“The Anthropocene finds its most radical expression in our acknowledgement that the familiar divide between people and the nature world is no longer useful or accurate.”

- Jedediah Purdy, *After Nature*

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**Course Description**  
Who defines nature? Is it a resource, an object, a spiritual force? This course will take an in–depth look at contemporary rhetoric and argumentation with the epoch of the Anthropocene as the underlying theme of our discourse. It will also explore the nuanced language used the political, scientific and artistic communities trying to stake their claim in the landscapes where you work and live. Our study this semester will focus on the way traditional rhetorical concepts are still powerful in contemporary American culture; you will have the opportunity to study arguments as a reader and enact those practices as a writer.

Much of your work in this class will involve different kinds of collaboration, including small group workshops and discussions that will take place in class. Because writing development is an important process that takes place over time and across different writing situations, all WRIT 201 classes use portfolio evaluation as a primary means of evaluation. By the end of the semester you should be able to accurately and subtly assess a given rhetorical situation and make effective rhetorical choices based your assessment in order to write a graceful, convincing, beautifully written argument.

**Required Course Texts**

  *(This will be marked as “optional” at the UM Bookstore, but it’s a required text for this section of Writ 201)*
Other Course Materials
- notebook for in-class writing
- folder for misc. class materials/handouts
- highlighters (minimum 3 different colors)
- binder for your final portfolio

General Class Expectations
- All reading assignments will be completed by the assigned date
- All writing assignments must be turned in on time
- All homework must be typed
- Attend class
- Actively, vocally, and appropriately participate in class discussions
- Any individual assignments (including requests for conferences) will be completed by the assigned date

WRIT 201 is an Approved Writing course. Its university learning outcomes include:
- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

Grades (Or, How To Earn That “A” In Writ 201)
I encourage you to talk with me at any time to better understand my comments or to discuss your overall progress and success in the class. You must earn a C- in this class to be awarded credit. You must turn in your portfolio and complete all major papers by their deadlines for course credit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (includes mid-term response)</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
<td>65%*</td>
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Participation and portfolio grade descriptors are included at the end of the syllabus.

Participation: Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, striving to make all your contributions excellent, and having your textbook in class when I ask you to bring it. I will always let you know ahead of time if you will need your textbook. Participation also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. Note: Please come to class on time. Lateness will hurt your grade because it is an unnecessary interruption and because latecomers are likely to miss valuable information. Please see Participation Grade Descriptors for more information.

Daily Short Assignments: You will receive comments from me, but no grade on informal writing submissions. Short assignments play an important part in your overall participation grade.

Major Inquiry Projects: To give you a sense of the check system I'll be using, please refer to the following descriptors.

Check: A project with a check generally meets its rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for extensive revision. Written comments will elaborate on strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for focused revision.

Check minus: A project with a check minus meets the basic requirements, but would benefit from
significant revision and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making. Written comments will elaborate on strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for revision.

*Unsatisfactory:* A project with a U does not meet basic standards, and requires extensive development and attention. An unsatisfactory submission may be incomplete or inappropriate to the assignment. Such a submission may receive a request to rewrite within a week in order to receive teacher comments.

**Grading Policy:** Students enrolled in WRIT 201 are graded by the traditional letter grade A, B, C, D, F or are given NC for no credit. The NC grade does not affect grade point average. It is reserved for students who have worked unusually hard, attended class regularly and completed all assignments but whose skills are not at a passing level at the end of the semester.

**Homework**
All homework is due in class. No exceptions without prior arrangement. Please include:
1. Your name, date, and word count at the top of the page.
2. *Typed responses* (no matter how short the assignment is) using complete sentences and appropriate punctuation.

Your work needs to be typed, printed, and in class with you to be considered *on time.*
- Late or handwritten homework does not receive credit.
- Emailed assignments are considered late.
- Late formal essays are unacceptable. They will receive no revision comments from me.
- If you miss class, the homework is due the next class period.
- You are always welcome to complete assignments early if you will be missing class.

**Attendance**
If you miss the first two classes, you will need to drop the course on Cyberbear and enroll in another semester. This is university policy and the reasoning behind it is that important groundwork for the semester is put in place in the first few class meetings. Students without that foundational framework are better served by taking the course when they can give it the attention it deserves. More than two absences from a TR class will compromise your grade. 5 or more absences from a TR class will result in a failing grade. Here’s the breakdown.

1. 3rd absence: final grade drops one letter grade
2. 4th absence: final grade drops one letter grade
3. 5th absence: final grade is an F

Here’s the reasoning behind the attendance policy. Without attending class, you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; learning and practicing rhetorical moves and concepts; or collaborating with your instructor and classmates. Required University events will be excused if you provide appropriate documentation. Personal situations inevitably arise that make it impossible for you to make it to class. Remember, however, that’s why a few absences are allowed; please reserve those for emergencies. If you must miss class, you are responsible for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class. Make sure you talk with me in *advance* if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

**Academic Conduct**
You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: “plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.”
Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Students with Disabilities
Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me privately after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

Participation in University Assessment
This course requires an electronic submission of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the writing program. Your papers will be stored in a database. This assessment in no way affects either your grade or your progression at the university.

