SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
WRTG 3020-801; WRTG 3030-801; WRTG 3040-801
Spring Semester 2015

Catherine Lasswell, Instructor

T/Th 11:00 – 12:15, CLUB 10

Course Office Hours and Contact Information:
   Tue 12:30-1:45 and by appointment
   1338 Grandview C-153

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will focus on the environmental discussion of our time: climate change and the move toward environmental, societal, and economic sustainability. Offered to international students majoring in the sciences, arts, and business, this course will emphasize the multiple, cross-cultural discourse surrounding climate change and sustainable solutions as discussed in news media, popular culture, academic writing, and scientific writing. Of paramount importance throughout the course is the effective use of writing and rhetoric in the genres pertinent to international students’ own disciplines and career paths. After a review of the scientific evidence of climate change, we will look at environmental sustainability through disciplinary lenses to explore areas in which sustainable practices are developing. A sustainability inquiry project will provide a range of possible foci: cultural, artistic, scientific, technological, or business related. These projects will be transformed into a digital format to be presented to the class. A half-day, hands-on outdoor environmental project will provide an opportunity to learn about Boulder County’s efforts to maintain healthy forests on public lands in the context of increased global warming on the Front Range.

Texts and Materials
• Course Packet (UMC Bookstore) This instructor-designed collection of readings contains a variety of genres of writing on sustainability and the environment: poetry, personal narrative, mainstream press, scholarly argumentation, scientific policy documents, and peer-reviewed research.
• Articles and worksheets posted on Desire2Learn (D2L) on environmental issues and writing skills
• Handouts using theoretical perspectives from Rosenwasser and Stephen’s Writing Analytically; revision strategies developed from the Harvard Writing Project
• Writing and Rhetoric skills websites: writing@CSU (http://writing.colostate.edu/index.cfm); Silva Rhetoricae (http://rhetoric.byu.edu/); Purdue OWL (https://owl.english/purdue.edu/); PWR Resources for Students website http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/resources.html

DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Ecological Identity 5% + 5%
This initial assignment will ask you to explain what factors in your life experience have helped shape your relationship with the natural world. You will examine your own history to find a way to discuss the seminal experiences that have impacted you. This writing will take the form of a chapter in a memoir, displaying clear causation and strong descriptive writing to recreate your experiences for your readers. This piece will be revised and extended in the final weeks of class.

Electronic Journal 15%
An Electronic Journal will provide direct application of the tools we are accumulating in writing and rhetoric. These writings will allow you to demonstrate the skills of summarizing, argumentative strategies, analysis, using textual evidence, citing sources, writing in various genres, and other skills used in longer essays. You will be given prompts to demonstrate these skills as well as explaining how you might apply them in your rhetorical analysis, your inquiry project, and writing in your
discipline or career. Your Electronic Journal will be submitted four times: at the end of WEEKS 2, 4, 7, and 14.

Rhetorical Analysis 15%
This assignment will ask you to choose a genre of writing useful in your major or important to your future such as a business plan, technical report, academic essay, patent application, or other type of document. After locating and studying three successful models of this genre, you will engage in a rhetorical analysis of one of them, identifying the major features of the work including purpose, audience, message, and credibility and explaining why various choices were made and how they contribute to the success of the document.

Sustainability Inquiry Project 25%
This major inquiry project will provide a range of opportunities to use your interests and experience to investigate and analyze a current sustainable development or policy decision. Choosing a specific context such as business, industry, urban planning, agriculture, computer science, or another field, you will investigate a current environmental initiative. You may also choose an environmental decision or project, analyzing it from the perspective of multiple stakeholders. This may involve examining the discourse found in corporate, independent, or social media as well as public policy, and/or scientific documents. The Inquiry Project will require a Proposal explaining the purpose, significance, your connection to the project, and your methods of inquiry.

Digital Presentation 10%
You will transform your inquiry findings into a visual presentation using digital technology to advocate for action. Using digital technology or PowerPoint, you will attempt to inspire others, nurture an existing project, persuade your audience, or contribute in a tangible way to greater environmental sustainability.

