

**GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM**

**Course information:**

Copy and paste **current** course information from [Class Search/Course Catalog](#).

College/School	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	Department/School	<b>English</b>
Prefix:	ENG	Number: <b>378</b>	Title: Environmental Creative Nonfiction (Topic: Place and Sense of Place)
Course description:		Units:	3

Catalogue: Lectures, discussion, and criticism concerning the literary history of nature writing and techniques of writing environmental creative nonfiction for publication.

Is this a cross-listed course? No

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Is this a shared course? No

*Note- For courses that are crosslisted and/or shared, a letter of support from the chair/director of **each** department that offers the course is required for **each** designation requested. By submitting this letter of support, the chair/director agrees to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and will teach the course in a manner that meets the criteria for each approved designation.*

Is this a **permanent-numbered** course with topics? Yes

If **yes**, each topic requires **an individual submission**, separate from other topics. **Place and Sense of Place**

**Mandatory Review:**

No

*Note- a **separate** proposal is required for each designation.*

**Eligibility:** Permanent numbered courses **must** have completed the university’s review and approval process. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact [Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu](mailto:Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu).

**Submission deadlines dates are as follow:**

For Fall 2020 Effective Date: October 10, 2019

For Spring 2021 Effective Date: March 5, 2020

**Area proposed course will serve:**

A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study. It is the responsibility of the chair/director to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and adhere to the above guidelines.

**Checklists for general studies designations:**

Complete and attach the appropriate checklist

[Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses \(L\)](#)

[Mathematics core courses \(MA\)](#)

[Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses \(CS\)](#)

[Humanities, Arts and Design core courses \(HU\)](#)

[Social-Behavioral Sciences core courses \(SB\)](#)

[Natural Sciences core courses \(SQ/SG\)](#)

[Cultural Diversity in the United States courses \(C\)](#)

[Global Awareness courses \(G\)](#)

[Historical Awareness courses \(H\)](#)

**A complete proposal should include:**

- Signed course proposal cover form
- [Criteria checklist](#) for General Studies designation being requested
- Course catalog description
- Sample syllabus for the course
- Copy of table of contents from the textbook and list of required readings/books

**It is respectfully requested that proposals are submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF.**

**Contact information:**

Name           Joni Adamson           E-mail           Joni.Adamson@asu.edu           Phone           480-727-3675          

**Department Chair/Director approval: (Required)**

Chair/Director name (Typed):           Krista Ratcliff           Date:           10 March 2020          

Chair/Director (Signature):           

**Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for**  
**HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN [HU]**

**Rationale and Objectives**

The humanities disciplines are concerned with questions of human existence and meaning, the nature of thinking and knowing, with moral and aesthetic experience. The humanities develop values of all kinds by making the human mind more supple, critical, and expansive. They are concerned with the study of the textual and artistic traditions of diverse cultures, including traditions in literature, philosophy, religion, ethics, history, and aesthetics. In sum, these disciplines explore the range of human thought and its application to the past and present human environment. They deepen awareness of the diversity of the human heritage and its traditions and histories and they may also promote the application of this knowledge to contemporary societies.

The study of the arts and design, like the humanities, deepens the student's awareness of the diversity of human societies and cultures. The arts have as their primary purpose the creation and study of objects, installations, performances and other means of expressing or conveying aesthetic concepts and ideas. Design study concerns itself with material objects, images and spaces, their historical development, and their significance in society and culture. Disciplines in the arts and design employ modes of thought and communication that are often nonverbal, which means that courses in these areas tend to focus on objects, images, and structures and/or on the practical techniques and historical development of artistic and design traditions. The past and present accomplishments of artists and designers help form the student's ability to perceive aesthetic qualities of art work and design.

The Humanities, Arts and Design are an important part of the General Studies Program, for they provide an opportunity for students to study intellectual and imaginative traditions and to observe and/or learn the production of art work and design. The knowledge acquired in courses fulfilling the Humanities, Arts and Design requirement may encourage students to investigate their own personal philosophies or beliefs and to understand better their own social experience. In sum, the Humanities, Arts and Design core area enables students to broaden and deepen their consideration of the variety of human experience.

