

<p style="text-align: center;">SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE 201 Cultural Perspectives on Sustainability</p>
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Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 1:00 pm until 1:50 pm
Ag Sciences North N-10

INSTRUCTORS

Leah Bayens

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

SAG 201 examines cultural dimensions within the concept of sustainability through a close reading of texts that address the relationship between people and nature. The course uses the author’s voice as the focal point for understanding the assumptions, values and beliefs through which they engage the natural world. People are both fully integrated and intrinsically isolated elements of this world, a dichotomy reflected in Wendell Berry’s observation that “[t]he only thing we have to preserve nature with is culture; the only thing we have to preserve wilderness with is domesticity.” What cultural constructs do people apply when experiencing, interpreting and impacting the natural world, and how does human understanding inform the meaning of “sustainability”? This course delves into the insights and observations of noted writers on environmental themes as they explore the interdependence between individuals, civilizations, and nature.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This is a writing-intensive (W) course approved to fulfill the upper tier of the graduation writing requirement (GWR). To receive W credit for this course, you must have successfully completed the first-year writing requirement (ENG 104 or its equivalent) and have completed at least 30 hours of coursework prior to enrollment in SAG 201.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Acquire and communicate an expanded understanding of sustainability within both personal and cultural contexts.
- Discuss significant themes found in the works of multiple modern authors who address the connections between personal identity, the growth of modern civilization, and the long-term fate of the planet.
- Write a paper that is essentially free of mechanical errors (grammar, punctuation, spelling, and syntax) and awkwardness, using a style that is appropriate to the purpose and audience.
- Demonstrate an ability to discover, evaluate, and clearly present evidence in support of an argument in the subject area and utilize documentation that conforms to the formats and the citation conventions of the subject area.
- Be aware that composing a successful text frequently takes multiple drafts, with various degrees of focus on generating, revising, editing and proofreading.

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS

- Frederick Douglass: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*, May 1845 edition (Bedford Series in History and Culture edition)

- pocket folder (for turning in all major essays and peer reviews)
- An Active Directory account (UK email login name & password) for Bb
- A working email address, checked regularly

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

In any course or series of courses approved as writing intensive, students will be required to write a minimum of 15 pages of formal writing that is drafted, reviewed, and revised. At least 10 of these pages must be single-authored assignments. No assignment requiring fewer than four pages may be included in the 15 page minimum.

There is **no final examination in this course**. Grades are determined on a cumulative scale of 100 points calculated as follows:

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING (dates are subject to change)

WEIGHT	PROJECT / ASSIGNMENT	LENGTH	Tentative DUE DATES
25%	Essay 1	5-6 pages	Fri., Feb. 8th
25%	Essay 2	5-6 pages	Fri., Mar. 7th
25%	Essay 3	5-6 pages	Mon., Apr. 28th
25%	Daily Work / Participation	(essay drafts, reading responses, in-class writing, homework, quizzes, attendance, participation, & peer reviews)	Throughout semester

<u>Grading Scale</u>
A=90-100%
B=80-89%
C=70-79%
D=60-69%
F= below 59%

- You will receive a handout that contains the general guidelines for major essay grades.* Other specific guidelines for major essays will be detailed on individual handouts. Grading guidelines for reading responses, homework, and other activities will be detailed on respective handouts.

