

# INTO THE WILD

## Gateway 100-20

### Fall 2005

#### Course goals

- To develop good habits at all stages of the writing process.
- To learn how to use writing to think and strengthen ideas.
- To learn how to revise writing and to establish the practice of rewriting.
- To learn how to write creatively and to defend a claim clearly.
- To learn to appreciate debate and enjoy contention.
- To learn to use intellectual reflection to focus the process of self-development.

#### Course schedule

8-30 Introduction: on the varieties of going into the wild

#### Part one: Into the wild to escape

- 9-1 Topic: master of his destiny or spoiled and spiteful son?  
Reading: Krakauer, *Into the Wild*, 3-69  
Assignment: type out a list of textual cues supporting the two ways of characterizing McCandless.
- 9-6 Topic: the varieties of getting back to nature  
Reading: Krakauer, *Into the Wild*, 70-132  
Assignment: be prepared to discuss the four people (Rosellini, Waterman, McCunn, Ruess) Krakauer compares to McCandless.
- 9-8 Topic: of fathers, ambition, and luck  
Reading: Krakauer, *Into the Wild*, 133-203  
Assignment: bring a one-page, typed essay to class that summarizes Krakauer's assessment of McCandless, and explains why you agree or disagree.
- 9-13 Essay #1: Position Paper—Draft Due in class (two copies)  
Topic: in class peer review of Essay #1  
Assignment: complete peer review in class  
Reading: *The Allen & Bacon Handbook*, 104
- 9-15 Topic: re-writing an essay for greater focus and depth  
Reading: *The Allen & Bacon Handbook*, 49-69; skim 69-91; 92-104; skim 104-152  
Assignment: on a sheet of paper type out your draft and revised thesis statements
- 9-16 Friday appointment in CLA 251
- 9-19 Essay #1 Due in CLA 251 by 4 PM

#### Part two: Into the wild by accident

- 9-20 Topic: Melville into the wild  
Reading: Melville, *Typee*, 1-40  
Assignment: type out answers to the following questions.
1. Which qualities does Melville associate with Europeans in the opening chapter? Which with the Marquesans? What textual evidence can you supply to suggest he prefers the former in some matters and the latter in others?
  2. What are the conditions like on the *Dolly*? What do we learn about the narrator from his decision to leave?
  3. What cruelties have the Europeans committed against the Marquesans? What qualities of European civilization does the narrator support, even if only by implication?

- 9-22 Topic: into an Eden of sensuality and "smiling appearances"  
 Reading: Melville, *Typee*, skim 41-65; 66-103  
 Assignment: type out answers to the following questions.
1. What do we learn about Tommo from his interactions with Toby during the escape? What kind of person is he?
  2. Can you think of any cases where appearances belie reality among the Typee? What might the narrator be suggesting by alerting the reader to what lies "beneath these fair appearances" (76)?
  3. What do you think are the three best and three worst features of life among the Typee? Give a reason to explain each of your judgments. Would Tommo share your assessment?
- 9-27 Topic: comparing natural society and civil society  
 Reading: Melville, *Typee*, 104-156  
 Assignment: type out answers to the following questions.
1. What might the "strike the light" (111) episode refer to other than lighting a match? What point might Melville be making in his comparison of European and Marquesan cultures?
  2. What significance is there in the fact that Tommo's wound heals after he seems to give up hope of leaving? What argues against his staying, given the "happiness" of the islanders?
  3. What, according to Tommo, are the advantages of the "primitive state of society"? Does Melville's use of the battle scene undermine his assessment?
- 9-29 Topic: of feasts, festivals and religion  
 Reading: Melville, *Typee*, 157-187  
 Assignment: bring three questions typed on sheet of paper to class. Be prepared to read one of your questions out loud and lead the class discussion on it.
- 10-4 Topic: what is wrong with conversion?  
 Reading: Melville, *Typee*, 195-258  
 Assignment: free write for ten minutes on the following topic and bring your writing to class. Is Melville's point that conversion is morally wrong or practically impossible (or some third option)?
- 10-6 Essay #2: Interpretative Paper—Draft Due in class (two copies)  
 Topic: in class peer review of Essay #2  
 Assignment: complete peer review in class
- 10-7 Friday appointment in CLA 251
- 10-10 Essay #2 Due in CLA 251 by 4 PM

