WRTG 3020: Don’t Fence Me In
Course Description

I don’t know what happens to country.
—John Grady Cole in All the Pretty Horses

This course is the study of a feeling. How is it that so many Americans feel entitled to open spaces? How can it also be the case that we seem so determined to avoid social contact, that we seek out privacy in wilderness? Our inquiry may range as widely as considerations of public policy, the bloody history of manifest destiny, and readings in gender studies and criticism on literature and film. Individual essays, though, may pursue questions as confined as how one character, or poem, exhibits ambivalence about space. Essays will ultimately display a similar variety in topics: civic rhetoric, political science, philosophy, and many other disciplines may provide scholarship for this course. Our work will follow this feeling of simultaneous desire for, and fear of, space without limits. We will consider the ambivalent feelings Americans have for urban spaces, and that many men (and some women) have for domestic enclosure and the promised safety within civilized spaces.

Our course of study will be broken into three Progressions (or stages), the better to accomplish a larger movement (or Progression) from our preconceptions on the topic, to a wider and deeper set of ideas by the end of the semester. Similarly, the larger progression of the course entails improvement in your ability to do research. Most of all, this is a writing class—albeit one that relies on interest in critical reading in ideas (and feelings): you will learn to blur the distinction between reading and writing, to revise radically, and probably to spend more time on your writing that you ever have before.

Progression I: Close Reading American Literary Space

We begin with the American Renaissance poets Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, and finish with a short story by Stephen Crane. In this way, we will trace American feelings about space in poems and short fiction. The final essay for this progression will be a relatively brief close reading of one or more of the assigned works.

Progression II: Close Reading and Scholarship in Literary and Cinematic Spaces

We will continue with American fiction and film, improving your skills in close reading, while developing your research skills. The final essay for this progression will add good criticism to a stronger close reading of a novel or film. This essay will be the fullest and most demanding scholarly essay of the course, requiring significant research in pursuit of an idea about space that arises organically from close reading of one of our major texts. Essays will range widely between a continuation of our aesthetic concerns, and investigations of larger
social issues as they are ocassioned by close attention to “American fictions” about space. This inherently interdisciplinary progression also encourages students to strengthen their writing within their major or to enjoy an excursion into another discipline.

**Progression III: Civic Rhetoric and Creative Writing on Space**

This brief Progression provides student with two choices: either a civic rhetoric essay, or a creative work (poem, short story, play, or creative non-fiction essay) on space. Civic Rhetoric students are encouraged to range widely after determining a spatial problem in a specific primary work. This is your chance to bring your major discipline to a proposal, familiar essay, or journalism “think piece” on space, even as you are encouraged to do research well outside that major. “Creative Writing students” need not have any prior experience in creative writing, but they will be called on to work very hard in revision and workshop on each other’s projects. Classes will overlap these two options, providing lecture and discussion for one group with workshop time for the other group, or consideration of writing techniques applicable to both options. This progression is intended to meet the various needs of students nearing the end of the semester (indeed, in some cases, nearing graduation). Students who need more work in research and writing for their other courses or for graduate school preparation can continue that improvement; students who have done well enough at the academic essay and are unlikely to be doing further writing in academia now have an opportunity to pursue a creative writing project.
Dr. Jay Ellis

Policies and Requirements for WRTG 3020

Office: Program in Writing and Rhetoric; Basement of Environmental Design Building, 1B50; Be sure to ask in class to see a map to help you find it. Office Hours: See Individual “Progressions,” By Appointment jay.ellis@colorado.edu

Texts

All texts other than novels are available by WebCT online link, handout, course packet, or by electronic or paper reserve at Norlin Library, as announced. See each Progression (Syllabus) for bibliographies and availability of all texts. CU Bookstore will have the required novel or novels for the course under its listing.

Dictionary: The American Heritage is available with a CD ROM that is well worth the money. Dictionary.com lately uses this dictionary, but you must be online and put up with advertising. In any case, you are expected to look up all words you don’t know, and also those you think you know. Own at least one college-level dictionary.

