class and comment upon their statements below their posts.

GOAL AND RUBRIC: the goal of this assignment is to understand the nature of science and how it differs from other forms of human inquiry. The grading rubric for this assignment will be developed by the class.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2

Read the essay, "Billy and the Ball" on the class website and post a one paragraph blog imitating the Old/New Information format. Also, post in ASSIGNMENTS at CU LEARN. Everyone should read at least 3 blogs and comment on them.

GOAL AND RUBRIC: the goal of this assignment is to understand how sentences are stitched together with old and new information to form paragraphs.

WEEK TWO—HOW WE FEEL AUG. 29--SEPT. 2

MON.

**CLASS**

How The Brain Works: Logic/Emotion/Feeling. We will see a film with neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, one of the most prominent neuroscientists working today that brings in new information on how the brain actually works. "We are feeling machines that think, not thinking machines that feel," Antonia Damasio. **Writing idea:** how the brain wants to categorize, tell a story,

interpret information.

WED.

CLASS

David Underwood—guest speaker—on preparing the video **Project 1**.

READING & WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3

Differing Worldviews Of Nature. Have read pages 1-25 of *Communicating Nature*, and post a short summary of this section of the book in ASSIGNMENTS at CU LEARN. (Have read how to write a summary, if you haven't yet: http://homepage.smc.edu/reading_lab/writing_a_summary.htm).

WEEK THREE—WRITING WITH ECONOMY SEPT. 5-9

MON.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Haiku—have read the poems online from Issa and Basho. Have read chapter 1 of Snyder's *The Practice of the Wild*.

CLASS

Writing About Nature: Haiku & an Eastern approach to the natural world. We will look at some Japanese haiku, talking about the components of this minimalist form and taking a stab at writing haiku-like pieces utilizing traditional haiku criteria. [Writing idea: protean leap of the imagination and the concrete.](#)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 4

We will talk about the rigorous requirements of haiku, and you will then later post three finished haiku on the blog site for review on Wed. Also, post in ASSIGNMENTS at CU LEARN.

GOAL AND RUBRIC: this assignment is to learn precision and economy with language.

WED.

CLASS

Writing Workshop. We will go over the poems that you have posted to the blog site.

Rhetoric Of The Wild—Depictions of wilderness in painting will be examined.

READING & WRITING ASSIGNMENT 5

Have read pages 26-56 of *Communicating Nature* and post a blog on the website (before today's class) that does the following: the blog should start with a very brief summary of chapter 2, and then write a separate reflection of your own that deals with the issues raised in the chapter (that is no more than about half a page). Each of you then must comment on 3 other class members' entries. Also post in ASSIGNMENTS at CU LEARN.

WEEK FOUR—THE MEDIA & NATURE

SEPT. 12-16

MON.

PROJECT 1, PERSONAL VIDEO ESSAYS, WILL BE DUE FOR VIEWING

CLASS

We will view and grade **Project 1.**

READING ASSIGNMENT

LET YOUR ACTORS ACT—SENTENCES ARE STORIES—have read the following in class, from THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE:

<http://redschoollhouse.org/drupal/?q=style/storytelling/see-it>

<http://redschoollhouse.org/drupal/?q=style/storytelling/basic-principle>

WED.

CLASS

Nature In Media Today, from Greenwashing to Ecoporn. We will examine different views of nature as presented in the media, taking a look at videos and magazine advertisements. Find interesting ads on YouTube or in magazines and bring one to class that deals with greenwashing.

[Writing idea: knowing your audience's mindset.](#)

READING & WRITING ASSIGNMENT 6

Have read chapters 6, 7, and 8 (pages 147-245) of *Communicating Nature*, and then post a very short summary of each chapter on the blog and CU LEARN. Below those, write a separate reflection of your own that deals with issues raised in the chapters (this paper should be no more than a page in length). Each of you must read and comment on 3 other class members' entries.

WEEK FIVE—CONNOTATIONS
SEPT. 19-23
MON.

CLASS

We will examine Hemingway's "Iceberg Theory" and then look at some new ways of presenting environmental/scientific information to the public, viewing some of Isabelle Rosellini's work on nature from the Sundance Channel: <http://www.sundancechannel.com/greenporno/>.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Have read Hemingway's short story "Hills Like White Elephants," at <http://www.has.vcu.edu/eng/webtext/hills/hills.htm> or <http://www.scribd.com/doc/94569/Hills-Like-White-Elephants>.

