

POETICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

RACE, IMMIGRATION, & THE ENVIRONMENT

Serve-Learn-Sustain

This iGniTe First Year Summer Launch Program course is affiliated with Serve-Learn-Sustain (SLS), a Georgia Tech program that facilitates real-world learning, on campus and off, to contribute to the task of “creating sustainable communities.” During an on-campus face-to-face semester, this would allow our class to engage in multiple off-campus events and volunteer opportunities. For our current asynchronous online semester, SLS has engaged with a group of community partners to create videos and other online content that will allow us to continue these important real-world partnerships and learning experiences.

Course Texts

alphabet by Inger Christensen (trans. Susanna Need)—PDF on Canvas

Schizophrenie by Bhanu Kapil

The Grave on the Wall by Brandon Shimoda

Course Description

Utilizing our WOVEN curriculum, this course will explore the intersections of race, immigration, and the environment as urgent social, political, and ecological issues through the lens of poetry. By reading across a global lineage of poets, students will learn about the historical and contemporary intersections of race, immigration, and environmental issues in order to create multimodal artifacts that engage with what we will refer to as a “poetics of sustainability.” The course’s primary questions will be: How does poetry as a genre allow us to confront these complex issues? How do these writers and artists allow us to articulate a more equitable future for communities facing challenges related to racial injustice, inequity, environmental crises, and environmental racism? What do these issues, especially related to immigration, look like here in Atlanta? Where and how do issues of race and the environment overlap as we consider rhetorical strategies for articulating our questions, ideas, and solutions related to identity, nationality, history, nature, and culture?



Dr. Sturm's Contact Info

nicholas.sturm@lmc.gatech.edu

Office hours will be held regularly (sometimes daily) via BlueJeans

Artifact 1

Experimental Index: In groups, students will create experimental indexes for Inger Christensen's *alphabet* that track the sequence's references to science, metaphysics, time, the human, and the nonhuman.

Artifact 2

Documentary Reading: Students will work individually to create a photo-textual documentary that traces the act of reading and thinking through Bhanu Kapil's poetry.

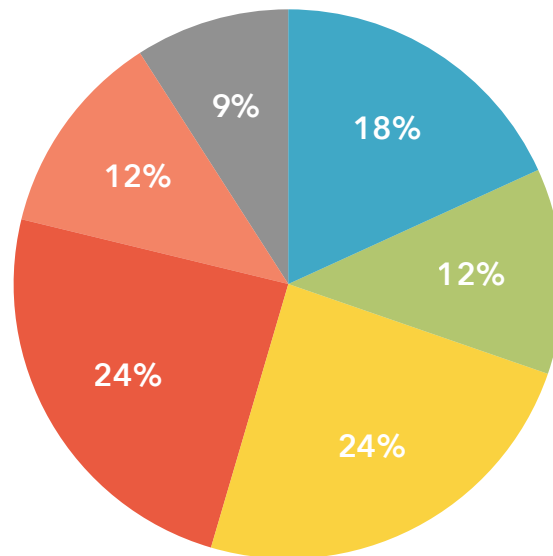
Artifact 3

Poetics of (Un)Sustainability: Borders, Citizenship, Diaspora, and Memory: In groups, students will produce multimodal websites that investigate and analyze the writing of Bhanu Kapil and Brandon Shimoda as well as the historical and contemporary political and cultural relationships constructed in their books. This project will also incorporate information provided by the Innovation Law Lab, a nonprofit that advocates for immigrant and refugee justice, about how the current crisis is affecting immigrant communities and asylum seekers in Atlanta.

Assignments

Students will complete three primary artifacts, a final reflective portfolio, and participate in a set of linked events both for the iGniTe program and for this course. Assignments will include individual work and group collaboration, pairing our in-class discussion of critical and creative texts with our real-world participation in conversations about development, equity, and sustainability.

- Artifact 1: 150 points
- Artifact 2: 150 points
- Artifact 3: 200 points
- Reflective Portfolio: 200 points
- Participation: 100 points
- Questionnaires: 100 points



Along with the reflective portfolio, which functions as the final exam for this course, students' participation grade is a significant portion of the total grade. The participation grade reflects students' engagement with course material as well as their collaborative engagement with peers during group work, meetings, and other course-related responsibilities. A series of assignments called questionnaires will accompany each required course reading. Each questionnaire includes a series of generative and reflective questions designed to help students consider primary themes and topics related to the books we read. Questionnaires will be graded based on meaningful, specific engagement with the readings and timely completion.

