This course surveys American nature writing, including texts by Mary Austin, Rachel Carson, Annie Dillard, Edward Abbey, Terry Tempest Williams, and others. Assignments include leading and participating in seminar-style discussion, attentive reading of all assigned texts, two in-class exams, and writing and revision of two essays—one analytical and one creative. Throughout the course, students will examine the connections and tensions that animate writing about nature, including links between identity and environment, between art and science, and between philosophical, aesthetic, and activist approaches to the natural world.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Analyze the strategies and aims of various literary texts.
2. Describe formal linguistic structures in literary texts.
3. Support arguments based on textual analysis.
4. Employ literary techniques in a creative text of their own.

Writing-Intensive Learning Outcomes:
As this course carries the WI (Writing Intensive) marker, it will also require that students:
5. Demonstrate the ability to write clearly, coherently and effectively within the discipline of English studies.
6. Adapt modes of communication to a specific disciplinary audience.
7. Incorporate constructive feedback from readers to improve written work.

Accommodations:
If you are registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (formerly the Office of Disability Services), I welcome you to talk with me about approved academic accommodations as early in the semester as possible. If you are not registered with OARS but believe you would benefit from their services, please contact that office through their website at http://ods.uncg.edu/ or by phone at 336-334-5440.

Academic Integrity Policy:
Violations of academic integrity are serious academic offenses that will not be tolerated in this class. I expect every student to review the guidelines and list of violations at http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu and to abide by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy. As you will see, violations include but are not limited to plagiarism.

A person commits plagiarism when he or she represents someone else's words or ideas as his or her own. In all writing for this course, you must take care to avoid plagiarizing the words or ideas of others. When you use sources such as books, web pages, articles, or primary documents in your writing, you must identify them to your reader. If you quote a source directly, you must put the borrowed material in quotation marks and include a proper citation. If you take an idea from another source but put it in your own words (i.e. paraphrase it), you must still give proper credit to the source. Please use MLA style documentation to document any sources used in written work. Be scrupulous about documenting, quoting, and citing your sources even in first drafts. A draft that has been read by your instructor or classmates has not been ‘checked’ and given the okay; it is always your responsibility to make sure you understand and have successfully followed rules of citation and documentation in all your writing.
All suspected violations of the academic integrity policy will be reported to the Dean of Students, and proven violations will result in serious repercussions. In my classes, a single violation of academic integrity is grounds for failure of the entire course. Repeated offenses can cause you to be expelled from the University. You can avoid these consequences by 1. never deliberately misleading your instructors or being dishonest in your writing, and 2. asking for clarification about any rules or standards for source-use that you do not understand. If you are ever unsure about how to cite a source or whether an act would be considered plagiarism, please ask me about it before you turn in your work.

Attendance:
All students are permitted three absences (one week’s worth of class meetings) without penalty. For these absences, I require no documentation, excuse, or explanation. Indeed, I prefer not to hear explanations because my assumption when you are absent is that you have good reasons for being so. I recommend saving these absences like tokens you can use in an emergency, because I do not distinguish between “good” reasons for being absent and “bad” reasons for being absent; that means that attending a funeral or needing to drive your sister to an appointment or having a flat tire or contracting the stomach flu are equally legitimate reasons to miss class, and it makes no difference to me what your reason happens to be. All absences beyond the third will result in a half-point deduction from your final Classroom Engagement grade.

Formal, graded assignments (those listed with due dates in your calendar) are due even if you are absent, so you should still post your assignment to Blackboard and arrange for a classmate to turn in the printed copy in your absence. If you will be absent on a day when a workshop is scheduled, you must make arrangements with your classmates to receive and provide feedback outside of class to receive credit for the workshop. Because I provide information about classroom activities on Blackboard and in the syllabus, I will not respond to emails that ask “What did we do in class?” Following an absence, you should consult the syllabus, read announcements posted to Blackboard, and, if necessary, contact a classmate to learn whether there are any informal assignments or changes to the syllabus that require your attention before the next class.

