

# ENC 3310

## Environmental Nonfiction

Instructor: Luke Rodewald  
Matherly Hall 0102  
MWF: 11:45 AM—12:35 PM

**This course is practice.** The authors, texts, and modes we study will generate a sandbox of ideas for experimenting with various compositional forms and techniques to communicate nonfiction stories about the environment, broadly defined. You will read, view, write, and design in this course with an eye on eventually crafting longform projects that blend research, analysis, and creative flair.

Our work considers the contemporary role of environmental nonfiction during an era increasingly marked by global climate change. One of our central explorations concerns the art and practice of storytelling and other narrative methods within this genre; we will examine them not only as tools of communication that prompt understanding of complex environmental crises and that prod our ecological imagination, but also as catalysts for emotional responses and pathways to civic engagement.

### Course Objectives

If pursued with appropriate energy and effort, your work in this class will make you a better writer and reader, and a more critical thinker. Specifically, you...

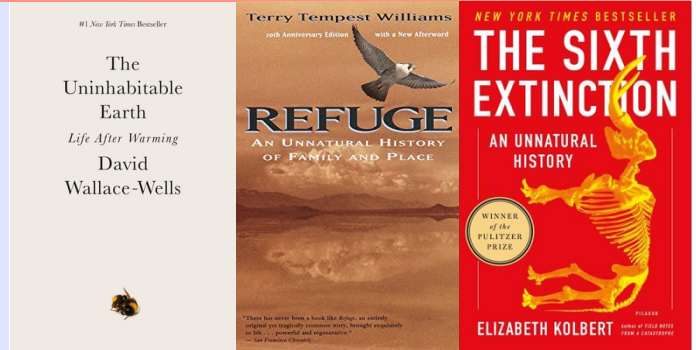
- ...will both become familiar with and develop the skills to compose in a variety of nonfiction genres: popular science communication, journalism, creative nonfiction, and emergent digital modalities.
- ...will consider the art, craft, and purpose of various communicative elements, including the role and integration of research, the use of personal anecdotes and other storytelling maneuvers, and the potential impact of other rhetorical devices that have become increasingly relevant due to contemporary environmental crises.

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## Texts Required

- *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming* (David Wallace Wells)
- *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* (Terry Tempest Williams)
- *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (Elizabeth Kolbert)



## Course Expectations

*What can you expect of me?* I will bring my full self to this course throughout the semester. I take my commitment to teaching seriously—this is my dream job!—and you can be sure that I will continually reflect on how our work together is going and what changes or modifications might be helpful along the way.

*What do I expect of you?* By signing up for this course, I assume you are at least somewhat interested in the course topic—one that, as we shall see, is of utmost importance given the planet's precarious state of affairs. As such, I expect you to engage fully with our material, come to class prepared (*having read with a pen in hand!*), and be respectful and active participants throughout. During class, I ask you for your attention to be fixed on our work together and your minds open.

## Communication

The best way to get ahold of me is via Canvas messenger. During the week, I respond to all e-mails within 24-hours (scout's honor!). Likewise, it is absolutely critical that you actively monitor your inbox and our course website for changes or news from me. I'll be holding office hours on Zoom this fall during the hours immediately before our class periods on Wednesday (9:30-11:00 AM), but I am also quite flexible to meet outside of this set time. Just let me know when you'd like to chat—I'll try to make it happen.

## Attendance

For obvious reasons, you are required to be present for class. This is, largely, a discussion-based course; much of what we do is geared toward a workshop format and cannot be tailored to you individually, if you miss. Our time together is precious!

- Missing more than 4 class periods (for any reason) will lower your final grade by 5% for each additional absence, and excessive absences (8—the equivalent of 2.5 weeks) necessitate dropping the course or being unable to receive credit.
  - The only exemptions from this policy are those absences involving university-sponsored events (athletics, band, etc.) or religious holidays. Please discuss these instances with me ahead of time.

