##### MERRIMACK COLLEGE

##### ESS 3600: Garden Memoirs

**Spring 2019**

##### Meetings: M/W 11-12:15 in Cushing 218

##### Professor: Dr. Lisa Perks

##### Office: Cushing 207

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00, Wednesdays 9:30-10:30, and by appointment

Office Phone: x3403

E-Mail: PerksL@merrimack.edu (Please give me 48 hours to respond during the work week.)

**IA. Course Description**

This course introduces students to the analysis and production of art and writing inspired by the act of producing one’s food. The course begins with literary analysis and criticism of garden memoirs, then gradually transitions to the planning and artistic representation of our own gardening experiences. By learning from other gardeners/farmers and planning our own edible oasis, students will develop writing, critical thinking, photography, gardening, group decision-making, and communication skills.

**IB. Student Learning Outcomes**

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1) Analyze sustainability themes in garden memoirs.

2) Create compelling, food-related multi-media stories in the memoir vein or as informative pieces with environmental and sustainability themes.

3) Propose and successfully implement an edibles plan for the Merrimack community.

**IIA. Required Reading Materials**

Carpenter, Novella. *Farm City: The Education of an Urban Farmer*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2010.

Kimball, Kristin. *The Dirty Life: A Memoir of Farming, Food, and Love.* New York, NY: Scribner, 2011.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal Vegetable Miracle: A Year of Food Life.* New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2008.

**IIB. Optional Materials**

* Garden gloves
* Waterproof boots
* DSLR camera (If you have one or can borrow one, that’s great. If not, your iPad or camera phone will be just fine.)

*Readings Posted in Blackboard*

Austin-Zacharias, Marcia. “Sense of Place, Sense of Self: Windows into an Examined Life.” *Women’s Studies* 33 (2004): 787-803.

Buss, Helen M. “Memoir.” Encyclopedia of Life Writing. Ed. Margaretta Jolly. New York and London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001.

*Selected Garden Blogs to Peruse*

[Farmgirl Fare](http://www.farmgirlfare.com/)

[Good Life Permaculture](https://goodlifepermaculture.com.au/)

[Jean’s Garden](https://jeansgarden.wordpress.com/)

[In Lee’s Garden Now](http://www.leereich.com/blog)

###### *Relevant Apps for Annotating Readings*

###### Hypothesis, Notability

###### **III. Course Assignments**

Readings: Readings are to be completed before the class on which they are due. Reading the assigned texts is necessary to understand the course content and to participate effectively in class discussions.

*Readings must be brought to class on the day they are due—either in printed or digital form (along with a laptop or tablet for access).* *All books are on reserve at the library and can be copied/scanned. Reading checks will be done periodically if students are attending unprepared. Attending without that day’s reading will result in an absence.*

File Submission: All files throughout the semester must be submitted as a .doc, .docx, or .pdf to be readable through Blackboard. Other file extensions cannot be opened or earn credit.

Reading Reflections: Students will submit reflection papers to Blackboard most weeks in which we are reading one of the three books. These brief reflection papers (of approximately 300 words) will serve as stepping-stones for our in-class discussions of what we have read. As you read, consider how the book links to the broader themes in our class, how it may resonate with or contradict your experience, how the writing offers universal themes (beyond farming, gardening, and food), how it conforms to or violates memoir convention, how it may have changed or shaken your perspective on an issue, how it may have revealed new insight into human experience, how it may have frustrated or upset you.

This [guide](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/rwc/handouts/the-writing-process-1/invention/Writing-a-Response-or-Reaction-Paper) from CUNY Hunter about briefly summarizing the work and then responding provides both great advice and a solid example. Also see the assignment description + grading criteria posted in Blackboard.

Literary Criticism: This 4-6-page paper will analyze a theme found in 2 or more of the assigned books. The paper can expand upon a topic addressed in a reading reflection or it can be something completely new that the student has chosen.

Blog Posts and Photography: The class will read several garden blogs, have photography lessons with Kevin Salemme, and also practice writing long-form blog content. Students will select two garden or farm-related topics and create compelling blog posts along with coordinating visuals.

