

# Enw 4370: Environmental Rhetorics

## Course Objectives, Policies, and Syllabus

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**Office:** JAAC 3041  
**Office Hours:** MWF 10-11 and 1-2  
**When:** MWF 12-12:50  
**Where:** AYRS 3087

### Books:

Goggin, Peter N. ed., *Environmental Rhetoric and Ecologies of Place*. Routledge, 2013.

### Course Objectives:

- Students will more fully understand the relationship between thought, expression, and nature
- Students will demonstrate mastery of a range of rhetorical theories
- Students will apply principles of rhetorical criticism to analyze discourse about the environment
- Students will be sensitive to how context shapes meaning and understanding in environmental topics



### Overview:

In this upper-level rhetoric course, we will investigate language and communication practices—that is, rhetorical practices—about the environment as used by oil companies, youth activists, public artists, and policy makers. We'll start by exploring environmental rhetoric's multiple discourses and study rhetorical strategies for analyzing arguments (over issues such as wolves, clean water, or sustainable design) and for communicating risk (in the face of climate change, fracking, as well as wind power).

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### Course Requirements

#### Attendance and Participation:

Due to the collaborative nature of this course, it is important that you come to class every day and are involved in class discussions and activities. I will abide by the Belmont University policy:

*Belmont University is committed to the idea that regular class attendance is essential to successful scholastic achievement. Absence is excused only in cases of illness or other legitimate cause. Attendance is checked from the first class meeting. Late registrants will have accrued some absences prior to formal registration in the course. In the case of excused absence from class, students have the right and responsibility to make up all class work missed.*

#### Failure for Non-Attendance

*Should the number of absences other than Provost's Excused Absences exceed 20% of class meeting time for a given student (9 MWF absences excluding Provost excused absences), the faculty member may assign the grade "FN" (failure for non-attendance) to that student.*

### Coursework

#### Praxis Journal:

- You will keep a physical praxis journal this semester, exploring theoretical concepts we'll be reading to understand their practical applications. Praxis is a word that means putting theory into action, and while a good bit of your writing may be focused on summarizing (or attempting to understand) the theoretical concepts we engage, I am also interested in seeing how these ideas might be applicable through analysis of your encounters with the environment

around you. This might also be a great place to journal about your time in nature and think about your own relationship to the environment that surrounds you on campus and beyond.

#### Dictionary of Pivotal Terms (Entry)

- As a class, we will be encountering a number of important theoretical terms that will help us toward a deeper analysis of Environmental language and persuasion. Once this semester, you will be responsible for adding a new term to the class dictionary, which will be a vital tool for everyone. You will be responsible for verifying which term (from our readings, from presentations, etc.) you want to define, and we will work together to draft and finalize your entry for this class text.

#### Mini Projects:

- In the first half of the semester, you will have three short assignments to help you process the readings and put them into action. These are low stakes assignments, but they will allow you to think through the importance of language and expression for persuasion.

#### Group Presentation:

- In groups of three, you will choose an article from our textbook or another approved topic to present on. Your presentation should summarize the reading or topic in detail; summarize the theoretical ideas in this work; connect this work or idea with our readings and other presentations; and in some way apply the rhetorical principles to analyze the discourse of a group or current event. Each presentation will last at least 20 minutes, and your group will be responsible for strong discussion questions to spur discussion after the presentation. This project will also involve the creation of a well-designed handout to more fully understand the work or rhetorical term.

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### Environmental Rhetoric Analysis:

- Your final project will be a rhetorical analysis of an environmental situation, cultural idea, or discourse group using one or more of the theories discussed in class or presented through the group presentations. Your aim in this 2500+ word essay should be to use rhetorical theories we've engaged in class to illuminate the rhetorical impact of an environmental idea or a discourse community. This project will also involve composing a one-page proposal for your final paper.

### Arbor Day Multimedia Text (Final Exam):

- Your final exam involves the creation and dissemination of a widely-distributable multimedia text (greeting card, poster, TikTok video, etc.) that would have an impact on an audience about an environmental issue. On the day of the final exam, we will gather to present these texts and discuss the potential or even real impacts your multimedia text can or did have.

## Grading

### Grade Breakdown:

- Praxis Journal Check 15% (3 @ 5% each)
- Entry for Dictionary of Pivotal Terms 5%
- Mini Projects 15% (3 at 5% each)
- Group Presentation 20%
- Rhetoric in Culture Analysis 40%
- Arbor Day Multimedia Text (Final Exam) 5%

The grading scale for this course is as follows.

A: 93-100	B-: 80-82	D+: 67-69
A-: 90-92	C+: 77-79	D: 63-66
B+: 87-89	C: 73-76	D-: 60-62
B: 83-86	C-: 70-72	F: 59 and under

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### Course Policies

#### Classroom Atmosphere:

I envision our classroom as a place where all of us can share our ideas, thoughts, and questions without fear of being made fun of or embarrassed. Our classroom interaction will be based on respect for all of the writers and readers we encounter this semester.

#### Late Work:

Late assignments will be assessed a 10% per day late penalty. Please contact me before an assignment is due if you need additional help.

