Upper-division Writing Requirement Review Form (12/1/08)

I. General Education Review - Upper-division Writing Requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept/Program Subject</th>
<th>COMM</th>
<th>Course # (i.e. ANTH 455) or sequence</th>
<th>377</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course(s) Title</td>
<td>Rhetoric, Nature, Environmentalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description of the requirement if it is not a single course</td>
<td>One of several courses that fulfill the COMM UD writing requirement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please type / print name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Steve Schwarze</td>
<td>2/2/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone / Email</td>
<td>X4901</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>Betsy Bach</td>
<td>2/2/2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III Overview of the Course Purpose/Description

The primary purpose of this course is to help students engage thoughtfully with public discourse about environmental issues within a US context. It introduces students to key texts, standard appeals, and recurring strategies of environmental advocacy. The secondary purpose is to improve students’ writing abilities in the context of rhetorical analysis. Students will read and write essays that analyze environmental rhetoric or engage scholarly research about environmental rhetoric.

IV Learning Outcomes: Explain how each of the following learning outcomes will be achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student learning outcomes: Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry</th>
<th>Students are required to negotiate the major paper topic and research questions with the instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources (see <a href="http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/">http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/</a>)</td>
<td>Students have a library session early in the semester about finding primary sources. Later sessions on discussion of rhetorical artifacts gives students practice analyzing primary sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate</td>
<td>The entire course is organized around the ongoing contestation of the appropriate relationship between humans and ‘nature.’ Students are consistently taught to identify the key issues on which competing perspectives clash.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline</td>
<td>Students develop their academic voice by producing written responses to scholarly articles in the field of environmental communication throughout the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work</td>
<td>Students are required to revise one longer essay based on instructor feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline</td>
<td>Students are introduced to MLA and Chicago styles</td>
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</table>
Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy

Students have two sessions that focus on locating and evaluating sources via information technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V. Writing Course Requirements Check list</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is enrollment capped at 25 students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If not, list maximum course enrollment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain how outcomes will be adequately met for this number of students. Justify the request for variance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are outcomes listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are detailed requirements for all written assignments including criteria for evaluation in the course syllabus? If not how and when will students be informed of written assignments?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefly explain how students are provided with tools and strategies for effective writing and editing in the major.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will written assignments include an opportunity for revision? If not, then explain how students will receive and use feedback to improve their writing ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are expectations for Information Literacy listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VI. Writing Assignments: Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 20 pages of writing for assessment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students’ performance on writing assignments. Clear expression, quality, and accuracy of content are considered an integral part of the grade on any writing assignment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Graded Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal Ungraded Assignments</td>
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Rhetoric, Nature and Environmentalism
COMM 377/EVST 377

Instructor: Steve Schwarze, Ph.D.
Email: steven.schwarze@umontana.edu
Office: LA 358  Phone: 243-4901
Office Hours:  WF 1-2 pm, W 2-4 pm, TBA

Course Description
The primary purpose of this course is to help students engage thoughtfully with public discourse about environmental issues within a US context. It introduces students to key texts, standard appeals, and recurring strategies of environmental advocacy. Our object of investigation in the course is “environmental movement,” not “the” environmental movement. That is, we are interested less in environmental organizations *per se* than we are in the rhetorical efforts by those organizations to *move* public opinion and public policy in a more environmentally sustainable direction. Consequently, we will spend most of our time examining the rhetoric of individuals and groups who are attempting to enable that movement. To a lesser degree, we will examine rhetoric that attempts to resist that movement.

As we will see, the power of environmental rhetoric to generate such movement is significantly influenced by the way it articulates cultural and ideological assumptions about <nature> and <progress>. Thus, the course begins by stimulating reflection on a range of historical discourses that have shaped public understanding of <nature> and <progress> and then turns to examine contemporary advocacy on environmental issues. Overall, we are interested in critically examining attempts to influence attitudes and actions, personal opinions, and public decisions through the circulation of persuasive public discourse.

The secondary purpose of the course is to improve your writing abilities in the context of rhetorical analysis. The course will introduce you to a broadly conceived rhetorical perspective on discourse, a perspective that takes seriously the role that symbols, images, narratives, metaphors, audiences, identities and ideologies play in influencing attitude and action. During the semester, you will write read and write essays that bring those concepts to bear on various environmental texts. In other words, the essays you write for this course will analyze environmental rhetoric or engage scholarly research about environmental rhetoric — they will not be reports about environmental topics nor personal opinion essays about environmental issues. Your writing ability should improve, as should your skills of analysis and criticism. Because of the emphasis on writing throughout the course, COMM majors can use this course to fulfill their upper-division writing requirement.
Objectives
By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1) explain how foundational rhetorical artifacts of the US environmental movement have influenced public understanding of nature and progress
2) identify and analyze rhetorical strategies and tactics in environmental rhetoric
3) make persuasive critical judgments about environmental rhetoric on the basis of effectiveness, ethical quality, and ecological soundness.

You will be evaluated for proficiency in each of these three areas, as described later in this document.

