NOTE to prospective students: This syllabus is intended to provide students who are considering taking this course an idea of what they will be learning. A more detailed syllabus will be available on the course site for enrolled students and may be more current than this sample syllabus. Summer term courses may be accelerated – please check the Ecampus Schedule of Classes for more information.

WR 353
Writing About Places

COURSE CREDIT:
(3) This course combines approximately 90 hours of instruction, online activities, and assignments for 3 credits.

PREREQUISITES, CO-REQUISITES AND ENFORCED PREREQUISITES:
WR 121 [D-]

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Utilizing personal experience and research, students study, discuss, and practice the conventions of writing about place from a global and local perspective for various audiences. Involves reading contemporary authors of place-based writing, informal and formal writing assignments, research assignments, multimedia presentations, lectures, group and online activities, and a final portfolio.

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Instructor’s name: Jeff Fearnside
Instructor’s email: fearnsij@onid.orst.edu
Office hours: TBD – Virtual Office, Skype

Sample syllabi may not have the most up-to-date information. For accuracy, please check the ECampus Schedule of Classes to see the most current instructor information. You can search for contact information by name from the OSU Home Page.
LEARNING RESOURCES:

Hardware: Computer with fast internet connection; headset to record narration for presentations; speakers/headset to listen to audio presentations.

Software: Word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation (slide) software capable of saving and sending in .doc/docx-xls/xlsx-PPT/PPTx; .rtf; and/or PDF formats.

For free versions try Zoho Notebook, Glogster, or Prezi for presentations; for voice, consider Audioboo.fm, Voicethread, or Fotobabble.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

- A publication of your choice that focuses strongly on a particular place (for approval) for Unit 5
- Articles and handouts I will prepare and disseminate on Canvas, etc.

In addition to these books and anthologies, we will also read more widely from literary journals, magazines, digital/online publications, websites, and blogs in order to understand and appreciate contemporary writers whose work focuses on place and the many (and varied) venues in which their work appears.

OPTIONAL/RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

- *Lonely Planet’s Guide to Travel Writing* by Donald George, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Lonely Planet)
- A good “collegiate” dictionary (either print or CD-ROM)
- A suitable writing journal (notebook)
NOTE: For textbook accuracy, please always check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website. Sample syllabi may not have the most up-to-date information.

Students can also click the ‘OSU Beaver Store’ link associated with the course information in the Ecampus schedule of classes for course textbook information and ordering.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Outcomes specific to WR 353: You will be successful when you can demonstrate the ability, at the 300-level, to:

- Write feature-length pieces (articles, essays, travelogues, etc.) that accurately, compellingly, and in a multidimensional way present or interpret particular places for various audiences.
- Choose content, form, language, voice, style, and rhetorical strategies appropriate to various publications and their audiences.
- Adapt and utilize the strategies of successful contemporary place-based writers, including appropriate documentation styles. This class uses MLA style.
- Research—find, evaluate, integrate, and synthesize in an ethical manner the necessary information (both primary and secondary sources) for completion of a project, including visual enhancements (charts, graphs, photographs, images, etc.) to supplement text, when appropriate.
- Workshop, revise text, respond effectively to peers’ work in progress, participate in collaborative learning activities, and consistently contribute to the ongoing course dialogue.

COURSE CONTENT AND POLICIES:
COURSE INFORMATION:

If you don’t know where you are, you don’t know who you are.—Wendell Berry

Of all the memberships we identify ourselves by the one thing that is most forgotten, and that has the greatest potential for healing, is place. We must learn to know, love, and join our place even more than we love our own ideas.—Gary Snyder

Home for us is not the place we were born, or that perfect somewhere else we used to dream of, but the place where we are—the place we stay long enough to begin to see. We know it imperfectly, not mindfully enough. But here we begin, and when we start over in another place we’ll take what we know of this place with us, we’ll begin this much closer to home.— John Daniel
In today’s highly interconnected global world, the ability to work with diverse students, colleagues, and communities is vital. In order to communicate effectively with others, particularly those from other countries and cultures, we must understand not only where they come from but where we come from. This course is designed to help you in that understanding, using place not only to ground us in our mutually entwined dialogues but to provide a jumping off point into new explorations of other places and selves, including our many own.

The definition of “place” for this course is deliberately broad: it includes both global and local, national and international, natural and human-made landscapes in wilderness, rural, suburban, and urban contexts, as well as the various systems within these, encompassing all the objective forms of a place—living and non-living, human and non-human—and, just as importantly, the subjective psychological, or inner, experiences associated with the places in our lives.

This is not strictly a travel writing course or a nature writing course, though we will certainly examine examples of both travel writing and nature writing. Whether you have traveled or studied abroad or at home, you will find ways to think and write about your experiences of places in the world. Specifically, we will practice the following:

We will learn how to write about those places important to us by closely examining and utilizing such elements as history, geography, language, and culture (through personal experience and research) in order not just to write more effectively about the places in our lives but also to better understand ourselves and our place in the wider global world.

We will consider the journalistic five W’s, plus one: Who (people or non-human agents), What (action or events), Where (place), When (chronology), Why (motive), and finally How (the underlying machinations that tie all of the above together, and the discerning of which is a key function of critical thinking).