Merrimack Service Learning Edibles Plan: Using Dewey’s Reflective Thinking Process (which includes planting guidelines already established by Merrimack’s administration), small groups within the class will craft and execute an edibles planting plan for the campus. Everyone will also need to volunteer for at least two hours in a garden- or food-related capacity either on or off campus. The Stevens-Coolidge place (just a mile from campus, with volunteer slots Wednesdays 9-12), [Campus Kitchens](https://www.merrimack.edu/academics/health-sciences/about-the-school/experiential-learning/campus-kitchen-project/), New Entry Farm in Beverly, or any number of local food pantries, are all options for volunteer sites. This work will be evaluated by assessing the plantings and student reflections about their group processes and volunteer work.

Participation and Professionalism: Participation will be evaluated and make up 40 points of your grade. Scores will be based on the quantity and quality of class contributions. High quality in-class contributions will show evidence that a student is prepared for class and is critically engaging the reading material as well as other topics we discuss.

Distracting behaviors such as texting in class, using social media, or doing outside work will substantially reduce professionalism scores. Students will receive a mid-semester grade (out of 20 points) and another grade (out of 20 points) at the end of the semester. Feel free to speak with Dr. Perks at any time to discuss how to improve participation and professionalism.

**IV. Course Policies**

Media Use in the Classroom: Consider these [research findings](https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/technology-and-student-distraction): “Several studies have compared students who texted during a lecture versus those who did not. Those who texted frequently took lower quality notes, retained less information, and did worse on tests about the material (e.g., [Kuznekoff et al.](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03634523.2013.767917) and [Rosen et al.](https://journals.copmadrid.org/psed/articulo.php?id=e721a54a8cf18c8543d44782d9ef681f)). Students themselves realize that cell phone usage does not promote learning; in [one survey](http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.10.003), 80% of students agreed that using a mobile phone in class decreases their ability to pay attention.”

Our class will incorporate the use of mobile technologies, but not all the time. Please respect your learning opportunities and tuition dollars by using mobile devices only for class-related work. If you are using your phone for activities not related to class, you will be asked to put it in your bag for the rest of class. (Also see Participation and Professionalism grade.)

Late Work: Late work will be penalized by 10% for each 24 hours (or fraction thereof) they are late. Late reflection papers will not earn credit because we will have already discussed the content.

Attendance and Lateness: Attendance is closely related to the learning process. You have three free absences, but will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for your fourth absence and each one after that. There are *no excused absences* so use these sparingly. You are responsible for all work missed. If you do miss class, be sure to ask one of your classmates for help getting up to speed.

It disrupts the learning environment when students come in late or leave early. If you are more than 10 minutes late or must leave more than 10 minutes early, you will be counted absent for that day.

Academic Integrity: The collegial pursuit of knowledge and truth depends on cooperation and trust between student and teacher, among students, and between the student and the college. The Merrimack College academic integrity code is designed to help students understand what is not permissible in their academic and intellectual lives at the college. This code includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of plagiarism (broadly construed as the failure to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others in one’s work), cheating, and submission of the same work in multiple classes. Always taking detailed notes on research, properly citing sources, and consulting professors about what is permissible when preparing graded work will help students stay on the correct side of the ethical line.

More detailed descriptions and college consequences can be found on the [Provost’s webpage](https://www.merrimack.edu/live/files/2136-policy-on-academic-integrity).

Academic Accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office: Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form: [www.merrimack.edu/accessibility](http://www.merrimack.edu/accessibility%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), email: accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu or by visiting us on the third floor of McQuade Library.

Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

**V. Grading**

Participation and Professionalism 40 points (20 points each half of the semester)

Reading Reflections 100 points (10 each)

Blog Posts 40 points (20 each)

Literary Criticism 100 points

Service Learning Edibles Work 50 points

Reflection on Planting Work 20 points

*Point Total: 350 points*

Here is the scale of what letter the grade percentage equals:

A = 92.7 - 100%      A- = 89.7 - 92.7%

B+ = 86.7 - 89.7%   B = 82.7 - 86.7%      B- = 79.7 - 82.7%

C+ = 76.7 - 79.7%    C = 72.7 - 76.7 %    C- = 69.7 - 72.7%

D+ = 66.7 - 69.7%   D = 62.7 - 66.7%     D- = 59.7 - 62.7%

F = 59.7 % and Under

Note about Grades: The grading scale already has a cushion built in. Grades will not be bumped up further at the end of the semester. If you are concerned about your performance in the class, see Dr. Perks early in the semester (not after all assignments are completed).

##### TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

*Any changes will be announced in class and updated in Blackboard.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Class Day** | **Class Topic** | **Assignment Due This Day** |
| 1/16 | Course overview; Discuss reflection assignment and critical reading strategies | Begin reading Carpenter if you want to get a jump start.  |
| 1/21  | **No Class: MLK Day** |
| 1/23 | Share critical reading work; Practice reflection in class; Sign up for blog posts  | Finish Carpenter “Turkey” section (pp. 3-98) |
| 1/28 | Read Buss “Memoirs” in class; Discuss Carpenter | Read up to Carpenter p. 155 (end of Chapter 21).  |
| 1/30 | Guest speaker: Brenna Donovan about topic selection and engaging writing  | Finish Carpenter “Rabbit” section (pp. 184); reflection due |
| 2/4 |  | Read up to Carpenter p. 236 (end of Chapter 32) |
| 2/6 |  | Finish Carpenter “Pig” section (pp. 269); reflection due |
| 2/11 |  | Read Kingsolver Chapters 1 and 2 |
| 2/13 |  | Read Kingsolver Chapters 3 and 4; reflection due |
| 2/18NO CLASS | **No Class: President’s Day** |
| 2/19 Monday Schedule | Discuss the memoir genre; compare/contrast memoirs and blog posts | Read Austin-Zacharias “Sense of Place, Sense of Self”  |
| 2/20 | Photography lesson with Kevin Salemme  | Read Kingsolver Chapters 5-7; reflection due |
| 2/25 |  | Read Kingsolver Chapters 8-10 |
| 2/27 |  | Read Kingsolver Chapters 11 and 12; reflection due |
| 3/4 |  | Read Kingsolver Chapters 13-15; **Merrimack edibles proposal due to Blackboard**   |
| 3/6 |  | Read Kingsolver Chapters 16 and 17; reflection due |
| 3/11-3/15  | **No Class: Spring Break** |
| 3/18 |  | Read Kingsolver Chapters 18-20; reflection due |
| 3/20 | Night Class/Movie Screening: *Food Chain$* (7pm Stevens Auditorium)  | No class at 11 and no work due this day; Everyone meets in Stevens Auditorium at 7pm  |
| 3/25 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 51 |
| 3/27 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 81, the gap in text; reflection due  |
| 4/1 | Photoshop lesson with Kevin Salemme (Cushing 220) | Read up to Kimball p. 124  |
| 4/3 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 166, the gap in text; reflection due  |
| 4/8 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 192 |
| 4/10 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 228; reflection due  |
| 4/15 |  | Finish Kimball |
| 4/17 | Peer review literary criticism; Discuss edibles plans if time | **Literary Criticism Draft Due (at least 2.5 pages)** |
| 4/22 | Implement our Campus Edibles Plans |  |
| 4/24 | Discuss literary criticisms; Work in groups  | **Literary Criticism Due**  |
| 4/26 1-3pm | *Lowell and Lawrence Math and Science Partnership to bring 50 middle school students to campus to plant some edibles. Volunteers needed.*  |
| 4/29 | Discuss *The Dollop,* land and water requirements for certain crops, connections to *Food Chain$*, etc. Implement our Campus Edibles Plans | Listen to *The Dollop* podcast #356 “The Resnicks: Water Monsters” (link in Blackboard)  |
| 5/1  | Implement our Campus Edibles Plans |  |
| 5/2  | Merrimack Research and Creative Achievement Conference |  |
| **FINALS WEEK:** Our slot is Thursday, 5/9, from 11:30-2:30. Student reflections on Edibles Plans due to Blackboard. Visit Stevens-Coolidge Estates. |