Any enrolled student who misses the first two class meetings or any three classes before Aug. 29 will be dropped from the course. Any student missing eight or more classes for any reason will be dropped from the course; prior to Oct. 10, this will result in a grade of “W”; after Oct. 10, this will result in a grade of “WF” for the course.

Exceptions to these attendance policies will be made for students who participate in a varsity athletic program or who must miss class due to religious observances and who speak with me well in advance of such absences.

Blackboard:
You will use Blackboard extensively during this course: to post electronic copies of each of your drafts and assignments, to talk to your groupmates, to sign up for conferences with me, to print copies of handouts, and to get feedback on your writing. I will use Blackboard to contact you and to post course announcements and reading assignments. For these reasons, check the course page frequently—in particular, the day before each class period.

Disruptions and Distractions:
I expect all participants in this class to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with each other, and I will intervene and, if necessary, remove from class any student who persists in disrespectful or disruptive behavior. I ask that you silence and stow your technological gadgets for the entirety of the class meeting, that you actively listen and maintain respectful conversation even when others’ opinions differ strongly from your own, and that you refrain from any use of derogatory or abusive language.

Late Work and Extensions:
Any informal writing we do in class cannot be made up; this writing generally serves its purpose during that class period and isn’t formally graded. You are welcome to complete these writing activities on your own outside of class, but you do not need to complete them and turn them in to me if you miss class.
Any assignment that we are workshopping in class cannot be granted an extension.

Any formal assignment is due both in print and on Blackboard at the beginning of class on the due date. I require an electronic and a printed copy to provide some flexibility here: if you have turned in either your printed copy or your electronic copy before the deadline, your assignment won’t be considered late, though I’ll also expect you to turn in both versions as soon as possible (for instance, by posting the electronic copy when you’re next at your computer, or by bringing the printed copy to our next class meeting). Assignments that are turned in late will lose 1 point for each day they are late. Thus, an assignment due at 10:00am on Monday will lose 1 point if it is turned in any time between 10:15am Monday and 10:00am Tuesday, and another point every 24 hours afterward.

I do not mind providing extensions on assignments that are due to me for grading (as opposed to assignments that are due to your classmates for workshopping). To request an extension, simply send me an email at least twelve hours before the due date and specify the date and time you would like to set as your new deadline. This new deadline (A) should be no more than a week beyond the original deadline, and (B) is absolutely inviolable. There are two risks you undertake if you request an extension: First, you cannot miss your new deadline; a paper that is not turned in by the extended deadline will receive an F. Second, you are likely to receive less extensive and less timely feedback from me on your writing when you have received an extension. I typically return student papers a week to a week and a half after I have collected them; I make no promises regarding timely responses to papers that have been granted an extension.

Make-Up Exams can be scheduled if you have a documented religious or athletic conflict and communicate this conflict to me at least one week before the exam’s scheduled date; in such cases, you will typically have to make arrangements to take the exam before your classmates take it. If you miss an exam unexpectedly due to an emergency, make-up exams may be scheduled at my discretion—probably at 8am—and they may differ from the version of the exam taken by your classmates.

Office Hours:
I am available for drop-in appointments during my office hours each week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 11:15 to 12:00pm. I’m also happy to make additional appointments outside of office hours; please talk to me before or after class to schedule an appointment if you cannot meet during regular office hours.

ASSIGNMENTS

Analytical Essay  [SLO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7]  (5-6 pages; 25pts.)
You’ll draft, workshop, and revise an analytical essay that makes arguable claims about how one of our course texts works: how it crafts a specific message or creates certain effects through its language or structure. You should support your claims about how this text is working by quoting and interpreting specific passages from your chosen text; other secondary sources are not necessary. A complete (at least five page) draft of your essay will be circulated to your peers for feedback in a workshop; you must incorporate peer feedback before turning in a revised version. I’ll then read and provide further feedback on this essay, which you will revise an additional time. A successful analytical essay will articulate a clear and arguable thesis, will support the thesis using textual evidence based on close analysis of the text, will be clearly organized and clearly written, and will be edited and proofread.

