First-Year Writing for Biology Majors
Fall Quarter, 1999

Instructor: Angela Buchanan
Class meeting times: Tuesday & Thursday, 2:05-3:25 p.m.
Room: Wadsworth Hall, G11W

Angela's office: Walker 145
Office hours: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 and Wednesdays 1:00-2:00, or by appt.
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Required Texts:

Course Description: The readings and assignments for this course are intended to help you draw connections between your interest in biology and your need to be a strong writer and a critical reader. The texts that you read will give you the opportunity to develop a more complex and interdisciplinary way of thinking about scientific issues. We will read about and discuss a variety of ways that the natural world and the scientific study of it have been theorized and categorized over time. We will discuss the ways that conceptions of science and nature are socially and disciplinarily constructed; that is, we will see some of that ways that the various academic disciplines focus on and discuss things in different ways, and we will look at how cultural, economic, and geographic factors influence the way different groups of people view scientific issues and problems.

The primary goals here are to make you aware of the way knowledge is constructed in your field, and to demonstrate how it differs from knowledge construction in other areas, disciplines, countries, and historical periods. As a doctor or a scientist, you will be asked to communicate with a variety of individuals who do not share your disciplinary knowledge or perspective, and you will need to be able to write and speak effectively to meet the challenges of different audiences. Scientific writing that appears in academic journals, for instance, is far different from writing that scientists do that is geared toward lay audiences such as government officials, media, students, patients, and administrators who govern scientific and medical grants. The ability to explain your work, and to persuade those outside the field of the importance of it, is a critical skill for people entering into any academic or scientific discipline. To this end, you will be doing a variety of different writing and communication activities throughout this quarter to give you the opportunity to practice communicating to different audiences and in different formats.

Course Work:
- Children's Story
- Proposal for Deliberative Essay
- Deliberative Essay, plus a minimum of two intermediate drafts
- Lab Report (from your Bio Lab project)
- Written Responses to selected class readings
- Rhetorical Analysis Essay
- Final Portfolio of course work, with cover letter
Attendance: Your attendance is absolutely critical to your success in this course. More than one unexcused absence will damage your final grade. If you must miss, due to what I assume will be extremely dire circumstances, you are still responsible for whatever work you missed on that day. Contact me ASAP to make arrangements.

Note to student athletes: If you will be missing classes due to away games, you MUST be sure that I receive a schedule of those dates, in advance, from your coach. Otherwise the absences will be considered unexcused. You are, of course, responsible for making up any of the work that you miss on those days. Please see me immediately to discuss this.

Grading: You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course. Your work for this course will not be graded individual, though I will give you written and verbal suggestions and commentary on most of it. Your work throughout the quarter will be graded in the form of a final portfolio of writing, to be handed in during finals week. This will allow me to view your work holistically and determine the degree of revision you have done on your main projects, the amount of thought and research that has gone into your work overall, and how you handled different writing situations.

Since I am fully aware that grades matter, and that they are the source of great anxiety for most students, I will give everyone a written mid-term evaluation during Week Five. In addition to a mid-term grade range (A-A/B, B-A/B, etc.), I will detail the things you are doing well and the things I would like to see you work on more for the rest of the term. Other than your writing, your in-class work and participation will also influence your final grade. That means coming to class prepared, doing the readings, being an active participant in group work and class discussions, etc. If there is some element of the course that you are particularly anxious about, or if you are ever concerned about your grade, please come talk to me immediately. I am very receptive to addressing any problems you have, so long as you don’t wait until the end of the quarter to discuss them with me--sooner is always better.

What "Honors" Means: If you receive a B or better as your final grade for this course, you will earn 9 credit hours on your transcript, to be distributed over the course of the academic year. Because there is an assumption here that you are entering this class well-prepared to do advanced work, and because the rewards are greater if you do well, the work load and general expectations of you are high in this course.

MTU's Policy on Discrimination and Harassment: MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

Note from Angela: This is the MTU statement I am required to put on all of my syllabi. I would like to add to it, however, that any student who has a physical or learning disability that requires consideration or accommodation in my course is encouraged to let me know as soon as possible so that I can help you in any ways I can.
Fall 1999 Course Schedule

Note: If the need arises, I will adjust this schedule to accommodate the specific learning styles and needs of your class.

**Week 1**
- **T 9/7**  Introductions to the course and each other; syllabus
- **R 9/9**  Reading due today: CN, chapter 1 intro and pages 15-62 (Las Casas through Bartram)
  
  *Bring your Guide to Succeeding in First-Year English with you to class today*

**Week 2**
- **T 9/14**  Reading due today: CN, chapter 2 intro and pages 111-145 (Thoreau through Jewett)
  
  *Reading Response due today*
  
  *(since this is likely to be K-Day, your responses can be turned in on Thursday)*
- **R 9/16**  Children’s story assignment and in-class work day

**Week 3**
- **T 9/21**  *Children's story due*—bring in the final copy, plus a photocopy
  
  Reading due today: CN, chapter 3 intro and pages 152-175 (Roosevelt through Burroughs)
- **R 9/23**  Reading due today: CN, pages 176-211 (Leopold and Carson)
  
  *Reading Response due today*
  
  *Hand out and discuss Deliberative Writing Assignment*

**Week 4**
- **T 9/28**  Group oral presentations on lab projects (Janice attending)
  
  Reading due today: CN, chapter 4 intro and pages 251-300 (Abbey through Sitko)
  
  *Reading Response due today*
- **R 9/30**  Deliberative Essay Project Proposal due today
  
  Reading due today: CP, chapters 2 and 7

**Week 5**
- **T 10/5**  Classes canceled for individual conferences
- **R 10/7**  Classes canceled for individual conferences

**Week 6**
- **T 10/12**  Library Day—meet in the lobby of Van Pelt Library
  
  Reading due today: CN, chapter 5 intro and pages 322-388 (Callenbach through Lopez)
  
  *Reading Response due today*
- **R 10/14**  Reading due today: CP, chapters 8 and 12
Week 7
T 10/19 **Draft of Deliberative Essay due today**—bring three copies to class
Reading due today: SGWB, pages 1-18 and 52-102

R 10/21 Reading due today: New Yorker article (on reserve at Van Pelt)
   **Reading Response due today**

**Week 8**
T 10/26 **Complete draft of group lab project reports due**
Reading due today: CP, chapters 14 and 15
R 10/28 **Rhetorical Analysis Essay due today**
Reading due today: CP, chapter 17

Week 9
T 11/2 **Classes canceled for individual conferences**
   **Draft of Deliberative Essay due in conference—bring two copies**
R 11/4 **Classes canceled for individual conferences**
   **Draft of Deliberative Essay due in conference—bring two copies**

Week 10
T 11/9 **In-class revision workshop—bring two drafts to class**
R 11/11 **In-class evaluations and farewells**

   **Finals Week: Wednesday, November 17**
   **Final Deliberative Essay Draft due in your Portfolio with Cover Letter**
   **Due in my office by noon**

Note that CN=*Constructing Nature*, CP=*The Coming Plague*, and SGWB=*A Short Guide to Writing about Biology*