

First Year Seminar 18.1 and 18.2 Fall 2013
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TEN WAYS TO KNOW NATURE

version 2.0, October 20, 2013

All FYS courses work towards actively building and sustaining an inclusive community of learners and contributors. This FYS class fully subscribes to Lafayette College's commitment to promoting diversity including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and place of origin.

—Overview and General Information—

<i>Instructor</i>	Benjamin Cohen
<i>Office</i>	304 Acopian Engineering Center (AEC) , Engineering Studies Program
<i>Phone</i>	610.330.3058
<i>E-mail</i>	cohenb@lafayette.edu
<i>Office Hours</i>	Tues & Thurs 11:00 am—12:15 pm, Wed 1-3 pm, and by appointment

<i>Readings</i>	Required readings as *.pdf or links at Moodle Lunsford, Andrea (2011). <i>St. Martin's Handbook</i> . New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
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Class times and locations

Tues/Thurs: Section 18.1, 1:15—2:30 pm, AEC 325
 Section 18.2, 2:45—4:00 pm, AEC 325

Writing Associates (WAs) for this semester

Caitlin Hope (hopec@lafayette.edu) and Ryan Maake (maaker@lafayette.edu)

Course Description

This is a First Year Seminar (FYS) called “Ten Ways to Know Nature.” It is about environmental thought and practice. The central question of the class is: how do you know what nature is? The question’s emphasis is on ‘*how do you know*,’ in the sense that knowing is an activity with many styles and coming to know things is an active process. The basic prompt for that question is that how we come to interact with nature influences the ways we think about those natures. The poet Wallace Stevens wrote “13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” in 1917, a model from which a number of other thinkers have mused about the various ways we see and live in the world. The geographer Donald Meinig, for example, writes of “Ten Versions of the Same Scene,” in which he describes the choice we make to see a landscape as habitat, as aesthetic, as system, as problem, as place, as history, and more. The environmental historian Jenny Price writes of “Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in L.A.,” in which she pursues a similar line of thought.

We’ll follow the approach of Stevens, Meinig, Price, and a host of other thinkers and writers to confront and analyze the choices we make in our lives to know nature. The “ways” we consider include, among others, the scientific, technological, artistic, experience-based (hands-on), biographical, and religious; the forms of interaction follow from our lives as consumers, as eaters, and as thinkers while we work, live, and play. The central aims of the course are (1) to provide students with the analytical tools to recognize “ways of knowing” nature, (2) to expose students to a variety of local experiences in different environmental settings, (3) to generate an awareness that

the ways we choose to live in nature today are shaped by historical trajectories, and (4) to help students begin their undergraduate studies at Lafayette with the knowledge that how we choose to live in nature influences how we make decisions about environmental health, that our ways of living are a subtle, everyday form of environmental politics.

Put another way, it's a class about ways of knowing—which is an intellectual but also a political claim. The underlying suggestion is that how we come to know nature matters for how we treat it and/or for how we see ourselves as part of it. Thus, these questions about knowing—what philosophers call epistemological questions—are an important underpinning for environmental politics and civil society.

Assignment Values

25%	Class participation
20%	Journal entries + HW
15%	Essays (#1 and 3 [7.5% each])
10%	Mid-term Essay (#2)
25%	Final podcast project
5%	<i>Cur Non</i> points (as explained at Moodle)

Specific Student Outcomes

The purpose of all FYS courses is to (1) provide students with strategies for interpretation and evaluation, (2) challenge students' assumptions and biases, (3) encourage the building of informed personal perspectives, (4) introduce students to the conventions of academic writing, (5) develop research-oriented skills, and (6) encourage intellectual communities among students and faculty. In addition to those general goals, the specific student outcomes for FYS 18 are to:

- (7) Provide students with the analytical tools to recognize “ways of knowing” nature;
- (8) Introduce students to a variety of local experiences in different environmental settings;
- (9) Introduce students to facilities that will serve them for their undergraduate careers, including Skillman Library, the College Writing Program, ATTIC, and LaFarm and the Community Garden;
- (10) Prepare students' expectations for college-level reading, writing, and class preparation;
- (11) Help students begin their undergraduate studies at Lafayette with the knowledge that how we choose to live in nature influences how we make decisions about environmental health, and that our ways of living are a subtle, everyday form of environmental politics;

Course expectations

At the end of this syllabus is an extensive FAQ file. Please read that in full for basic expectations and background commentary on the class.

A note on the College Writing Program

The College Writing Program helps to integrate the practice of writing in courses throughout the college. It trains selected students as Writing Associates (WAs) and makes them available for courses in a wide variety of disciplines. The WAs for this course are Caitlin Hope and Ryan Maake. One or the other will meet with each of you in conferences to discuss drafts of your written work and engage you in conversation about your writing so that you can revise it effectively. Each of you will meet with Caitlin or Ryan **four times** this semester, during weeks I will announce in advance (usually a week before the assignment is due). Once scheduled, these are required meetings. Caitlin and Ryan are obligated to inform me of any late or missed appointments. I deduct one letter grade

from the final version of an assignment from students who miss their appointments with the WAs. As well, I cannot read over drafts that you have not first discussed with a WA.

