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**WRIT 116.003**  
**Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing**  
**“Animal and Us”**  
 Spring 2014  
 University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
 Department of English

MW/3:30-5:45/Hibbard 222

**A Helpful Note At The Start Of The Syllabus:**

Dear Class,

Welcome! Please be sure to read this syllabus carefully as the information herein will be critical to your success in this class. However, I also wanted to offer a few tips that will dramatically help you succeed here.

- 1.) **I need you in class and prepared each and every class period.**
- 2.) **I need you to fulfill the needs of each assignment and turn each assignment in on time.**
- 3.) **I need you to check your email at least once every 48 hours.**

As the rest of the syllabus notes, if you miss class, come unprepared, or do not fulfill the needs of the assignments in a timely manner, your grade will be negatively impacted. Now, back to the syllabus...

**Required Texts**

- *The Blugold Guide*, ISBN: 978-1-269-35850-7

**Required Materials**

- Assigned .pdf [printouts](#) (all links available on D2L under “Content” Tab)
- Notebook suitable for daily writing

**Course Description**

Welcome to the Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing. This course is designed to ground first-year students in the reading, writing, and rhetorical demands necessary for success in college and beyond. This class teaches students to be both critical readers of complex texts and critical writers of effective texts. The key to critical reading and writing is rhetorical knowledge. Rhetoric is foundational for this course because it allows you, on the one hand, to understand how other people’s texts affect readers and attempt persuasion, and on the other, to compose effective and purposeful texts yourself. Rhetorical knowledge prepares you to participate in and respond to nearly any conceivable writing situation, whether it be another college course, certain professional demands, or personal needs. At its most basic—but most profound—level, writing is about making choices, and this course teaches you how to identify other writers’ choices and how to make your own across a variety of writing situations.

Each section of the Blugold Seminar focuses on a different theme, topic, or question. In this particular course, we will investigate the various connections between animals and humans, as well as what our interactions with one another might teach us. If animals aren’t your preferred subject, don’t worry; the theme is simply a lens through which we can study rhetoric and critical thinking.

## University Learning Outcomes

The Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing is a course required by the University, and as such, it coheres with the goals of an Eau Claire education, which include:

- Respect for diversity among people;
- Knowledge of human cultures and the natural world;
- Creative and critical thinking;
- Effective communication;
- Individual and social responsibility.

## Course Goals

All Blugold Seminars are organized around the same goals. These learning outcomes will be used in part to assess your progress this term and your success in the course.

### *Rhetorical Knowledge*

Students will be able to:

- Understand and apply a variety of key rhetorical terms and concepts in their reading, writing, and research;
- Demonstrate rhetorical awareness pertaining to the conventions of Academic English by using conventions of appropriate tone, style, format, and structure in their writing.

### *Inquiry & Research*

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate information literacy skills by finding and evaluating a variety of source materials;
- Demonstrate critical reading skills by summarizing, paraphrasing, analyzing, and synthesizing information from a variety of source materials in their writing;
- Formulate viable research questions, hypotheses, and conclusions;
- Understand the extent and nature of the sources needed to meet rhetorical goals within a specific writing situation;
- Learn how to participate ethically and responsibly in the inquiry and research process.

### *Writing Craft*

Students will be able to:

- Assess accurately the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing, and develop individual plans for revision and improvement;
- Understand and enact revision as substantive change;
- Identify and prioritize a range of writing concerns in their work and others'.

### *Digital Literacy*

Students will be able to:

- Use a variety of technology tools to collaborate, compose and revise;
- Use a variety of digital and multimedia sources critically;
- Understand that images, sounds, animations—in addition to words—are all integral parts of effective communication.

## Course Requirements

Throughout this course, you will compose four major papers/projects for this course (summary, rhetorical analysis, exploratory essay, multimedia project). You will also compose a self-assessment essay and upload an ePortfolio. When you turn in the final draft of a paper/presentation, you **must** turn in an electronic copy to the Dropbox on D2L and a hard copy in-class. Your work will be deducted five points if your electronic submission is late.

In order to keep all papers in a standard format, please use Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins on all sides. Please staple. Under the “Format” tab in Microsoft Word, click on “Paragraph” and be sure your “Spacing” is set to 0 both “Before” and “After.” All papers are due at the beginning of class. You can use either MLA or APA formatting for citation. Make your choice based on the citation system most useful for your future work.

### Papers/projects

As noted above, you will compose four major papers/projects for this course, not including various other in- and out-of-class writing assignments. Each major paper is the culminating project for each segment of the course, and several (perhaps all) will be linked together so that the work that you do for one paper builds the foundation for the next. That is, the summary skills you develop in segment one will be reapplied in segments two, three, and four. Likewise, the rhetoric skills you develop in segment two will be reapplied in later segments. Thus, the curriculum spirals in such a way that you can expect (and are expected to) continually hone your skills. Below, please find specific information regarding the major graded work.