COURSE POLICIES

- Class attendance.** Interaction with instructors and classmates is essential for getting the most out of SAG 201, and each student is responsible for attending class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class, and students will be **allowed two unexcused absences per semester**. Additional absences that are not authorized by the University will be considered when determining a student’s grade. The instructors determine when class concludes, and prior departure can result in a student being marked absent.
- Revision:** Each essay will be revised at least once. Instructors will comment on the first drafts of essays and/or essays will be peer workshopped.
- Submission of assignments & essays:**
 - Reading responses and any other written homework* assignments should be **typed** and submitted in hard copy form unless otherwise instructed.
 - For the three major essays, you will submit drafts to me via Blackboard’s Assignment feature.* We will distribute a handout with instructions for this submission method.
 - You will also **bring to class one hard copy for your peer review / workshop.**
 - For final drafts,** you will submit the peer review of your draft, the draft with our comments, any other drafts you have worked on, and your final copy in a 2-pocket folder.
 - All formal writing will be in the **MLA style**, double-spaced, have one-inch margins on all sides, and be in Times New Roman 12pt. font.
- Late Policy & Missed Work**
 - We don’t like late work. When students turn in late work, it throws off our schedules, and it also makes us assume that students do not respect or value our time. Part of your college education is a lesson in working within time constraints, and it is unfair for those students who *do* turn in their work on time.
 - Whether you have an excused or unexcused absence, **missed announcements, instructions, assignments, etc. due to absence will not constitute an acceptable excuse for failing to meet subsequent deadlines.** It is the **student’s responsibility to learn the content of the missed classes** and to initiate arrangements with the instructor for making up the work.
 - Students who miss classes when assignments are returned are responsible for **collecting their own work** from their instructors, during office hours or as otherwise arranged.
 - Excused late papers are graded without penalty, provided the alternate due date is met.** See below for details on unexcused paper penalties and deadlines.
 - Excused absence:** deadlines missed will be extended within reason, as determined by instructor.
 - Unexcused absence:** You are responsible for turning in your work on the proper due dates, even if you miss class. You should make arrangements with a classmate to turn in your work.
 - Late First Drafts of Major Essays:** Late drafts of major essays will be penalized 5 points per day late (unless late due to an excused absence).

- **Late Final Drafts:** If I don't have your essay and portfolio in our hands by the end of class on the due date, then it is considered late. You have three days (not three class meetings) from the date the assignment is due to turn in your work. Every day that the work is late, we will deduct 1/2 letter grade from the final score. We will not accept the assignment after three days. For excused absences, you are responsible for bringing in the appropriate draft of your essay on the day you return to class (or according to deadline we appoint). Consult University Policy for the definitions of "excused" and "unexcused" absences: www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code.
- **Class etiquette.** Please respect your colleagues by arriving to class on time and avoiding disruptive behavior during lecture, such as side conversation, newspaper browsing, and the use of cell phones or pagers. You are welcome to bring beverages to class but please, no eating. Feel welcome to express views pertinent to the subject while respecting the right of others to express their opinions as they choose.
- **No form of plagiarism or cheating will be tolerated.**

Part II of *Student Rights and Responsibilities* (available online at <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about a question of plagiarism involving their work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it be published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or whatever. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be. Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone.

When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources or information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she has employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain. (Section 6.3.1).

The minimum penalty for an academic offense, such as cheating or plagiarism, is an 0 on the assignment. Repeated offenses will result in more serious penalties.

- **Disability.** If you have a disability that requires special accommodation during class or for completion of assignments, please tell the instructors at the beginning of the semester.
- **Support for students.** We are looking forward to a constructive, interactive learning environment. If you are having problems with the course material, please come see the instructors sooner, rather than later. If you cannot come during scheduled office hours, email to make an appointment. Feel free to talk to us about your problems, and we'll do our best to correct them.

WRITING INITIATIVE GRADING POLICIES

To pass the course, students must submit all formal assignments (in draft and final form) and earn a grade of C or higher on each. Assignments other than the formal writing enter into the final grade determination *only if the student has achieved grades of C or higher on graded assignments*. The draft and review process will employ peer review workshops under the direction of the course instructors.

Any major assignment that receives a D or below must be revised to reflect competency and resubmitted. Instructors may limit the number of revision attempts. At the discretion of the instructor, students who fail to achieve competency may receive I (incomplete) grades, but in no case may a student whose writing fails to reach the level of C (competent) receive a passing grade in a course that satisfies the University Writing Requirement.

Please submit two copies of your final paper to the instructor. One copy will be graded by the instructor; the second copy will be used for SACS assessment and should be a clean copy, with only your social security number listed at the top of the page, with all other identifying information (your name, instructor name, and course and section number) removed.

WRITING INITIATIVE CONTACT

Questions about the W option should be referred to the Director of the UK Writing Initiative, Professor Janet Carey Eldred, eldred@uky.edu.

