

ENG 806: Topics in Modern Rhetoric (CRN# 15094, 3 hours)

Special Topic: The Rhetoric of Place-Based Identity

Dr. Dom Ashby, Eastern Kentucky University, Fall 2016

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ENG 806 explores the relationship of place and identity and how notions of place are constructed through language. The course explores theories about place, identity, and their interconnection. Special attention will be given to examples of constructions of Appalachia as a place and identity, although the concepts covered in class can be applied to any place-based identity. We will address the importance of these ideas for literary and rhetorical analysis, writing, and pedagogy.

Required Texts

- Douglas Reichert Powell. *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape*. U. of North Carolina P., 2007.
- Nedra Reynolds. *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference*. Southern Illinois U.P., 2004.
- Toddy Snyder. *The Rhetoric of Appalachian Identity*. Contributions to Southern Appalachian Studies, 36. McFarland, 2014.
- Yi-Fu Tuan. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. U. of Minnesota P., 1977.

Other readings will be provided online via BlackBoard.

POLICIES

Absences

I expect you to attend every class session unless an emergency situation arises. If you are absent for more than one week of class, I reserve the right assign you a failing grade (FA) for the course. Since the class only meets once a week, that means failing if you miss more than one class period without documentation of an emergency. If you anticipate missing more than one class due to existing obligations, talk with me ASAP so we can discuss alternatives.

For the purposes of this course, “excused absences” include **verifiable** medical or family emergencies, university approved activities (accompanied by a university excuse), illness (yours or a family member’s), and other absences as outlined in the University’s “Student Absence from Class” policy:

(http://policies.eku.edu/sites/policies.eku.edu/files/policies/4.1.6_student_absence_adopted_12.1.14.pdf). **Students should be prepared to document the reasons for the absence.** Students

whose absences are not excused will not normally be allowed to make up tests, quizzes, and/or assignments. Students who anticipate having a high number of *excused* absences should contact their instructor as soon as the situation arises so that they can make

arrangements for how to handle missed class time. Late arrival or early departures from class that are unexcused will be considered in the tabulation of absences as well.

Mutual Respect

I encourage vigorous and lively debate in this class and within our university community. However, personal insults involving an individual person's race, class, ability, gender identity, sexuality, and/or veteran status will not be tolerated. Practice empathy and help maintain our classroom and university as a safe and inclusive place.

Disability Accommodation Statement

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you are registered with the ECU Center for Student Accessibility (CSA), please obtain your accommodation letters from the CSA, present them to the course instructor, and discuss the accommodations needed. If you believe you need an accommodation and are not registered with the CSA, please contact the office in 361 Whitlock Building by email at disserv@ecu.edu or by telephone at (859) 622-2933. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in an alternative format.

A student with a "disability" may be an individual with a physical or psychological impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, to include, but not limited to: seeing, hearing, communicating, interacting with others, learning, thinking, concentrating, sitting, standing, lifting, performing manual tasks, working. Additionally, pregnancy accompanied by a medical condition(s), which causes a similar substantial limitation, may also be considered under the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA).

Academic Integrity Statement

Students are advised that ECU's Academic Integrity policy will strictly be enforced in this course. The [Academic Integrity policy](#) is available at the ECU [policy website](#). Questions regarding the policy may be directed to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Assignments and Grading

Reading Responses (200 pts): Identify key terms and concepts. Discuss how they help to conceptualize region and identity; what do they help you to see differently? Practice applying those ideas to an event, place, practice, or text. Raise questions. (About two pages, double spaced. Due weekly.)

Discussion Lead x2 (100 each, 200 total): Working in pairs, take responsibility for two readings during the semester. On your selected days, you and your partner will take charge of 45 minutes of class time. Discuss major concepts, apply them to examples that you'll present to the class, and engage the class with an activity and/or questions. Handouts encouraged. *You do not need to write a reading response for the weeks you lead discussion.*

Research Proposal: Write a 2 page proposal and meet with me outside of class time to discuss your project. Focus on explaining your research questions, the importance of your topic to the field, and the relation of the topic to issues addressed in the course and to your research/professional goals.