Revised April 2014

Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

<b>ASU - [HU] CRITERIA</b>			
<b>HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN [HU] courses must meet <i>either</i> 1, 2 or 3 <i>and</i> at least one of the criteria under 4 in such a way as to make the satisfaction of these criteria A CENTRAL AND SUBSTANTIAL PORTION of the course content.</b>			
YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted
—	—	<b>1.</b> Emphasizes the study of values; the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems; and/or aesthetic experience.	
—	—	<b>2.</b> Concerns the interpretation, analysis, or creation of written, aural, or visual texts; and/or the historical development of textual traditions.	Syllabus, Course Description
—	—	<b>3.</b> Concerns the interpretation, analysis, or engagement with aesthetic practices; and/or the historical development of artistic or design traditions.	Syllabus, Course Description
—	—	<b>4.</b> In addition, to qualify for the Humanities, Arts and Design designation a course must meet one or more of the following requirements:	
—	—	<b>a.</b> Concerns the development of human thought, with emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought.	
—	—	<b>b.</b> Concerns aesthetic systems and values, especially in literature, arts, and design.	
—	—	<b>c.</b> Emphasizes aesthetic experience and creative process in literature, arts, and design.	Syllabus, Assignments
—	—	<b>d.</b> Concerns the analysis of literature and the development of literary traditions.	Syllabus, Assignments
		<b>THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF COURSES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE [HU] DESIGNATION EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT GIVE SOME CONSIDERATION TO THE HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN:</b>	
		• Courses devoted primarily to developing skill in the use of a language.	
		• Courses devoted primarily to the acquisition of quantitative or experimental methods.	
		• Courses devoted primarily to teaching skills.	

Course Prefix	Number	Title	General Studies Designation
ENG	378	Environmental Creative Nonfiction: Place and Sense of Place	HU

Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the **specific** designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

Criteria (from checksheet)	How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)	Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)
2) The interpretation, analysis, or creation of written texts + historical development	Studies the advent and historical development of creative environmental nonfiction prose/genre; studies how human perceptions of environment and place are shaped by inherited cultural, literary, and regional or place-based paradigms	See course description and yellow highlights on the syllabus *study of the development of classic creative environmental nonfiction, from Thoreau's "Walking" and Gary Snyder's The Practice of the Wild, to international forms such as Isak Dinesen's "Out of Africa" *study of regionally specific, or place-based creative nonfiction from Pat Mora's Nopantla to Richard Shelton's Going Back to Bisbee *study of the more recent development of activist environmental creation nonfiction such as Scott Russell Sander's Hunting for Hope and Sandra Steingraber's Living Downstream
3) The interpretation, analysis, or engagement with aesthetic practices, historical development of artistic traditions	Concerns the three directions of the creative environmental nonfiction prose/genre: 1) the essay which focuses primarily on pattern, beauty, and meaning in the natural landscape but in which humans are tangential; 2) the essay which takes equal account of both the natural world and the physical and mental structures of human life, experience, and imagination; and 3) the activist essay concerned about human and nonhuman issues of health, toxic disruption, and possibilities for human and environmental regeneration and resilience	See course description and green highlights on the syllabus *study of pattern, beauty and meaning in Thoreau, Synder, Dineson, Erlich *study of writing that accounts for physical and mental structure of human life and experience and imagination is each of the writers assigned *study of activism and aesthetics in Sanders, Steingraber and Shelton
4c Aesthetic experience and creative process in literature	Weekly reading responses and discussions concerning analysis of environmental creative nonfiction that expresses an aesthetics of writing or articulation of pattern, beauty, and meaning in the natural landscape that is one of the foci of the course	See syllabus listing analysis of specific aesthetic features of the first two directions of creative environmental nonfiction, and yellow highlights

**Humanities and Fine Arts [HU]**

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4d Analysis of literature and literary traditions	Weekly reading responses and discussions concerning study of the developing genre of environmental creative nonfiction, including the development and aesthetics of the three directions of the genre studied in this course	See course description, especially requirements for the reading responses posted to Canvas and the directions for the mid-term rhetorical analysis essay, plus green highlights
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. . . landscapes tell us much about the values we hold and at the same time affect the quality of the lives that we lead . . . a well-cultivated sense of place is an important dimension of human well-being.

