Reflective Writing and Walking the Path of Henry David Thoreau (HONR 3300-302) Spring 2018
T/R 12:30-2:00 in O’Leary 200A
Professor Marlowe Miller
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 - 12:15 and Tuesdays 2:00 – 3:00
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From taking a walk to taking a stand
Careful reading of Thoreau will teach us that he relied upon a few fundamentals to arrive at his philosophy and his writing:

⇒ Questioning, questioning, questioning
⇒ Practicing simple living
⇒ Walking
⇒ Taking field notes
⇒ Journaling
⇒ Drafting multiple versions of his lectures and essays

In this course, we will carefully consider these practices as we engage in reflective writing about the world around us. As a result, we will do the following:

• We will combine walking, contemplative practice, our readings of Thoreau, and a focus on relevant UN Sustainability Goals to generate contemplative or reflective essays about the world around us;
• We will examine how the genres of field notes, journals, and reflective (or contemplative) essays can help re-establish our sense of place and heighten our awareness of the human place on this earth;
• We will also explore how such writing can help us become citizens for positive change and social justice, how writing can help change the world.

A Word about what you’ll be reading and writing
The texts we will create this semester will run the gamut from short to long, graded to ungraded, informal to formal, and private to public, solitary to collaborative. Each of these texts will serve as a means through which you can develop your own opinions, beliefs, and thoughts about the natural world and environment. Likewise, some of the “public” texts you create may help to shape the ways that various audiences think about and understand the world around them.

The environment is more than just the great outdoors. It is also a product of the discourse surrounding it. In other words, the environment—and what we think, say, and do concerning it—is influenced by what other groups and individuals have written or said about it. Environmental debates are shaped by more than simply “the facts” surrounding environmental issues; they are also shaped by the persuasive tactics and stylistic choices writers and speakers make. We will spend
our time this semester analyzing Thoreau's rhetorical choices in both his private and public writing in order that we might understand his philosophy and deliberately choose techniques for our own writing about place and environment.

**My Goals**
It is my goal that we will explore the following questions with open hearts, serious commitment and inquisitive vigor:

- What does contemplative writing about place and environment look like? (What work does it do in the world? How do we practice writing it?)
- How can we cultivate a presence and awareness that allows us to quiet the noise of our busy world and attend to what is immediately in front of us?
- How can we cultivate curiosity and inquiry about the world and, briefly, suspend our conventional ways of seeing?
- How can contemplative writing about place, climate, “Nature” help to change our world for better? Is contemplative writing action?

**What I expect from you**
I expect each of you to take this *exploration of mind, practice, and place* very seriously. This means that you will be open to having a great deal of fun as you establish a *daily practice* of reflection and exploration. In detail, this means that you will be responsible for the following:

- Write (draw and play) in a journal as a contemplative practice *five days a week* for the entire semester.
- Compose four contemplative essays reflecting on place in some way.
- Revise two of those essays at least once.
- Prepare one of your essays (or part thereof) for presentation to the class.
- Prepare one of your essays for the class publication.
- Create a portfolio of your work with a carefully composed and considered reflective statement.
- Attend class regularly and participate willingly.
- **NO phones on during class!** – this is a non-negotiable part of the practice of mindful awareness. (If you have an emergency situation unfolding and need the phone on vibrate, please see me before class.)

**Objectives:**
It is my hope that as a result of our work together you will

- Establish a regular contemplative writing practice.
- Compose four reflective essays.
- Engage deeply with one of the UN SDG’s.
- Provide an oral presentation of one of your essays in progress.
- Publish one essay in the class publication.
- Produce an exemplary portfolio of your work.
Attendance Formula:
It is so important that we are all in class because this is where a lot of the discovery and magic will happen. So, here's my formula:

- You can miss two classes without it impacting your grade – even so, two classes equal an entire week of meetings and will impair your ability to do well in the course.
- If you miss three classes, your grade will be reduced by a one letter grade.
- If you miss four classes, your grade will be reduced by an additional full letter grade (and so on, with each additional absence).
- Three times late to class = a full absence.

(If we are snowed out, you will be expected to use the Blackboard course site to complete all work for the week – this counts as class attendance on snow days.)