Creative Natural History Essay  [SLO 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7]  (5-6 pages + self-analysis; 20pts.)
This essay should be modeled on any of the pieces of nature writing we read in the course, though you can choose another model if you discuss it with me ahead of time. In this essay you should examine closely a place you know well, explore connections or conflicts between the human and the natural worlds, or pose and support an argument concerning a topic of interest to other writers of natural history. A successful natural history essay will focus clearly on a place, an issue, and/or a philosophical or aesthetic question, will weave together personal observation
and argumentative or philosophical musings, will approximate the literary strategies of one of the writers we’re studying in the course, will be clearly written and fully edited and proofread, and will be accompanied by a brief (500-word) self-analysis that evaluates how well your essay imitates your chosen model.

**Two In-Class Exams** [SLO 1, 2, 3] (10pts. each)
Two in-class exams will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of the assigned readings and to practice interpreting passages. Exams will typically ask you to identify the speaker, context, and significance of several lines of a text, to identify the context and significance of objects, characters, or concepts that appear in a text, and to respond to brief essay prompts by taking a position and marshaling examples from assigned readings.

**Discussion Leading** [SLO 1, 3, 5, 6] (two times; 10pts. each)
Each of you will sign up for two days on which you’ll serve as a Discussion Leader. To prepare for your turn as Discussion Leader, you should thoroughly digest the day’s reading assignment, identify specific passages to analyze during discussion, and compose thoughtful questions to engage your classmates. During class, you (along with one other classmate, usually) will be responsible for guiding discussion for approximately 30 minutes, during which time I will hold back, supporting rather than leading discussion myself. While guiding discussion, you should seek to include as many students as possible, should provide room for varied positions in response to your questions, and should work to keep discussion lively and engaged—which might mean asking your peers to write, speak, move around the room, or engage in some other activity. At the end of each meeting in which you are a Discussion Leader, you will turn in a printed sheet (1-2 single-spaced pages) that includes 3-4 passages marked for discussion, at least 3-4 thoughtful, engaging discussion questions, and any other notes you’ve used to prepare.

**Active Engagement in All Class Activities** (15pts. total)
Your engagement, attention, and participation in all class activities—including individual writing exercises, small group writing exercises and discussions, large group discussions and activities, and in-class workshops—is required. Occasionally I will ask students to complete informal, out-of-class writing assignments to prepare for class discussion or to explore further some issue raised in class discussion; your completion of these and all other informal assignments will determine 15 points of your final grade.

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**Evaluation**

Because this class carries a WI marker, you will write during most class meetings, will complete frequent informal writing, and will complete multiple assignments demanding analytical and argumentative writing. All assignments must be completed to earn credit for the course. In-class work will be evaluated according to how fully, thoughtfully, and productively you engage in class discussions and activities. Out-of-class work will be evaluated according to assignment-specific rubrics; you should use these rubrics as you prepare your writing, share it with your classmates, receive and incorporate feedback from your classmates and from me, and revise your writing for final grading.

Grades will be assigned to major activities as follows:

- Analytical Essay (25pts.)
- Creative Natural History Essay with Self-Analysis (20pts.)
- Mini-Exams (20pts. total, 10pts. each)
- Discussion Leading (20pts. total, 10pts. each)
- Active Engagement in Class Activities and Completion of In-Class Writing (15pts.)

These points will be converted to letter grades as follows:

- 92.5-100pts. = A
- 90.0-92.4pts. = A-
- 87.5-89.9pts. = B+
- 77.5-79.9pts. = C+
- 72.5-77.4pts. = C
- 70.0-72.4pts. = C-
REQUIRED TEXTS


+ Additional essays and selections from books posted to Blackboard.