--D.W. Meinig, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*

**Joni Adamson Website**

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### **ENG 378: Environmental Creative Nonfiction: Place and Sense of Place**

In this course we will study, define, and problematize what is developing as an important and popular nonfiction prose genre, the essay or book which focuses on the environment and/or human relation to nature. Though not strictly divided, the genre has taken three general directions: 1) the essay which focuses primarily on pattern, beauty, and meaning in the natural landscape but in which humans are tangential; 2) the essay which takes equal account of both the natural world and the physical and mental structures of human life, experience, and imagination; and 3) the activist essay concerned about human and nonhuman issues of health, toxic disruption, and possibilities for human and environmental regeneration and resilience. We will read widely to gain a perspective on this tradition/genre and then examine works which focus on the region we inhabit--the American Southwest. As we read, some of the questions we will ponder include: What is "nature"? What is "culture"? What is "place"? What is "wilderness"? What is "civilization"? What is "region"? What is "nature writing"? What is the "essay of place"? How does the writer's language project an interpretation of human relationship to the environment on that world? What is the relationship of human imagination (and writing) to landscape and place? How are our perceptions of our environment and place (and everything else) shaped by inherited cultural and literary paradigms? How does the writer inscribe her or his own experience on a place? How is "discovery" of a landscape or place related to discovery of the self? How does creative nonfiction about the American Southwest influence our sense of regional identity and reality as "Southwesterners"?

**C-4** This course is writing intensive. This means that you will be asked to write often and repeatedly both inside and outside of class and to experiment with both scholarly and creative styles. In our readings, our attention will be on both the characteristics of the genre we are examining **and** the use of style and rhetoric in the writing of "nature writing," the "essay of place," and the "activist essay." We will examine what makes each essay unique as a literary work and what all the essays/books we are reading have in common. Our goal in the course will be to improve our ability to read intelligently and to express ourselves persuasively and creatively in our oral presentations and in our own writing of creative environmental nonfiction.

**Required texts:**

Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild*

Isak Dinesen *Out of Africa*

Gretel Ehrlich *The Solace of Open Spaces*

Scott Russell Sanders *Hunting for Hope*

Pat Mora *Nepantla*

Sandra Steingraber *Living Downstream*

Richard Shelton, *Going Back to Bisbee*

**Other required nonfiction readings by Henry David Thoreau, Richard Selzer, G. Douglas Atkins, Barry Lopez, and David Quammen can be accessed free of charge on Canvas site.**

**Course requirements:**

**--Class participation and attendance:** Because this class is part literary analysis and part writing workshop, your presence each week in class is required. The success of this class depends heavily on your discussion, with the rest of the class, of your readings. Students should prepare for class by reading and analyzing assigned texts and posting a reading response about those texts to Canvas **before** the class in which they will be discussed. C-2

**--A nature writer's journal:** Your journal is a place to muse/reflect/philosophize about your readings and a place to keep track of what is happening in the nature/landscape/place you inhabit. Try to find a place in "nature" that is accessible to you at least two or three times a week and observe what you see there. Make two to three entries in your journal per week. The journal will be a crucial part of the class--especially as it becomes a place in which to prewrite/brainstorm your creative essay. You will be asked to draw parts of your creative environmental nonfiction essay from your journal as you begin crafting your own creative nonfiction essay for the course. C-2

**--Each week, post informal reading responses and responses to your peer's reading responses to the Canvas site:** For each class period, post one response about the readings for the week. Be sure to identify the text you are responding to and how it contributes to the genre. Do not summarize. Rather, focus on one quote, one phrase, one word, or one characteristic that identifies it with one of the three directions of the genre. Ask yourself a question about the text and answer it. Or brainstorm possible directions for class discussion.

