**INTD 100: Nature in America and the World**

Instructor: Nat Zappia

Class Time: MWF 9:00-9:50

Class Location: HV 104

Office Hours: M/T/W/F, 10-11 and by appointment

Office Hours Location: HV 201

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**Introduction:**

This is an intensive writing course that will investigate the concept of “nature” as understood in different cultural contexts throughout the world. What does “nature” look like? How is it defined? How do we experience it? Is it something that is real or only imagined? We will explore these questions in personal reflections, in-depth reading and discussion, field trips to “nature,” presentations, and intensive writing, including experimenting with various modes of literature.

**Course Goals and Learning Objectives:**

In this class, students will have the opportunity to learn key concepts and themes about “nature” and communicate knowledge through writing and public presentation assignments. By the end of this course through in-class discussions, interactions, presentations, and written papers, students will develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading; understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work; learn to critique their own and others' works; use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences; and make an argument showcasing fundamental knowledge about the role of nature in the world.

**Course Requirements and Assignments**:

**Grading**:

Three Papers 45%

Final Paper 25%

Participation (includes journal entries, peer review, final presentation, and attendance) 20%

Leading Discussion 10%

*Papers and Writing Assignments*

You are required to produce four (4) formal 3-5-page essays (600 words each paper) and one final polished essay (6-8 pages/1200 words) connecting all of your previous work. Paper due dates are as follows:

9/30 – paper #1 draft

10/7 – paper #1 final version

10/21 – paper #2 draft

10/28 – paper #2 final version

11/11 – paper #3 draft

11/18 – paper #3 final version

12/9 – final paper draft

12/15 – polished final paper

Your essays will address the following overlapping themes: “concepts of nature,” “nature vs. nurture,” “nature writing,” and “preservation or imagination?” These essays will require extensive revisions, peer and faculty-reviewed feedback, and multiple drafts (see page seven for more details). Exercises will focus on such skills as summarizing and paraphrasing, documenting sources, and using strategies of analysis, argument, description, and narration. ***I accept only hard copies of essays.*** Students will also do some writing in every class meeting in a composition journal that will be shared with fellow peer reviewers and myself. I will review your journals once a week (on Fridays). We will also reflect on your writing either in discussion or with peer mentors.

*Leading Group Discussion and Peer Review*

Leading discussion is an important assignment that requires advance preparation. It includes submitting a one-page outline of discussion questions, context, and topics. You will also be responsible for moderating participation. You will sign up for a discussion topic in advance and meet with me during office hours to talk about your strategy.

Strategies for Successful Group Discussions:

* a brief overview of the themes discussed in the reading
* new vocabulary, if relevant
* detailed analysis, praise, and critique of the author’s methods, theories, insights, and shortcomings
* your own take on the material you are presenting
* at least five questions to pose to the class during the discussion period
* bring the material alive and make it relevant—“own” the reading

You will also take part in the peer review process that includes reading and critiquing the work of your writing partners. Fair, honest, and *kindly offered* peer review is critical to the writing process. We will discuss this in more details during the first week of class, but here are some general strategies for effective peer review:

* take notes as you read your colleague’s writing
* provide clear, pointed comments—whether positive or negative
* critique the writing style or argument—not the person or the ideas
* remember that you are not “grading” the writer but facilitating their writing process

*Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is a growing problem throughout higher education. Plagiarism constitutes “the act of using another person’s ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source” (MLA Handbook, 21). Many times, students inadvertently commit plagiarism without being fully aware of their transgression. In the first few classes, we will discuss ways to ensure that you avoid such pitfalls. The penalties for plagiarism in this class will include an “F” grade on the assignment for the first occurrence and an “F” grade for the course on a second occurrence. To repeat, **IF YOU PLAGIARIZE, YOU WILL FAIL THE ASSIGNMENT AND POSSIBLY THE COURSE. YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE REFERRED TO THE DEAN OF STUDENTS POSSIBLE ACADEMIC SUSPENSION.**

**Attendance and Participation:**

*Attendance*

Since you are graded for attendance, I will take roll call at the beginning of class. If you miss role call, you will be counted absent so arrive on time—NO EXCEPTIONS. Failure to attend class will result in a lower grade. After you miss three classes, you will lose half-a letter on your final grade (for example, if you get a “B” for your final grade but missed 4 classes, you will automatically earn a “B-”; if you missed 5 classes, you will earn a “C+”. However, if you have perfect attendance you will receive 5 extra points on your final grade.

Students desiring accommodations on the basis of physical, learning, or psychological disability for this class are to contact Disability Services.  Disability Services is located in the Library building, first floor room G003 and can be reached by calling extension 4825.

*Participation*

**NO LAPTOPS OR ANY TECHNOLOGY (i.e. text messaging devices, mobile phones, etc.) WILL BE ALLOWED IN CLASS.** If you text/facebook/tweet, I will count you as absent. Participation is also crucial during this course. There is no set criteria or “participation quota,” but I expect you to contribute through active conversation, listening, and/or visiting me during office hours. You must bring *Writing about Nature* to every class. I expect you to bring questions and thoughts for discussion and may periodically collect these notes to see how you’re processing the material. During the eighth week of the course, I will ask you for a 1-2 page self-evaluation of your class participation. This exercise will help you identify the variety of ways you have participated and locate other avenues for improvement.

Below are some strategies for effective participation:

- Read assigned materials carefully and take notes

- Contribute insights and ask questions of your peers (and professor) in class

- Write notes during class and share your thoughts when they fit with the conversation flow

- Respond to your peers’ presentations and questions

- Pay attention during discussions and presentations and follow up with relevant contributions

-Encourage others to speak

- Avoid irrelevant anecdotes!