Grading

See the “Grading Guidelines” at the bottom of this page for explanation of letter grades. You may schedule an appointment with me during office hours at any time for a general indication of how you are doing in the course. Even before I’ve finished grading essays, I am happy to look over your work at any time with you during an office hours appointment and give you a clear indication—within a letter grade—of how you’re doing.

Progression I Close Reading Essay 15%
Progression II Scholarly Essay (with substantial research) 30%
Progression III Civic Rhetoric or Creative Writing 15%

1 Read the fine print!
2 This address is for scheduling office hours. All help on your writing will be on WebCT, not regular email.
3 Essay grades are on the final draft only and indicate degree of success, regardless of intent and process. Whatever you do toward that draft (exercises, early drafts, revisions, and workshop) is graded either in your Participation or your Progression Grade.
4 This essay grade expects success not only for a general reader, but also within an academic context: a well-written essay that lacks adequate research will not fulfill the requirement here; nor will a well-researched poorly written essay.
5 We will discuss in class the criteria for choosing one of these options.
Attendance and Active Class Participation\(^6\) 20%
Portfolio “Progression” Grade\(^7\) 20%

**General WRTG 3020 Course Description**

This is an advanced interdisciplinary writing seminar. You will complete three major writing projects (at least two of these being essays), informing at least one (and possibly two) of these with significant research at an advanced undergraduate level, with an acute awareness of your intended audience for each. To succeed, you must read each assignment *before* the day it is listed on the “schedule” part of each “progression” (our word for the schedule part of a syllabus); you must write carefully to the prompts given in each progression and come to class with your work posted to WebCT. You are not required to offer an entirely fresh understanding of the reading, but you should at least have formed a question about it. I may at any time give pop quizzes or call on particular students concerning assigned material, and I reserve the right to include grades on such exams in the Participation and Progression grades. A final exam to determine that you have done all the reading may be required, depending on how seriously the class takes reading assignments, and a passing grade on this would become half the overall “Progression” grade for each student. For this advanced writing seminar, you will be required to work within a writing community, giving and responding to substantial critiques within a “small group” of four to five fellow students.

See the Course Description, and the individual Progressions specific to our topic for more information on the course theme. **All serious writing courses require discussion of ideas, as well as of process and technique. Your active engagement with difficult ideas is assumed.**\(^8\)

**Progressions**

Our semester will be divided into three stages, with each stage intended to help you master critical skills in the course, and each focused on a particular aspect of our topic. **Our movement toward the goals of each stage is called a progression because**

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\(^6\) Discussions, presentations, and workshop in class. Note that you cannot do well in this if you do not read assigned material before class, and that I may give unannounced quizzes to determine this. If you suffer from shyness, please send me an email and make an office appointment to discuss how you can still be an active participant in the class. Otherwise, you are expected to speak in class, every class.

\(^7\) This grade indicates how much you’ve moved: how hard you’ve worked, but very much how much your writing has changed (and we hope improved) throughout the course. The Progression Grade is based on all work to be found in WebCT—not only final drafts, but early drafts, revisions, exercises—as well as office hour discussions and the degree to which you put class time to good use as a writer and editor.

\(^8\) This course may include discussion of adult themes, such as politics, sexuality, and religion, and we assume that the learning process may include difficult subject matter that may be uncomfortable for any or all of us to discuss. Participation in the course does not mean agreement to discuss issues to which you claim special sensitivity; at the same time, the course makes no promises not to explore ideas that may be found offensive by any particular student or group of students—only to do so in a manner that is fair to all students. If you suspect that a particular reading, viewing, or lecture may offend you and you wish not to attend that day’s class, see me in advance to arrange for an alternative to your attendance.
you are expected not simply to improve by repetition, but to improve through a movement from one way of doing things to another, generally more complex, way of doing things. Our use of this as a spatial metaphor for improvement also helps us avoid the useless worry of moral language about writing (such as the concept of “errors”—a foolish and class-bound way to think about writing that doesn’t work, or that is inappropriate for a particular audience or genre), and to focus instead on competency, skill, and facility. To be clear: if you cannot commit to earnestly improving your writing through multiple drafts, beginning with a serious draft (more than something tossed off to meet the prompt), and working through several significant—perhaps radical—revisions, you should find another section of the course.

