



ENGL311 Environmental Writing
What Our Time Together Might Look Like

1. Celebration / Appreciation / Check-Ins
 - What are you learning from the people in the room? What do you appreciate about our community?
 - What discoveries are you making in your process?
 - What is present for you today?
2. Grounding Through Our Writing
3. Sharing and Listening
 - What emerges when you listen to the writing that is shared today? What can you learn from it?
4. Intentions / Guiding Questions
5. Findings from What You Prepared for Class Today
6. Text Partners
 - What did the readings you completed for today prompt you to consider, think about, or add to your “writer toolkit”?
 - What would you want to say in response to the author(s) of the readings for today?
7. Exercise & Reflection
8. Requests for Next Time
 - What specific requests do you have of our community for future class sessions? How will you help contribute to seeing those requests happen?

Day 1: Building Community

Goal: That we will begin to generate a sense of community among our group.

Welcome!

- Who I am.
- Who you are: a community of writers and environmental thinkers.
- Overview of this class:
 - Trying narrative, poetic, and rhetorical modes
 - Experimenting with different genres
 - Learning how creative writers integrate interdisciplinary research
 - Building awareness of environmental justice
 - Experimenting with informal and immediate forms of publication and experience writing for a specific formal publication
 - Opportunity to see what work literary writing can do, to contribute to environmental justice
- You'll review the syllabus this evening, as a proposal. It gives us a road map, but if there are detours or places you collectively want to pause and rest along the way, just me know.

Grounding Through Our Writing

- We'll start class each day with 15 minutes of writing, using an hourglass to keep our time.
- Prompt:

Write your favorite place.

Write your favorite place in such a way that it feels multi-dimensional and fully inhabited on the page. In other words, help your readers to move, sit, or walk with you in the space. Describe the space in exquisite detail. Bring it to life for us, in all its complexity.

Then reflect: What factors influence the feelings you have for this place? How did you get access to this place? Are there social, economic, cultural, physical, etc. reasons that this place is accessible to you?

Debrief Writing Exercise

Meet in a group of 3. Introduce yourself. Share about what you wrote. Read from your free writing only if you feel comfortable (we'll get more comfortable with each other as time goes on in this class).

Human Map Exercise Outside in the Courtyard

- Working together to make maps (with our bodies pinpointing our favorite places, place where we made our first memories, place you'd want to show someone else).
- This semester we have an opportunity to learn about our different relationships to place, as a community.

Reading Together in a Circle: Cheryl Strayed's "Write Like a Motherfucker"

- Popcorn reading: Read a paragraph. Jump in when and if you feel comfortable.

- Conversation: What is the emotional experience of writing like for Strayed? What is Strayed's message for us as writers?

Introductions

- With a partner, share (at least) your **name** and **gender pronoun**, and something that has made you **feel good** today.
- You'll introduce your partner to the class in a few minutes. Help us learn your partner's name and say a sentence or two about your partner—anything your partner wishes for you to share.
- Use the correct pronouns for your partner as you talk (but you don't need to say sentences like "she identifies with feminine pronouns").

Reviewing Names

Making Connections

- In groups of 10, find 10 things that all 10 people have in common.

Note to the Class Facilitator

- Write a letter to me that includes the following... Please share only what you feel comfortable sharing.
 1. At the top of the page: The name you liked to be called.
 2. At the top of the page: Your gender pronouns (she/he/ze/they...)? (You'll also be adding your third-person bio to our page on Canvas.)
 3. Response to any of the following questions:
 - a. What do you *expect* to learn in a class called environmental writing? What do you most *want* to learn or do in this course? What do you think you'll most remember from this class in the future?
 - b. How do you see yourself in relation to this class? How does this course fit into your broader goals and intentions?
 - c. How can I best support your learning? What conditions enable you to do your best work? What do you most appreciate from a teacher or facilitator? What makes you feel safe and able to learn?
 - d. What was the best learning experience you've ever had?
 - e. What circumstances outside of our class might affect your learning this semester (e.g., work hours, family obligations, expectations/pressures to do well, etc.)?
 4. Do you have any allergies that the class should be aware of (perfumes, foods, etc.)?
 5. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

Request for next time:

- Your requests
- My requests
 - Bring a notebook to class next time. This notebook will be with you all semester.
 - Also review the syllabus and our course website. Write a short definition of environmental writing, based on what you read. If someone were to ask you, "what is environmental writing?"--how would you answer?