CLASS

We will talk about the significance of Place and the Commons.

READING & WRITING ASSIGNMENT 7

Have read "The Place, the Region, and the Commons" by Snyder. **For Monday, you will post a 2 page personal essay on the environment on the blog and CU LEARN.**

WED.**CLASS**

We will watch a short video segment with Jim White, climate scientist at CU, and I will post this on the website as well.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 8**PROJECT 2--ADVERTISEMENT FOR VANITY FAIR—GROUP PROJECT of 2 or 3 people. DUE OCT. 5th**

After listening to Jim White, it will be clear that scientists are not communicating the truth about climate change to the general public. In Communicating Nature, the themes of miscommunication (and deliberate falsehood) are shown as often being linked to special and moneyed interests. With this in mind, you will take the important elements of Jim White's talk, summarize. Now, try to get this message out to a larger audience by way of a print ad that would appear in VANITY FAIR magazine (you will have to examine a copy of VANITY FAIR). Design a public service advertisement that uses images and text to create a message that will wake the readers of VANITY FAIR up to the dangers of global warming. This should be submitted as a jpeg file. Every class member must take a look at the ads of the other students and make comments on the following: the rhetorical strategy employed (does it convey the message), as well as the use of image, color, text, font, and space: are these handled effectively? You cannot use stock photos for this advertisement. You must take your own photos or create your own images (drawings, pictures, Photoshopped photos). For this project you will work in groups of two.

GOAL AND RUBRIC: Rhetoric, or the Art of Persuasion, makes use of numerous elements to affect change. However, Confirmation Bias makes it difficult for a person to be convinced of something they do not already believe. In addition, as we have seen from Damasio's work, "We are feeling machines that think, not thinking machines that feel." To move an audience, to affect change, we must think of emotion and feeling, for we will not convince the general public through statistics. The summary is intended to help the mind consolidate ideas and pick out the most important features: the print ad is intended as an exercise to take ideas and translate them into images and text to move a particular audience. The ad will be graded on creativity, effectiveness, design, and professionalism. The class will create the rubric and help grade the projects.

WEEK SIX—STORY OF PLACE

SEPT. 26-30

MON.

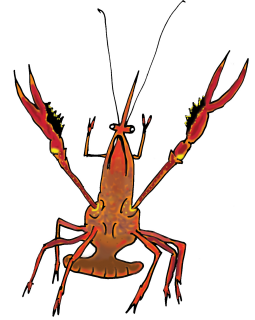
CLASS

Writing Workshop

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 9

Telling A Personal Story To Make A Larger Point. Essay About One's Relationship To Nature. 1st

DRAFT. Using Snyder's essays as models, write (and post to the blog, for today, and CU LEARN) your first draft of a 2-page essay about your own connection to the natural world. Bring to life a place, but also aim for an emotional and intellectual response from the reader that might cause them to embrace an important idea regarding the environment, or to act in a manner that echoes your own environmental concerns. Also post in ASSIGNMENTS at CU LEARN.



WED.

CLASS

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 10

2nd DRAFT. Writing Workshop: we will continue working on the Place pieces. Once we go through them all, you must revise the piece and post the completed draft on the blog and on CU LEARN.

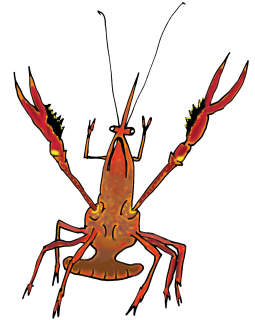
WEEK SEVEN—DEVELOPING A CAMPAIGN FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION

OCT. 3-7

MON.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 11

We will begin working on **PROJECT 3—DUE LAST WEEK OF CLASS.** For this project I will put you in groups of three. Each group will examine and contact a not-for-profit environmental organization. Pick one that is doing work that interest you, say in animal preservation, in developing green technology, or documenting global change. Look at the kind of media campaigns they are involved in. Find issues the group is championing and look at their current media presentations. With your group, design a media campaign that includes a public-service message of about 30 seconds as well as a print media campaign that would appear in a specific magazine. Every group will work together with the same organization, but each member will be required to do a video and one magazine advertisement. The idea is for working together is to collaborate and help each other with technological problems. You should all be onboard with the same organization, and one of you should contact someone at their headquarters for advice. This can be a local or a national/international environmental not-for-profit organization. In addition, everyone must write a paper on the project, two pages in length, outlining the rhetorical strategies you used and why you chose them, and you must write a 4-page research paper on the topic.



