# English 1143: Academic Research and Writing

**(Writing and the Environment)**Spring 2021 (Online)

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Office Hours: Zoom by appointment

**“The things taught in colleges and schools are not an education, but the means of education.”**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

**“It is only when we forget our learning that we begin to know.”**

Henry David Thoreau

## Required Texts

* *The Little Seagull Handbook*. W.W. Norton, 2017. (978039360647)
* Hallowell and Levy, *Listening to the Earth*. New York: Pearson, 2005. (9780321195159)
* Aldo Leopold*, A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford UP, 1968. (9780195007770)

## Course Description

Using a diverse array of environmentally-centered writing as a catalyst for improving our own critical thinking, reading and writing skills, we will explore how language affects the construction and shaping of our concepts of place, identity, ideology, culture, and the environment. By the end of this course you will have a more sophisticated understanding of the complex web of social, personal, and rhetorical processes that make up written discourse. Along the way, we will

* Apply knowledge of rhetoric to make decisions about written communication
* Engage in a writing process that includes invention, drafting, and revision
* Write thesis-based academic arguments that provide strong support and specific details
* Find, evaluate, and synthesize credible sources in support of a research paper
* Use sources ethically and in contextually appropriate ways and follow a designated style guide
* Demonstrate proficient use of Standard Written English
* Additional information about course objectives can be found on the department webpage, https://msutexas.edu/academics/libarts/english/index.php

**My courses are organized around the Academic Seminar model pioneered in German universities in the 19th century, in which faculty and students work together to strive for new knowledge based on five pillars: interdisciplinarity; academic freedom; critical thinking; seeking knowledge as an end in itself; and integrating new knowledge while at the same time preserving and interpreting the past.**

**My pedagogy is founded on the intrinsic value of questioning and reflection, including the questioning of my own assumptions. As a student in my class you will develop your higher-order thinking skills through active learning—clarifying and challenging your own perspectives and those of others though the critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of theoretical and literary texts. We will examine and discuss challenging questions and complex realities, learn to think for ourselves, and connect to the world in rich, subtle ways.**

## Course Requirements

| **Assignments** | **Grade Percent** |
| --- | --- |
| Weekly Writing & Discussion Board | 20% |
| Nature Writing Essay | 15% |
| Annotated Bibliography | 15% |
| Paper Proposal | 15% |
| Researched Academic Argument Paper | 20% |
| *A Sand County Almanac* Review Essay | 15% |

## Grading Policy

In this class, the following numerical equivalents for finalgrades are used: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; F = 59-0%.

## Daily Writing and Class Activities

Weekly writings will ask you to respond to writing prompts for that week’s writing. Some weeks that means brief responses to several questions, other weeks I will ask you to respond longer to a single question. These writing activities will be graded on a plus/check/minus scale: a plus for doing a thorough job (100%), a check for completing the work in an acceptable fashion (70%), and a minus for not completing the work or for obvious lack of effort (0%). Some assignments, depending on length and difficulty, will count for more than one weekly grade. You cannot make up in-class writing or homework. This portion of your course work can easily make or break your overall grade, so be sure to keep up.

## Class Preparation and Participation

To succeed on your daily writing you must show that you’ve closely read, have at least a cursory understanding of the material, and address, to the best of your ability, the writing prompts. Specific examples from the work always help get the point across. It is also good to try to tie in any relevant terminology or critical concepts from class discussions. Read the assigned material by the date listed on the schedule of readings. As you read, take notes and underline/highlight what you believe are key passages in the text (a climactic scene, crucial lines for understanding the work, a summary of the argument, etc.), or things you have trouble understanding.

## Paper Submission Format and Policy

All out-of-class assignments must be typed in Times New Roman 12-point black font with one inch margins using MLA format. By enrolling in this class, the student expressly grants MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and for educational purposes. Note:You may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless you obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved *in advance*.

## Late Paper and Assignment Policy

Unless arrangements are made *in advance* for extenuating circumstances, you will automatically lose a letter grade for each day a paper is late, including weekends. A paper that is more than a week late will automatically receive an F, regardless of the quality of work. All major assignments must be turned in to pass the class. You will not be able to make up daily work and there is no extra credit.

## Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing in “Works Cited”)–whether you use that material in a quotation, paraphrase, or summary. It is a theft of intellectual property and will not be tolerated, whether intentional or not. I have a zero tolerance for any type of plagiarism. All incidents of plagiarism will be penalized (the paper will receive an automatic F), reported, and kept on file. The second incident of plagiarism in class by the same student will result in the student receiving an F for the course.

## Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

## Safe Zone Statement

I consider this classroom a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being – regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is my expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

## Grade Appeals

I will be happy to try to explain the rationale behind any grade; however, I absolutely do not negotiate, haggle, or argue about grades. Part of my job is to evaluate your work and to assign a written grade to it. I do that to the best of my ability the first time. The bottom line is that you have to take responsibility for your own education.

## MSU Writing Labs

I encourage you to begin drafting papers as early as possible and to take advantage of the MSU Writing Labs located in 224 Bea Wood and RC246 Moffett Library. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide you with specific suggestions for improving your writing.

## Writing Proficiency Requirement

All students seeking a Bachelor’s degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they have 1) passed English 1113 and English 1123 and 2) earned 60 hours. You may meet this requirement by passing either the Writing Proficiency Exam or English 2113. Please keep in mind that, once you have earned over 90 hours, you lose the opportunity to take the $25 exam and have no option but to enroll in the three-credit-hour course. If you have any questions about the exam, visit the Writing Proficiency Office website at http://academics.mwsu.edu/wpr, or call 397-4131.

## Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative; I reserve the right to amend it with oral notice in class. If you anticipate a problem with due dates please speak with me well in advance.

**GREEN = D2L**

**BLUE = *Listening to the Earth***

**MAROON = *Little Seagull***

**Week 1** (1/11–1/15)

Class Introduction

Discuss nature writing genre and Paper 1

*LS* “Writing Contexts” – “Writing Processes” (2-16)

**Week 2** (1/18–1/22)

John Muir, “A Wind-Storm in the Forests” (D2L)

*LS* “Personal Narratives” (58-61) and “Reading Strategies” (83-86)

**Week 3** (1/25–1/29)

Henry David Thoreau, “Walking” (44-53)

Edward Abbey, “The First Morning” (165-171)

**Week 4** (2/1–2/5)

Terry T. Williams, “The Clan of One-Breasted Women” (122-130)

“Secret Cold War Tests” (D2L)

*LS* “Arguments” (43-44)

**Week 5** (2/8–2/12)

**Nature Writing Essay (Parts I & II) Due Wednesday by Noon**

Discuss Research Project & Library Databases

Rachel Carson, “The Human Price” (113-122)

*LS* “Doing Research” – “Searching . . . Databases” (90-99)

**Week 6** (2/15–2/19)

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, “Part I: A Sand County Almanac” (vii-92)

Discuss *A Sand County Almanac* Review Essay **(Due any time before Week 15)**

Discuss Annotated Bibliographies

*LS* “Evaluating Sources” – “Paraphrasing” (102-112)

**Week 7** (2/22–2/26)

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, “Part II: Sketches Here and There” (95-162)

**Week 8** (3/1–3/5)

**One Practice Annotated Bib Entry Due Wednesday by Noon**

Aldo Leopold, Part III “Conservation Esthetic” (165-177)

**Week 9** (3/8–3/12)

Leopold, Part III “Wildlife in American Culture” (177-187) & “Wilderness” (188-200)

**Week 10** (3/15–3/19)

**Completed Annotated Bib Due Wednesday by Noon**

Leopold, Part III “The Land Ethic” (201-226)

Discuss Paper Proposals

*LS* “Proposals” (66-69)

**Week 11** (3/22–3/26)

Joy Williams, “One Acre: On Devaluating Real Estate to Keep Land Priceless” (95-105)

Sallie Bingham, “A Woman’s Land” (183-187)

“Acknowledging Sources” – “Avoiding Plagiarism” (116-118)

Thesis workshop

**Week 12** (3/29–4/2)

**Paper Proposal Due Wednesday by Noon**

**Week 13** (4/5–4/9)

Review *LS* “In-Text Documentation” (122-128)

Gary Snyder, “Four Changes” (D2L)

Barry Lopez, “Caring for the Woods” (35-41)

**Week 14** (4/12–4/16)

***Sand County Review* Essay Due by Noon Wednesday**

Edward O. Wilson, “The Environmental Ethic” (198-207)

**Week 15** (4/19–4/23)

*LS* “Rhetorical Analysis” (49-53)

Final draft workshop

**Week 16** (Finals Week)

**Research Paper Due TBA**