- If there is a medical condition that causes you to miss a prolonged series of class periods, you must speak with the Disability Resources Center (DRC) at the beginning of the semester to officially request an accommodation. I'll work with the DRC to arrive at an accommodation that allows you to be successful without altering the rigor of the class.
- Regardless of reason, if you miss a class, it is still your responsibility to find out what occurred and is expected for next time. I will get you the materials necessary for the next class period if they are not already available on Canvas. Additionally, if something is due for the class period you miss, it's your responsibility to e-mail me the assignment if you want to receive credit for it. This course moves quickly, and I'll do my part to keep you on pace if you fall behind—just stay in touch.

## Major Course Assignments

Your final grade for this course is composed of the following major assignments and evaluative categories, each of which will be detailed at length as it arrives in class.

Everyday Life Projects	150 points (1000 words)
Visual Map of an Essay	75 points
Midterm Essay	200 points (1250 words)
Final Projects	300 points (3000 words)
Annotated Bibliography / Reading List	75 points (750 words)
Daily Quotes and Minor Responses	100 points
Course Engagement	100 points

### Everyday Life Projects (150 points)

Inspired by Min Hyoung Song's *Climate Lyricism*, you will engage in your own everyday life project for the duration of this course—an experiment that's artificial and rule-bound, which engages in certain activities, usually for a set amount of time, with the goal of channeling attention to one or more aspect of everyday experience. We will break down this project into different components (including a formal topic proposal), and take time as we go to reflect on how engaging in such projects while reading works of environmental nonfiction affect our experiences of the everyday. The project will culminate with the writing of a short reflective paper at the end of the semester, which seeks to bring together everything you've discovered by engaging in this project.

### Visual Map of an Essay (75 points)

Building off of David George Haskell's ideas, you will deconstruct an essay to create a visual representation of its structure. You'll investigate how authors use the shape and movement of narrative and style within their pieces. Then you'll communicate the results of your analysis in a document that presents, explains, and interprets these visualizations. Your work should, through the use of diagrams, drawings, and maps, see beyond the essay's content into its form and structure, translating verbal into non-verbal representation.

**Midterm Essay** (200 points)

You will write an article intended for a non-scientific audience, explaining the results and implications of a recent peer-reviewed scientific research paper. The article will convey and interpret for a non-scientific audience the scientific paper's findings, importance, and context. A successful paper will also use literary craft to convey a compelling story. How this might be achieved depends on the content of the scientific paper and the particularities of your own voice.

**Final Projects** (300 points; 75 points)

You will create a longform project on an environmental issue related to the state of Florida (we will brainstorm and select specific topics in class). More details will be finalized later (depending on the modality of your project), but all projects will involve the creation of a reading list and annotated bibliography (75 points), which will be tailored to your particular project focus.

**Minor Responses and Daily Quotes** (100 points)

On 10 occasions (your choice of days), you will bring 3 quotes from that day's reading to class, along with a brief reflection of their significance or interest, within a single document. Quotes should be typed in their entirety, and analytical commentary should be 4-5 sentences for each quote.

**Course Engagement** (100 points)

"Participation" is a fairly loaded term, and so I steer away from it. Rather, this course's success will largely depend on how fully you engage with the material and with each other. Specifically, your engagement counts toward 7.5% of your overall course grade and is measured in a variety of ways: informal discussions during our scheduled class periods, formal discussion exercises, reading response prompts, and other opportunities where you are able to demonstrate the effort you've put forth in this course. This grade is not necessarily "talking in class" (*although that helps!*). Rather, it considers active involvement in our course; showing up to class prepared and contributing to small group and whole group discussions and activities—that's "participation" to me.

**Assignment Format**

All major essays will be submitted on Canvas. Final drafts should be polished in a professional manner. For the two larger assignments, there will be benchmarks along the way to aid you in your progress (topic proposals, introduction/thesis drafts, peer review, etc.). If at any time you're unprepared for these benchmarks or miss their deadline, the overall letter grade will drop for the assignment by roughly 1/3: (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.).

