Course Description

Geoscientists have proposed a new designation in the geologic time scale for our current time period, “the Anthropocene.” This designation reflects the fact that human beings are acting as geological agents, transforming the Earth on a global scale as natural events have in the past. In this course, we will contemplate what it might take to reconfigure the actions of humans in the Anthropocene toward sustaining life on this planet, instead of accelerating its demise. First recognizing how humans are altering earth’s systems on such a grand-scale, we will explore in analytical prose what our individual and collective responsibilities might be once we are equipped with this knowledge and that of the consequences of our actions. With the Anthropocene, science enters humanities interests as never before,
challenging the age-old humanist assumption that we are creatures set apart from (and above) everything else. We will consider texts, both critical and creative, that ground their trajectories in these assumptions.

This is a composition course specially designed for STEM majors or students interested in STEM topics and for students in the SEEP Learning Community. The theme reflects a topic of growing interest in those disciplines, and the assignments are designed to develop important critical reading and writing skills needed to participate in academic and professional conversations about sustainability and environmental ethics.

**General Learning Outcomes for 1101**

In service of the QEP and in order to help students develop skills that can be applied across the disciplines, the FYW program’s 1101 course:

- Focuses on the needs, interests, and skill level of students when choosing texts and sequencing assignments, scaffolding assignments to advance the students’ critical reading, writing, and thinking skills throughout the semester;
- Chooses length-appropriate and level-appropriate texts, consisting primarily (but not exclusively) of non-fiction;
- Teaches the skills of summary, critical analysis of texts, and argumentative synthesis;
- Develops a range of assignments that focus on a variety of analytical writing tasks, including at least two distinct types of writing over the three major out-of-class essays (possibilities include, though are not necessarily limited to: summary, reader response, autobiographical narrative, critiques, problem/solution, ad analysis, rhetorical analysis, description, argumentative synthesis);
- Creates grammar lessons and assignments to teach students about a range of grammatical issues and to track student progress on those issues.

In service of the QEP and in order to develop skills that can be applied across the disciplines, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of rhetoric in the construction of effective academic writing
- Hone critical reading and critical thinking skills
- Develop facility with the whole writing process from invention through revision
- Complete a range of assignments that highlight different rhetorical strategies and different methods of critical analysis
- Develop the skill of summarizing an argumentative text, identifying and conveying in the student’s own words the main and supporting arguments and the evidence used to support these arguments
- Develop the skill of effectively conveying and analyzing the significance of a text, through the student’s engagement and dialogue with the text
- Develop the skill of critical analysis, both analyzing the components of an argument in texts and mounting an effective argument of the student’s own
- Develop the skill of synthesis, understanding how to analyze, integrate, and summarize the ideas from multiple texts while the student makes an argument of his/her own
- Become proficient in accurate paraphrasing, citing, and documenting of a text
- Complete specific assignments aimed at competence in 1101-level grammar and writing mechanics, with an understanding of the application and relevance of these skills outside the context of the FYW classroom
Course Texts

Several of the required readings—professional articles, short works of creative nonfiction, and excerpts from longer works—will be found on Course Den, in the section labeled “Required Readings.” Readings are organized there according to the order in which they should be read and include all of the bibliographic information you will need to cite them correctly in your work.

You will also need to bookmark this resource: Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). Periodically, I will refer you here to practice basic writing skills, formatting, and documentation of sources. Otherwise, this is a great resource for help writing and revising your work, and we will be using this in place of a writing handbook.

Here’s what you need to buy:

   (Bedford, ISBN: 9781319042134)

   (Hill & Wang, ISBN: 9780809093557)

Course Requirements

Essays & Projects (75%)

Students will complete 3 major essay assignments and 1 poster project:

1. Critical Summary (2-3 pp.) – 15%
2. Rhetorical Analysis (3-5 pp.) – 20%
3. Application/ Reflection Essay (5 pp.) – 25%
4. Service Learning Poster Project – 15%
Specific assignment sheets and standard rubrics will be distributed on Course Den before each essay is due.

You will receive graded assignments with letter grades only. You can imagine them numerically like this: A+=98%; A=95%; A-=92%; B+=88%; B=85%; B-=82%; C+=78%; C=75%; C-=72%; D+=68%; D=65%; D-=62%; F=50%

Note that students must have a C or higher to progress to the next course.