Calculation of Grades
5% Ecological Identity
10% Short in-class writings, reading quizzes
15% Electronic Journal
15% Rhetorical Analysis
25% Sustainability Inquiry Project
5% Annotated Bibliography
10% Rhetorical process/revision effort on drafts, timely submission of drafts, class participation, quality of contributions, and quality of peer review as determined by classmates’ comments
10% Digital Presentation
5% Revised and extended Ecological Identity

Workshop Format
At times we will engage in workshops in which we will look at student writing in class. Student writing will be discussed through critical dialogue in small groups or whole class discussion. We will all work closely together to move each person’s ideas to greater originality, depth, logic, and
clarity. On the days that we workshop, you will be expected to contribute constructive comments to your classmates’ drafts. High quality participation in workshops involves identifying weaknesses in the writing and offering ways to remedy them. The writers, in turn, will receive peer feedback and decide how to incorporate the feedback into their revisions.

All final essays need to go through a drafting process with some peer or instructor review. I will not accept final essays that have not been reviewed on a regular basis over the course of the assignment

**Preparedness**

Succeeding in this course will depend on your preparedness. Readings and writings need to be completed for each class session since they will serve as the basis for the class discussion and activities. Preparedness means always bringing the articles, books, handouts, and writings needed for that day.

**Attendance**

In writing courses, attendance is essential. Please arrive on time and to attend every class. **If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining materials missed on that day from one of your classmates.** I would rather you not email me to ask me “what did I miss?” Find a partner to keep you informed and stick closely to following the assignments on D2L. Since we only have 29 class meetings, each one is important. **You are allowed THREE absences to use in any way you choose. I do not excuse absences except in the most extreme circumstances.** For each class session missed over THREE, your overall grade will drop one fraction such as from an A- to a B+. **If you have six or more absences, you will have missed out on substantial course material that your final course grade will be no higher than a “D.” Seven or more absences will result in an “F” – NO EXCEPTIONS.** If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, you will be counted as ½ an absence. Failure to be prepared for class may also be counted as an absence.

**Drafts**

In addition to handing in final drafts of all assignments, you are required to produce a first draft of each major paper. We will sometimes workshop these drafts in class. **You will be graded not simply on the final paper you turn in, but on the quality of the entire writing process.** Your grade on the final drafts will take into account your incorporation of comments and responses to your drafts. When you hand in your essays, staple all previously graded and commented-upon drafts with your final copy placed on top. Never throw away any drafts, notes, papers, or research materials you produce during the semester until you receive a final grade.

**Late Assignments and Drafts**

All assignments must be turned in at the class they are due or in some cases in my mailbox on the Friday they are due. **Please do not email your submissions unless you’ve been given permission to do so.** **Final drafts turned in one day late (24 hr. period) will drop a full letter grade; no work will be accepted more than one class day late.** Missed work CANNOT be made up. If you are going to be absent from a class when an assignment is due, you must submit the assignments (in hard copy) prior to class in order to receive credit for the assignment.
Cell phones and computers
Once class begins, you need to turn off your cellphones and put them out of sight. Texting is not allowed under any circumstances. If your cell phone is in your lap or visible in your bag, I will assume you are waiting for, sending, or reading messages. If you need to check the time, wear a watch. After class is the time to input your classmates’ emails or mark something on your calendar. The bottom line is this: using cellphones outside of technology-specific periods of the class will significantly lower your final grade. Laptops are not needed except on rare occasions. Transcribe your notes onto a computer outside of class. Students who have texted in class can expect that any letters of recommendation for employment, graduate school, or future prospects will mention the inappropriate use of cell phones.

Classroom Conduct
Our classroom environment will use a discussion format in which you put forth your perspective on issues discussed. For this to be productive, we must treat one another with the highest respect. This means avoiding making disparaging remarks and instead valuing all honest contributions. I reserve the right, if necessary for behavioral reasons, to request a student to leave the room. Inappropriate, lewd, and/or aggressive behavior will not be tolerated.

Writing Center
Additional help with your writing is available at the Writing Center in Norlin’s Learning Commons. A tutor will help with everything from brainstorming ideas for a paper, to grammar tips, to helping you organize your ideas. Advance appointments are required. Check the Writing Center website for information on hours and services:
http://www.colorado.edu/PWR/writingcenter.html

Here are a number of CU Policies that you need to know about:

Scholastic Honesty and Plagiarism
Turning in work that is not your own or any other form of scholastic dishonesty will result in a major course penalty. If any part of a paper up to two sentences is plagiarized, you will receive an F on the paper with no possibility for a rewrite. If any more than two sentences are plagiarized, you will fail the course and the incident will be reported to the Honors Council. 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; 303-735-2273). 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/academics/honorcode/index.htm

Disabilities
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on
documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu.