**Part three: Into the wild to answer a question**

- 10-11 Topic: look to the animals: Hrdy into the wild  
 Reading: Hrdy, *Mother Nature*, 1-26  
 Assignment: type out answers to the following questions.
1. What does Gilibert mean by "look to the animals"? How does Hrdy want to change the way we look to the animals?
  2. Why is motherhood a minefield? How does Hrdy's focus on "making tradeoffs between subsistence and reproduction" (8) avoid some mines? Does it avoid mines altogether?
  3. Hrdy rejects the "naturalistic fallacy" (23). What is the fallacy and why does Hrdy reject it?
- 10-13 Topic: using definitions to clarify Hrdy's many-layered approach to evolution  
 Reading: Hrdy, *Mother Nature*, 27-54  
 Assignment: type out definitions of the following key terms on one sheet of paper and bring the sheet to class: fitness tradeoff, parental investment, attachment theory
- 10-18 Topic: using an analytical outline to clarify Hrdy's view of phenotype development or ontogeny  
 Reading: Hrdy, *Mother Nature*, 55-78

Assignment: bring a one-page outline of 62-76 to class. Be sure to specify Hrdy's overall thesis and the main points she makes to support it.

- 10-20 Topic: maternal variation in nature and society  
Reading: Hrdy, *Mother Nature*, 79-117; 205-234  
Assignment: bring three questions typed on sheet of paper to class. Be prepared to read one of your questions out loud and lead the class discussion on it.
- 10-25 Topic: Why have human females developed concealed ovulation?  
Reading: Hrdy, *The Woman That Never Evolved*, 131-159  
Diamond, *The Third Chimpanzee*, 32-84  
Assignment: bring a one-page, typed essay to class on the following topic:  
Does Diamond fairly present Hrdy's approach to the issue of concealed ovulation?
- 10-27 Topic: The optimal number of fathers  
Reading: Hrdy, *Mother Nature*, 235-263  
Melville, *Typee*, 188-194  
Assignment: bring three questions typed on sheet of paper to class. Be prepared to read one of your questions out loud and lead the class discussion on it.
- 10-31 Essay #3: Explanatory Paper—Due in CLA 251 by 4 PM (one copy)
- 11-1 Topic: Are "safe haven" laws good public policy?  
Reading: Williams-Mbengue, "Safe Havens for Abandoned Infants," 1-11 in *State Legislative Report* 26 (September 2001)  
Assignment: special meeting with Librarian Kristen Vogel in Ames Library
- 11-3 Topic: neonaticide and the case of infant abandonment  
Reading: Hrdy, *Mother Nature*, 288-317; 485-510  
Assignment: type out answers to the following questions.  
1. What common point do the *arcutio* and Hoyt stories have in common?  
2. What unintended consequences did the Ospedale degli Innocenti have? Would safe havens today have the same consequences? Why or why not?  
3. Why was Bowlby's attachment theory controversial? How might it relate to the abandonment issue?
- 11-8 Essay #4: Research Position Paper—Draft Due in class (one copy)  
Topic: in class peer review of Essay #4  
Assignment: complete peer review in class
- 11-10 Topic: sharing your research  
Reading: selected readings from your classmates' research  
Assignment: group reports
- 11-14 Essay #4 Due in CLA 251 by 4 PM

**Part four: Into the wild to live deliberately**

- 11-15 Topic: Thoreau into the wild  
Reading: Thoreau, *Walden*, 1-26  
Assignment: Type out answers to the following questions.  
1. If Thoreau is not writing an ode to dejection by going off and living alone in the woods, what is he doing? Why does he think people would take him for writing such an ode?  
2. Is Thoreau really talking about clothing and shelter and other "necessities"? If not, what then? Can he be talking about both the natural world and the moral world at the same time?  
3. Thoreau notes that nature is "various" and "as well adapted to our weaknesses as to our strengths"(6). What does he mean by this, and what does it suggest about his use of nature to correct society?