**Participation (10%)**

This grade can be a significant asset or a liability for borderline students. You are responsible for keeping up with the reading each class period, displaying your knowledge of the texts by being active in class discussions, and participating in group work and peer-editing sessions from time to time. You can boost this grade by attending at least one conference with me.

Peer Editing Guidelines: Students working in groups of 3 or 4 will take turns reading excerpts from their drafts aloud while the rest of the group listens, taking no notes. When the writer finishes reading, the other members of the group will each prepare a brief written response based on their initial impressions of the piece. Following this activity, group members will switch papers, carefully reading their group members’ essays and making comments on what stands out as particularly effective, what seems to need more development, and what questions the essay leaves them with. Students should swap papers as many times as possible in the time allotted, aiming to have as many people in the group read each draft as time allows. If time allows, groups should engage in a constructive discussion about the papers. We will discuss these procedures and sometimes designate specific goals for the session before each peer editing class period.

Conference Guidelines: I recommend that students have an individual conference with me during my office hours at least once during the semester. For the conference, students should come prepared with a draft (however rough) and a list of the three most pressing questions/issues to be discussed. In addition to your own questions about your draft, which can focus on whatever aspect of the draft you feel needs work, I will ask you three questions about the draft to help you develop your ideas further. You will not receive a clear sense of what grade the essay will receive from these sessions, and you will never leave without options for improving your work, no matter how good it is. These conferences are optional, but the better prepared you come to talk about your draft, the more useful they will be when revising.

**In-class Assignments (15%)**

This category encompasses any written work you complete in class, including the following: attendance questions/reading responses, process work, group work, quizzes, service learning and other projects, and pre- and post-tests.

Reading Responses: When you arrive in class, you will find a writing prompt relating to the reading assignment for that period. You will have the first 10-15 minutes of class to respond to this prompt, depending on the complexity of the prompt. It is important to arrive in class on time, as you will not be able to submit a response after I have taken them up for the day, even if you started late. You may, however, begin writing early if you arrive early to class. In these responses, you will be assessed on three things: 1) responding specifically and critically to the prompt; 2) organizing your thoughts into complete sentences and in paragraph form; and 3) demonstrating your knowledge of the assigned reading through the use of textual support. Responses that seriously attempt to do all three will receive full credit.,
exceptional responses will receive extra points (+), and scant submissions that engage with the readings only vaguely will receive only partial credit (-). I will drop the lowest of these from the final grade. Please note that these are *not* reading responses in the sense that you tell me whether or not you *liked* the reading or *agreed* with some feature of it unless I specifically ask you to do so. I value your opinions, of course, but the point of these short assignments is to practice academic interrogation and argumentation, like that which you will be required to do in your essays, in a lower-stakes setting.

Process Assignments: This category encompasses any short writing exercises I assign. In lieu of reflections on course readings, I will sometimes ask you to complete short writing challenges related to your major assignments during this time. These assignments will ask you to do things like: practice thesis statements, introductory paragraphs, and concluding paragraphs; write short summaries, paraphrases, and utilize the correct quotation of paragraphs from the reading; and effectively challenge an author’s argument or use it to support one of your own. Often, you will be able to revise and use this material in your major assignments later. Though I will give you feedback on these assignments, you will receive full credit for seriously attempting them, as with reading responses. Sometimes, we will workshop these assignments, and other students will be invited to respond with questions or constructive feedback; other times, only you and I will see them, and only I will give you feedback.

Service Learning Project

This course includes a mandatory service-learning component related to the course theme. This semester’s project will involve three class meetings at the Campus Community Garden (see course schedule for dates), wherein students will participate in hands-on activities related to the cultivation of a sustainable, organic food source. Such activities can include, but are not limited to: weeding, starting crops, transplanting, harvesting, soil preparation, and encouraging pollinator activity. This portion of the course serves to facilitate tangible connections between our classroom discussions of texts and immediate, real-world contexts. The labor we put into the garden thus mutually benefits students and the university/greater Carrollton community by providing both a sustainability learning experience and locally sourced edible goods. Students will be expected to attend each SL activity in the garden in suitable attire and with an open mind, prepared to participate in any and all related tasks during the trip. Student attendance and engagement during each garden visit will contribute to the overall Participation Grade (10%) and will inform several in-class writing assignments (15%) and potentially the final Poster Project (15%). In other words, think of the garden as a text, and imagine your work there as reading. Failure to attend and/or engage with the SL component of the course will result in deductions/penalties that cannot be recovered.