Attendance and Participation
Because this is a workshop, you must attend class fully prepared for meaningful participation with the other students.

The Rules on Absences:
1. I make no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, so save your doctor’s notes and explanations. Miss only if you must. If you must miss a class, read on.
2. If you miss two classes in the first week, I will drop you from the course.
3. If you miss two classes in the first two weeks, I can drop you from the course.
4. If you miss any three classes in a row, I can drop you from the course.
5. All absences negatively affect your grade. One or two may have little affect, assuming you are very active and engaged in class. (If you’re really sick, we want you to rest!) More than that will definitely pull down your Participation Grade and begin to affect your Progression Grade. Understandable absences mean understandable catch-up work—just as in the rest of your life.
6. If you miss more than six classes total, for any reason, I can give you a failing grade for the course.
7. After any absence, you should return to class with all missed work completed as soon as possible—preferably that class meeting. In the case of a very serious illness, see me during office hours to arrange a schedule for you to catch up—after you have attempted number eight:
8. After any absence, contact your fellow students, not me, to find out what you missed.

Computer Workshop, WebCT, and Me

Teaching with online resources forces me to make obvious something once taken for granted by people with good manners: the fact that we are capable of contacting each other at any time, night and day, does not mean that we should do so; certainly it does not mean that we should expect immediate answers to every communication. Please, use email only to make an appointment with me. Then come see me during office hours with your questions. All minor questions can always be answered.
If you are reading this, you are already somewhat acquainted with WebCT. We will use WebCT throughout the course, in class and outside class, as a virtual extension of our classroom space. No advanced knowledge of computers is required for the course. If you can type, we can teach you the rest within the course, and we also have dedicated technical support for our class—wonderful people who can help you with technical problems such as file transfer. All work for the course must be handed in to WebCT. If you have any computer problems, call 5-HELP for technical support.

You will be assigned a “small group” where you will hand in that work within WebCT, and you are required to read all the posts of your fellow four to five students in this group within half a week. If you choose to edit each other’s work on hard copy, you must make a copy of this editing and give this to me at the end of the semester (so I know what you’ve been up to in your group). Unless otherwise stated in class, do not hand in any assignments to me in paper form, and please, use my email address only to contact me to arrange office hour meetings—never to send attachments. For security reasons, my computer deletes all student emails with attachments. Furthermore, if you send me a draft by private email, your fellow students will not have access to it.

For discussion of the course in general, your progress in it, or a particularly interesting reading or writing problem, please see me during office hours. If you have another class during the exact time that I hold office hours, bring me a copy of your registration to that effect, and I will schedule an alternative time to meet with you. I put a high value on discussing the course during office hours, and I will be happy to help you during that time. Please feel free to make an appointment as late as that day (though it helps if you make an appointment earlier) and come talk.

**Information Literacy**

This level of course assumes you are somewhat adept at research, but we will improve your research skills through workshop and individual direction. You must make use of many research resources outside of class. Norlin library has an excellent research staff. Make use of whatever open tours there are of the library, and become well acquainted with the resources of the Central Reference Department, beginning at http://www-libraries.colorado.edu/ps/ref/frontpage.htm. Special tutoring services in research are available at http://www-libraries.colorado.edu/ps/ref/peer.htm. It is assumed that you will conduct a reasonable level of research beyond explicit requirements. It is also generally the case that you should never hand in a paper that has only online sources.