If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries under Quick Links at Disability Services website (http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/) and discuss your needs with your professor.

**Religious Holidays**

Please notify me at least one week in advance if you will be absent due to religious observances. These missed classes will not be counted as absences. I will make every effort to accommodate your absence including giving make-up exams or extra credit work for in-class assignments missed. [See policy details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html]

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, {[insert your procedures here]} See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

**Classroom Conduct**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, 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 policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

**Discrimination and Harassment:**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://hr.colorado.edu/dh/

**Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Criteria**

This 3000-level writing seminar satisfies upper-division core requirements in the College of Arts & Sciences because it extends student rhetorical knowledge and writing skills by engaging theoretical perspectives and addressing specialized disciplinary communities. This upper-division seminar is part of the state-wide “Guaranteed Transfer” pathway of courses. Thus, this course meets the goals of an Advanced Writing course (GT-CO3) through:
**Rhetorical Knowledge:** The course takes a rhetorical perspective on academic research, reading, and writing activities that target real-life audiences in relevant academic disciplines or in the civic sphere. We will draw from a collection of environmental texts, many persuasive in nature, to develop rhetorical knowledge. Students will first synthesize data from these texts in order to effectively communicate and substantiate ideas. Specific rhetorical concepts will be tailored to international students’ needs through various handouts adapted from Rosenwasser and Stephen’s *Writing Analytically*. To help students write in their academic genres, we will also refer to the substantive materials on three nationally recognized web sites: The Purdue University OWL (on-line writing lab), the Colorado State Writing Center, and the Silva Rhetoricae website.

**Writing Process:** This course provides multiple opportunities for students to understand audience-centered writing by focusing on peer review of work in progress. Through this approach, students will discover the importance of revision as an academic discursive activity. The revision strategies of experienced writers will be studied through handouts developed from Nancy Sommers’ Harvard Writing Project, a pedagogy that emphasizes revision as shaping and refining one’s arguments and addressing one’s audience more fully. As students write, they will integrate various technologies (e.g., Internet search engines, electronic discipline-specific databases, RefWorks, PowerPoint) into their digital presentations, and to develop advanced information literacy skills pertinent to their research area. Students will learn advanced information literacy skills needed for their grant (such as use of government databases for demographic data).

**Critical Thinking:** Skills of critical thinking will be developed through the readings, writings, and discussions of environmental writing. Students will examine complex issues from multiple points of view as well as differentiate thoughtful responses to environmental issues from casual reactions, and criticism from critique. The prompts for students’ electronic journals will be based on the critical thinking pedagogy of Bloom’s taxonomy; this approach will deepen their level of thinking, a pedagogy developed by nationally-acclaimed researcher Patty Clayton.

**Writing Conventions:** The documents students write for this course will call upon the key genres of academic communication (rhetorical analysis, persuasion, visual and oral rhetoric) in the field of sustainability as well as from their own disciplines. As international students sometimes unfamiliar with patterns and conventions of English language genres, they will analyze a pertinent genre from their own discipline to better understand how the rhetoric, organization, and conventions effectively reach audiences. Students will also learn about how to draw on specialized vocabularies in ways that still make their work accessible to secondary audiences and learn ways that textual features and document design (e.g., bold-face heading sections) serve as persuasive tools.

**Effective application:** Directing discourse to real-world audiences will be central to the course. The assigned readings will model writing directed to specific demographics of readers of environmental writing. The strategies of ethos, logos, and pathos will be uncovered in these readings and applied to students’ rhetorical analyses, research projects, and digital portfolios. As such, students will gain familiarity with writing in a disciplinary or specialized rhetorical situation, even as they make their work accessible to secondary audiences in other related fields.
Day-by-Day Course Readings and Due Dates

(Assigned readings are accompanied by a written assignment detailed on D2L. Readings will be discussed on the day listed below and the assignment for the reading will be collected at the end of class. This schedule is tentative and may be changed.)

