

ENC 3254: Writing in the Disciplines
Nature Writing
Fall 2023

Section: 5013

Instructor: Dr. Robyn Johnson
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Office hours: TBD

Class location: MAT 102
Class times: MWF7
Office location: 2215 Turlington Hall

Course Description

Prerequisite: ENC 1101 or ENC 1102.

This course is designed to introduce students to the genre of nature writing. During the first half of the semester, we will read the canonical and the contemporary writers who have shaped the discourse from the nineteenth century through the present. We will focus in particular on the linguistic and rhetorical strategies the authors use to construct the natural world and our relationships to our environs. The second half of the course moves toward our final project, a publishable piece of public-facing nature writing designed for a specific outlet and audience. To achieve this goal, we will learn about the techniques used to write for a public audience, analyze the generic conventions of a variety of published pieces, critically review a publication outlet, and design all of the appropriate submission documents.

Learning Outcomes

- learn the major figures and discourses of the nature writing genre
- develop critical reading and writing skills through rhetorical analysis and reflection
- understand and employ the techniques of public-facing writing
- create a publishable piece of writing for a specific outlet and audience
- improve your writing process through revision and feedback

Assignments

Detailed assignment sheets will be provided at appropriate intervals throughout the semester.

1. In-class work and participation (150 points)
 - Throughout the semester, students will be required to complete in-class work and to participate in the daily class activities, which might include small writing assignments, small group work, and class discussions.
2. Genre Analysis (1,000 words; 100 points)
 - For this assignment, students will create a reverse rhetorical outline of one or more of our course readings. There will also be an analysis and reflection component. This assignment is designed to build familiarity with the rhetorical maneuvers employed by nature writers.
3. Observation, Style Writing, and Reflection (1,500 words; 100 points) (x2)
 - These assignments require students to observe nature, produce two writing samples about their observation in two different nature writing styles, and reflect on the experience. These assignments are designed to allow students to practice working in different nature writing styles and help them develop their own writerly voice.

4. Outlet Review (1,000 words; 150 points)
 - For this assignment, students will choose a nature writing publication outlet and review it. The goal of the review is to understand the outlet’s origins, purpose, target audience, style, preferences for publication, submission requirements, publication history, and the like. This assignment is designed to teach students how to analyze publication outlets critically and find the right venue for their work.

5. Outlet Review Presentation (100 points)
 - The presentation is the public-facing component of the Outlet Review. It is designed to make the information learned for the Outlet Review available to the entire class and to practice presenting one’s work in concise and informative ways to an interested audience.

6. Final Project (2,000 words; 300 points)
 - The final project for the course is a complete submission package for publishing a piece of public-facing nature writing with a specific publication outlet. A complete submission package will include an inquiry email, pitch, author biography, polished nature writing piece, reverse rhetorical outline, and reflection.

Grading

The course will be graded on a points scale of 1,000. Successful students will participate regularly in the class and complete all of the assignments completely and on time. As this is a writing course, the expectations for writing are rigorous: students will be expected to submit polished writing, respond appropriately to feedback (from both instructor and peers), and work within the standard generic conventions for language, syntax, and grammar.

To fulfill the Composition requirement, students must pass this course with a “C” or better. To fulfill the University Writing Requirement, students must write 6,000 words or more.

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Attendance and Participation

Writing is a collaborative, community-shaped process. As such, regular attendance and participation is required.

The policy of the University Writing Program is that if students miss more than six periods during the term, they will fail the entire course. Double periods count as two absences. The UWP exempts from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Academic honesty is expected in every aspect of the class. Plagiarism is not allowed in any form. UF students are governed by the UF Student Honor Code, which stipulates that students can neither give or receive unauthorized aid in completing any and all assignments. A full description of the Honor Code can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

Late Work

Late work will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the circumstances, late work may be accepted.

Accessibility Statement

I am fully committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment in my classroom at all times. I highly encourage all of my students to discuss with me any type of accessibility or accommodation that would improve their experience in the class. I'm happy to have this conversation before or after class, during office hours, or over email—whatever works best for the student. Additionally, students are encouraged to register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/).

Writing Assistance

Writing is a process and requires drafting, feedback, and revision. All students are encouraged to visit me during my Office Hours to discuss their writing (or other aspects of the course). If my OHs don't work for your schedule, we can coordinate an appointment at an alternative time. I'm happy to begin conversations about writing feedback via email, also.

The Writing Studio is another great resource for writing, and I highly recommend using their services. They offer one-on-one writing assistance and are available to all levels of students at all stages of the writing process.