Students also should achieve the following learning outcomes for upper-division writing courses:

- Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources
- Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate
- Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline
- Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work
- Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline
- Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy

Texts
Several articles for the course will be found in *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and the Environment*, ed. Craig Waddell, which will be available in the UM Bookstore. Other readings will be available via ERES (password: COMM377), course packet (available later in Sept), or as handouts.

I strongly encourage you to subscribe to Headwaters News, a daily email news service sponsored by UM’s Center for the Rocky Mountain West. It is a collection of the day’s news about our region, and it is an excellent way of getting familiar with regional environmental issues (public land management, growth and sprawl, waste issues (toxic and otherwise), energy development, endangered species, etc.). You can subscribe at [http://www.headwatersnews.org/HeadwatersSub.html](http://www.headwatersnews.org/HeadwatersSub.html). Another good regional source is High Country News, a twice-monthly news magazine. Some articles are for pay-subscribers only, but many are available at [www.hcn.org](http://www.hcn.org).

Other good environmental news services with free email subscription are [www.enn.com](http://www.enn.com), [www.envirolink.org](http://www.envirolink.org), [www.environmentalhealthnews.org](http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org), and my personal favorite, [www.grist.org](http://www.grist.org).
Assessment and Grading

To achieve the objectives listed above, you will have a set of assignments that provide an opportunity to demonstrate your proficiency.

1) **Reading Responses.** In this area, you will write three short (3-4 pg) critical responses to the readings assigned during the first unit of the course. I will give you specific guidance in class; generally speaking, your response should explain an important argument made in the scholarly readings and respond to it. Each response should engage the readings from one week; thus, you must plan to write responses for three of the five weeks. The essays are due on Monday of the subsequent week.

2) **Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics.** In this area, you have a choice between two options. One option is to execute a two-part exam that will take place on Nov. 14 and Nov. 21. Part of it will be performed in class, the other part will be take-home. A significant portion of the exam will be in essay format. The other option is described below.

3) **Critical Judgment.** In this area, you have a choice between two options. One option is to write an essay of 5-6 pages in which you execute a critical analysis of some rhetorical artifact(s) with environmental dimensions. You will negotiate the choice of artifact with me, and you will revise the essay based on my feedback. You will present your findings at the end of the semester. The other option is described below.

4) **The 2-3 Combo; or, the “long” paper.** In lieu of the exam and short essay, you will write an essay of approximately 10 pages that analyzes a set of rhetorical artifacts or investigates an environmental issue from a rhetorical perspective. You will negotiate the topic with me, and you will revise the essay based on my feedback. You will present your findings at the end of the semester. The goal is to produce a strong draft that, with revision, could be submitted to scholarly conferences in the spring: the UM Conference on Undergraduate Research, and/or the Northwest Communication Association Conference.

By mid-late September, I will ask you to commit to either 2 & 3, or 4. Students interested in option 4 should start engaging me in conversations right away.

As part of the “information technology and digital literacy” learning outcome, students will expected to acquire and evaluate both primary and secondary sources via digital means for their Critical Judgment essay or Long essay.

Your final grade will be based on an equal consideration of four components of the course: your performance in the three areas, plus class participation. (For the numerically inclined, that’s 25% each.) If you opt for the longer paper, that will be worth 50%.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability that may require modification of some element of the course, please obtain the appropriate documentation and then see me so we can make arrangements.
Academic Misconduct
Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and deliberate interference with the work of others. It is the intellectual equivalent of theft, and the aesthetic equivalent of plastic surgery. Like the former, it ruins the trust necessary for a well-functioning community; like the latter, it mistakenly sacrifices your unique contributions and characteristics and replaces them with a disfigured, false ideal.

There is a clear statement about plagiarism and a specific process for dealing with potential plagiarism cases at http://www.umt.edu/SA/vpsa/index.cfm/page/1339. Read it.

In this course, it is primarily a matter of conducting scholarship ethically: giving credit to others for their ideas, and fairly and accurately gathering and representing the discourse of others (your “data”). It results in an ‘F’ on the particular piece of work and, in cases of willful disregard for the rules, a permanent ‘F’ on your course transcript. Bottom line: don’t do it.

Expectations
Those of you in COMM know that mine are high. Beyond that, I need to say a few things specific to this course. First, while it is a writing course, I suspect the bigger challenge will be the fact that it is reading-intensive. To get something out of our class time, You HAVE to do the reading and you HAVE to stay on top of it. Get out your daily planners, start blocking off the hours, and stick to it. Taking notes, having a dictionary by your side (and perhaps your notes from COMM 250, if you haven’t already donated them to the Smithsonian or used them to line your birdcage), and writing down questions and connections as you go will help to make the readings meaningful for you.