## Late Work

Life happens. There may be times where our planned itinerary conflicts with your other obligations and commitments. Knowing this, you each get two (2) days of no-questions asked extensions on major assignments. The only requirement is that you e-mail me before the assignment's original deadline and let me know you're using the extension. Otherwise, major assignments will be penalized 10% for each day they are late.

## Grading & Evaluation

Earning A's and B's at this level requires strong, consistent effort. Your assignments will include specific evaluation criteria and I will provide detailed feedback on your work that illuminates progress, achievement, and areas for revision. In the past, students who have received A's put significant time and effort into this course right from the start and simply kept at it. Be realistic in your expectations about grades; start assignments early and work steadily to avoid last-minute rushing.

<b>A</b> (90-100)	The qualities of a B project, plus imagination, originality, and engaging expression. The work exhibits depth of thought, command of language, and a keen eye for communicating through the selected medium.
<b>B</b> (80-89)	A sufficient execution of the assignment's objectives. The work demonstrates coherent organization, ample supporting details, and a clear expression of ideas.
<b>C</b> (70-79)	A satisfactory execution of the assignment's objectives, with baseline organization and style. A "C" means you met the demands of the assignment in a minimally acceptable way.
<b>D</b> (60-69)	The presence of a significant defect in context, substance, organization, style, or delivery in a lackluster paper; the project demonstrates an inadequate treatment of the assignment.
<b>F</b> (0-59)	Inadequate coverage of essential points; uncertain or misguided purpose; poor organization; ineffective and inconsistent expression; significant defects in standard usage.

ENC 3310 fulfills 6,000 of UF's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR). In order to meet this requirement, you must pass this course with a "C" or better. A grade of "C-" will not confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Requirement.

I would like to be impressed by the complexity and depth of your thinking. Please try.

All major assignment grades will be posted and recorded on our Canvas site and will receive extensive feedback from myself, but if at any point you're curious about your grade in the course or would like more insight on completed assignments or works in progress—just ask! I'm fully committed to helping you succeed this semester and welcome the opportunity to help you improve in whatever ways I can.

## **Academic Honesty and Integrity**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the UF Student Honor Code. Detecting it is often fairly easy—all of your major assignments are sent through a copyright analysis system—and once found, violations are automatically reported to the Academic Dean. UF's Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it as follows:

*“A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to 1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patchwriting. 2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the faculty to whom it is submitted. 3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.”*

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Conduct & Honor Code, found here: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>. If you have any questions about using work other than your own in a paper, see me before you turn in an assignment. “I didn't know!” is not an excuse, and will not be counted as one, so ask.

## **Diversity Affirmation**

The University of Florida does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Effective learning environments value and support diversity, and free, open discussion is a hallmark of a functioning democratic society. It's my goal to cultivate a comfortable classroom where we can all exchange ideas freely. Please keep in mind that the individuals in this course come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we discuss and write about engage in controversial topics and opinions. A myriad of student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that might differ from your own. College is a time to broaden your perspectives, challenge your ideas, and consider the viewpoints and opinions of those you haven't engaged with before. View this as an opportunity for growth—and embrace it.

## **Disability Affirmation**

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Those requesting accommodation should contact the Disability Resource Center: 001 Reid Hall. That office will provide documentation to you and then you provide this to me. For more information, see: <https://disability.ufl.edu>.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community. For more information, see: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>.



## Writing Studio

Free appointments with writing tutors can be made up to twice a week for help on structural work on major assignments. See <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio> to learn more.