- 11-17 Topic: experiments in living and writing  
 Reading: Thoreau, *Walden*, 26-52  
 Assignment: make a list of your favorite (five or so) uses of symbolic language in the reading. Be sure to explain what you consider the symbolism is about and why you like it.
- 11-22 Topic: does the universe answer to our conceptions?  
 Reading: Thoreau, *Walden*, 53-64  
 Assignment: Type out answers to the following questions.  
 1. What does Thoreau mean by the metaphors of morning and sleep (58-59)?  
 2. Thoreau wants "to live deliberately" but also "to affect the quality of the day" (59). Are these two consistent? If so, how?  
 3. What did Thoreau live for? How is he so sure he will find something, that the natural "fact" (64) is sublime, that the universe does "answer to our conceptions"(63)? Is he, in fact, sure?
- 11-24 THANKSGIVING BREAK
- 11-29 Topic: The plant analogy  
 Reading: Thoreau, *Walden*, 84-90; 100-108  
 Assignment: bring a typed, one-page analysis of what discovers in the wild by comparing humans to plants.
- 12-1 Topic: "I love the wild not less than the good"  
 Reading: Thoreau, *Walden*, 136-144  
 Assignment: free write for ten minutes on the following topic and bring your writing to class. What does Thoreau mean when he says he wants to live so that "life emits a fragrance like flowers" (140)?
- 12-6 Essay #5: Interpretative Essay—Draft Due in class (two copies)  
 Topic: in class peer review of Essay #5  
 Assignment: complete peer review in class
- 12-8 Topic: A belated word on style  
 Reading: Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, 52-71  
 Assignment: Bring a fresh copy of your best essay to class
- 12-9 Friday appointment in CLA 251
- 12-14 Final Paper and Style Re-write Due in CLA 251 by 1:30 PM

### Course texts

The following texts are at the IWU bookstore to be purchased:

- Hrды, Sarah Blaffer. 1999. *Mother Nature: Maternal Instincts and How They Shape the Human Species*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Krakauer, Jon. 1996. *Into the Wild*. New York: Doubleday.
- Melville, Herman. 1996 [1846] *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*. Introduction by John Bryant. New York: Penguin.
- Thoreau, Henry David. 1995 [1854] *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods*. New York: Dover.

Selections from the following texts are on e-reserve at Ames Library. Password for the class is 'wild' (all lower case).

- Diamond, Jared. 1992. *The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal*. New York. Harper Collins.
- Hrды, Sarah Blaffer. 1999. *The Woman That Never Evolved* Cambridge, Ma. Harvard University Press.
- Rosen, Leonard J. and Laurence Behrens. 1997. *The Allyn & Bacon Handbook*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Boston. Allyn & Bacon.

Strunk, William, Jr., and E.B. White. 1959. *The Elements of Style*. New York. The Macmillan Co.  
Williams-Mbengue, Nina. 2001. "Safe Havens for Abandoned Infants," 1-11 in *State Legislative Report*  
Volume 26 (September 2001):1-12

### Course requirements

The grade in this course is based on 5 essays (75%), class participation (10%), and a final portfolio (15%). The precise weight of each requirement is listed below.

Essay #1:	10% (includes draft)
Essay #2:	15% (includes draft)
Essay #3:	15%
Essay #4:	15% (includes draft)
Essay #5:	20% (includes draft)
Style re-write:	10%
Class discussion:	15%

### Social contract

No essay will be graded unless it includes a title and page numbers. Essay assignments will be posted on my web site at least one class session before the paper is due.

The style re-write is due on the day of the final, which in this class is December 14. This consists of an essay that you consider to be the best you have written for the class. Bring this essay to our last class session. You will then have until the 14<sup>th</sup> to re-write the essay focusing this time on improving its style. The style re-write will be graded according to the rules of Strunk and White.

The class schedule contains many "assignments" that are required as part of the class participation grade. Some of these are outlines, which should be typed, one-page, single-spaced analytical summaries of the argument(s) presented in the passages from the text assigned. Lists should be one page, typed and should include page numbers for all textual references. Reaction question sheets are one page, typed answers to the questions for specific sessions found in the class schedule. Three question and class essays should also be typed; free writes do not have to be typed.

*All class assignments are due in class on the day they appear in the syllabus.* This is a strict rule. Further, I will insist on the essay deadlines since your work will often be reviewed by a peer during the class session in which it is due. Specific essay assignments will be posted on my website:

[www.iwu.edu/~jsimeone](http://www.iwu.edu/~jsimeone). See the "assignments" link on the menu page just below my course syllabi list.

At any time before the last class, students may hand in re-writes of the first four essays. The re-write grade is then averaged with the original grade. However, in order to receive such credit, *all re-writes must show evidence of a thorough revision* (see one such revision in *The Allyn & Bacon Handbook*, 92-115).

I will keep a regular attendance record. After more than three absences, I shall begin deducting points from your class discussion grade. More than any other class you take at IWU, it is essential that you attend your Gateway regularly.

### Office hours

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