Segment	Due Date	Possible Points	Word Count
“Reading the Conversations”	2/5	50	See assignment sheet
“Understanding Perspective”	3/5	100	See assignment sheet
“Cultivating Complexity”	4/9	125	See assignment sheet
“Joining the Conversation”	5/7	150	approx. 5 minute iMovie and Project Rationale
Self-Assessment Essay with ePortfolio	5/13, 1:00p.m.	25	See assignment sheet

In addition to these points, 10 additional points can be earned as a result of Reader Responses (see below for more information).

### **Total possible points: 460**

#### Self-Assessment Essay with ePortfolio

The final writing project for the Blugold Seminar is a self-assessment essay where you, the student, use the goals, key terms and focal concepts in the course to make a set of evaluative claims about what you’ve achieved in these areas and how your portfolio represents it. This is a formal, academic essay, usually about 3-5 pages.

#### ePortfolios

**Save everything!** A basic requirement for this course is the submission of an electronic portfolio of your written work for this class. ePortfolios will include the following items:

- Self-Assessment Essay
- Segment One paper
- Segment Two paper
- Segment Three paper
- Segment Four project (including Youtube link—uploaded as “Unlisted”—and Project Rationale)

As noted above, the combination of your self-assessment essay and proper submission of your E-Portfolio will have the potential to earn you 25 points.

### **Reading Responses**

Reading Responses *cannot* be made up and *cannot* be turned in late. In fact, they should serve as an easy way to boost your grade. Expect one to be due at the start of class each night we have a theme-related reading. A dated folder on D2L will correlate with each reading. Your responses should be dropped in to the appropriate folder an hour prior to class.

Your reading responses should be approximately 150-200 words in length. This is a chance for you to do two things: 1.) **summarize** the daily reading and 2.) **reflect** on the rhetorical strategies at work within the piece. In order to receive full credit you will need to adequately summarize the piece (the main arguments, thesis, etc.) as well as reflect on how it achieves its purpose from a rhetorical standpoint. The most successful reader responses will also form a bridge or connection between your own life and the reading. Please do not view reader responses as “busy work.” In fact, they are critical to your ability to master the material. It is also an opportunity for you to continue honing your summary and rhetoric skills that will prove vital to your success in this class. Spelling and grammatical errors are unacceptable.

### **Grading**

You need to earn a grade of “C” or higher in this course in order to fulfill the University Writing Requirement for graduation. A grade of “C-“ or below will necessitate retaking the course. Work that does not follow the assignment (though otherwise acceptable) will also receive an “F.” Work that is not done or not turned in is recorded as a zero. All major papers will be graded and returned before the next major assignment is due. The percentage grade breakdown can be found below:

90-100%	A/ A-
80-89%	B+/ B/ B-
74-79%	C+/ C
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70-73%	C-
60-69%	D+/ D/ D-
0-59%	F

### **Course Policies**

#### Attendance

You are required to come to class every day. I am required by the University to take attendance every class period. With the exception of authorized absences, you cannot make up any graded work that was missed. Please see the University’s policy available online at <http://www.uwec.edu/DOS/policies/attendance.htm>

#### Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic misconduct will not be tolerated under any circumstances. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the University’s policy on academic dishonesty and related disciplinary procedures. Ignorance is no excuse for any violations. See <http://www.uwec.edu/dos/Codes/ch14procedure.htm> for this information.

#### Accommodation

Any student who has a disability or is in need of any classroom accommodation should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Old Library 2136, or call 715-836-4542. This office will treat any issue with complete confidentiality and will help put any necessary forms of assistance into place. You can feel free to speak with me as well. I want to do everything in my power to help you succeed in this class and at UW-Eau Claire.

#### Late work

I will only **consider** late work in two cases:

1. If you contact me **ahead of time** (at least 24 hours before the due date) with a legitimate reason for your work not being done (which does NOT include being busy, working, studying for other

classes, etc.), and we work out a different arrangement. I am under no obligation to agree to an extension.

2. And/or, if you provide **documentation of a legitimate reason** for the late work within 24 hours of the due date (such as serious illness, family emergency, etc.)

In both of these cases, depending on the circumstances, you still may not receive full credit for the work. If I do grant you an extension, you will receive a 10-point deduction for each day the paper is late (barring certain situations, of course). In addition, late work may receive credit but little to no comments or feedback from me. In any other case, late work will not be accepted, nor will it receive any credit. However, don't allow poor time management to result in an action that might be academically dishonest. Talk to me, instead.

### Conferences

I strongly encourage you to visit me during my office hours to discuss your questions and concerns with the course and specific assignments.

### Final Exam

The Final Exam for WRIT116.003 will be held during our scheduled final exam period in our regular classroom: **Tuesday, May 13 at 1:00p.m.** This time will be used to upload your e-Portfolio and Self Assessment Essay.