Unit 1: Identifying and Establishing Effective Ethos in Environmental Texts

WEEK ONE
T Jan 13
Introduction to course: rhetoric and sustainability; theories of sustainability; what is effective writing?
Reading:
   *Business Writer’s Companion* pp. xxix-xxxvi

Th Jan 15
Introductions
Readings:
   Ecological Identity Assignment (D2L)
   “For the Love of Life” (D2L)

WEEK TWO
T Jan 20
Discuss your Ecological Identity ideas in small groups
Watch:

Th Jan 22
Watch and read:
   Jim White Lecture on climate change “Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going?” [http://vimeo.com/39835429](http://vimeo.com/39835429)
   IPCC Excerpt (D2L)
   Rhetorical Strategies Handout (D2L)

WEEK THREE
T Jan 27
**Ecological Identity Assignment DUE**
Discuss Rhetorical Analysis Assignment
Readings:
   Claims/Evidence/Assertions Handout (D2L)

Th Jan 29
Readings:
“Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math” (Course Packet)
“Introductions” (Course Packet)

Begin reading articles in your chosen genre

Electonic Journal #1 DUE in Dropbox no later than 6pm Sun.

**Unit 2: Using Rhetorical Features of Genre to Effectively Reach Audiences**

**WEEK FOUR**  

T Feb 3
Discuss business writing genres
Readings:
   - *The Business Writer’s Companion*
   - The genre of an academic essay [http://stripe.colorado.edu/~fredrice/intro.html](http://stripe.colorado.edu/~fredrice/intro.html)
   - Academic essays from PWR’s *Occasions* website
   - Bring 2 articles from your chosen genre to share with others

Th Feb 5
Readings:
   - *The Business Writer’s Companion*

Fri Feb 6: Electronic Journal #2 DUE in Dropbox by 5pm

**WEEK FIVE**

T Feb 10
Workshop Rhetorical Analyses in small groups

Th Feb 12
Readings:
   - “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers” by Nancy Sommers (Course Packet)
   - Workshop Rhetorical Analyses

**WEEK SIX**

T Feb 17
Workshop Rhetorical Analyses

Th Feb 19
Rhetorical Analysis DUE in class
Reading:
   - Sustainability Inquiry Project (D2L)

**Unit 3: Exploring Connections for Effective Environmental Arguments**
WEEK SEVEN
T Feb 24
Readings:
“Building Integrated Agriculture: Utilizing Rooftops for Sustainable Food Crop Cultivation in Singapore” by Astee and Kishnani (Course Packet)
**Bring in three newspaper articles of interest that connect the environment with your discipline.** Prepare to discuss these with others.

Th Feb 26
Bring in two more articles from the newspaper along with two peer-reviewed articles
Discuss annotated bibliographies; read models of papers
Readings:
Annotated Bibliographies (OWL)

Fri Feb 27: Electronic Journal #3 DUE in DropBox by 5pm

WEEK EIGHT
T Mar 3
Discuss your project in class
Readings:
“Introductions” (Course Packet)

Th Mar 5
Individual Conference with Instructor at Grandview

Fri Mar 6: Wed: Email your completed proposal by 5pm.

WEEK NINE
T Mar 10
Peer Review of Introductions

Th Mar 12
Peer Review of Introductions and body paragraphs

WEEK TEN
T Mar 17
Peer Review of annotated bibliography, revised introductions, and first body paragraphs

**Wed: Email instructor revised introduction, revised annotated bibliography, and two body paragraphs.**

Th Mar 19
Individual Conference with Instructor. Discuss selected bibliographies, introductions, and body paragraphs
Individual Conferences with Instructor

WEEK ELEVEN
SPRING BREAK March 23-27

WEEK TWELVE
Tue Mar 31
Peer Review of projects
Reading:
    “Conclusions” (D2L)
Th Apr 2
Final Peer Review of complete projects

Fri Apr 3: Sustainability Inquiry Project DUE in ENVD mailbox or at 1338 Grandview by 5pm

Unit 4: Understanding Rhetorical Fallacies in Environmental Contexts
WEEK THIRTEEN
T Apr. 7
Discuss Digital Presentations
Reading:
    Types of Appeals: Logical and Emotional Fallacies (Course Packet)

Th Apr. 9
Reading:
    “Saving Nature, but Only for Man” (Course Packet)

Sat Apr 11: Half-Day Outdoor Environmental Project (Required)

Unit 5: Using Visual Rhetoric and Digital Technology to Effect Environmental Change
WEEK FOURTEEN
T Apr. 14
Readings:
    Business Writer’s Companion pp. 259-268

Wed. Apr. 15: Electronic Journal #4 DUE in Dropbox by 5pm

Th Apr. 16
Digital Presentations

WEEK FIFTEEN
T Apr. 21
Digital Presentations

Th Apr. 23
Digital Presentations
FCQs

WEEK SIXTEEN
T Apr. 28
Digital Presentations
Revised and Extended Ecological Identity DUE

Th Apr. 30
Final Reflections