Also, for each class period, post at least one entry in response to your classmates' posted reading responses. Be sure that you respond to your peer's postings after you have already written your own response for the week. C-2

*The instructor will provide early feedback on these responses and offer suggestions for development to reading responses each week. The success of the class also depends heavily on the feedback which each class member gives to the others about their writing both on the Canvas site and in class.*

**--Meet with me for two conferences:** Please make an appointment to see me at least once before you lead your class discussion and at least once to talk with me about your mid-term response/analysis essay and your end-of-term creative essay. C-4

**--Lead one discussion:** Lead the class in a discussion of an assigned/required nonfiction essay or book. Choose an essay or book which you find particularly compelling or repelling in relationship to the writing you are doing on your own personal essay for the class. The focus of your discussion will be on reading the author you choose as a writer of creative nonfiction contributing to a genre. You will also be presenting your reading of this author as scholar and writer developing a sense of your own personal aesthetic. C-3

**--Mid-term response/analysis paper:** [length: 6-8 pages] In this paper, analyze one of our assigned creative nonfiction authors, their subject matter or style or technique of writing, and explore one issue that your author raises that is particularly relevant to your own creative nonfiction writing. C-2, C-3 The instructor will provide early feedback in a meeting about your midterm BEFORE this assignment is due and offer suggestions for development of the essay.

**--First draft, and final draft of a personal creative nonfiction essay:** [length: 10 pages] The major project of the semester will be produced in several stages over the course of the semester and your instructor and peers will provide you with feedback at each stage. C-4 Before Spring Break, you will be asked to post excerpts from your writing journal to the Canvas site that you will drawing from to craft your rough draft of the creative nonfiction essay. C-4 This assignment asks you to start putting together notes of your observations from your journal, your reading responses posted to the Canvas site, and your own individual research about the topic of



your creative nonfiction essay, quotes from your reading that you will “quilt” into your own essay etc. After Spring Break, you will revise your rough draft with the feedback from your instructor, you will post a more polished first draft of your personal creative nonfiction essay to Canvas. This draft will be workshopped in small peer groups on the Canvas site. The final draft of your personal creative nonfiction essay will be due during the last week of the course. C-2, C-3, C-4

**Percentages that will determine your grade: C-1 (80% writing)**

Journal-----	10%
Informal reading response assignments (Canvas)-----	20%
Mid-term response/analysis paper-----	15%
Leading class discussion -----	20%
Creative essay (1st draft and final draft)-----	35%

**Tentative Class Schedule.** (This schedule may change for a variety of reasons as we proceed. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to check with one of your classmates regarding any changes in our plans.)

Jan

27 Introduction to course. Post a journal entry to the Canvas. Include a short biography for yourself and answer these questions: What is "nature"? What is "nature writing"? Why write about place? What place might you write about? Why did you take this class? For the next class please bring five photos/images of places that are special to you—images that show places that have significant associations for you.

Feb

3 The Genre of Environmental Creative Nonfiction: Why write? Why write about nature and place? Discuss Richard Selzer's, "Why a Surgeon Would Write," G. Douglas Atkins' "In Other Words: Gardening for Love--The Work of the Essayist," and Barry Lopez's "Landscape and Narrative." Discussion of your photos and places.

Assignment for the next class: Pick a specific place in your childhood (or adulthood) during which you felt very close to nature and write about that experience in your journal. Prepare a map of your experience. You do not have to accurately represent the landscape, just represent it as you remember it with a freehand drawing. What landmarks were important to you? Mark them on the map. What were the important paths and routes of travel? Sketch them into the drawing. What were your special places and hideouts? Did any people—imaginary or real—inhabit your landscape? Draw your map on a large sheet of paper so that you can share it with the class and discuss it.