- Don’t monopolize the discussion – make sure others have a chance to speak

**Office Hours:**

While not required, I strongly recommend that you make at least a few appointments with me over the course of the semester. I am also available outside of my office hours if your schedule conflicts with my posted days/times. During my hours, I can provide some extensive feedback and give you a better sense of how you’re doing in class, so take advantage of this valuable time.

**Readings:**

**ALL READINGS MUST BE COMPLETED *BEFORE* FRIDAY’S CLASS.**

**Required Course Texts:**

John Krakauer, *Into the Wild*

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

John Murray, *Writing About Nature*

Jordan Fisher, *Nature Noir*

Philip Connors, *Fire Season*

**Schedule:**

Week 1:

9/9 Introduction – What is Nature?

Week 2: Concepts of Nature

9/12 – syllabus and general ground rules

9/14 – ground rules of writing and peer review

9/16 – reading seminar

Readings – *Into the Wild* (chaps. 1-4)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 1)

Week 3: Concepts of Nature

9/19 – Rajesh Gopie visit

9/20 – Gopie performance at Shannon Center

9/21 – library visit

9/23 – Erik Greenberg Visit

Readings – *Into the Wild* (chaps. 5-10)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 2)

Week 4: Concepts of Nature

9/26 – nature hike

9/28 – writing discussion – reflections on nature hike/paper #1 discussion

9/30 – reading discussion

Readings –  *Into the Wild* (chaps. 11-15)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 3)

Writing Assignment – Paper #1 draft due 9/30

Week 5: Concepts of Nature

10/3 – Fred Arroyo

10/5 – writing discussion – reflections on museum concepts of nature/peer review

10/7 – reading discussion

Readings – *Into the Wild* (chaps. 16-18; epilogue)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 4)

Writing Assignment - Paper #1 final draft due

Week 6: Nature vs. Nurture

10/10 – clip of “Into the Wild”

10/12 – final reflections on “Into the Wild”

10/14 – NO CLASS

Readings – *Nature Noir* (chaps. 1-4)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 5)

Week 7: Nature vs. Nurture

10/17 – Huntington

10/19 – writing discussion – nature and food/paper #2 discussion

10/21 – reading discussion

Readings – *Nature Noir* (chaps. 5-8)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 6)

Writing Assignment – Paper #2 draft due 10/21

Week 8: Nature vs. Nurture

10/24 – Linda Biehl

10/26 – writing discussion – what is an argument and evidence?/peer review

10/28 – Final reading discussion on “Nature Noir”

Readings –  *Nature Noir* (chaps. 9-11; epilogue)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 7)

Writing Assignment – Paper #2 final draft due 10/28

SELF-EVALUATION DUE

Week 9: Nature Writing

10/31 – TBA

11/2 – writing discussion – reflections on visit

11/4 – reading discussion

Readings -  *Fire Season* (chap. 1)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 8)

Week 10: Nature Writing

11/7 – TBA

11/9 – writing discussion - Paper #3 discussion

11/11 – reading discussion

Readings – *Fire Season* (chap. 2-3)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 9)

Writing Assignment – Paper #3 draft due

Week 11: Nature Writing

11/14 – TBA

11/16 – writing discussion – using outlines/peer review

11/18 – final reading discussion on “Fire Season”

Readings – *Fire Season* (chap. 4-5)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 10-11)

Writing Assignment – Paper #3 final draft due

Week 12: Preservation or Imagination?

11/21 – featured presentation (TBA)

11/23 – reading discussion

11/25 – no class - Thanksgiving

Readings - *Walden* (pp. 1-116)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 12-13)

Week 13: Preservation or Imagination?

11/28 – writing discussion – how do you effectively present?

11/30 – writing discussion – editing and synthesis/peer review

12/2 - final reading discussion on “Walden”

Readings – *Walden* (pp. 213-264)

*Writing About Nature* (chap. 14-16)

Writing Assignment – Final Paper Draft Due

WEEK 14: Preservation or Imagination?

12/5 –presenting your ideas (group 1)

12/7 – presenting your ideas (group 2)

12/9 –presenting your ideas (group 3)

Week 15: Final Essay Due 12/15 at 12:30PM

**PAPER ASSIGNMENTS:**

The first three papers are worth 45 points. For each paper, you will hand in a first and final draft. Your first draft is worth 5 points. Your second paper must reflect suggested revisions by peers and myself. It is worth 10 points.

The final essay will consist of a synthesis of all your essays into one coherent essay and will require extensive editing and two drafts. Your final paper draft is worth 10% and the polished version is 15%.

***Paper #1 Focus Question – How are concepts of “nature” different or the same? (600 words)*** Write an essay comparing and contrasting a concept of nature commonly shared by Americans (either today or during another historical time period) and another culture. You may focus on any group, society, or period of history. For example, perhaps you’re interested in comparing/contrasting the ways that the Roman Empire or the ancient Greeks understood and applied concepts of nature in their lives, or you’re interested in the ways that East Asian concepts of nature diverge (or converge) with European sentiments. This essay will require using basic sources of evidence (primary/secondary sources, sanctioned websites, art, and other sources discussed with me.

***Paper #2 Focus Question – Nature or Nurture? (600 words)***

This essay requires you to take a position on the eternal question: are humans influenced more by nature or nurture? You may choose nature, nurture, or both. Whichever position you take, you must provide supporting evidence for your argument.

***Paper #3 Focus Question – What is Nature Writing? (600 words)***

In this essay you will explain to a “non-expert” audience what you think “nature writing” means. How is nature writing the same or different than other genres? What types of techniques are employed that make nature writing unique (if any at all)?

***Paper #4 Focus Question – Preservation or Imagination? (1200 words)***

Your final essay will ask the larger questions: is nature something that can be preserved? Is nature a “real” thing or is it simply a product of our imagination? Your essay will include aspects of the three previous papers.