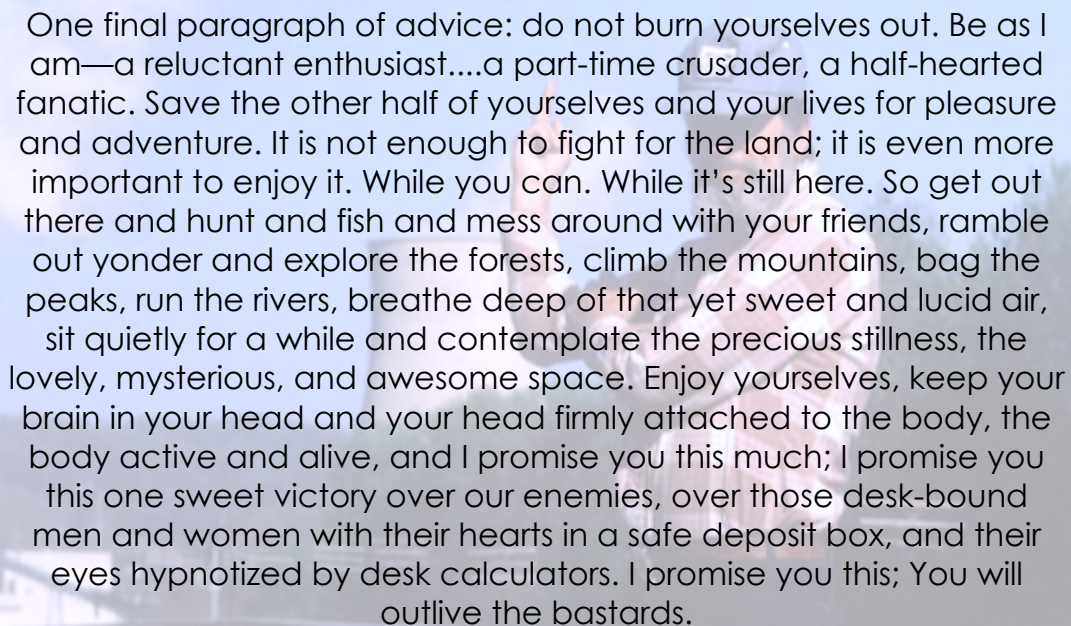
## Course Evaluations

You'll have the opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. You will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email you receive from your Canvas course menu under GatorEvals or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl>.

## Physical and Mental Wellbeing

For guidance during distressing situations, please contact U Matter We Care or the Dean of Students Office. They can help you navigate resources and academic procedures for personal, medical, and academic issues.

- U Matter We Care: <http://umatter.ufl.edu>, [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), (352) 294-2273
- Dean of Students: <https://dso.ufl.edu>, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261
- Counseling Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu>, 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575
- Field & Fork Pantry: <https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu>, 564 Newell Drive, (352) 294-3601
- Student Health Care Center: <http://shcc.ufl.edu>, multiple locations, (352) 392-1161



One final paragraph of advice: do not burn yourselves out. Be as I am—a reluctant enthusiast....a part-time crusader, a half-hearted fanatic. Save the other half of yourselves and your lives for pleasure and adventure. It is not enough to fight for the land; it is even more important to enjoy it. While you can. While it's still here. So get out there and hunt and fish and mess around with your friends, ramble out yonder and explore the forests, climb the mountains, bag the peaks, run the rivers, breathe deep of that yet sweet and lucid air, sit quietly for a while and contemplate the precious stillness, the lovely, mysterious, and awesome space. Enjoy yourselves, keep your brain in your head and your head firmly attached to the body, the body active and alive, and I promise you this much; I promise you this one sweet victory over our enemies, over those desk-bound men and women with their hearts in a safe deposit box, and their eyes hypnotized by desk calculators. I promise you this; You will outlive the bastards.

-- Ed Abbey, 1976

## ENC 3310

### Environmental Nonfiction

The schedule below is subject to change and may not necessarily reflect all smaller assignments or minor readings. Readings and assignments are to be completed before the class period in which they are listed, unless otherwise noted. Our Canvas site will be the most up-to-date site of all resources, texts, due dates, assignments, and course information. Make it a habit to frequently check it along with your e-mail for updates from me as they become available.