Also, it is to your benefit to start reading about environmental issues on your own. You can do this on the cheap if you make use of the internet as mentioned earlier and keep your eyes open around campus and town (it is Missoula, after all). The main articles from the Missoulian each day are online, the Independent is free every Thursday, and there are several online environmental news services that can send you daily emails. Several environmental organizations have offices in Missoula, and they would love to have you drop by and pick up (and read) their stuff. We’re also home to the regional headquarters of the US Forest Service in an area that often sets the precedent for national forest policy. Further, take a few seconds to scan the bulletin boards around campus and you’ll find several talks, meetings, films, etc. around town that address environmental issues from a variety of perspectives (conservationist, preservationist, EJ, ecofeminist, free-market, etc). It’s all rhetoric, my friends, and we have plenty of it here.

As far as classroom expectations: this is an undergrad-only course, but it earns you upper-division credits and Honors credit, and therefore it is fair to expect you to be able to do more than sit in the back of the room and take notes. (Contrary to popular opinion, you are not a customer of the University. If you want to stick with the business metaphor, thought, you are the raw material and I have been tasked to turn you into a product: a thoughtful, articulate citizen.) That means we will engage in serious intellectual activity—reading serious thinkers, writing and speaking seriously—about serious matters. As many of you know, I believe we can engage in serious intellectual activity and enjoy it too, so I don’t mean to mislead you about the
classroom environment. I do mean to say that you must be willing to come to class ready to engage every day, and if you are not then you might want to reconsider your options.

On a different note: for some odd reason, people get hot under the collar pretty quickly about environmental issues. (I will argue that the main reason is “ideology,” and we’ll discuss that idea throughout the semester). This can translate into some rather unproductive communication patterns in the classroom, so I want to call attention to that now. Berating people with differing opinions, barking the party line, or pontificating about your pet issue are among such patterns. The purpose is not to provide you with a political platform; instead, we are trying to understand environmental rhetoric. That means that often, you will need to bracket your initial impulses to support or reject a particular position on an environmental issue. Instead, I will encourage you first to understand that position as it functions rhetorically—how it might be persuasive in relation to situation, purposes, and audiences. Eventually you may take a position, but only after you have done the hard work of understanding the rhetorical dynamics of a particular piece of discourse. This holds for environmental rhetoric, academic essays about environmental rhetoric, and your colleague’s arguments about environmental rhetoric.

There are good interpersonal reasons for doing all of this, but just as important are the personal reasons. One by-product of studying environmental rhetoric is that you, hopefully, will start to see how your own beliefs, attitudes and values have ALREADY been shaped by rhetorical discourse. You will consistently hear me ask, “Why do you think that,” or “What’s your evidence for that?” These questions are intended to get you to think more carefully about the positions you take, how you have come to accept those positions, and why you respond to environmental rhetoric in certain ways. You may even come to change your mind as a result of our investigations throughout the semester. There’s nothing wrong with that, by the way. Ultimately, that’s what a liberal arts education is intended to enable—your ability to make sound judgments rather than offer knee-jerk reactions based on unexamined assumptions.

I say all of this because I enjoy teaching this course, and I want us to get started on the right foot and be mindful of opportunities and hazards as we go. Please keep me informed as to how the class is going for you and what we can do to enhance your learning.
# Rhetoric, Nature and Environmentalism

## Course Schedule

### Rhetoric and the Constitution of Nature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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### Rhetoric and Environmental “Movement”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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Friday: Discussion of rhetorical artifacts

Oct. 10 Modes of Appeal: Constituting Character, Rationality, and Emotion
Monday: Craig Waddell, “Perils of a Modern Cassandra: Rhetorical Aspects of Public Indifference to the Population Explosion”
Wednesday: Steve Schwarze, “Environmental Melodrama”
Friday: Finding and Evaluating Scholarly Resources in Environmental Comm (SLC)

Oct. 17 Strategy and Tactics
Monday: Brant Short, Earth First! and the Rhetoric of Moral Confrontation”
Wednesday: Marilyn Cooper, “Environmental Rhetoric in the Age of Hegemonic Politics: Earth First! and The Nature Conservancy”
Friday: Discussion of Rhetorical Artifacts
DUE: “Long” paper preparatory assignment

Oct. 24 Protest Rhetoric and Its Representation
Monday: Kevin DeLuca, from “Image Events: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism”
Wednesday: Terence Check, “The Framing of Radical Environmental Rhetoric: TV News Coverage of the Earth Liberation Front”
Friday: Discussion of Rhetorical Artifacts

Oct. 31 Backlash: Reactionary Rhetoric in Our Backyard
Wednesday: Articles on John Stokes; View The Fire Next Time
Friday: Writing Workshop

Nov. 7 Corporate Strategies to Resist Environmentalism: The Case of Climate Change
Wednesday: Ross Gelbspan, “Criminals Against Humanity”
Friday: Writing Workshop/Discussion of MLA & Chicago styles

Nov. 14 Individual Work
Monday: Part 1 of exam
Wed, Fri: NO CLASS, NCA Convention

Nov. 21 Individual Work
Monday: Part 2 of exam; Draft of “long” papers due.
Wed, Fri: NO CLASS, Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 28 Discourses of Sustainability
Readings TBA
Dec. 5  Paper Presentations

Finals Week  Finish Presentations