Grades
Your final grade will be based on:

- Class participation (includes completed reading, work with UN Goals, in-class discussion, and completion of all assignments) 15%
- Content and use of journals 15%
- 4 essays - with revisions of 2 of those essays 40%
  Including revised essay for the presentation to class and class publication
- Two conferences with me 10%
- Final portfolio of your work (including your reflection) 20%

Because we are focusing on Thoreau and his ideas that pertain to self-reliance in all things, you are expected to take responsibility for your engagement with the materials and the course. Ideally, I want you to be your own judge and critic in all you do, driving yourself to exceed your own expectations.

NOTE: Rather than letter grades, I will use check, check +, and check- on all assignments except your final drafts, your portfolio, and, of course, your final grade. The goal here is to emphasize process, eliminate the judge, and encourage the explorer!

- Those who do the minimum amount of work required get a C.
- Those who spend more time on assignments and demonstrate engagement with the work will get a B (for example, this might mean that you did more than one daily entry in your journal, and revised your works for the portfolio 3 or 4 times, and engaged with external resources extensively for your projects or presentation).
- Those whose work is thorough and exemplary in all ways will get an A.

You will be fairly and carefully evaluated.
Required Books
*I to Myself: An Annotated Selection from the Journal of Henry David Thoreau*
Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer

*Thoreau Essays: A Fully Annotated Edition*
Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer

*Walden: A Fully Annotated Edition*
Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer

*There will occasionally be additional required readings provided throughout the course.*

**NOTE:**
1. There is a Blackboard site for this course. I will use it to post course materials, all links, videos, and podcasts that I require you to visit.
   [www.umassonline.lowell.net](http://www.umassonline.lowell.net)
2. There is also a LibGuide for this course
   [https://libguides.uml.edu/reflective_writing](https://libguides.uml.edu/reflective_writing)

Additional Class Supplies
You will need at least one composition notebook or journal (you may need more).

The Journal
You are expected to maintain a journal throughout the course: this will include five entries a week of at least a page (including five botanical samples with accompanying written entries – over the course of the semester) and a minimum of two maps. Journals will be collected for review three times during the semester.

⇒ Please make clear headings for each week so that I can easily review your weekly entries.

**NOTE:** In many ways, the journal is the heart of your reflective writing practice for the semester. You should take your journal with you everywhere and fill it with things from your day and night. What sorts of things? You can find suggestions for journal topics in the “Resources” folder on the course Blackboard site, but here are a few things that come to mind:

- Daily writing/drawing
- Observations about the world around you
- Short descriptions of place
- Short descriptions of moments experienced
- Things you find (tape or glue them right into the notebook)
- Descriptions of objects you come upon
- Photos
- Ticket stubs
- Quotes
- Dreams
- Things people say
- Memories that come bubbling up into your mind
- Rants and other things you wish you could say out loud
Class Presentation and publication
Your journal will be the source of your longer pieces of writing.
1. Like Thoreau, each of you will work one of your pieces into a “mini lecture” or more formal presentation on a topic of your choosing. This step in the process encourages you to think about your audience, it asks you to make the problem you have identified and your perceived solutions relevant to your community.
   The presentation rubric will be student-created.
2. We will also compose a volume including one work by each author in the class.
   Together we will determine the criteria for this volume.

A very short list of other Naturalists and Environmental Writers of Note
Should you be interested in reading further, the following authors and texts are powerful and important.

Edward Abbey, The Monkey Wrench Gang
Wendell Berry, Our Only World
Rachel Carson, Silent Spring
Barbara Kingsolver, Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life
Elizabeth Kolbert, Field Notes from a Catastrophe
Winona LaDuke, All Our Relations
Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac
Bill McKibben, The End of Nature
John McPhee, The Control of Nature
Gary Snyder, Back on the Fire
Terry Tempest Williams, The Hour of Land
E.O. Wilson, Half-Earth: Our Planet’s Fight for Life

NOTE: All University policies are on the page following the agenda.
Weekly Topics and readings – detailed agendas will be provided each week

NOTE: This agenda is subject to change. You will be notified in class of any revisions and they will also be posted on the Blackboard site.

PART I: TAKING A WALK

Week 1: (Tuesday 1/23 and Thursday 1/25)
On walking, contemplating, and journaling: changing society by changing yourself

READINGS:
“Introduction” to I to Myself
Read pages 39-61 of Thoreau’s journal

Week 2: (Tuesday 1/30 and Thursday 2/1)
Cultivating awareness of the spiritual significance of nature

First essay due: “Where’s your Walden?”