WRITING ASSIGNMENT—CRITICAL RESEARCH PAPER

Begin working on a first draft of a research paper that deals with the issue you have picked with to work with a not-for-profit environmental organization. If that issue is elephant eradication in Africa, for example, begin researching and writing a 4-page paper that deals with this topic, bringing in information from at least 4 reliable sources. You must have a Work Cited Page using the MLA format for documentation.

HOW TO WRITE THE CRITICAL PAPER

When most people write a critical paper they wade through a topic, often treating it like a book report, without really having anything to say. Then they get to the required amount of pages, realizing that they have not yet made a point, so they quickly come up with something. This is natural, but what you need to do is then turn it all around and start over. You want the paper's first paragraph to start with a thesis. The thesis contains a problem. If we were looking at *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance (and using the same approach I'm having you use for your paper) we might say that the problem here is that Romeo is delusional due to an influx of testosterone now that he is in his teens, and likewise Juliet is also feeling a desire for mating now that she has reached puberty and her hormones are revved up. The PROBLEM is that nature is taking over for these two, who are completely unaware of what is happening to their bodies and minds. Romeo's fickle nature (that he can fall for one girl, get heartbroken to the point of absolute despair, then immediately fall for another) is due to evolution working on his brain, telling him to find a mate. And like most males in the animal kingdom, he instinctually knows that it is the female who does the ultimate choosing and has the upper hand. Like any courting bird, he must show himself to be good, worthy, clever, and sincere. The COST of these two not having the slightest idea why they are acting the way they do, is that they cannot distance themselves from the onslaught of dopamine, oxytocin, and vasopressin, the drugs in the brain that are propelling them to doom. The SOLUTION to this dilemma is not one that these star-crossed lovers can avail, but we the audience can. By looking at this drama from the perspective of science, we can see this as a cautionary tale regarding our own feelings, realizing that the chemical stew in our brains and bodies is not always telling us the truth. To think like a scientist, we need to be dispassionate regarding the information we assess and not fall into the traps that lead to Confirmation Bias. We can also see Theory of Mind at work over and over in this play, as every character is trying to solve the puzzle of everyone else's mindset to anticipate what will happen next. (Theory of Mind is predictive, something very useful when living in a world of other social animals like oneself, but our predictions are not always good: hence, the demise of the two lovers who got it all wrong). But the two warring families got it all wrong as well, for their actions led not to fecundity (offspring that would further the DNA of both families) but death without reproduction, which from an evolutionary sense is all that matters. Only those who reproduce succeed in the game of life.

THESIS

The thesis should have these components—a PROBLEM, THE COST OF THE PROBLEM (why it matters), and a SOLUTION. The thesis drives the paper. You are making a claim—in the case above—that the protagonists, Romeo and Juliet, because of their ignorance of how their brains are affected by hormonal programming from evolution, act like slaves to their desires (which are really the chemicals in their heads propelling them to mate). In their case this causes death instead of life, due to the fact that their social condition is extremely dangerous and they do not take their “environment” into consideration. Had they been cognizant of science, they might have been able to make alternate decisions to control their actions and saved their lives.

The evidence you present would have to come from scientific sources that deal with love, neuroscience, and evolutionary psychology.

THESIS=problem, cost of problem, and solution

EVIDENCE=this is where you bring in ideas to support your claim. While you can bring in opposing arguments, you want to move everything so that it supports your thesis and does not stray from it.

Check out this essay on What Counts as Evidence:

<http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=evidence/what-counts/illustration>

GOAL AND RUBRIC: The critical paper requires one to gather research on a problem from numerous sources and find a possible solution to that problem, which is your thesis.

WED.

CLASS

PROJECT 2--ADVERTISEMENT FOR VANITY FAIR PRESENTATION—DUE
GUEST SPEAKER: DAVID UNDERWOOD.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Have read chapters 1-7 of E.O. Wilson's *The Creation* for next Monday's class.

WEEK EIGHT—SAVING THE CREATION

OCT. 10-14

MON.

CLASS

We will discuss Wilson's book and examine his rhetorical strategy.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 12

Write a short summary of chapters 1-7 of The Creation, post it on CU LEARN and the blog. Below that, write a half page reaction of your own. Everyone is required to read and comment upon 3 of these from other classmates.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Have read chapters 8-13 of E.O. Wilson's *The Creation* for Wednesday's class.

