

English 358/558: Outdoor Writing

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Zoom Office Hours:

- Monday/Wednesday 11:00 a.m.-12 noon
- **Also** by appointment (send me an email to schedule)

Welcome to English 358/558, Outdoor Writing (GEP Category: Environmental Responsibility).

In this course, we will examine professional outdoor writing. That is, we will read and write *non-fiction* pieces that focus on the outdoors. We will apply (and improve) your writing skills to subjects and topics involving outdoor (environmental) communication. Some areas we can cover are outdoor activities, techniques, issues, problems, and concerns.

Because maintaining a sustainable natural environment is vital, we will read and discuss the ways working outdoor (or conservation/environmental) writers contribute to environmental sustainability by educating the public of conservation and environmental challenges. (Think of, perhaps, Sigurd Olson, Aldo Leopold, Ted Williams, Ernest Hemingway, or Susan Fenimore Cooper.)

This course contributes to UWSP's overall mission to connect students with the future by enabling you to learn how to enhance your writing in the field of outdoor communication and foster your ability to appreciate and use the power of communication to educate the public about our collective environmental responsibility.

As an upper division course in writing, English 358/558 further enhances your skills in critical reading, understanding the structure of the English language, and your ability to use language clearly, creatively, and persuasively.

Initially, we will discuss why each of us is a member of this course and where our particular interests lie. Establishing our reasons for being here will help focus the range of outdoor writing that we work with during the semester.

Course Learning Objectives for GEP Environmental Responsibility

Upon successfully completing this course, you will:

- Understand the genres and types of outdoor writing and recognize how this writing addresses the interaction between outdoor enthusiasts and the natural environment
- Identify the ways outdoor enthusiasts influence environmental sustainability
- Become familiar with a variety of outdoor writers

- Learn how outdoor writers produce various types of outdoor writing in order to educate the public
- Understand style and language of outdoor writing
- Produce outdoor writing of your own

Course Materials

- A writing handbook/dictionary
- Various other materials such as magazines, articles, and other documents related to outdoor writing that we will collect as we move along.

Course Format

This course functions much like a standard classroom course in that you will be expected to keep up with weekly textbook readings and material, meet deadlines for assignments, and participate actively in discussions online.

However, this course differs from a standard classroom course in that you can participate in class at any time of day and choose where to participate...at the library, at home in your bunny slippers, or anywhere else you have reliable Internet access...providing that you stay on schedule.

I do not plan to schedule any mandatory Zoom meetings. In fact, other than my office hours, I do not plan to use Zoom.

Another characteristic of an online course is that students are responsible for much of their own learning. In other words, my role as the instructor is to be a learning facilitator while you (the student) take charge of your own learning process. The necessary learning resources and instructional activities will be provided so you can successfully learn, but I will not provide instruction in the form of lectures.

Successful students “stay in contact” with the course and required work rather than “checking in” periodically to see what is occurring.

That said, I will not supply information and leave you on your own. We all will be active participants in the process.

Students should expect to spend 6-12 hours per week on this course. This includes readings, viewing course content, completing homework assignments, posting to the discussion area, etc.

Course Work

As much as possible, there will be flexibility in the subject matter of your writing. If you have no interest in fishing, for example, you will not be forced to write about fishing. We will endeavor to make your writing useful to your field of study, anticipated profession, or areas of interest.

The work you will do to earn your final grade (1,000 points total) will be as follows:

1. What is your definition of outdoor writing, and what does it look like? (Posted on Canvas) 45 points
2. Two author or publication analyses 75 points each
3. Three from: 200 points each
 - a) Personal experience
 - b) Equipment review
 - c) Where-to
 - d) Natural history
 - e) Science- or fact-based news
 - f) Profile/Character sketch
4. Peer Reviews 80 points
5. Professionalism 125 points

Points and letter grades

The total course points and associated final letter grades are as follows:

Course Grade	Total Points
A	940+
A-	900-939
B+	870-899
B	840-869
B-	800-839
C+	770-799
C	740-769
C-	700-739
D+	670-699
D	640-669
F	Below 640

When I evaluate assignments, I will do so from the perspective of an editor. What that means is because we deal with outdoor writing from a professional angle, each piece of writing (with the exception, perhaps, of the two analysis pieces) has an intended audience and purpose. I will evaluate each piece as to how well it addresses a particular audience and achieves its purpose.

Meaning of grades: Because the work in this class is based on professional writing (i.e., for publication or application on the job), the following

correlation between the grades you earn and professional writing standards will apply:

A range	Yes! Ready for publication. Your article/piece of writing needs little to no revision before sending it to an editor for consideration.
B range	Well, OK... Almost there. Minor revisions are needed to address problems such as style, missing information, organization, etc.
C range	Hmmm... On the right track. An editor probably would understand the intent of the piece but significant revising is needed. The piece lacks organization, there are bigger gaps of missing information, numerous textual errors (e.g., style, grammar), etc.
D range	Ohmigosh! Major revision needed. Overall, the quality is poor. Although the piece has a recognizable subject, the writing and content require substantial improvement.
F	Uh-oh... A do-over. Revision is needed to the extent that an editor would not offer any suggestions but simply reject the piece.

Attendance

In our online course, “attendance” will be the Professionalism item in the list of graded work. Points are earned for Professionalism by doing your job as a student and member of Outdoor Writing. That means participating in discussions when scheduled with thoughtful responses.

Recordings

Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of course material without written permission from Professor Morgan.

Connect with class members using the Navigate student app

For those of you looking to connect with other students in the course for study groups, the Navigate student app has a feature called **Study Buddies**. Here, you can find a list of other students who have indicated they are interested in forming a study group. If you are the first, you will be sent notifications when other students join. You can select who you want to connect with and can leave the group at any time. A separate document with instructions is in the Course Information module.

Accessing the Navigate student app: For students who have already downloaded the Navigate smart phone app, choose the **Study Buddies** icon, and a full list of your courses will appear. Each section shows how many buddies are in the group.

The free Navigate app is available to download from any mobile operating system. For students without a smart device, a desktop version of the app is available here: <https://uwsp.navigate.eab.com/app>