READINGS:
“Deep Mapping” – handout in class and on Bb
“Where I Lived and What I Lived For” (in Walden p. 78)
“Solitude” (in Walden p. 125)

Week 3: (Tuesday 2/6 and Thursday 2/8)
Walking and Mapping

Conferences this week

READINGS:
“Walking” (in Essays p. 243)
“A Winter Walk” (in Essays p. 27)
“Mapping Thoreau Country” http://www.mappingthoreaucountry.org/maps/

Week 4: (Tuesday 2/13 and Thursday 2/15)
Wildness

Saturday, 2/17 – trip to Walden
Second Essay Due: “Mapping/Surveying Place”

VISIT:
Thoreau’s survey maps at the Concord Library: https://concordlibrary.org/special-collections/thoreau-surveys/
Specifically, look carefully at 107a Plan of the Concord River: https://concordlibrary.org/special-collections/thoreau-surveys/107a

**READINGS:**
“Sounds” (in *Walden* p.108)
“The Ponds” (in *Walden* p.168)
Choose one UN Goal to study for group brainstorm
See this app: https://sdgsinaction.com/

**PART II: TAKING A STAND**

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<th>Week 5: (Thursday 2/22)</th>
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<td><strong>Moral obligation to resist corrupt and inhumane government</strong></td>
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**NOTE:** Tuesday is a Monday schedule

**READINGS:**
“Resistance to Civil Government” (also known as “Civil Disobedience”) (in *Essays* p. 145).

**Week 6** (Tuesday 2/27 and Thursday 3/1) **Water is life**

**Guest Speaker:** Professor Bob Forrant on the Lowell mills and regional rivers

*Third Essay Due: “Looking Closely”*

**READINGS:**
“Thoreau's Distressing Canoe Trip”

**WATCH:**
Netflix documentary “Chasing Coral” – in class
Videos from the Water is Life site - http://waterislife.com/media/videos (also see https://www.waterislifemovement.com/)

**Week 7:** (Tuesday 3/6 and Thursday 3/8) **Thoreau’s Surveys**

**READINGS:**
“The Pond in Winter” in *Walden* p. 273

Spring Break 3/12 through 3/18

**Week 8:** (Tuesday 3/20 and Thursday 3/22) **Fourth Essay due: “Taking a Stand”**

**READINGS:**
“Autumnal Tints” (in Essays, p. 281)
PART III: TAKING ACTION THROUGH WRITING

NOTE: At this point, in order to allow you time to work on your writing projects I have only listed a few reading assignments (all from Thoreau's journal) for this section of the course. I may add readings should it prove useful to our work.

Week 9: (Tuesday 3/27 and Thursday 3/29) Revision
Conferences
READINGS:
Read pages 120-143 of Thoreau's journal

Week 10: (Tuesday 4/3 and Thursday 4/5) Peer Critique
Readings:
Revised essay #1 due
Read journal entry for August 8, 1856 (pp. 269-74), and read pages 317-337

Week 11: (Tuesday 4/10 and Thursday 4/12) Preparing a Presentation
Presentations
READINGS:
Read pages 354-77 of Thoreau's journal

Week 12: (Tuesday 4/17 and Thursday 4/19) Composing a Portfolio
Presentations
READINGS:
Read pages 447-58 of Thoreau's journal

Week 13: (Tuesday 4/24 and Thursday 2/26) Editing
Revised essay #2 due

Week 14: (Tuesday 5/1 and Thursday 5/3)
Portfolio due
University Policies

On plagiarism and academic integrity:
Plagiarism is an act of intellectual theft and a serious breach of intellectual integrity. Learn what it is by visiting www.plagiarism.org. Also carefully read the official University of Massachusetts Lowell policy on academic dishonesty here: www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic_dishonesty.htm. Deliberate offenses (such as including material from websites in formal essays without attribution) will result in a failing grade for the course. I will be happy to take time in one of our early chat sessions to discuss plagiarism and to address your questions about it. If you have questions about plagiarism that you feel more comfortable asking the professor directly, please do so through e-mail.

Disability Accommodations:
In accordance with University policy and the ADA, I will provide accommodation for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. Their office is at University Crossing, 220 Pawtucket Street, Suite #300, phone: 978-934-4574, e-mail: Disability@uml.edu. This documentation is confidential.