WED.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 13

Write a short summary of chapters 8-13 of The Creation, post it on blog and CU LEARN, and write a half page reaction of your own below the summary. Everyone is required to read and comment upon 3 of these from other classmates.

VIEWING ASSIGNMENT OVER THE WEEKEND

FILM TO WATCH OVER THE WEEKEND—see below.

Have watched *Evolution on Trial* at <http://video.pbs.org/video/980040807/> over the weekend.

WEEK NINE—PRESERVATION VS. CONSERVATION

OCT. 17-21

MON.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 14

Post a 1-3 page reaction paper blog (and on CU LEARN) in which you give your response to the video. Bring in your own ideas about evolution that you have thought about and/or explored in the past, and talk about how the film has or has not altered your thinking. Everyone should read and comment on at least 3 other papers.

CLASS

Writing Workshop. We will discuss the film and the reaction papers.

WED.

CLASS

Film on Seton and Lobo, from PBS: Preservation vs. Conservation.

WEEK TEN—THE CREATION

OCT. 24-28

MON.

CLASS

Film: The Practice of the Wild.

READING ASSIGNMENT

Have read chapters 3, 4, and 5 (pages 58-145) of Communicating Nature, and then post a very short summary of each chapter on the blog and on CU LEARN.

WED.

CLASS

Discussion of Communicating Nature, chapters 3-5.

WEEK ELEVEN—ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

OCT. 21- NOV. 4

MON.

CLASS

Environmental Ethics. A review of ethics, from Aristotle (Virtue), to Consequentialist, to Deontological, to Environmental Ethics. To Darwinian Ethics. Why do we desire to act “good?” Altruism. SOCRATES: “Is conduct right because the gods command it, or do the gods command it because it is right? Have read Garret Hardin’s “The Tragedy of the Commons,” which will be posted on the class website.

WED.

READING & WRITING ASSIGNMENT 15

Post a blog about two of your favorite essays from Snyder’s The Practice of the Wild that we have not done in class, analyzing why you think these two essays stand out. Post on CU LEARN as well.

CLASS

Film on population crisis.

WEEK TWELVE—ANALYZING PAPERS

NOV. 7-11

MON.

CLASS

Workshop.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 16

Post the 1st page of your research paper on the blog and on CU LEARN, which should contain the thesis. We will workshop these in class. Afterwards, revise your 1st page and post again on both sites. Be prepared to give an update on your media campaign for **PROJECT 2** as well. Post a complete revised Draft by Nov. 16th. Everyone must comment on 3 different papers (and spread your comments around, so that everyone gets feedback).

WED.

CLASS

Workshop.

WEEK THIRTEEN—HOW REASONABLE ARE WE?

NOV. 14-18

MON.

CLASS

We will watch the following documentary: “The Ecological Footprint”:

<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/about/documentarydvd.asp>.

VIEWING ASSIGNMENT

Watch the following documentary at home for Wed: “Mind Over Money”:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/mind-over-money.html>

WED.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 17

After watching both of the videos, write a 1-2 page paper in which you compare the ways in which we use and manipulate money and ways in which we use and manipulate the environment. As “The Ecological Footprint” makes clear, the economy and the environment are integrated and not separate entities. While classical economics states that humans make rational choices for their own best interests, neuroscience shows another story altogether. With the recent studies in neuroscience challenging the way we do business, what should we humans do to change? Can we create a sustainable world?

Post your reaction to the blog and to CU LEARN, and we will go over the papers in class.

GOAL AND RUBRIC: This paper requires one to synthesize information from neuroscience, the economy, and the environment in order to see a holistic view about the human condition.

BY THIS TIME EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED FEEDBACK ON THE SECOND DRAFT OF YOUR RESEARCH PAPER. TAKE THE FEEDBACK AND REVISE AGAIN.

WEEK FOURTEEN

NOV. 21-24

NO CLASS—FALL BREAK--THANKSGIVING

FILM TO WATCH OVER THE BREAK.

On your own time, watch the film *The 11th Hour*, and post your reaction to the blog and CU LEARN. The length of this will be at your discretion.

WEEK FIFTEEN—WILDLIFE—

NOV. 28—DEC 1.

MON.

