



English 213: Nature Writing and Environmental Literature

Josh Doležal

Central College – Spring 2011

Office: 216 Jordan Hall

Phone: 628-5109 (o); 641-780-7878 (c)

Office hours: 2-3 p.m. MWF (and by appointment) Email: dolezalj@central.edu

Welcome

We are living in a pivotal time, when arguments for sustainability are driven not only by the ethical imperatives that we will discover in the course readings, but also by the urgency of our survival as a species, which requires sensitivity to both global and local ecology. This course will help us to think carefully about how to define and discover wildness, how to find beauty in our broken world, and how each of us might engage more mindfully with the places we inhabit.

Course description and objectives

Nature Writing and Environmental Literature studies the literary tradition of nature as a source of inspiration for many poets, novelists, and essayists. We'll seek both literary and ecological literacy in the following ways.

Student learning outcomes for the English major:

- Explicate literary texts effectively
- Reflect thoughtfully on one's strengths and abilities as a writer and thinker
- Communicate complex thoughts effectively through poised and articulate oral presentations and through class discussions
- Produce quality creative, critical, and research writing

Student learning outcomes for Global Sustainability:

- Demonstrate an increased awareness of the interconnectedness of decisions made by ourselves and those around us
 - Understand ways human systems affect ecological systems
 - Apply definitions of sustainability to local issues
- Demonstrate an understanding of local and global sustainability challenges faced by our own and future generations
 - Identify and articulate ethical frameworks (equity, justice, human rights)
 - Articulate how to align core values with daily living

Required texts

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

Krakauer, Jon. *Into the Wild*. New York: Anchor Books, 1997.

Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989.

Momaday, N. Scott. *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1976.

Pollan, Michael. *The Botany of Desire*. New York: Random House, 2002.

Price, John. *Man Killed by Pheasant (And Other Kinships)*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2008.

Williams, Terry Tempest. TBD.

Attendance

Regular attendance is crucial to the success of the course, but your desire to attend is most important of all. I will take attendance every day and will give attendance credit on random days. Attendance credit will accumulate in the Participation column in Blackboard, so you can see where you stand, but will not be included in the overall average until the end of the semester. Whatever points remain unassigned in the participation column will be mine to award based on performance in class discussions, online forums, and other course-related activities. More than nine absences will automatically result in a failing grade.

Due dates

All work is due at the beginning of class on the specified date. Late work is not acceptable without advance notice. Technological glitches (computer crashes, faulty disks, etc.) should be anticipated, as Murphy's Law dictates that at the last minute whatever can possibly go wrong will go wrong. It is your responsibility to be prepared.

Written assignments: Please type all assignments and use MLA style for citations.

All written work must be typed. Everything but quizzes and reading notes will be submitted on Blackboard.

- **Reading notes:** These will show preparation for class, with emphasis on textual examples and ideas for discussion.
- **Quizzes:** On designated days, I'll use quizzes to test your familiarity with the reading.
- **Journals:** This is your space to think out loud about the reading a bit more formally than in the reading notes. Journals are conversations between you, me, and the authors that should prepare in some way for discussion. Five journals will be assigned, each worth 30 points.
- **Formal Essays:** Submit through SafeAssignment on Blackboard as a Microsoft Word file. I'll distribute more detailed guidelines in class.
- **Exam:** I'll give a final exam based on reading notes, class notes, and quizzes.

Grade evaluation (1,000 points total)

Participation:	150
Discussion leading:	50
Quizzes:	75
Reading notes:	75
Journals:	150
Formal essays:	400
Final exam:	100

Grade breakdown

100-98	A+	97-93	A	92-90	A-
89-88	B+	87-83	B	82-80	B-
79-78	C+	77-73	C	72-70	C-
69-68	D+	67-63	D	62-60	D-
59-0	F				

Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty

Plagiarism and cheating of any form are serious offenses and may result in a failing grade for the assignment, the course, or expulsion from the college. Specific examples of academic dishonesty that I find unacceptable include:

- copying material from an outside source without documentation
- submitting work from another class for an assignment in this class
- copying work from a previous assignment in this class for a later assignment

Other details of Central College's Academic Integrity policy are found in the Student Handbook, on the web. A copy will be sent to you via email during the first week of the semester. It is your responsibility to read and understand the contents of that policy before you submit work to be graded. Questions regarding the policies and enforcement of the policies may be addressed to me during class or during office hours.