Instructional Resources:
The Writing Center, located on the third floor of O’Leary Library, offers free writing tutoring. You can meet with a tutor about any writing assignment in any class. The Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services provide many tutoring resources http://class.uml.edu/. I encourage you to seek assistance if you are struggling in this or any class here at UML. Their services are free to use (and paid for by your student fees!).

Classroom Conduct:
In this class, and in all classes at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, students are expected to exhibit professional and respectful behavior that is conducive to a mutually beneficial learning environment in the classroom. Examples of inappropriate behavior include: text messaging, listening to music, cell phone use (other than the campus alert system), late arrivals, early departures, use of laptops for other than class purposes, disrespectful comments or behavior, intentional disruptions, failure to follow faculty directives. Students in violation of these standards may be asked to leave class and/or be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

Weather Cancellations:
http://www.uml.edu/about/university-closing/
University Cancellation Line: 978-934-2121
Student Affairs Information and Services for Students

Dean of Students’ Office / Office of Student Affairs: The primary responsibility of Student Affairs is the welfare of all students enrolled at UMass Lowell. We provide students with the resources and assistance for students to graduate as well rounded, active contributors to their communities. Please visit our website for links to the departments in the Division of Student Affairs. We are located on the 2nd floor of University Crossing.

- **Absence from class:** The Dean of Students Office does not provide "excused absences" for students; if you are absent for any reason you must speak with your professor directly. Students need to be aware, and follow, the absence policy listed on their syllabus.
- **Single Point of Contact:** If you are homeless or are in fear of becoming homeless, or if you are food insecure, and you want assistance, please come to the Dean of Students’ Office located on the 2nd floor of University Crossing.
- **UMASS Lowell Navigators’ Food Pantry:** Please visit the food pantry located in University Crossing, room 104 if you need assistance securing food; we are open Monday-Friday from 3pm-7pm. All you need is your student ID to access the food pantry; there is no charge for food, toiletries, or other resources we offer.
- **A word about conduct / behavior:** Students are expected to read and understand the syllabus given to them by their professor. The syllabus should outline the behavioral expectations of the professor, including but not limited to the use of electronics in the classroom, disruptive behavior, the absence policy, and information regarding academic integrity. Students should be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct found on the UMass Lowell website under “Conduct Code”. Disruptive behavior in the classroom may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Veterans’ Services: UMass Lowell is committed to helping our military students take full advantage of all the educational benefits available through the federal and state governments. We welcome veterans, guardsmen, reservists and all active duty military students who are enrolled in undergraduate, graduate and continuing education degrees and/or certificate programs. Students are certified for benefits by our Veterans Benefits Administrators (VBA).

The Office of Veterans Services provides world-class service to our student veterans: UMass Lowell was named to Military Times "Best for Vets" 2014 College rankings, and is ranked among the top Military Friendly Schools in the nation by Victory Media, indicating the campus is among the top 20 percent for military students’ experience. For complete information on the services and resources available please visit our website at: [https://www.uml.edu/student-services/Veterans/](https://www.uml.edu/student-services/Veterans/)

Wellness Center - Call 978-934-6800 to schedule an appointment with any of the Wellness Center Departments. While walk-in appointments are not available, the staff will schedule you in a timely manner. The Wellness Center is located on the 3rd floor of University Crossing.

- **Health Services:** As part of the Wellness Center, Health Services provides diagnosis and treatment of episodic illnesses such as headache, colds, sore throats, mono, nausea, vomiting, rashes, sprains, vaginitis and urinary tract infections, etc. We provide evaluation and treatment of minor injuries as well as gynecologic care, contraceptive management and counseling, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, health and wellness counseling, the administration of immunizations and laboratory work.

- **Health Education:** As part of the Wellness Center, Health Education & Promotion offers students a variety of resources for health information. Students may speak directly with their health care provider at the time of an appointment, or may contact one of our Health Educators for information. The health educators work collaboratively with students, faculty, staff and community organizations to provide a range of programs, materials and interactive activities covering topics such as alcohol and other drugs, stress, depression and anxiety, healthy relationships and sexual health, nutrition and disordered eating behaviors, and sleep. The HEP Department sponsors Peer-to-Peer Health Education groups: CAPE and Healthy HAWKS. Look for their programs offered throughout the year.
- **Counseling Services:** As part of the Wellness Center, Counseling Services at UMass Lowell provides mental health counseling, consultation and referrals to help students achieve personal and academic success. We also assist students in better understanding and coping with their feelings, relationships, and choices surrounding their academic success. If you visit our webpage you will find free and anonymous online screening tools that may provide you with useful information regarding your mental health.