10 Your maps due. Discussion of maps. More discussion of the genre. Discussion of "nature," "wilderness" and "place." Read *Out of Africa* (1st half) and Gary Snyder's "The Etiquette of Freedom" and "Good, Wild, Sacred" in *The Practice of the Wild*.  
Discussion Leader:

17 The Natural History Essay. What is "nature writing?" Read Henry David Thoreau's "Walking," *Out of Africa* (2nd half), and Gary Snyder's "Tawny Grammar" in TPW.  
Discussion Leader:

24 Continue discussion of "nature writing." Read David Quammen's "The Face of the Spider" and Gretel Erhlich's *The Solace of Open Spaces*  
Discussion Leader:

March

3 The Essay of Place. What is the relationship of nature to culture? What is the relationship of space and place? What makes a place a place? Read Scott Russel Sander's "Land and Imagination" and *Hunting for Hope*, 1<sup>st</sup> half

Discussion Leader:

If you have not already done so, make an appointment to talk to me about your mid-term and final essays. See Syllabus requirements above. C-4

10 Continue discussion of *Hunting for Hope*, 2<sup>nd</sup> half. We'll discuss the development of the recent development of activist environmental creation nonfiction concerned with the health of both human and nonhuman environments, as exemplified in Sander's work. We'll spend some time writing in our journals and discussing how to excerpt passages and ideas from your informal writing assignments and journal assignments in order to begin writing your creative nonfiction personal essay. Read journal excerpts posted on Canvas. We'll also discuss the mid-term response/analysis paper. C-4

Spring Break ( March 17-23)

24 **Mid-term response/analysis essay due. Post excerpts from your journal to Canvas.** Begin discussion of writing about place. Read Pat Mora's *Nepantla*. Discussion of the Southwest in imagination, image, film, history, and as it exists in reality today. What are the characteristics of creative nonfiction that treats the region we inhabit--the American Southwest? How are our perceptions of our environment and place (and everything else) shaped by inherited cultural and literary paradigms? How does Mora inscribe her own experience on a place?

Discussion Leader:

31 More discussion of regional writing. Read Gary Snyder's "The Place, The Region, and the Commons" in *TPW* and *Living Downstream* (1<sup>st</sup> half). What is a bioregion? How does the Snyder's language project an interpretation of human relationship to the environment on that world? What is the relationship of human imagination (and writing) to landscape and place? We'll discuss the work of activist/artists such as Steingraber who write both aesthetically and to effect change in environmental creation nonfiction concerned with the health of both human and nonhuman environments.

Discussion Leader:

April

7 Read *Living Downstream* (2<sup>nd</sup> half) Workshop journal excerpts.

Discussion Leader:

14 **Journal due. Post the first rough draft of your creative essay to Canvas for small group peer response and Instructor feedback.** C-4

21 First draft of your own Creative Environmental Nonfiction Essay Due. Your small peer group is assigned to read and give you feed back on your essay in class workshops on April 28 and May 5. C-4 Discussion of Dick Shelton's *Going Back to Bisbee* (1<sup>st</sup> half). How is "discovery" of a landscape or place related to discovery of the self? How does creative nonfiction about the American Southwest influence our sense of regional identity and reality as "Southwesterners"?

Discussion leader:

28 Discussion of *Going Back to Bisbee* (2<sup>nd</sup> half). How is "discovery" of a landscape or place related to discovery of the self? How does creative nonfiction about the American Southwest influence our sense of regional identity and reality as "Southwesterners"?

Begin workshopping creative essays. Small group peer and instructor responses to your 1<sup>st</sup> draft. C-4

May

5 Finish workshopping creative essays. Small group peer and instructor responses to your 1<sup>st</sup> draft. C-4

9 **Final draft of creative essay due.**