Paper 1—Position Paper or Literature Review (200): 4 to 6 pages.

(Option 1) Drawing from course readings and outside research, stake out your position on your topic and make an abbreviated case for that position.

(Option 2) You could instead write a review of research related to your topic. Address the contributions of the sources, how they interact, what trends you see in the research, and what gaps remain. In the conclusion, gesture toward how your research will contribute to this ongoing conversation.

In either case, what you write in this piece may be integrated into your next paper.

Revised Proposal (optional): After completing your lit. review or position statement, if you would like, meet with me again to revisit your project proposal to redirect or refine it.

Paper 2—Term paper (400): 12 to 16 pages. In this paper, critically engage with concepts from the course and apply them to your topic of interest. You may integrate parts or all of paper 1 into this paper, working forward from or expanding upon those ideas. This paper may take a theoretical, analytical, or pedagogical focus—for example, you might:

- explore how several of the theories covered in this course could be brought together productively to form a new theoretical lens
- use some of the concepts to offer a new reading of a text, place, event, or practice, drawing attention to what is productive or revelatory about this new way of seeing
- make a case for how theories of regional identity can be used in the composition classroom.

Grading Scale: A 900–1000, B 800–899, C 700–799, D 600–699, F 0–599

Generally I will not accept late work. In some situations I may accept late work, but with reduced points.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(Schedule is subject to change, with notice)

Week 1

8/22

Course Overview

Sign up for discuss lead days

Class activity—Negotiating Inside and Outside Positionality

Week 2

8/29 Read Jenny Rice, “From Architectonic to Tectonics: Introducing Regional Rhetorics,” PDF.

Douglas Reichert Powell, *Critical Regionalism*, Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 3–31)

Week 3

9/5 Monday—Labor Day, no class meeting

9/7 **Wednesday evening, Due Online:** Reading Response to: Bennedict Anderson, *From Imagined Communities*. Introduction and chapters 1 & 2, PDF.

Week 4

9/12 Powell, chapters 3 & 4 (pp. 100–186)

Week 5

9/19 Todd Snyder, *The Rhetoric of Appalachian Identity*, Prelude, Introduction, and Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1–53)

Three short essays on Appalachian identity: Wilkinson, “On Being ‘Country’: One Affrilachian Woman’s Return Home,” Fisher, “Appalachian Stepchild,” and Hall, “If There’s One Thing You can Tell Them, It’s that You’re Free.” PDF.

Week 6

9/26 Snyder chapters 3 & 4 (pp. 55–94)

Due: Project Proposal—schedule a time to meet with me this week. Your proposal is due at the time of your meeting.

Week 7

10/3 Snyder chapter 5 (pp. 95–116)

Sara Webb-Sunderhaus. “A Family Affair: Competing Sponsors of Literacy in Appalachian Students’ Lives.” PDF.

Week 8

10/10 From *Why Place Matters: Geography, Identity, and Civic Life in Modern America* (PDF):

Jacoby, Russell. “Cosmopolitanism and Place” pp. 70–83.

Mitchell, Mark. “Making Places: The Cosmopolitan Temptation.” 84–101.

Amato, Joseph. “Local History: A Way to Place and Home.” 215–237.

Week 9

10/17–10/18 Monday & Tuesday—Fall Break, no classes

No assignments due this week, but paper 1 and a full week of readings due next week.

Week 10

10/24 **Due: Paper 1**

Nedra Reynolds, *Geographies of Writing*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Week 11

10/31 Reynolds, chapters 2 and 3

Week 12

11/7 Reynolds chapters 4 & 5

Week 13

11/14 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, chapters 1, 2, and 4.
Dom Ashby, "Uchi/Soto in Japan" PDF

Week 14

11/21 Tuan chapters 5, 6, & 7
Doreen Massey, from *Space, Place, and Gender*. 177–190, PDF

Week 15

11/28 Tuan chapters 8, 9, and 13.
Massey, "Politics and Space/Time," PDF

Week 16

12/5 Workshop Drafts—bring in two copies of your draft for peer review.

Finals Week

Due: Paper 2