##### MERRIMACK COLLEGE

##### ESS 3600: Garden Memoirs

**Spring 2021**

##### Meetings: T/Th 12-1:15 in Palmisano 273

##### Professor: Dr. Lisa Perks

##### Office: Cushing 207

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12-2 (through Zoom), and by appointment

Zoom Link: https://merrimack.zoom.us/j/9729612121

E-Mail: [PerksL@merrimack.edu](mailto:PerksL@merrimack.edu) (Please give me 24 hours to respond during the work week, longer on weekends.)

**IA. Course Description**

This course introduces students to the analysis and production of art and writing inspired by the act of producing food. The course begins with literary analysis and criticism of garden memoirs, then gradually transitions to the planning and written representation of our own gardening experiences. By learning from other gardeners/farmers and improving our own planting sites, 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, land sovereignty, and food justice themes in garden memoirs.

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

3) Propose and successfully implement a garden improvement 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.

Penniman, Leah. *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm’s Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land.* White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2018.

**Librarians are Amazing**

Our books are on reserve at the Merrimack library. The physical copies are at the reserve desk. *Note: They have to be quarantined for 3 days after being checked out.*

There are also ebook reserves. Here are ebook instructions and links from the librarians:

*Note: For ebooks that can be read online only, we recommend that students*

* Login (upper right, after clicking on the links below) if they are on campus and have not logged in already.
* Add book to Bookshelf
* Read online, highlight and add comments.
* Next time you connect, view Bookshelf to continue reading and review.

**Book Titles with Links**

Carpenter, Novella. *Farm City: The Education of an Urban Farmer*. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/merrimack/detail.action?docID=6080412>

(1 user at a time; read online only; no printing or saving to PDF)

Kimball, Kristin. *The Dirty Life: A Memoir of Farming, Food, and Love.*

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/merrimack/detail.action?docID=5665958>

(1 user at time, read online only, 5% printing)

Penniman, Leah. *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm’s Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land.*

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/merrimack/detail.action?docID=5568837> -

(unlimited users, can print to PDF, read off-line)

**IIB. Optional Materials**

* Garden gloves (for April/May)
* 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.

###### *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.

*Make sure you have access to the readings (either in print or digital form) on the day we are discussing them. All students will need to be able to refer back to certain pages. Please note that the Carpenter and Kimball ebooks on reserve at the library can only have one reader at a time, so they won’t work for in-class referencing.*

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 Responses: Students will submit reading response to Blackboard most Thursdays in which we are reading one of the three books. (See the schedule below for specific dates.) These brief responses will serve as stepping-stones for our in-class discussions and activities. The reading response prompts will change slightly throughout the semester as we prepare for different assignments. The reading response prompts will change slightly throughout the semester as we prepare for different assignments. See the assignment description + grading criteria posted in Blackboard. *In part because no late reading response can earn credit,* *the lowest reading response grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.*

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 response or it can be something completely new that the student has chosen.

Blog Posts and Photography: The class will read several garden blogs, have a photography lesson 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 Garden Improvements Plan: Using Dewey’s Reflective Thinking Process, small groups within the class will work together to propose solutions to Merrimack garden problems. This work will be evaluated by assessing the group problem solving presentation, the actual work, and student reflections about their group processes. *We plan to take action, not simply share ideas. We have reserved a few days at the end of the semester to implement our solutions.*

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.

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: 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.

Remote/Hybrid Learning: Our class will meet in person on Tuesdays (with remote-only students attending virtually through Blackboard Collaborate). We will all attend through Blackboard Collaborate on Thursdays. **Update as of 2/8: We are trying out Zoom because of audio issues with Blackboard Collaborate.**

**Dr. Perks’s Zoom Link: https://merrimack.zoom.us/j/9729612121**

Ours is a “cameras on” class so we can more fully engage with one another. If you have an insurmountable reason that your camera can’t be on, please speak with Dr. Perks in the first week of the semester or as your situation changes. Class recordings are available through Blackboard Collaborate in case of absences or if a student needs to review the material.

Late Work: Late work will be penalized by 10% for each day late. Late reading response papers will not earn credit because the work is preparation for class discussion.