**Protocols for Assignments**

The format for all major drafts is either MLA or APA style (see appropriate guides),

by a rereading of the prompt, of this document, or of other material on WebCT. If not, the fault is mine and will be so critical that I will address the matter in class. In particular: do not send emails regarding absences, excuses, etc. Contact your small group instead. Of course, I will be spending many hours reviewing and sometimes commenting on your writing, by using WebCT. But I reserve the right to refuse to answer all inappropriate contact by email.
depending on the favored format for your major. Otherwise, I prefer MLA format with parenthetical citation, a proper header, double-spaced throughout, 12-point type throughout, with appropriate indentation for extended quotes, name and page number on every page in the upper left-hand corner; 1” to 1 ½” margins. Formal drafts are complete only if they include a Works Cited or Works Consulted page (not to be included for the required page count as assigned). Except for inclusion of your name, format is not important on informal exercises. On all drafts of essays, it is: I may refuse assignments that do not conform to all formal requirements. Late essays, if accepted, will be docked 1/3 a letter grade each class they are late. I may only accept drafts in class—and not on days we do not meet (WebCT does not affect the need for us to keep a reasonable schedule). If you have problems with “block,” see me early on during office hours. I may refuse to give written comments on any project if you fail to hand in a full first draft on time.

Keep copies of your work in at least three places: 1) on a main storage drive, 2) on a backup floppy or other drive, 3) and printed out in your portfolio or in WebCT. After one week, I will accept no computer-related excuses. I therefore urge you to visit CU’s Information Technology Services for any help you need.

Late and incomplete drafts compromise my schedule for commenting on papers. This means that if you fail to turn in a complete draft on time, you are negatively affecting the teaching and learning for the entire course and even in my other courses. Accordingly, I reserve the right to dock final grades on any project—no matter how impressive—if earlier drafts were not complete and on time.

Special Circumstances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, I will make every effort to respect the needs of some students to reschedule attendance and work in order to observe religious holidays. Because even movable religious holidays are scheduled far enough in advance for us to plan ahead, I require that you meet with me at the beginning of the semester to discuss schedule conflicts between a particular holiday and any day that CU has not scheduled as a holiday, so we can determine a reasonable means of avoiding conflicts between course requirements and your religious observance. Other observance will of course be respected within the bounds of CU policy. See full details at:
http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities.


Classroom Behavior, the Honor Code, Plagiarism, and Sexual
Harassment Policies

Classroom Behavior
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See polices at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

All students of this course are expected to follow the Honor Code: http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

The Honor Code
All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

Plagiarism
We assume that the work you hand in as your own was in fact written by you. If you have any questions about how to quote or paraphrase material so as not to be mistaken for a plagiarist, this course should answer those questions; in any case, I will be happy to meet with you to avoid a misunderstanding. Note that your work may be evaluated through TurnItIn.com, a plagiarism service provided to all faculty at CU-Boulder; and that this service retains a copy of the submitted work for future comparisons. If I find that you have plagiarized, I will give you a failing grade (between 0 and an “F”—50 points on a hundred) for that project (essay or presentation) and may submit a letter to your Dean to be placed in your file. I may fail you for the course for a first offense that is egregious, and I will certainly do so for a second offense.
participation, this grade requires work that stands out above the class average. *You absolutely cannot earn this, or a higher grade, if you do not regularly, with enthusiasm, participate in class discussions—or, if you are shy, make arrangements for alternative participation.*

**C Average Work.** The paper exhibits strengths but weaknesses. The writing is readable at the surface level, and has an idea, but it will have significant, unresolved problems in more than one key area: quality of idea, reasoning, and evidence; or word choice, stance, and structure. The paper may fulfill basic requirements yet say little of importance or significance—or a well-written paper that does not satisfy a significant part of the assignment. In participation, this grade reflects showing up, surface reading, and average or below-average contribution to discussions and workshop.