#### Luddite Mode:

Throughout the semester, there will be moments in class when I will move us into "Luddite Mode." In short, this means that our class discussion or activity will begin without the use of technology (laptops, cellphones, etc.), and I expect you to put away your devices in order to participate fully in class. If you'd like to learn more about the Luddites (19th century workers who resisted industrial technology), you can read more about it at this link:

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/rethinking-the-luddites-in-the-age-of-ai>

#### The Writing Center:

The Belmont University Writing Center exists for students, faculty, and staff—all members of the Belmont community. They offer free 30-minute sessions for anyone seeking advice or help with writing. To schedule an appointment: come in, call 460.6241, or email [writing.center@belmont.edu](mailto:writing.center@belmont.edu)

<https://www.belmont.edu/learning-centers/writing.html>

### Academic Integrity:

"Honor Code: The following is the Student Honor Pledge that guides academic behavior:

"A Bruin does not lie, cheat, or steal, and does not tolerate those acts."

### Note on AI Generators:

Using any generative AI program (Chat GPT, Jasper, Scribe, etc.) for brainstorming, researching, or writing on any assignment will be considered an act of Academic Dishonesty unless

1. You have my explicit permission in advance to use it, being specific about what you're using it for; AND
2. You cite your specific use of it in the assignment: <https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/>

### ADA:

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Belmont University will provide reasonable accommodation of all medically documented disabilities. If you have a disability and would like the university to provide reasonable accommodations for the disability during this course, please notify the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) (460-6407) as soon as possible.

### Course Evaluations and Final Exam Note:

At the end of our course, you will be expected to participate in course evaluations, and you will be expected to attend the final exam period, which is designated on the schedule below. There are no exceptions to this rule.

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**Calendar - dates and readings are subject to change as I finalize certain field opportunities**

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### **Environmental Rhetoric and Ecologies of Place = EREP**

<b>W 1/8</b>	Intro to the syllabus What is Environmental Rhetorics?	<b>F 1/31</b>	Read "Rhetorical Landscapes and the 'Ambiguities of Identification'" Clark (pdf on Canvas)
<b>F 1/10</b>	Read "Terministic Screens" by Kenneth Burke (pdf on Canvas)	<b>M 2/3</b>	Read EREP "A Place of One's Own" (143-54) <b>Praxis Journal Check #1</b>
<b>M 1/13</b>	<b>Introduce Mini-Project #1</b>	<b>W 2/5</b>	Climate Activism Rhetoric Read "Intensifications" by Hawhee 1-13 (pdf on Canvas)
<b>W 1/15</b>	Read Eco-Speak 1-10 (pdf on Canvas)	<b>F 2/7</b>	Presentation #1
<b>F 1/17</b>	Belmont Indigenous Garden (meet in 3087 and walk to campus location)	<b>M 2/10</b>	Watch: <i>I Am Greta</i> (excerpt)
<b>M 1/20</b>	<b>No Class - Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b>	<b>W 2/12</b>	Read "In a World Full of Ifs" by Hawhee 76-109 (pdf on Canvas)
<b>W 1/22</b>	<b>Mini-Project #1 Due</b>	<b>F 2/14</b>	Presentation #2
<b>F 1/24</b>	Read EREP Introduction 1-11 Introduce Group Presentations	<b>M 2/17</b>	"The Ghosts of John Tanton" by Abraham Lustgarten (link on Canvas)
<b>M 1/27</b>	Landscape as Rhetorical Read "The Rhetorical Experience of Landscape" Clark (pdf on Canvas)	<b>W 2/19</b>	"Metabiology and Recalcitrance" by Kenneth Burke (pdf on Canvas)
<b>W 1/29</b>	Read "Transcendence at Yellowstone" Clark (pdf on Canvas)	<b>F 2/21</b>	Presentation #3
		<b>M 2/24</b>	Watch: <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i> Part 1

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## Calendar continued

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<b>W 2/26</b>	Watch: <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i> Part 2 <b>Mini-Project #2 Due</b>	<b>M 3/31</b>	Read EREP "Local Flaneury: Losing and Finding One's Place" (155-69)
<b>F 2/28</b>	Discussion about Film	<b>W 4/2</b>	
<b>M 3/3</b>	Read EREP "Digital Cities: Rhetorics of Place in Environmental Video Games" (111-24) <b>Praxis Journal Check #2</b>	<b>F 4/4</b>	<b>Mini-Project #3 Due</b>
<b>W 3/5</b>		<b>M 4/7</b>	<b>Praxis Journal Check #3</b>
<b>F 3/7</b>	Presentation #4	<b>W 4/9</b>	Rough Draft Workshop
<b>M 3/10</b>	<b>No Class - Spring Break</b>	<b>F 4/11</b>	In class writing exercises
<b>W 3/12</b>	<b>No Class - Spring Break</b>	<b>M 4/14</b>	<b>Environmental Rhetoric Analysis Due</b>
<b>F 3/14</b>	<b>No Class - Spring Break</b>	<b>W 4/16</b>	<b>Spark Symposium (no class)</b>
<b>M 3/17</b>	Watch: <i>The Wild Robot</i> Part 1	<b>F 4/18</b>	<b>No Classes - Easter Break</b>
<b>W 3/19</b>	Watch: <i>The Wild Robot</i> Part 2	<b>M 4/21</b>	<b>No Classes - Easter Break</b>
<b>F 3/21</b>	Discussion about Film	<b>W 4/23</b>	Prepare for Viva Voce
<b>M 3/24</b>	Presentation #5	<b>F 4/25</b>	<b>No Classes (Academic Study Day) Arbor Day</b>
<b>W 3/26</b>	<b>Conferences</b>	<b>R 5/1 @ 11am-1:30pm</b>	<b>Final Exam: Viva Voce To Be Scheduled</b>
<b>F 3/28</b>	<b>Conferences</b>		