About the Campus Garden: The University of West Georgia’s Community Garden began in 2014 in partnership with the Tanner Health System’s “Get Healthy, Live Well” initiative. Community gardens are on the rise in a number of rural and urban environments and provide residents with sustainably grown produce, practical skills for the cultivation of regional crops and knowledge of local foodways, a sense of community, and a connection to the land. Some of the crops grown in our garden include tomatoes, peppers, squash, okra, corn, and strawberries. The UWG Community Garden is made possible through funding partnerships and collaboration between UWG Facilities, Sustainability Council, Wolf Wellness Advisory Council and the Green Elite student organizations and Get Healthy, Live Well—a community transformation grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. UWG’s garden is located behind the Observatory area track and bus storage lot. To take part in the gardening effort, contact wolfwellness@westga.edu.
Course Policies

Attendance & Participation

Your presence and participation in this class are crucial to your individual success and to the cultivation of a learning community. Failure to engage with either the assigned material or your peers in class will negatively impact your grade. Active participation in large-group discussions and small-group tasks and the completion of short, in-class assignments designed to develop your individual writing process will be considered in the calculation of your overall grade (see breakdown of final grades below). Students missing more than five class periods should not expect to pass the course.

Classroom Etiquette

Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that threatens or disrupts the learning environment of others or is deemed disrespectful to other students, the professor, or the learning process. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Arriving excessively late for class—if you find you are more that 15 minutes late for class, do not come. You will not be given credit for attendance.
- Persistent use of portable electronic devices for purposes unrelated to course content—if you need to send a text here or there, that’s fine, and on occasion, I might even ask you to use phones, laptops, or tablets to look something up or complete an assignment, but if you are paying more attention to social media, work for other courses, email, etc. than what is going on in this class, you will not be given credit for attendance.
- Inappropriate behavior—racist, sexist, classist, xenophobic, homophobic, or transphobic comments or slurs, threats of violence, sexual harassment, or other forms of abuse have no place in an academic setting. These behaviors will not be tolerated and will carry the stiffest possible penalty.
- Lack of preparedness—if you arrive in class without the day’s assigned reading(s) or means by which to take notes or complete in-class assignments, or if you are found sleeping in class, you will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

You may feel free to eat or drink, to use the restroom without asking, to respond in conversation without raising your hand as long as you are speaking in turn, to share materials with others, to bring infants and children occasionally if need be, to raise questions, to share your own knowledge, and to contribute suggestions for course discussions or activities.

A Word on Preparing for Class

Learning to take detailed notes and annotate texts is crucial to succeed in most college classes, not just this one. You are expected to take notes as you read independently and to structure your responses to texts around those notes, referring to specific ideas and passages from course materials. Though I will not be monitoring this stage in your writing process after the first few weeks, it will be apparent from the quality of your work whether you kept good notes on the thoughts and questions you had as you read. I recommend highlighting or underlining ideas you find interesting or that seem important to you, language or concepts you do not understand, vocabulary with which you are unfamiliar and will need to look up, and moments in course readings you think you might be able to use as evidence for the arguments you will make in assignments. Use different colors or symbols to indicate which of these each moment you’ve marked reflects. For this reason, printing the readings from Course Den is recommended, though you can annotate digitally with many document viewers. Also for this reason, renting your textbooks is a bad idea, as the necessity of keeping your book free of markings will add extra steps to this process.
Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her email. Though I will often communicate with you about course content and assignments using Course Den and welcome you to do the same, please email only from your UWG account to discuss final grades (because FERPA) or with time-sensitive questions or information, as I am often likely to see this correspondence sooner.

Though I will often reply to your emails promptly, please allow 24 hours for a response during the week (48 hours over the weekend) before sending a follow-up email or message and plan accordingly. Remember that email is another opportunity to practice good writing techniques—always include a greeting and a closing with your name. Also, be sure to proofread for clarity, spelling, and grammar. Studies show that well-written, courteous emails are better received and more likely to lead to rapid and favorable replies than those that are hastily written or inappropriate in tone.

Assignment Submission, Late Work, & Revision Policy

All major assignments should be submitted to the appropriate assignment folder in Course Den by midnight on dates they are listed due in the course schedule below. Emailed files will not be accepted, except in the case of verified server failure (like system-wide Course Den maintenance or something). All assignments should be double spaced in a 12-point plain font (i.e. Times New Roman) and follow MLA formatting guidelines (remember that OWL thing?). All assignments need to be completed in or converted to .DOCX or .PDF formats. I grade in TurnItIn, which does not accept other file formats, so your assignments will not be accepted if they are in another format, like Pages or .TXT, even though these are common file types.