COURSE SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR UPDATE AT ANY TIME

Week 1	IN-CLASS	WHAT TO DO
Wednesday, June 17	Attend synchronous 1 hour meeting for introduction to the course and to watch the short film "Plastic Bag" @ Time to be Announced	Acquire required texts ASAP: purchase Kapil and Shimoda books (ebook or physical copies OK)
Thursday, June 28	Attend synchronous 1 hour meeting to discuss poem packet @ Time to be Announced	Read poem packet, attend a synchronous 1 hour meeting with Dr. Sturm
Week 2		
Monday, June 22	Attend synchronous half hour meeting with group members to discuss <i>alphabet</i>	Read <i>alphabet</i> by Inger Christensen; DUE: Questionnaire #1 @ 10am EST
Tuesday, June 23	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Collaborate w/group on Artifact #1 process
Wednesday, June 24	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Collaborate w/group on Artifact #1 process
Thursday, June 25	Attend synchronous half hour meeting with group members to discuss Artifact #1	Collaborate w/group on Artifact #1 process; prepare for synchronous group meeting with Dr. Sturm; DUE: Artifact #1 due Sunday June 28 @ 11:59pm EST
Week 3		
Monday, June 29	Attend synchronous half hour meeting with group members to discuss <i>Schizophrene</i>	Read <i>Schizophrene</i> by Bhanu Kapil; DUE: Questionnaire #2 @ 10am EST
Tuesday, June 30	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Work individually on Artifact #2
Wednesday, July 1	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Work individually on Artifact #2
Thursday, July 2	School Break	NO CLASS; DUE: Artifact #2 due Sunday July 5 @ 11:59pm EST
Week 4		

Monday, July 6	Attend synchronous half hour meeting with group members to discuss assigned section of <i>The Grave on the Wall</i>	Read pg 1-78 in <i>The Grave on the Wall</i> by Brandon Shimoda
Tuesday, July 7	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Read pg 79-111 in <i>Grave</i> ; DUE: Questionnaire #3 @ 10am EST
Wednesday, July 8	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Read pg 112-155 in <i>Grave</i>
Thursday, July 9	Attend synchronous half hour meeting with group members to discuss <i>The Grave on the Wall</i>	Read pg 156-200 in <i>Grave</i>
Week 5		
Monday, July 13	Attend synchronous half hour meeting with group members to discuss Artifact #3 progress	DUE: Questionnaire #4 @ 10am EST
Tuesday, July 14	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Collaborate w/group on Artifact #3 process
Wednesday, July 15	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Collaborate w/group on Artifact #3 process
Thursday, July 16	Attend synchronous half hour meeting with group members to discuss Artifact #3 progress	Collaborate w/group on Artifact #3 process
Week 6		
Monday, July 20	Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	Collaborate w/group on Artifact #3 process
Tuesday, July 21	Final Instructional Day; Attend synchronous half hour meeting to discuss Final Portfolio	DUE: Artifact #3 @ 11:59pm EST
Wednesday, July 22	Reading Period; Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	NO CLASS; Complete initial formatting of Canvas portfolio & prepare draft of reflective essay
Thursday, July 23	Reading Period; Dr. Sturm available for Office Hours	NO CLASS
Week 7		
Wednesday, July 29		DUE: Final Reflective Portfolio @ 11:59pm EST

Serve-Learn-Sustain

This course is part of Georgia Tech's Serve-Learn-Sustain (SLS) initiative, uniting classroom learning with community action. SLS works with all six colleges to offer courses and programs connecting sustainability and community engagement with real-world partners and projects, allowing students to use their disciplinary expertise related to science and technology to help "create sustainable communities" where humans and nature flourish, now and in the future, in Georgia, the U.S., and around the globe. More information about SLS can be found at www.serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu. Visit the website to sign up for the [SLS Email List](#), view the full list of [affiliated courses](#), and find links to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

SLS Equitable & Sustainable Development: Key Concepts

- **Infrastructure serves multiple purposes.**

Sometimes we look at a major infrastructure project and focus on one of its functions, but good infrastructure can serve several functions. The BeltLine provides a transportation corridor for transit, walking, and biking, while it also mitigates flooding, creates business opportunities, restores greenspace, and showcases artists.