Major Assignments
Expect to write four papers and make major revisions over the course of the semester, in addition to other short writing assignments in and out of class. I will give you a detailed assignment sheet as we begin each of these major assignments. You will have the chance to develop all of your major projects through a process of inquiry and drafting. You'll compose papers in and out of class, alone and with your small group. All inquiry projects must be completed for you to pass the course. I will respond to these projects with written comments focused on suggestions for revision, but I will also mark them using a check system to help you know where you stand on a specific project.

Major Papers*
#1: Really, At The End Of The Road  
Due: Tuesday, February 25th

#2: In Your Backyard  
Due: Tuesday, March 22nd

#3: Cult of the Individual  
Due: Tuesday, April 19th

#4: Portfolio Introduction  
Due: Tuesday, May 5th

*Dates subject to change

Research Presentation
You will give a presentation about your research findings at the end of the semester. The purpose of this presentation will be to revisit your portfolio work from throughout the semester and share what you've learned with the class. You can focus on your major revision work for your final portfolio or show broad connection across all three papers.

Writing Workshops
You should expect to produce multiple revisions for some of the writing you compose for this course. Your active participation in Writing Workshops and Peer Review is important for this course and mandatory for your success.

Final Portfolios
Your final portfolio will count for 65% of your grade. It will contain all of your major papers, and selections of in-class writing assignments and homework. You will be expected to perform intensive
revision work on at least 1 of your major papers. Portfolios will be due on the last day of class and returned during finals week.
Plagiarism Policy

If I suspect that something a student has written has been plagiarized, in full or in part, intentionally or unintentionally, I take the following actions:

1. I alert the student of areas of the text that are suspicious
2. the student receives no credit on the paper, pending failure, and it is up to him/her to prove that he/she turned in original work
3. each student is asked to provide me with hard copies of the research she/he used in writing the paper
4. if the student cannot provide documentation of her/his research, the student will fail the paper

These measures are also put into action when a paper is poorly cited. When a student brings his/her research to me I use the time to talk with them about citation and make sure that they understand how and when to cite in the future. In the case that the student is unable to provide evidence of his/her original work, or in the case that I have evidence that the student has intentionally plagiarized his/her work:

● the student will automatically fail the given assignment
● the student may fail the course unless, at my discretion, I offer alternative assignments and/or conditions
● I may pursue a plagiarism citation unless, at my discretion, I offer alternative assignments and/or conditions
● the student may receive alternate assignments, etc. to avoid failure. In this instance, all conditions must be met. I need to see evidence of excellent work and effort, and work must be completed on time.
● all other previously established conditions in the class (i.e. attendance, participation, homework grades, etc.) still stand and can still cause a student to fail the course
● in the case of blatant or egregious offenses, I will not negotiate against course failure and will pursue a University Citation of Plagiarism
Participation Grade Descriptors for WRIT 201

A Superior participation shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions and workshops through his/her verbal, electronic, and written contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, thorough, specific, and often provide other student writers with a new perspective or insight.

B Strong participation demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, specific, and helpful.

C Satisfactory participation demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group workshops and large class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful and prompt, but could benefit from more attentive reading and/or specific detail when giving comments.

D Weak participation demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions or small group workshops. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, suggestions to group members may be missing, disrespectful, or far too brief and general to be of help.

F Unacceptable participation shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive in class. Reading and writing assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, the student has a pattern of missing, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive.

Portfolio Grade Descriptors for WRIT 201

A Superior portfolios will demonstrate initiative and rhetorical sophistication that go beyond the requirements. A portfolio at this level is composed of well-edited texts representing different writing situations and genres that consistently show a clear, connected sense of audience, purpose and development. The writer is able to analyze his or her own writing, reflect on it, and revise accordingly. The portfolio takes risks that work.

B Strong portfolios meet their rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for further major revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or style/mechanics. The writer is able to reflect on his or her own writing and make some choices about revision. The writer takes risks, although they may not all be successful.

C Consistent portfolios meet the basic requirements, yet the writing would benefit from further revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or writing style/mechanics (or some combination) and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making involved in different writing situations and genres. The writer composes across tasks at varying levels of success with some superficial revision. The writer has taken some risks in writing and exhibits some style.

D Weak portfolios do not fully meet the basic evaluative standards. Most texts are brief and underdeveloped. These texts show a composing process that is not yet elaborated or reflective of rhetorical understanding related to composing in different genres and for a range of writing situations. Texts generally require extensive revisions to purpose, development, audience, and/or style and mechanics.

F Unacceptable portfolios exhibit pervasive problems with purpose, development, audience, or style/mechanics that interfere with meaning and readers' understanding. Unacceptable portfolios are often incomplete. A portfolio will also earn an F if it does not represent the writer's original work.