Schedule your travel plans accordingly; I cannot reschedule the exam, give it early, or give makeup exams (except for documented emergencies). Our exam time is dictated by the registrar and cannot be made up.

### Drop/Withdrawal Dates

January 27 is the last day to drop full-semester courses without instructor permission. February 3 is the last day to file withdrawal from the University with no record. April 7 is the last day to withdraw from class. For more information, go here: [http://www.uwec.edu/Registrar/calendar/AcademicRegCal2012\\_13.htm](http://www.uwec.edu/Registrar/calendar/AcademicRegCal2012_13.htm)

### Class Environment

As members of this class, we are members of a larger learning community where excellence is achieved through civility. Our actions affect everyone in our community. Courtesy is reciprocated and extends beyond our local setting, whether in future jobs, classes, or communities. Civility is not learned individually, it is practiced as a community. Therefore, I ask only that you be respectful of your classmates and instructor.

**Text messaging, disruptive cell phones, inappropriate laptop use, or other inappropriate behavior will result in your dismissal from the classroom and force me to count you as absent for the day.**

Please do not be late. Please do not sleep. Please observe the rules of common courtesy.

The Blugold Seminar is a combined lecture and discussion course. This means that, in part, all students are responsible for contributing to both their own learning experience and the learning experience of others. Because the contribution of ideas from each student is critical to the learning process, any behavior that makes other students feel uncomfortable in their learning environment will not be tolerated. This includes interrupting others while they are talking, carrying on conversations separate from the class discussion, or making comments that could be perceived as racially, sexually, ethnically, culturally or in any other way offensive. As a Safe Space trained faculty member, I try to be particularly mindful of these matters. Please make every effort to maintain an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable sharing and responding to ideas. I look forward to treating students with the utmost respect and offering each the opportunity to succeed.

It's easy to downplay the importance of the classroom environment. However, our ability to learn together is dependent in our ability to trust one another and feel comfortable in the classroom. The most successful classes I've ever been a part of are those that understand the importance of mutual respect.

Consider this quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope." In short (and this applies to women, too, of course, though Emerson apparently ignores the female gender here), we learn best when we are sincere about our pursuit. Don't skim the reading on the walk over. As Emerson says, your genius will desert you.

### **Email Etiquette**

Remember: I am your English professor, and therefore, it is your responsibility to compose your emails in a formal tone. Begin with "Dear Professor Hollars" or "Dear Mr. Hollars" or "Dear B.J." Be sure to email your question in grammatical English and conclude with "Sincerely, [insert your name here]". We need to uphold the standards of email etiquette because you will need to observe professionalism throughout your academic careers as well as in the workplace. **Also, please reserve email for pressing concerns that cannot wait to be answered during our next class period. Oftentimes a student's question can benefit the whole class.** Due to my responsibilities beyond the classroom, I will be most accessible to email during normal business hours (9-5p.m.).

### **The Practical Application of the Blugold Seminar**

You may be thinking, "What good will the Blugold Seminar be for me? After all, I don't plan on being an English major." This class is not solely for English majors. Not by a long shot. In fact, every student at this university will take this class and very few of them are English majors. While writing will play a critical role throughout the term, we'll be spending the majority of our time learning how to analyze rhetorical situations and apply rhetoric in our lives. We're working together to make ourselves better thinkers, better able to read a situation and know how to respond most effectively. There is a very practical use for the information we're striving to acquire. It can be applied to virtually anything—a roommate dispute, a conversation with a professor, an interaction with your parents. Persuasion is practical, and by extension, so is rhetoric.

### **Joining the Conversation**

In an effort to fulfill liberal education learning goals set forth by the university, you may be required to attend 2 outside readings/events this term. I will provide you with more information.

### **The Center for Writing Excellence**

The Center for Writing Excellence is a free service offering individual writing support for all UWEC students, staff, and faculty at any stage of any writing project. Depending on where you are in your writing process when you visit the CWE and what your major concerns are, a session might involve deciding how to approach a particular assignment, identifying a thesis and sculpting a rough outline, reading a rough draft to check for general coherence and clarity, incorporating new material into a revision, addressing problems of grammar and sentence structure, learning how to cite sources properly – or any of a myriad of other questions about writing. It has various locations around campus.

### **Academic Honesty Pledge**

As a member of this class, you understand the importance of adhering to all facets of academic honesty. This means that you will abide by the following statement, as noted by the UWS Chapter 14 Code: <http://www.uwec.edu/DOS/policies/academic/chapter14.htm>

"The Board Of Regents, administrators, faculty, academic staff and students of the University of Wisconsin System believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education and of the University of Wisconsin System. The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions."

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### **Academic Honor Pledge**

I promise or affirm that I will not at any time be involved with cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation while enrolled as a student at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. I have read the Academic Honor Code, which explains disciplinary procedures that will result from the aforementioned.

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(Student's printed name)

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(Student's signature)

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(date)