**D Inferior Work.** A paper that is seriously underdeveloped and deficient in content, form, style, or mechanics. It may be disorganized, illogical, confusing, unfocused, or contain pervasive errors that impair readability. A paper that does not come close to meeting the basic expectations of the assignment—including length. In participation, this grade reflects a lack of contribution to the class effort, missed readings, failure to critique the work of fellow students, and generally insufficient attention to the workshop.

**F Failing Work.** A paper that is incoherent, disastrously flawed, unacceptably late, plagiarized, or non-existent. Any paper that fails to meet basic requirements of page length, number of sources, and genre (for instance, a “book report” when a “close reading” was required by the prompt) can earn a paper an “F.” In participation, this grade reflects the attendance and contributions of a student unable to adequately participate in the course, or one indifferent—or hostile—to fellow students or the goals of the seminar.
Dr. Jay Ellis  
Fall 2005; Sections 050 and 051  
Office: Program in Writing and Rhetoric, 1B50C  
(Basement of Environmental Design Building)  
Office Hours: T/Th 11:30 to 12:15; T/Th 5:00 to 5:45 by appointment  

**Note:** I average far more than the required three hours a week of office hours, but I prefer that these be substantive. This means I may schedule hours *when possible* on Wednesdays and Fridays for students who cannot meet during my regular times. It also means I sometimes stay far later than 5:45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. But for either, *plan ahead with me.* Please schedule office hours in class, or by email:  
jay.ellis@colorado.edu

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**Don’t Fence Me In**  
**Progression I:**  
**Dimensional American Fictions**

*I don’t know what happens to country.*  
—John Grady Cole in *All the Pretty Horses*¹  

*Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth.*  
Simone de Beauvoir²

**Schedule**

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Reading/Viewing</th>
<th>Writing Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/23</td>
<td>Introduction; WebCT; Noticing Dickinson; Ask Dr. Fredericksmeier: “OK, So What’s the Act?”</td>
<td>Dr. Fredericksmeier’s Choice [Optional Emily D.]</td>
<td>[Optional In-Class Free Write on the Course Title]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>Close Reading Dickinson; Transparency and Opacity</td>
<td>Policies and Requirements; Progression I; Dickinson³</td>
<td>Noticing Dickinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Dickinson Spaces; Close Reading Whitman; The Critical Spectrum</td>
<td>Dickinson; Whitman's “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”</td>
<td>Tropes Ex. 1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>The Dickinson and Whitman Spectrum</td>
<td>Whitman (Reread with Marginalia)</td>
<td>Tropes Ex. 2</td>
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³ All texts for this Progression are located in (or linked to from) the “Readings” section of our WebCT.
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<th></th>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment/Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>Crane’s Details; What to do with Tropes; Abstracts; Marginalia?</td>
<td>Stephen Crane’s “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky”</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>Crane’s Spaces; Close Reading Examples</td>
<td>Stephen Crane (Reread with Marginalia)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>Editorial Roles; Critiques; W.C. and Size</td>
<td>Essay Rough Draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Workshop: W.C. and Beads</td>
<td>Peer Essays</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>Workshop: W.C. and Hit List; Word Counts (Not “to be”)</td>
<td>Peer Essays</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9/22</td>
<td>Workshop: Punctuation Review</td>
<td>Peer Essays</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>9/27</td>
<td>Meta-Writing; Progression Review; Information Literacy</td>
<td>Final Essay; (Anon Responses)</td>
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**Progression I Exercises and Essay Prompt**

**Noticing Dickinson:**

Simply make a list of things you “notice” in two Dickinson poems (reading is on WebCT). We will discuss in class briefly how to do this, but your main reminder here is that you should do your best to forego all interpretation. Rather than telling us what something “means,” simply indicate it. (For example, “I notice that Wallace Stevens has a lot of prepositions in his poem titles.”) This list should consist of at least a dozen items, total. **Be prepared to comment in class without me calling on you; any student who does not speak up in class during discussion of a reading should schedule a meeting with me to discuss either strategies to successfully participate in class discussion, or alternative means of contributing to the class.**

**Tropes Exercise, Parts I, II, and III**

Please refer to the Tropes Exercise in “Notes on Composition.” For a reference, follow the “Web Link” for “Silva Rhetoricae.”