Because I have a generous revision policy (outlined below), you may not submit assignments late under any circumstances. If you are having trouble with an assignment, come and talk to me well ahead of that assignment’s due date. I do not grant last minute extensions for assignments. It is your responsibility to regularly back up your work and to ensure that the submitted product is formatted correctly. Submission of corrupted files or “I thought I uploaded the file” are not accepted excuses for late work, so I strongly suggest you save your work to a USB drive or cloud storage regularly and double check that ALL of your submissions to Course Den go through as planned.

Any one major essay can be revised. You may submit this revision at any time before the end of the semester. Revision grades will completely replace the initial grade—the two will not be averaged. It is not possible to receive a lower grade on a revision. In the unlikely event that you submit a revision worse than your original, I will, of course, keep the higher grade. Plagiarized papers are not available for revision, nor can you submit a “revision” for an assignment you simply did not turn in. Only substantial revisions that address all of my comments on the original essay will receive a grade change. Correcting sentence-level errors alone does not count as a substantial revision. Weekly assignments can never be made up, as they reflect both engagement and attendance.

Extra Credit

Learn not to expect extra credit. Do the work that gets credit in the first place.
Academic Support

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services.

Center for Academic Success: The Center for Academic Success provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu

Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student’s account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the Student Handbook.

HB 280

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance: http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information#

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php
All readings need to be completed by the date they are listed on the syllabus and will be central to class activities that day. This reading schedule is subject to change if necessary for the success of the class. I will never add additional reading or graded assignments and will notify you in advance.

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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>8/9 – Syllabus Overview</th>
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<td>Introductions</td>
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<td>Read (in class): Paul Crutzen, “Geology of Mankind” (on Course Den)</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>8/14 – Read: Roy Scranton, “Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene” (on Course Den)</th>
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<td>Action</td>
<td>Watch: Majora Carter, “Greening the Ghetto” (on Course Den)</td>
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<td>8/16 – Read: Jared Diamond, “Easter’s End” (on Course Den)</td>
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Discuss: Assignment 2  
(Issue 1 in *Understanding Rhetoric*) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 10 | What Sustainability Really Means | 10/9 – Read: Naomi Klein, Excerpt from *This Changes Everything* (on Course Den) | 10/11 – Read: Seth Wynes & Kimberly Nicholas, “The Climate Mitigation Gap” (on Course Den)  
**Due Friday 10/13:**  
Assignment #2, Rhetorical Analysis |
| Week 11 | Food | 10/16 – Read: Michael Pollan, Excerpts from *In Defense of Food* (on Course Den) | 10/18 – **Garden Day # 3**  
Watch: *Can You Dig This*? (on Netflix)  
**Response Due: Sunday 10/22** |
| Week 12 | Food | 10/23 – Read: Jonathan Safran Foer, Excerpt from *Eating Animals* (on Course Den) | 10/25 – View in class: *Cowspiracy* (on Netflix)  
Discuss: Assignment 3, Application/Reflection Essay (Issue 4 in *Understanding Rhetoric*) |
| Week 14 | Fuel | 11/6 – Read: John Francis, Excerpts from *Planet Walker* (on Course Den) | 11/8 – Read: John Zimmer, “The Road Ahead” (link on Course Den)  
Watch: Cesar Harada, “A Novel Idea for Cleaning Up Oil Spills” (on Course Den) |
|--------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 15 | Flight | 11/13 – Read: Stewart Barr et al., “A Holiday is a Holiday’: Practicing Sustainability, Home and Away” (on Course Den) | 11/15 – Read: Seth Stevenson, Excerpt from *Grounded* (on Course Den)  
**Due Friday 11/17:** Assignment #3, Application/Reflection Essay |
| Week 16 | Thanksgiving | 11/20 – **Thanksgiving Break, No class meeting** | 11/22 – **Thanksgiving Break, No class meeting** |
| Week 17 | Conclusions | 11/27 – In-class Poster Consultations | 11/29 – **Poster Presentations in the UCC Ballroom, Room 108-1** |
| Final Exam Week | | 12/4 – Final Exam Period: **Due: Revisions (by 5 PM)** |