- **Disability Services:** As part of the Wellness Center, the Disability Services staff promote diversity and inclusion at UMass Lowell by partnering with the campus community. We create equal access by removing barriers, promoting diversity, employing universal design and striving for inclusion. Visit our webpage for information, forms, and policies. Also, Disability Services supports software for **ALL** students. Read&Write Gold is literacy software that allows you to read on-screen text aloud, research and check written work, and create study guides. You can download the software from the IT Software webpage on the UML website: [https://www.uml.edu/IT/Services/Software/Read-Write-Gold.aspx](https://www.uml.edu/IT/Services/Software/Read-Write-Gold.aspx).

Additionally, Disability Services reviews and approves students’ requests for accommodation based upon the recommendation of the student's provider. Please see “Accommodations,” below, for more information.

**Accommodations:** University of Massachusetts Lowell is committed to serving all students without regard to disability status or religion, and in accordance with regulations and policy. Students may request accommodations based on disability or religion. Students are not required to provide specific information to their faculty members about the reasons for their requests. Please note that not all requests for accommodation can be granted. The law allows the University to consider input regarding the technical / content requirements for courses in making its determination. Accommodation requests for medical reasons should be directed to Disability Services, disability@uml.edu.

- Students with known disabilities are encouraged to register prior to the start of their first semester. Once accommodation(s) are approved, students should inform their faculty members of those accommodations as soon as possible. To protect privacy, students may prefer to speak with their faculty members privately during office hours or after class.
- If a syllabus requires that a healthcare provider’s note be given to a faculty member to excuse a medical absence from a class or scheduled exam date, the healthcare provider’s note does not need to indicate the nature of the medical condition.
- If you believe you may miss classes due to a disability, and are registered with Disability Services, please contact the staff to discuss your options.
- Requests for accommodation for religious reasons should be directed to Equal Opportunity and Outreach at 978-934-3565, Wannalancit Mills, Suite 301.

**UMASS Lowell Police Department:** The UMass Lowell Police Department is a full service police department with 30 sworn officers. We operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, providing patrol, investigation, specialized and emergency response, as well as crime prevention and educational services. Please dial 978-934-4911 in case of emergency; for non-emergencies dial 978-934-2398. The UMLPD is located in the “B” Building of University Crossing on the 1st floor.

**Title IX Reporting Requirements:** UMass Lowell is committed to fostering a welcoming, respectful and safe environment. We believe that all the members of the UMass Lowell community are responsible for ensuring that our campus is free from discrimination. In accordance with Title IX, UMass Lowell is required to investigate incidents of sex discrimination that occur on our campus. Faculty who become aware of an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking, are required to notify UMass Lowell’s Title IX Coordinator. The purpose of this disclosure is to inform students of the University’s obligations under Title IX and the reporting responsibility of faculty. For more information about how to file a complaint, your rights and your reporting options available at UMass Lowell, including confidential

**UMASS Lowell Prevent Website:** Community members will find information about resources, support services, the Student Conduct Process for Title IX violations, and other information at www.uml.edu/prevent. In addition, information on reporting incidents of sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, harassment, and bullying can be found here.

**Sensitive Course Content:** Some courses may include content and discussion which address sensitive topics that may be disturbing to some students. Topics may include, for example, trauma, depression, anxiety, sex or gender-based violence or abuse, addiction, mental health concerns, relationship problems, suicide, violent and abusive behaviors, sexual situations, racism, war, catastrophes, or genocide. Participating in class discussions, reading course materials, and completing course assignments may remind you of experiences that you, a friend, or family member may have experienced. Although you are not expected to share personal information in class, classroom discussion of these topics may be unavoidable. Please take the time to care for yourself. You may wish to speak with a staff member of Counseling Services, discussed above. Also, feel free to privately ask the faculty member beforehand about topics listed in the course syllabus. In some but not all cases, faculty may be able to privately arrange for you to complete alternate assignments which allow you to fulfill the requirements of the course without active engagement in some of the sensitive topics. Please note that faculty are not required to make these arrangements.