Further directions for those of us bad at figuring out directions:

1. Open the “Tropes Exercise” in “Notes on Composition” in WebCT. You can block and copy this into Word and save it for future reference.
2. Go to “Web Links” in WebCT, and click on the “Silva Rhetoricae” link. This is one of many good sites for tropes and rhetorical figures, and you can easily use this site to find most of the terms I list in the exercise; others you can find using Google or one of the references I cite at the bottom of the exercise.
3. To begin Part I, simply write out or copy the definitions you find. Of course, to really get anything out of this, it will help if you can translate the definition you find into your own words—showing that you truly understand the trope or rhetorical device in question.

Essentially, this exercise begins as an Easter egg hunt: you simply have to look up some terms and become familiar with them. Then, you put this vocabulary into play in the beginnings of close reading toward your eventual essay. For example, one of the ten terms you define might be “kenning,” which you might go on to “notice” as a device used by Crane, which then leads
you to close reading for insights about the gender space in that story (what, after all, does “he of the six guns” mean?). Part III of the exercise does not have to be done with a text you will write on, but of course, it wouldn’t hurt to be working in the direction of your essay.

250-Word Abstract
Simply indicate what text or texts you will be examining in your close reading essay, and on what you intend to focus. This will probably be a progression from your Tropes exercise, but if you prefer, you may choose a different text or texts for your essay. In 250 words, tell us where you’re looking, how you plan on reading the text (what feature of it will you focus on), and (less importantly) what you expect to find.

Close Reading Essay
In four to six pages, write an interpretive essay that focuses on one or two of the texts we’ve read in an examination of space (in whatever form) in that work, perhaps drawing on your own personal narrative concerning space. We will go over various types of space in these texts, both in aesthetic and semantic terms. Your primary evidence for your interpretation must be the primary text: close reading is the focus; other voices are not required. (You’ll do a lot of research next essay!) For practice, include a Works Cited that simply lists the primary work or works under consideration.

Critiques
Critique at least one student essay from your small group. All members of each group are responsible for determining who critiques which essay so that everyone does a critique, and everyone receives a critique. Round robin is preferable to pairing off. (Ex: instead of Anne and Simon trading essays, while Alberto and Sarah trade papers; Anne critiques Simon’s, who critiques Alberto’s, who critiques Sarah’s, who critiques Anne’s.) Obviously, it will be all the more important for an student unavoidably absent to stay in touch with his or her group, so that no one gets missed. We will go over Word commenting tools so that all critiques will be electronic, posted to WebCT, in Microsoft Word. If you expect any problems with Word documents, get help sooner, rather than later.

Briefly, all serious critiques will consist of at least one substantive paragraph of overall reaction, and will also employ various commenting techniques (at least the “comment” sticky-note feature) throughout the essay. A good critique, including reading time, should take at least half an hour to an hour per essay.

"2nd" and subsequent critiques should usually be on a different student’s paper. The minimum requirement for this progression, for instance, is two critiques, or two different student’s papers. Better students will of course informally continue to work together throughout a progression, and would therefore in this progression end up doing at least three critiques: one on a first draft, one on a second draft but also a follow-up on the first essay they critiqued. Failure of fellow students within a group to post a full draft in Word is no excuse for not doing critiques; you can always roam into other groups and do volunteer critiques—even in sections other than yours.
Final Revision of Essay

Remember to review the Requirements and Policies Sheet, the Progression Checklist (in “Notes on Composition”), and the above prompt before handing in your final draft. Also be sure to read aloud, and if possible to listen to someone else read your work aloud, to catch things the eye—and spell check—misses.
Dr. Jay Ellis  
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To schedule a meeting, write to me with three times you can meet, in order of preference (5:20, 5:40, 12:00, for example), at: jay.ellis@colorado.edu