And, through close reading of the assigned texts, we will consider the various techniques used by established writers to convey a sense of place, as well as the roles place plays in their writing, ultimately adapting and utilizing these strategies in our own writing. Some of the questions we will explore in this course include the following:

- How does writing about place relate to nature writing? Travel writing? Personal narrative? Literary journalism?
- Does how we define a genre affect how we read and write a work in that genre?
- What are some of the reasons it might be important to write about place?
- What does it mean to have a relationship with a place? How have our relationships with place changed over time?
• Do the places we inhabit or visit affect how we view the rest of the world, others, ourselves? If so, how?
• Do the places we inhabit affect how we communicate with each other?
• “Place,” “space,” “environment,” “landscape,” “country,” “culture,” etc.—what are the differences, commonalities, and connections between these terms? Does using different language change how we view or experience a place?
• Do men and women view or experience place differently? Do people of different ethnicities or nationalities? If so, what are the implications of this?
• How do social, economic, and cultural forces influence our concept of place? How does this in turn influence how we act toward the places (and people) in our lives?

Ultimately, it is hoped that you will find a sense of being home in the places you write about—wherever they may be, and however far they may be from your actual place of birth or regular residence—and that in knowing where you are through your writing, you will come to better understand who you are.

Canvas:
This course will be delivered via Canvas, your OSU online learning community, where you will interact with your classmates and with me. Within the course Canvas site you will access the learning materials, tutorials, and syllabus; discuss issues; submit assignments; take quizzes; email other students and the instructor; participate in online activities; and display your projects. To preview how an online course works, visit the Ecampus Course Demo.

You need to have frequent access to the internet; check your ONID email and Canvas several different times a week to keep current.

Late Assignments:
All assignments are due at the time specified on Canvas and will be submitted on the link into Grade Center. Any assignment turned in after that time will be considered late. You have up to one week from the due date in which to turn in any late assignment, with a 15% penalty to your grade for that assignment. After one week, the assignment will be recorded with a grade of zero. We simply have too much to do in an extremely short period of time, and this policy is designed to keep you from falling hopelessly behind in class.

Incompletes:
As a rule, all assignments must be turned in by the final class session. An incomplete may be assigned on an individual basis only under the most extreme or unusual of circumstances.
Ethical Conduct:
Students are expected to act professionally in class, whether that is on campus or online, arriving on time and being polite. Behaviors that are disruptive to learning will not be tolerated and will be referred to the Student Conduct and Mediation Program for disciplinary action. In keeping with federal law, behaviors that create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating environment based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation will be referred to the Affirmative Action Office.

Cheating, in any form, is not tolerated at Oregon State University. Any plagiarism or use of someone else’s writing, work, information, or ideas without proper citations including copy/paste that lacks required quote marks—intentional or accidental—may result in an F in the class and a written report filed with the Dean’s office for further disciplinary action. Students may not recycle your own work from other classes.

SIMPLIFIED SCHEDULE:
Weekly homework (HW) will include but is not limited to written responses to assigned readings, assignments focused on specific aspects of writing about place, discussion board postings, brainstorming activities, peer review workshop comments, and research assignments. Some assignments may involve group activity. Quizzes, which may be unannounced, are not reflected below.

- Week 1: Introduction to course and concepts, begin Personal Reflection About Place, readings, HW 1
- Week 2: Personal Reflection About Place due for workshop, readings, HW 2
- Week 3: Begin Place Media Round-up Project, readings, HW 3
- Week 4: Place Media Round-up Project due, readings, HW 4
- Week 5: Research, begin Short Feature Essay/Article, Annotated Bibliography due, readings, HW 5
- Week 6: Short Feature Essay/Article due for workshop, readings, HW 6
- Week 7: Begin Long Feature Essay/Article, readings, HW 7
- Week 8: Long Feature Essay/Article due for workshop, readings, HW 8
- Week 9: Begin Place-based Publication Review, readings, HW 9
- Week 10: Place-based Publication Review due for workshop, readings, HW 10, class wrap-up Finals week: Portfolio w/ reflective essay due
SCHEDULED READINGS:

- Week 1: Barry Lopez’s “A Literature of Place” (online)
- Week 2: Paul Grindrod’s essay “Des Ta Te: A Love Story” and Jennifer Barton’s essay “To Liv” (from Part I: Intimacy) in *Wildbranch: An Anthology of Nature, Environmental, and Place-based Writing*
- Week 3: Susan Futrell’s essay “Prairie Skin” (from Part II: Speaking of Place) and Simmons B. Buntin’s essay “A Pure Color” (from Part IV: On Perceiving and Knowing) in *Wildbranch: An Anthology of Nature, Environmental, and Place-based Writing*
- Week 4: Maureen Sullivan’s essay “Jupiter Came Down on Tuesday” and Scott Russell Sanders’ essay “For the Children” (from Part V: For the Children/For the Future) in *Wildbranch: An Anthology of Nature, Environmental, and Place-based Writing*
- Week 5: Karen Joyce’s essay “The Day It Rained Chickens” and Jim Mastro’s essay “Lost in the Storm” in *Antarctica: Life on the Ice*
- Week 6: Susan Fox Rogers’ essay “The Secret of Silence” and Lucy Jane Bledsoe’s essay “How to Find a Dinosaur” in *Antarctica: Life on the Ice*
- Week 7: William L. Fox’s essay “Leaving the Ice” and Guy G. Guthridge’s essay “Maverick Among Scientists” in *Antarctica: Life on the Ice*
- Week 8: John Daniel’s essays “A Word in Favor of Rootlessness” and “In Praise of Darkness” (from Part I: Loose on the Land) in *The Far Corner: Northwestern Views on Land, Life, and Literature*
- Week 9: John Daniel’s essays “A Place in the Rivered Land” (from Part II: Oregon Rivers) and “Creative nonfiction’ and the Province of Personal Narrative” (from Part III: Writing Life) in *The Far Corner: Northwestern Views on Land, Life, and Literature*
- Week 10: John Daniel’s essays “The Mother of Beauty” and “A Word in Favor of Rootedness” (from Part IV: The Wages of Mortality) in *The Far Corner: Northwestern Views on Land, Life, and Literature*

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:

You will be expected to read the assigned material and prepare written responses to it as assigned, which along with quizzes and regular informal assignments designed to focus on specific aspects of writing about place will constitute 10% of your final grade. Your first major assignment will be a personal reflection about a place important to you (10%). In addition, you will be required to produce a research project on place-based media (15%), two original feature length pieces of place-based writing (20% and 25%, respectively), and a review of a publication focused strongly on place (10%). Finally, there will be a final portfolio due (10%), a thoughtfully constructed and comprehensive collection of your writing throughout the term in which you will be expected to revise your major assignments a final time and write a reflective essay summarizing what you learned and how that is incorporated in your work.
Overview of Assignments:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1: Personal Reflection About Place</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 2: Place Media Round-up Project</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 3: Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Feature Essay/Article</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 4: Long Feature Essay/Article</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 5: Place-based Publication Review</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion board postings</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop critiques</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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**COURSE SITE LOGIN INFORMATION**

Information on how to login to your course site can be found [HERE](#).

**STATEMENT REGARDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Oregon State University is committed to student success; however, we do not require students to use accommodations nor will we provide them unless they are requested by the student. The student, as a legal adult, is responsible to request appropriate accommodations. The student must take the lead in applying to Disability Access Services (DAS) and submit requests for accommodations each term through DAS Online. OSU students apply to DAS and request accommodations at our [Getting Started with DAS](#) page.

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

Additionally, Canvas, the learning management system through which this course is offered, provides a [vendor statement](#) certifying how the platform is accessible to students with disabilities.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT (OSU POLICY)**

Students are expected to be honest and ethical in their academic work. Intentional acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating or plagiarism may be penalized by imposing an “F” grade in the course.

Student conduct is governed by the universities policies, as explained in the Office of the Dean of Student Life: Student Conduct and Community Standards. In an academic
community, students and faculty, and staff each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment, whether online or in the classroom. Students, faculty, and staff have the responsibility to treat each other with understanding, dignity, and respect.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g. on discussion boards, email postings, etc.) in compliance with the university’s regulations regarding civility. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded to themselves. Disrespectful behavior (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or disruptive behaviors are unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Student Conduct and Community Standards.

For more info on these topics please see:

Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct
Student Conduct and Community Standards - Offenses
Policy On Disruptive Behavior

PLAGIARISM

You are expected to submit your own work in all your assignments, postings to the discussion board, and other communications, and to clearly give credit to the work of others when you use it. Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F.”

Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct
Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

Turnitin Plagiarism Prevention

Your instructor may ask you to submit one or more of your writings to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment content will be checked for potential plagiarism against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students, for common or borrowed content. Turnitin generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in your paper. The report may be submitted directly to your instructor or your instructor may elect to have you submit initial drafts through Turnitin and you will receive the report allowing you the opportunity to make adjustments and ensure that all source material has been properly cited.

Papers you submit through Turnitin for this or any class will be added to the OSU Turnitin database and may be checked against other OSU paper submissions. You will retain all rights to your written work. For further information on Turnitin please click HERE.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, assistance logging into the course, or if you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact the OSU Help Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-3474, email osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu or visit the OSU Computer Helpdesk online.

COURSE DEMO
GETTING STARTED

TUTORING
For information about possible tutoring for this course, please visit our Ecampus NetTutor page. Other resources include:

Writing Center
Online Writing Lab

STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING
The online Student Evaluation of Teaching form will be available in week 9 and close at the end of finals week. Students will be sent instructions via ONID by the Office of Academic Programs, Assessment, and Accreditation. Students will log in to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted. Course evaluation results are very important and are used to help improve courses and the learning experience of future students. Results from questions are tabulated anonymously and go directly to instructors and unit heads/supervisors. Unless a comment is “signed,” which will associate a name with a comment, student comments on the open-ended questions are anonymous and forwarded to each instructor. “Signed” comments are forwarded to the unit head/supervisor.

REFUND POLICY INFORMATION
Please see the Ecampus website for policy information on refunds and late fees.