CLASS

Animal Poems. BIOPHILIA. Animals in human consciousness. Writing Workshop.

READING & WRITING ASSIGNMENT 18

Have read the animal poems and prose pieces I put on the website. Write a short poem or prose poem in which you become an animal, or you watch an animal, incorporating real elements of the animal’s life and world into your work. Make a copy for everyone in class and bring it for this Monday.

WED.

CLASS

Writing Workshop.

WEEK SIXTEEN—PRESENTATIONS & FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE DEC 5—9

MON.

CLASS

PROJECT 2 will be presented by each person, and the research papers handed in.

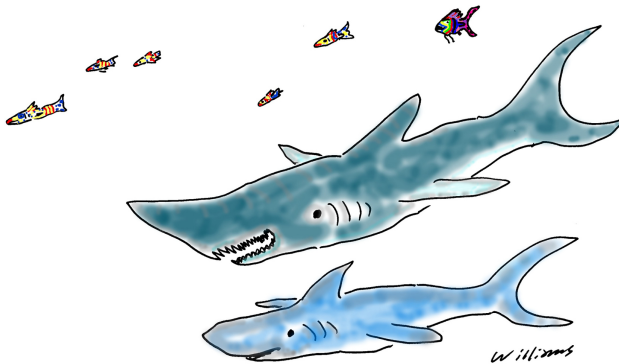
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WRITING ASSIGNMENT 19

Bring in a one-page essay typed-double-spaced in which you assess what you have learned and gained from the class. In addition, you must post it to the blog and to CU LEARN. This will be the Final.



*But don't you think overall,
that people basically taste good?*



*Hey man, it's not worth it. A million years
from now, no one will believe it.*

All Cartoons by David Williams ©
David Williams' bio at realDavidWilliams.com

A KEY GOAL

Developing rhetorical awareness is the main learning goal of the class, given that it's a class in the field of Composition and Rhetoric. You may not have known the name of the field, given that the course prefix WRTG doesn't match the name of the department that offers the class: the Program for Writing and Rhetoric. (See the [About WRTG 3020](#) page for more info.)

BUT WHAT IS IT?

"Rhetorical awareness" is, in some ways, a fairly simple concept, and in other ways, a really difficult one. On a simple level, being "rhetorically aware" means being aware that any act of communication you engage in has an audience and a purpose, and that the success or failure of your communication is based almost entirely on how well it meets the needs of that audience and fulfills that purpose.

Sounds easy enough, right? Some people have naturally good rhetorical awareness, or what is often called "good people skills," meaning that they know how to read people and deliver messages to them in the format best suited to that particular group of people. They may not even be conscious of it, but they know which strategies to use to appeal to which audiences, and they're keenly aware of how their message is impacting their audience.

For example, a rhetorically aware teenager knows better than to beg her parents to pay for a trip to Cancun for Spring Break by pointing out that "all my friends are doing it." As a persuasive strategy directed at parents, that one is a miserable failure. The rhetorically aware teenager would take a different approach, like pointing out that this is an opportunity to learn responsibility or to explore other cultures. But that would only work if the teenager was genuine in her reasoning. If she's not genuine, then those are just manipulative tactics that aren't very rhetorically savvy.

WHY NOW?

It's actually somewhat rare for teenagers to be rhetorically aware, as such awareness requires a focus on the "others" of one's audience, rather than on one's self. So that's why you don't start learning about rhetorical awareness until college, when you've matured to the point that you're able to see things from other people's perspectives more easily. And when you can see things from your audience's perspective, you can make much better decisions as a writer than if you only focus on your perspective.

RHETORICAL AWARENESS GOALS

In order to help you develop rhetorical awareness, this class will ask you to engage in the following activities, with the hope that you'll be able to apply what you learn to new rhetorical situations you encounter elsewhere. In other words, you might think of these as learning outcomes.

BECOME A RHETORICALLY AWARE READER

Although this is a writing class, I've put reading goals before writing goals because good reading skills are the basis for good writing skills. You can't develop rhetorical awareness as a writer until you've developed rhetorical awareness as a reader.