A note on Honor and Academic Integrity

Student-teacher relationships require trust. For example, students must trust that teachers have made responsible decisions about the structure and content of the courses they teach, and teachers must trust that the assignments students turn in are theirs. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational process. At Lafayette College we maintain a community of trust by promoting a culture of honor, principle, and integrity. As this is a College of students, faculty, administrators, and staff, we work *as* a community to create such a culture. Generally I encourage you to talk to other students about the issues being addressed in the course, and I encourage you to read relevant written material in addition to that assigned in class. However, when it comes to written and oral assignments, the words must be your own and you must cite those whose ideas you use. Please note that for group projects, where some of these terms and issues are muddled, we will discuss further the boundaries of ethical behavior and academic integrity.

Ours is not a laptop course, unless otherwise specified in class. That is, along with a standard request to silence and stow away your cell phones during class, I ask that you keep laptop screens closed out of respect for your peers and for the betterment of classroom atmosphere.

Grading Schema

	A (93+)	A- (90-92)
B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)	B- (80-82)
C+ (77-79)	C (73-76)	C- (70-72)
D+ (67-69)	D (63-66)	D- (60-62)

Assignment summary

<i>Every class</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Semesterly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance Readings and preparation for discussion Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entries Meetings with the professor Synthesis of prior week and its relation to current week <i>Cur Non</i> activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with Writing Associates Meetings with Reference Librarians Field trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main course project (<i>proposal; draft; revisions; presentation; final product</i>)

A note on credit hour provisions

The student work in this course is in full compliance with the federal definition of a four credit hour course. Please see the Lafayette College Compliance webpage for the full policy and practice statement.

—Course Syllabus, draft ver.2—

Note: All readings are *to be read* for the day given below (as opposed to being *assigned* on that day). Almost all readings are available at the class Moodle site.

	Tuesday	Thursday	Misc.
Week 1 <i>Introduction</i>	Aug 27 Way #1: Personal Experience <i>Bring: notebook (for journal entries—not just your class note-taking notebook) and printed copy of this syllabus and course overview</i>	Aug 29 Read: Meinig; Price Due: Journal Entry #1 (by hand, in class)	Due Friday@5: JE#1 (on-line)
Week 2 <i>1st WA meetings</i>	Sept 3 Read: Thoreau; Thoreau mini-bio	Sept 5 Way #2: Religion Read: Five encyclo. selections	Due Friday@5: HW#1 (auto-bio)
Week 3 <i>2nd WA meetings</i>	Sept 10 <i>...cont. from Thursday</i>	Sept 12 Way #3: Art Read: Barrow; Cole Due: Journal #2 (in class)	
Week 4	Sept 17 Library orientation@Skillman	Sept 19 Read: Frazier; TBD Attend: McWilliams talk, 7:30 pm	Due Friday @5: Essay #1 Weekend HW: watch <i>Rivers and Tides</i> for Tuesday, 9/24
Week 5	Sept 24 Read: Goldsworthy; Solnit	Sept 26 Way #4: Science Read: On Descartes; Crease; Sagan; 19 th c. commenters Attend: Merkel talk, 7 pm	Saturday, Sept. 28: All-day Field Trip to Storm King Arts Center (8 am to 6 pm)
Week 6	Oct 1 Read: Wilson, and <i>EST</i> article	Oct 3 <i>...cont. science</i> Due: Journal #3 (in class)	Due Friday@5: JE#3 (on-line)
Week 7	Oct 8 Way #5: Technology Read: Levine; Cronon; Solnit	Oct 10 Read: Howard; Ackerman Watch: Nguyen	
Week 8 <i>3rd WA meetings</i>	Oct 15 <i>No class</i> FALL BREAK	Oct 17 Watch: <i>Manufac'ed Landscapes</i> Due: Journal #4 (in class)	
Week 9	Oct 22 Way #6: Animals Read: Goodall; AnimalPlanet.com Attend: Galusky talk, 7:30 pm	Oct 24 <i>In-class podcast workshop with J. Alley</i>	Due Sunday, Oct. 27 by 5pm: Mid-term (Essay #2)
Week 10	Oct 29 Way #7: Food Read: Berry and Pollan	Oct 31 Watch: Bee Due: Journal #5 (in class); project materials (topic choices)	Due Sunday@5: JE#5 (on-line)
Week 11	Nov 5 Way #8: Consumers Read: Price	Nov 7 Due: podcast revs.	
Week 12 <i>4th WA meetings</i>	Nov 12 Way #9: Film Read: Mitman; On Disney Due: topic confirmed + bib.	Nov 14 Due: outline+storyboard of podcast; Journal #6 (in-class)	
Week 13	Nov 19 Project workshop (in class) Due: First draft of recording & script	Nov 21	<i>Watch: Bambi, The Lion King, Finding Nemo, Wall-E</i> Due: Fri@5: Essay #3
Week 14	Nov 26 Due: Full project draft for peer review	Nov 28 <i>No Class</i> Thanksgiving Break	
Week 15	Dec 3 Way #10: Experiential/educational	Dec 5 Last Day of Class debriefing	Final Project Due Monday, Dec. 9 (all materials: audio file, bib., transcript, visuals)