Updated 9/25/05

Don’t Fence Me In  
Progression II:  
Violence, Identity, and Western Spaces

I ain’t like that no more.  
*Unforgiven*

What kind of Indians was they?  
*Blood Meridian*

I don’t deserve this. [...] I was building a house.  
*Unforgiven*

The problem is that anyone who is identified as or identifies as Indian stands in a position to put that [all this was Indian land] back in people’s faces.  
*Ward Churchill*

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<td>1</td>
<td>9/27</td>
<td>Progression Review; Information Literacy: Ethos, Credibility, Veracity, and Web Sites</td>
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### Progression II Exercises and Essay Prompt

**Noticing and Responses:**
First, make sure you get down lists of things you notice in the viewing and reading for the progression. Second, write brief responses (at least) to the texts. Remembering that one part of your evidence for this essay will consist of close reading, you’ll most likely be writing something useful for the first draft of the essay, and you’ll have the opportunity to think ahead toward an abstract.

**300-Word Abstract**
First, indicate not only what primary text or texts you will be examining, but some key passages or scenes that you might want to focus on. In 300 words, tell us where you’re looking, how you plan on reading the text (what feature of it will you focus on), and what you expect to find. Second, indicate what disciplinary, or interdisciplinary, research you plan for this essay. Most likely you will not have done much, if any, research at this point. But what do you need

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1. You must have seen the film by this date. It’s widely available, but you’ll find it best to plan ahead—perhaps even seeing the film with your small group or at least another student outside class. You may view the film at Norlin (call to make sure they have it available and not on hold for another class). And, of course, these days a film like this costs less than a book to purchase used on the internet.
2. Bring all sources to class where possible for the rest of the Progression. This is particularly important if you check out one of the collections of criticism on McCarthy or Eastwood; I’d like you to share such items within reason.
for this project, and where do you expect to look for it? Of course, you’ll want to look ahead to
the essay prompt to get a good sense of the project requirements in the final revision.

**Preliminary Bibliography**

Your preliminary bibliography is the working draft of your future “Works Cited.” Look
ahead to the research requirements given in the prompt below. List your primary source(s), at
least one or two significant secondary sources, and at least one tertiary source. Be sure to get
help from research librarians in Norlin, and see the many links to sources given here in
WebCT—in Web Links but also from the Progression II Extensions page. Make judicious use
of Google and, if you know how, online article access through Chinook (we’ll cover this last
resource in class). This is a working document, and for reasons of format it’s easiest at first to
keep it a separate document. Note, however, that once you begin drafts of the essay, I need you
to at least cut and paste all your bibliographic information into the bottom of the same
document as your essay (so I can open it all at once). Finally, to do well on this part of the
progression, you need to make some notes beneath each entry. For example:


This early book-length volume was the first full treatment of the McCarthy novel and
consists of notes on likely sources for the book’s many (surprisingly many) historical
references. Beginning with lists of character and place names, Sepich’s *Notes* grew to
encompass more in-depth arguments about several passages in the novel, including non-
historical literary references.

OK, a tough example! (Sadly, this book is out of print and will likely be available only
when I get my copy on reserve.) But you get the idea. For more help on how to do this
bibliography, google the term “annotated bibliography.” And remember, a serious essay will
likely begin with more than a quick cut and paste of easy sources.

