Group Sequence 4

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Introduction

This sequence design draws on theories of ecocomposition (Dobrin and Weisser) to explore ways that discourse and text alter how we experience and interact with “nature.”

Framing Question

What is “Nature” (for you)?

Possible Categories for Exploration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature writing</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mythology</td>
<td>Academic writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-reflective writing</td>
<td>Folksong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hiking trail</td>
<td>Trailguide</td>
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Sequence Outcomes

- Understanding (using) metaphor
- Analysis and comparison of texts
- Synthesizing points of view
- Writing from primary sources (“the world”)
- Textual citation

Sequence Readings

- Thoreau, “Walking”
- N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (excerpts)
- Songs containing metaphors for nature: traditional New Mexican folk song, Bob Dylan’s “Highlands,” John Denver’s “Country Roads,” Hawaiian place song, etc.
- Hawaiian creation myth of Papahanaumoku and Wakea
- National Park Service charter (or brochure)
- Article/reading on nature as material resource
- “Traditional Hawaiian Metaphors”
- Student metaphors for nature (available on e-reserves and by in-class student presentation)
- Lakoff, *Metaphors We Live By* (excerpts)

Support Texts
- *Norton Field Guide*: “Comparing and Contrasting” (266); “Describing” (285); “Analyzing Causes and Effects” (255); “Narrating” (304)
- *Allyn & Bacon*: Chapters 3 and 4 (“Thinking Rhetorically about Purpose, Audience and Genre” and “Thinking Rhetorically about How Messages Persuade”)
- Diane Thiel, *Open Roads: Exercises in Writing Poetry*: Chapters 5 and 6 (“Image and Symbol” and “Figurative Language,” including reading sections “Using All of Your Senses” and “Making Metaphor” and exercises on p. 31-2 and 34)

**Low-Stakes Assignments**

- Walking exercise: students take a “Thoreauian” walk (possibly a walk they do daily and regardless of assignment) and using power of observation generate a reflective piece modeled upon Thoreau’s “Walking”
- Metaphor for nature: students create an original metaphor for nature and presenting it as 1) an expository essay, describing how the metaphor dictates a certain relationship with nature; or 2) creation story of a known place driven by natural metaphor (consequences expressed implicitly)

**Alternative Low-Stakes Assignments**

- Analysis of song lyrics containing metaphor for nature (found by student)
- Creation of walking trail and descriptive trail guide for directing visitors (trails as nature-shaping text)
- Personal reflective assignment: how do metaphorical constructs shape individual and social space
- Weekly thought journal (2 pages) in response to prompts given in class each week

**High-Stakes Assignment**

- Comparative analysis paper of two contrasting metaphors for nature with textual citation (text may be drawn from class readings and student-generated metaphors)

**Tentative Schedule**

**Week 1** – Writing “in place” and walking – class-length outdoor freewrites, sharing of student observations and Thoreau’s “Walking”
1. First day at Duck Pond, sensorial description of 3 distinct places in the Duck Pond area (15 min. each)
2. Second day in two tree-filled places—first between Zimmerman and Dane Smith circle, then between SUB and Athletic center (trees confined in planters—with free-write question, “How do you feel this is (or is not) nature; where does nature “begin” and “end” in each locale?” (25 min. each)
3. Third day: student sharing of observations and discussion of “Walking” reading
Week 2 – Various natural metaphors
1. Class discussion of natural metaphor readings (see Readings) – nature as
   *kin*, *material resource*, *recreational park*, etc.
2. Group presentation on songs treating nature on metaphorical terms

Week 3 – Analysis: shaping nature through metaphor
1. Student presentations of original metaphors for nature
2. *Metaphors We Live By* and analyzing consequences of various nature
   metaphors (how metaphors for nature dictate how we interact with it/him/
   her…)

Week 4 – Continuation of discussion and preparation for cumulative paper
   assignment

Week 5 - Conferences