- Accurately identify the rhetorical situation (audience, author, purpose, genre, occasion, conversation) for messages and analyze how each element contributes to the meaning of the message
- Accurately identify the rhetorical strategies (appeals to ethos, logos, and pathos) used to support the claims made in the message and critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy
- Analyze how the rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategies of a message impact the extent to which you allow the message to influence your own thinking on the topic
- Analyze how those elements impact where a message falls on established scales of reliability
- Identify the rhetorical moves common to different discourses, genres, and communication mediums and understand the role those moves play in influencing audiences
- Recognize the difference between claims and evidence provided by academics or journalists and claims made by non-specialists, as well as why the source of the claims matters
- Understand the variety of factors that go into producing and distributing the wide range of messages we receive on a daily basis, across different discourses and communication mediums, and analyze how these factors impact how influential the message is on particular audiences
- Compare and evaluate the knowledge we gain about gender identity and sexual orientation from different discourses, including personal experience, popular culture, news and mass media, educational, activist, public policy, and academic

An important part of the process of becoming educated is placing what you read in its larger context — its rhetorical context — so that you better understand how the message fits into the broad scope of human knowledge. For example, because you understand that the rhetorical context (audience, purpose, genre) for *Glamour* magazine is rather different from that of, say, *Scientific American*, you (hopefully!) don't put equal weight on the kind of information you find in either magazine.

You know that, in the broad scope of human knowledge, one carries much greater authority, although you may not yet have given some serious thought to why that is. Understanding why that is, and how different types of messages construct different types of knowledge, is part of the process of becoming more rhetorically aware.

BECOME A RHETORICALLY AWARE WRITER

- Make decisions about how to compose messages, including which genre and communication medium to use, what content to cover, and how to format the content, based on the demands of the rhetorical situation for each message
- Employ appropriate rhetorical strategies to connect with real audiences, accomplish a specific purpose, establish credibility, and communicate meaningful messages
- Approach writing as a design art that draws on multiple factors beyond the content in order to communicate a message

- Identify and follow the communication customs of the discourse community or communities that serve as your target audience
- Select sources of evidence your target audience will deem trustworthy
- Document your sources using MLA or APA style citations (or the equivalent for multimodal compositions)
- Use layout and presentation strategies that make your message as easy to read as possible, based on research into how readers process information in the genre and medium you're using

Nearly all of your class activities ask you to address a particular audience, for a particular purpose, using genres and rhetorical appeals appropriate to that rhetorical situation. You'll practice writing different kinds of messages to your classmates, your instructor, other CU students, other college students in general, and other audiences you select for your projects.

And to help you better understand what you're learning in the process, you'll also write reflections or "rhetorical rationales" that explain the choices you made based on the particular characteristics of your audience and purpose.

DEEPEN CRITICAL READING SKILLS

A learning goal that is closely related to rhetorical awareness is critical thinking. Below is my adaptation of the learning outcomes for critical thinking and critical reading as defined by the CCHE.

- Recognize the nature and purpose of different genres
- Identify the main claim, supporting points, evidence, and other forms of support in texts from a variety of text and multimodal genres
- Read closely and carefully, creating a conversation with the text on both intellectual and personal levels
- Approach differing perspectives and experiences with empathy and an open mind
- Critically evaluate texts, paying special attention to underlying assumptions, credibility of the source, the nature and quality of evidence, and rhetorical strategies the writer uses to persuade his or her audience
- Seek out new readings and resources beyond those required in order to follow your own curiosity in the subject

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read this handout to learn more about rhetorical appeals and rhetorical situation, both of which are key concepts you'll need to understand in order to successfully complete the course: [What is Rhetoric?](#)

I will also discuss rhetorical awareness throughout course materials, in paper assignments, calendar entries, and class discussions, as a way of helping you better understand the concepts. But it's worth keeping in mind that rhetorical awareness is the sort of skill that takes many years as well as a certain degree of emotional maturity to learn, given that it requires that you think empathetically about the need and expectations of your audience, rather than about your own needs and wants. In other words, it requires that you step outside of your own perspective and see your messages from the perspectives of people who may be very different from you.

In fact, the concept of rhetorical awareness — and why it's so important — may not really start to sink in until you've graduated from college and find yourself having to produce writing on the job whose worth will be determined entirely by whether it meets the needs and expectations of your target audience — i.e., your rhetorical situation. Then you'll be glad you learned about these

concepts in this class! 😊

KEY TERMS

As a result of studying the concept of rhetorical awareness and practicing developing your skills in this area, you should be able to define these key terms:

- rhetorical context
- rhetorical strategies (or moves)
- primary and secondary audiences
- genre
- discourse
- claim and evidence
- knowledge vs. belief
- credibility

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