Day 2: Daily Writing Habit & Intro to Course

Goal: That each person in the room that will begin a daily writing practice that transcends our course.

Celebrations / Appreciations / Check-ins

- What have you appreciated about your semester so far?

Sharing the Letter that the Previous Class Wrote For You

- On the last day of class at the end of the semester, I ask the students in this class to write a letter to the group that will take their seats in the following term. This is the letter that was written for you, to welcome you.

Grounding Through Our Writing: What Are You Here to Do?

- In the notebook you brought to class ...

Part 1: Brainstorm thoughts on the following questions:

- What are you expecting from this course?
- What specific skills do you want to practice?
- What do you want to be able to do when you leave the course?
- What projects do you want to create and add to your portfolio this semester?
- What “dream projects” do you want to accomplish some day in the future?

Part 2: Letter or poem to your future self

- Write a piece that you’re looking forward to looking back on. You’ll be keeping this notebook all semester, and you’ll review everything you wrote this semester during the last week of class.

Agreements

- In a few minutes, we’ll do a roundtable in which everyone will have an opportunity to share any part of what they wrote in the first part of class.
- Writing is a personal and vulnerable activity, and we share that vulnerability in this space. Trust is necessary in building a good workshop writing community.
- What do you need to be able to trust this group? What requests do you have of the group? What can this group do to support you?
- Write your requests on a notecard (no need to include your name).

[We will come back to these agreements in just a few minutes.]

Introduction of the Daily Writing Habit

- Why we do this / How we do this
- Research behind it
- Other environmental writers who practice it
- Doesn’t need to be anything for an assignment: this is your time to learn your process.

Handout: Daily Writing Log

- 10-minutes to decorate this and make it your own. Markers, quotes, stickers spread out on the benches in the hallway. Browse and collect. Make this something that you want to see each day.

[Facilitator compiles all the notecards into a Google doc while students work to make the daily writing log more inspiring and inviting for their work.]

Reviewing Agreements

- This is what you asked for from each other in the notecard activity we did today.
- Anything to add? Anything to clarify?
- What might be most difficult to honor?
- If we were to boil this list down to three points, what would those three points be?
- How do you imagine our day-to-day setup and work differently, based on these agreements? What does our time together look like when we are following these agreements?
- How do you want to be appreciated for reading, when you share? Snapping or clapping?
- Can you agree to providing this for each other? Speak “yes.”

Sharing Our “What Are You Here to Do”

- We’ll sit together in a circle. Each person will have the opportunity to read a favorite sentence or passage from their piece. (You can pass if you prefer.)
- We’ll move clockwise. After the person to your right reads, say something to that person that goes beyond: “I like that” or “that’s good.” Either
 - make a connection to their piece,
 - say something that struck you,
 - note what the piece makes you think about or feel,
 - identify a technique they’re using that you’d like to borrow...

Then it’s your turn to read!

What will your daily writing habit look like?

- When does your body most want to write?
- Where in your schedule can you set time for yourself to write? Put it on your calendar. This is sacred time.
- What in your routine will cue you to sit down to write?
- Where will you write?
- What do you need around you to support your writing? (Index cards, prompts, certain books, snippets as material to work with, etc.)
- How do you go about finding something to write about?

Mingling Exercise

- Write on a notecard:
 - A question you’d like to ask about how to get writing done (something you’d genuinely like to know about how people in the room write).
 - A strategy for getting writing done that you’d like to share.
- We’ll push the desks out of the way. We’ll turn music on and you’ll mingle. Try to meet everyone in the room, and discuss the questions and strategies you wrote on a notecard.
- Debrief: What were the most exciting ideas for our writing processes that emerged?

Syllabus as Proposal

- Questions you had about what you saw on our course website and syllabus
- suggestions
- How you want the class format to look

What We Understand about Environmental Writing from the Syllabus

- Share the definitions of environmental writing that you brought to class today. Ten people will read and everyone will take notes on key phrases.
- In a group of four, create a visual representation of what you heard in the definitions.

Requests for next time:

- Your requests
- My requests
 - Bring a word to class for which there is no equivalent in the English language. Be ready to share the word and its definition.
 - Read "Learning the Grammar of Animacy" by Robin Wall Kimmerer