Week & Date	Day	Topics / Readings / Assignments Due
<b>1</b> (1/9—1/13)	Monday	No Class (Instructor Absence)
	Wednesday	Course Introduction
	Friday	NYT "Year in Climate Change in Review" "How Shall I Live? Inattention and Everyday Life Projects" (Song)
<b>2</b> (1/16—1/20)	Monday	No Class (University Holiday)
	Wednesday	<i>American Earth</i> selections: Thoreau, Marsh, Muir, Burroughs
	Friday	<i>American Earth</i> selections: Abbey, Carson, Dillard
<b>3</b> (1/23—1/27)	Monday	<i>The Uninhabitable Earth</i> (Wallace-Wells; pp. 3-40) • Introduction to Visual Map Assignment
	Wednesday— Friday	<i>The Uninhabitable Earth</i> (Wallace-Wells; pp. 43-153; assigned selections)
<b>4</b> (1/30—2/3)	Monday	<i>The Uninhabitable Earth</i> (Wallace-Wells; pp. 165-265; assigned selections)
	Wednesday	Excerpts from <i>Rising: New Dispatches from the American Shore</i> (Rush)
	Friday	"Heaven or High Water: Selling Miami's Last 50 Years" (Miller)
<b>5</b> (2/6—2/10)	Monday	<i>The Sixth Extinction</i> (Kolbert; selections) • Introduction to Midterm Essay Project
	Wednesday	<i>The Sixth Extinction</i> (Kolbert; selections)
	Friday	<i>The Sixth Extinction</i> (Kolbert; selections)
<b>6</b> (2/13—2/17)	Monday	Excerpts from <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i> (Pollan) • Midterm Essay Topics Due
	Wednesday	Excerpts from <i>Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply</i> (Shiva)



<b>7</b> (2/20—2/24)	Monday	<b>Visual Map Due</b> Excerpts from <i>Animal Vegetable Miracle</i> (Kingsolver) • Midterm Essay Workshop I
	Wednesday—Friday	No Classes (Midterm Project Conferences)
<b>8</b> 2/27—3/3)	Monday	Excerpts from <i>On Fire</i> (Klein)
	Wednesday	Excerpts from <i>The Mushroom at the End of the World</i> (Tsing) • Midterm Essay Workshop II
	Friday	<i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> (Kimmerer; pp. 1-32)
<b>9</b> (3/6—3/10)	Monday	<b>Midterm Essay Due</b>
	Wednesday	<i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> (Kimmerer; pp. 39-59; 195-215) • Introduction to Final Projects
	Friday	“Thriving Together: Salmon, Berries, and People” (Housty)
<b>10</b> (3/13—3/17)	Monday—Friday	No Classes (Spring Break) <i>Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place</i>
	Monday	<i>Refuge</i> (all)
<b>11</b> (3/20—3/24)	Monday	<i>Refuge</i> (all)
	Wednesday	Excerpts from <i>1,001 Voices on Climate Change</i> (Lockwood)
	Friday	“The Nature of Plastic” (Subramanian)
<b>12</b> (3/27—3/31)	Monday	<b>Reading List Due</b> Excerpts from <i>The Hidden Life of Trees</i> (Wohlleben)
	Wednesday	Excerpts from <i>Entangled Life</i> (Sheldrake)
	Friday	<i>Emergence Magazine</i> (Volume IV)
<b>13</b> (4/3—4/7)	Monday	<b>Bibliography Due</b> • Final Project Workshop I
	Wednesday	Yale Climate Connections Podcast
	Friday	<i>Melting Ice</i> <i>Out of the Blue</i>
<b>14</b> (4/10—4/14)	Monday	<i>My Octopus Teacher</i> (Part I)
	Wednesday	<i>My Octopus Teacher</i> (Part II)
	Friday	<i>My Octopus Teacher</i> (Discussion)
<b>15</b> (4/17—4/21)	Monday—Friday	No Classes (Self-Generated Reading Lists & Final Project Conferences)
<b>16</b> (4/24—4/28)	Monday	<b>Everyday Life Project Due</b> Everyday Life Project Presentations
	Wednesday	Final Class Meeting • Final Project Workshop II
<b>17</b> (5/1—5/5)	Wednesday	<b>Final Projects Due</b>