Class Schedule [Subject to Change]

Week 1: Introductions

- Wednesday
 - In Class: Syllabus Review
- Friday
 - In Class: Class Introductions

Week 2: The Nature Journal

- Monday
 - Read for Class: Thoreau, *Walden*
 - In Class: What is “nature”? What is an “essay”?
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: Thoreau, *Walden*
 - In Class: Reading for content; Reverse outlines
- Friday
 - Read for Class: Thoreau, *Walden*
 - In Class: Rhetorical strategies

Week 3: The Natural Journal

- Monday
 - NO CLASS (Labor Day)
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: Thoreau, *Walden*
 - In Class: Reading for rhetoric; Reverse rhetorical outlines
- Friday
 - NO CLASS

Week 4: The Nature Journal

- Monday
 - NO CLASS
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: Thoreau, *Walden*
 - In Class: Discuss reading
- Friday
 - Read for Class: Thoreau, *Walden*
 - In Class: Discuss reading
 - **DUE (by the beginning of class): Genre Analysis Assignment**

Week 5: The Natural History Essay

- Monday
 - Read for Class: Susan Fenimore Cooper, *Rural Hours* (Selections); Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (Selections)
 - In Class: Discuss reading
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: G. H. Lewes, *Seaside Studies* [Selections]
 - In Class: The history of natural history
- Friday
 - Read for Class: Grant Allen, “Preface” to *Evolutionist at Large*; “Fallow Deer,” *Vignettes from Nature*
 - In Class: Writing for the public; Discuss Observations assignment

Week 6: The Philosophical Essay

- Monday

- Read for Class: Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountains* (Selections)
- Wednesday
 - NO CLASS
- Friday (Sept 30)
 - NO CLASS

Week 7: The Philosophical Essay

- Monday
 - Read for Class: Virginia Woolf, “Death of a Moth”
 - **DUE: Observation, Style Writing, Reflection #1**
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: David Rains Wallace, “The Nature of Nature Writing”
- Friday
 - NO CLASS (Homecoming)

Week 8: The Nature of the Nature Essay

- Monday
 - Read for Class: James Canton, *The Oak Papers*
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: James Canton, *The Oak Papers*
- Friday
 - Read for Class: Brian Doyle, “The Greatest Nature Essay”; Michelle Nijhuis, “Nature Writing is Survival Writing” (Daegan Miller, “The Nature Essay”)

Week 9: The Local Essay

- Monday
 - Read for Class: Mark Cocker, “Death of the Naturalist”; Robert Macfarlane, “Why We Need Nature Writing”
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: Mary Austin, *Land of Little Rain* (Selections)
- Friday
 - Read for Class: Sarah Gerard, *Sunshine State* (Selections); *The Wild Heart of Florida* (Selections)

Week 10: The Activist Essay

- Monday
 - In Class: Aldo Leopold, “Thinking Like A Mountain”
 - **DUE: Observation, Style Writing, Reflection #2**
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Selections)
- Friday
 - Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as the Grass Grows* (Selections)

Week 11: The Activist Essay

- Monday
 - Read for Class: Earth First! (Selections)
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: Jean-Marc Drouin, *A Philosophy of the Insect* (Selections)
- Friday

- Read for Class: Ross Gay, “Catalogue of Unabashed Gratitude”; *Black Nature*, edited by Camille Dungy (Selections)

Week 12: Lyrical Estrangement; or, Poetic Nature

- Monday
 - Read for Class: Aimee Nezhukumatathil, *World of Wonders*
- Wednesday
 - Read for Class: Aimee Nezhukumatathil, *World of Wonders*
- Friday
 - Read for Class: Aimee Nezhukumatathil, *World of Wonders*

Week 13: Preparing for Publication

- Monday
 - In Class: Analyze publishing outlets (Willowherb)
 - **DUE: Final Project Proposal**
- Wednesday
 - In Class: Publication process: outlet identification, inquiry email, pitch
- Friday
 - In Class: Publication process: write, submit, revise

Week 14: Preparing for Publication

- In class: Outlet Review and Final Project assignment overview

Week 15: Outlet Review Presentations

- Monday
 - In Class: Presentations

- Wednesday
 - In Class: Presentations
- Friday
 - In Class: Presentations

Week 16: Final Projects

- Monday
 - In Class: Peer Review Workshop
 - **DUE: First Draft of Final Project**
- Wednesday
 - In Class: Peer Review Workshop

DUE: Final Project (TBD)