Writing Initiative Office, 152 Bowman Hall, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40508-0059

Fall Hours: M-F 9:00-4:00

859-257-4831

www.uky.edu/UGS/WritingInitiative

COURSE CONTENT

First Thematic Unit: The Wild and Its Counterparts

Readings:

(Leah's selections):

- Henry David Thoreau, "Walking"
- John Muir, "Wild Wool"
- William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness"
- Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron"
- Ursula LeGuin, "Buffalo Gals Won't You Come Out Tonight"
- Gary Snyder, "The Etiquette of Freedom" & poetry selections
- Gloria Anzaldúa, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue"

This unit investigates ways that the wild is differentiated from states or conditions opposed to it: the domestic, the tame, the cultivated. Readings include nonfiction essays by influential 19th century nature writers (Thoreau, Muir) that take up the term expressly; comparable essays by recent environmental writers (Snyder, Shepard, Jackson); a further essay (Anzaldúa) that takes up the term in a multicultural context; works of fiction that dramatize passage between wild and "cultured" states (Jewett, LeGuin); and a flurry of poems that enact relations between centers and peripheries, order and abandon, of sorts that exemplify play between these categories.

Assignments will pose such questions as these:

- What sorts of qualities, what virtues and shortcomings, have been associated with ideas of wildness over the last couple centuries of American life? How are these related to images of American identity? How have they changed over time?
- How can "wildness" be substantiated as a quality in scientific terms? What sorts of features and processes in animals, plants, soils qualify them as wild or domestic? Where and how do we draw these lines? How do they inform our notions as to how farms should appear and operate?
- When you say a person is acting wild, do you mean the same thing as you do when you say a plant is wild? Can whole cultures be wild in ways other cultures are not? If so, does this make them backward or primitive? Noble and unspoiled? How can we make such distinctions without lapsing into sentiment and stereotype?

The unit will eventuate in an exploratory essay that draws upon terms, episodes, and perspectives from readings to make sense of images and experiences of wildness and its counterparts in aspects of SAG coursework to date and the culture at large.

Second Thematic Unit: Subjugation of the Wild

Readings:

Leah's selections:

- William Bradford, from *Of Plymouth Plantation* (excerpt)
- Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer* (1782) (excerpt)
- Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (excerpts)
- Willa Cather, *O Pioneers*
- Edward Abbey, "The Heat of Noon: Rock and Tree and Cloud" (b/c outlines the "project" of urbanization and wilderness razing)
- Thomas Palmer, "The Case for Human Beings"
- William K. Reilly, "The Green Thumb of Capitalism"

This unit examines the philosophical and theoretical mediation of the natural world in ways that support an understanding of human dominion, control, and mastery. We will draw upon fictional and nonfictional texts

from a historical range stretching from the late Age of Exploration through the dawn of globalization. The early works in this range (Bradford, Crèvecoeur, Jefferson, and Cather ~~Cather~~) capture the impressions of individuals living at our near the literal frontiers of their culture; the later works (Palmer, Reilly) reflect the more reflective perspective from the era of modern convenience and leisure. This unit will assess the foundational arguments of the authors' reasoning and ask what natural world as well as human constructed phenomena contribute to their perspective.

Third Thematic Unit: “To command nature, it must be obeyed”

The third unit addresses alternative or revisionist responses to the relationship between humans and nature dating from the mid-twentieth century and later. This unit also introduces food and agriculture as a central theme in that relationship. The concepts of integration, reciprocity, and collective destiny will highlight readings from authors who seek to bridge conceptual divisions or distinctions between people and the planet. The practice of agriculture and our understanding of food can do much to convey our appreciation for humanity's ultimate dependence upon the entire biological community and the physical environment which houses it.

Readings:

Leah's selections:

- Aldo Leopold, “Thinking Like a Mountain”
- Rachel Carson, Selections from *Silent Spring*
- Wendell Berry, “The Pleasure of Eating” (or selection from *Unsettling of America*)
- Barbara Kingsolver, *Prodigal Summer* (the whole novel)

Leah's cuts:

EXTRA CREDIT READING (& Writing)

- Berry, Wendell. *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (1986)
- T.C. Boyle's *Friend of the Earth*
- Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow*
- Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- DeLillo, Don. *White Noise* (1985)
- Erdrich, Louise. *Tracks* (1988)
- Williams, Terry Tempest. *Refuge* (1991)
- Castillo, Ana. *So Far From God* (1994)
- Hogan, Linda. *Solar Storms* (1995)
- Ray, Janisse. *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* (2000)
- Boyle, T.C. *Drop City* (2004)
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*