**Scholarly Essay**

In five to seven pages, write a scholarly essay on some problem of violence, identity, or
space in the West. These are large terms, of course, and might also be combined for a topic. To
make them work, you’ll want to narrow at least one of them. Example:

“Senseless and Sensible: Varieties of Retributive Violence from *Blood Meridian* to 9/11”

Another tough example! But one that could work using both the McCarthy text and Ward
Churchill’s arguments supporting retributive violence. (Churchill’s 9/11 essay is not assigned,
but an example of another primary text you could use.) Such an essay (admittedly ambitious)
would necessarily also address issues of identity. To make this example work, one would need
to narrow the question of identity, such as a focus on the question “What kind of Indians [or
highjackers] was them?” Here’s a more narrow example:

“Unforgiven Domestic Violence Inside Out”

This one would naturally close read the scenes of violence against women, as well as their
mud (and horse manure) attack outside Greely’s, and could draw on sociological and
psychological research on domestic violence, as well as film studies of same, and of course,
secondary material directly on the film.
As always, the general territory of "space" of any kind is merely a conceit of the course. As the most important goal of the course is to help you improve your writing, please do not feel you must force an otherwise interesting topic under the rubric of "space." Similarly, primary texts other than those assigned for the whole class are allowed, with specific permission. That said, we will have to make sure your workload is fair, so no "double-dipping" without special permission, which generally includes a more extensive project.

Note that as always, you absolutely must have a full five to seven page first draft to receive comments from me and for me not to dock your grade. Yet, this draft can be formative, and we expect radical revision before your final draft. Minimum sources for the first draft: four.

This essay may include your voice as you see fit, provided that strategy works within what we will call a familiar scholarly essay. In any case, your close reading of one or more of the texts for this progression should be put in conversation with relevant scholarship at both the secondary and tertiary levels. Secondary scholarship simply means something written directly about your primary text(s).

Tertiary scholarship means at least one item from a particular disciplinary angle on your idea—one that is not particularly—or at all—geared toward your primary text, but one that helps you make your argument about that text. (An essay on guns as synecdoche in both texts, for instance, might draw on the work of Jacques Lacan; one on changing ideas of "the West" in either primary text, on the other hand, could draw on a famous essay by Fredrick Jackson Turner.) Initially, you may have all electronic sources—but not in the final draft.

In subject, you may now range more widely than a purely "literary" or "film studies" essay. But, while your essay may address a particular (not too universal!) problem of space in American life, you should at the very least use your primary text as a perfect occasion (more than a mere excuse) in which to view that problem. So, you have a spectrum along which you may work: from a purely aesthetic consideration of the primary text, to an essay that is very much about some problem in the world, and yet that seems to require significant attention to that text in order for us to understand that problem.

Final Revision of Essay

In seven to ten pages, write a scholarly essay on following the above prompt. Remember to review the Requirements and Policies Sheet, the Progression Checklist (in "Notes on Composition"), and the above prompt before handing in your final draft. Also be sure to read aloud, and if possible to listen to someone else read your work aloud, to catch things the eye—and spell check—misses.

Be sure that your evidence comes in
1. Close Reading in the primary text(s),
2. Secondary Research: solid scholarship on that text,
3. and Tertiary Research: scholarly sources on whatever disciplinary (or interdisciplinary) angle you choose.

While your personal evidence might also work at some point, you will always want to avoid faulty generalization, hypothetical arguments, etc. Be specific, and work your way up from the details to the larger idea.
Minimum sources: five, including your primary text (if one; if you use both primary texts, you will need four secondary and/or tertiary sources). Without a waiver from me, at least one of your secondary or tertiary sources must be in paper form, i.e., not available as full text online; at least one of your sources must be a peer-reviewed journal article. Most, though not all, successful essays will employ more than the minimum number of sources. Finally, with permission from me, you may work on some text other than the two primary texts we have used in class. All essays must be in correct format, MLA style unless you use another for your discipline, in which case APA, etc., are allowed.
Progression II Primary Source Bibliography


*Unforgiven*. Clint Eastwood, dir. Warner Bros, 1992.³

³ Note that if you write on the film, you may need to list other aspects of the film depending on your focus. A paper that focused on the character of Ned, for instance, would include “Morgan Freeman” as an actor. See the MLA guide (or link) for more details.