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.

Academic Accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office: Regardless of whether the course or the student is on-campus or remote, Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities through the Accessibility Services Office. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the Accessibility Services website: [www.merrimack.edu/aso](http://www.merrimack.edu/aso), email [accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu) or by visiting us on the third floor of McQuade Library (subject to change if the college is remote).

Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible via the website or via email at [accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu) to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Students already registered with Accessibility Services are encouraged semesterly to request for their letters to be emailed and students are responsible to then email the letter to their instructors personally. The Accessibility Services Testing Center remains available to students whether in-person or remote. While it is understood that some students will not use all accommodations in all courses, accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

**V. Grading**

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

Reading Responses 40 points (8 x 5 points each; lowest 1 is dropped)

Blog Posts 50 points (25 each)

Literary Criticism 100 points

Garden Improvement Presentation 50 points

Reflection on Garden Work 20 points

*Point Total: 300 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 emailed to the class and updated in Blackboard.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Class Day** | **Class Topic** | **Assignment Due This Day** |
| 2/2 | Course overview; Discuss reflection assignment and critical reading strategies | Begin reading Carpenter if you want to get a jumpstart. |
| 2/4 | Share critical reading work; Practice reading response in class; Sign up for blog posts | Read up to p. 39 in Carpenter (the end of Ch. 3) |
| 2/9 | Read Buss “Memoirs” in class; Discuss Carpenter | Finish Carpenter “Turkey” section (to p. 98) |
| 2/11 |  | Read up to Carpenter p. 155 (end of Chapter 21). *Reading response due* |
| 2/16 |  | Finish Carpenter “Rabbit” section (pp. 184) |
| 2/18 |  | Read up to Carpenter p. 236 (end of Chapter 32); *Reading response due* |
| 2/23 | Kevin Salemme photography lesson;editing with www.photopea.com | Finish Carpenter “Pig” section (pp. 269) |
| 2/25 | **Guest speaker:** Investigative journalist from Netflix’s *The Innocent Man* docuseries, columnist*,* andfarmer AC Shilton | Read Penniman “Introduction: Black Land Matters” (pp. 1-10); *Reading response due* |
| 3/2 |  | Read Penniman Chapter 5 |
| 3/4 | Discuss the memoir genre; compare/contrast memoirs and blog posts | Read Austin-Zacharias “Sense of Place, Sense of Self”; *Reading response due* |
| 3/9 |  | Read Penniman Chapter 6 |
| 3/11 |  | Read Penniman Chapter 8; *Reading response due* |
| 3/16 | Make Greenhouses |  |
| 3/18 | Documentary: [Biggest Little Farm](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfDTM4JxHl8) |  |
| 3/23 |  | Read Penniman Chapter 11 |
| 3/25 | Discuss literary criticism assignment | Read up to Kimball p. 51; *Reading response due* |
| 3/30 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 81, the gap in text |
| 4/1 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 124; *Reading response due*  **Merrimack garden improvements proposal due (one group member to email or share Google doc with Dr. Perks)** |
| 4/6 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 166, the gap in text |
| 4/8 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 192; *Reading response due* |
| 4/13 |  | Read up to Kimball p. 228; reflection due |
| 4/15 | Dig/Plant/Discuss Book | Finish Kimball; *Reading response due* |
| 4/20 | Peer review literary criticism; Discuss garden plans if time | **Literary Criticism Draft Due (at least 2.5 pages)** |
| 4/22 | Write/Revise/Edit | Paper conferences with Dr. Perks |
| 4/27 | Garden Improvement Implementation; Work with Politics of Food class |  |
| 4/29 | Discuss literary criticisms; Work in groups | **Literary Criticism Due to Blackboard** |
| **FINALS WEEK:** Our slot is Friday, 5/7, from 11:30-2:30. Garden Improvement reflection papers are due to Blackboard by that time. We’ll need to keep this time a bit flexible. If we need to wrap up garden improvement projects, we’ll do that starting at 11:30. Either way, we’ll meet on Zoom for a portion of the finals slot to discuss the reflection papers. | | |