ADA compliance

Central College abides by interpretations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which stipulates that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education “solely by reason of a handicap.” Disabilities covered by law include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities, hearing, sight, or mobility impairments, and other health related impairments. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class, please see me and Nancy Kroese, Director of Student Support Services and Disabilities Services Coordinator (x 5247), during the first two weeks of the semester so that accommodations may be arranged.

Notification of participation in college sanctioned events

Mock Trial participants, music participants, athletes, and others who must miss a class for participating in a college sanctioned event must notify me in advance and complete work, including exams, in advance of the absence. It is your responsibility to communicate with me in advance regarding absences so that we may adjust our schedules.

COURSE CALENDAR

Wildness and Community		
Jan. 18	Introductions, syllabus, 10 questions Recommended: Turner, “Cultivating the American Garden” (on Bb)	
Jan. 20	Leopold, <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> (Part I, Jan-June; 3-40)	Reading notes
Jan. 25	<i>A Sand County Almanac</i> (Part I, July-Aug, 41-52; Nov-Dec, 66-92; and Part II, “Thinking Like a Mountain” (129-33) Recommended: “Wisconsin” (95-116)	Journal 1
Jan. 27	<i>A Sand County Almanac</i> (Part III, 188-226)	Journal 1
Feb. 1	Krakauer, <i>Into the Wild</i> (ch. 1-7, 3-69)	Reading notes Group 1
Feb. 3	<i>Into the Wild</i> (ch. 8-12, 70-126); start film	Reading notes
Feb. 8	<i>Into the Wild</i> (ch. 13-end, 127-203); continue film	Quiz
Feb. 10	Finish film	Paper 1 due

Finding Beauty in a Broken World		
Feb. 15	Price, <i>Man Killed by Pheasant</i> , 1-66	Journal 2 Group 2
Feb. 17	<i>Man Killed by Pheasant</i> , 67-79, 109-122, 143-167	Journal 2
Feb. 22	No class: Josh is gone for Dean’s search	
Feb. 24	<i>Man Killed by Pheasant</i> , 203-260	Draft 1
Mar. 1	Momaday, <i>The Way to Rainy Mountain</i> (ix-41)	Journal 3 Group 3
Mar. 3	<i>The Way to Rainy Mountain</i> (44-89)	Journal 3
Mar. 8	Terry Tempest Williams (TBD)	Reading notes Group 4
Mar. 10	Terry Tempest Williams (TBD)	Reading notes
Mar. 14-20	SPRING BREAK	
Mar. 22	Terry Tempest Williams (TBD)	Quiz
Mar. 24	TBD	Paper 2 due

Nature and Food		
Mar. 29	Pollan, <i>The Botany of Desire</i> , Introduction, 3-58	Quiz
Mar. 31	<i>The Botany of Desire</i> , 61-110	Reading notes
Apr. 5	<i>The Botany of Desire</i> , 113-179	Journal 4 Group 5
Apr. 7	Class visit with Terry Tempest Williams Terry Tempest Williams, 7:30 p.m., Cox-Snow	
Apr. 12	<i>The Botany of Desire</i> , 184-245	Reading notes
Apr. 14	Kingsolver, <i>Animal, Vegetable, Miracle</i> , chapters 1-3	Reading notes
Apr. 19	SERVICE DAY: Pick a common project	
Apr. 21	<i>Animal, Vegetable, Miracle</i> , chapters 4-10	Quiz
Apr. 26	<i>Animal, Vegetable, Miracle</i> , chapters 11-14	Journal 5 Group 6
Apr. 28	<i>Animal, Vegetable, Miracle</i> , chapters 15-17	Journal 5
May 3	<i>Animal, Vegetable, Miracle</i> , chapters 18-20	Quiz
May 5	TBD	Paper 3 due
May 9	STUDY DAY	
May 11	FINAL EXAM, 3:30 p.m.	