- **Development decisions impact both human and non-human life.**

Humans are just one piece of a complex and dynamic system. Therefore, our decisions need to take all forms of life into consideration. For example, the City of Seattle requires a proportion of new development to include vegetation, which offsets a portion of habitat loss attributed to development.

- **Values influence development decisions.**

Individuals and communities (professional, geographical, cultural, socioeconomic) bring their values and beliefs to every decision, whether they mean to or not. These values impact infrastructure development. For instance, a city may transform a vacant lot into a community garden, but if neighborhood residents do not value farming or lack proper guidance, then the garden may fall into disrepair.

- **Infrastructure development impacts different communities in different ways.**

Because infrastructure projects have multiple uses and multiple effects, we must consider why each project is being built, and whom it serves. Development outcomes have different impacts on different groups, and what may be useful to one group may be neutral or even harmful to another. For example, the Old Fourth Ward Skate Park serves as a social and recreational space for youth, but some nearby homeowners view it as a nuisance because it brings noise.

- **Your voice is a powerful and necessary tool in assuring that large development projects benefit existing communities and benefit nature.**

Government and business entities almost always end up controlling large development projects. To ensure that these projects benefit communities, individuals and communities need to organize and act. They must use their experiences and expertise to contribute a strong voice, one that will influence the direction of projects that impact, for example, the closing of neighborhood schools, a large infrastructural endeavor that impacts local educational practices and access to quality schooling in one's neighborhood.

Objectives

The Writing and Communication Program has common goals that apply to every course we teach:

- The goal of classes in the Writing and Communication Program is for students to develop competence in all communication modalities (written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal) and to understand how effective communication balances multiple modalities thoughtfully and synergistically.
- The goal in every project should help students develop deep understanding of the genre on which the project focuses and the rhetorical processes involved in creating examples of that genre.
- The goal for every student should be to create purposeful, audience-directed artifacts that present well-supported arguments using appropriate conventions of written, oral, visual, and/or nonverbal communication, regardless of the mode and medium.

In addition to these common objectives, students will:

- Develop individual processes of multimodal communication
- Develop and hone both critical thinking skills and an aesthetic awareness of critical issues
- Learn to approach all texts (visual, written, digital, etc.) through a critical lens

Statement on Asynchronous-Synchronous Mixed Instruction

This course will be primarily asynchronous with weekly synchronous group meetings with peers and your instructor through BlueJeans. Synchronous group meetings will be scheduled based on student availability with maximum allowances for alternatives, emergency situations, and technological access.

Policies

The Writing & Communication Program has standard policies for English 1102 which you should familiarize yourself with [here](#). These include:

- Georgia Tech General Education Outcomes for English 1101 and English 1102
- Learning Outcomes for English 1101 and English 1102
- Evaluation Equivalencies
- Evaluation Rubric
- Course Completion
- Attendance
- Required Textbook
- Dean of Students and Counseling Center
- Safety
- Participation in Class
- Non-Discrimination
- Communication Center
- Accommodations (Office of Disability Services)
- Academic Misconduct
- Syllabus Modifications
- Final Instructional Class Days and Reading Periods
- Multimodal Reflection Portfolio and Canvas

You are required to acknowledge that you have read, understood, and intend to comply with these policies. In addition to these policies, I have my own policies for this course in particular, including:

Late Assignments

I am willing to grant extensions requested by email no less than twenty-four hours prior to an artifact's due date. Except for exceptional situations, granted extensions will not exceed an additional day in which to complete the artifact. Questionnaires turned in less than 12 hours late will be accepted for 50% credit. Questionnaires turned in more than 12 hours late will not be accepted.

Missing and Missed Assignments

Except for absences officially exempted by the Institute or exceptional and unanticipated situations, I do not allow students to make up missed quizzes, presentations, or in-class assignments. Missing work is counted as a "zero."

Revision of Assignments

Revision will constitute a significant part of our class, and play a role in each major assignment. In some cases, I may request that students engage in additional revision, beyond the requirements of the peer review process, in which case you will be notified and instructed accordingly.

Attendance

In addition to the WCP Common Policies statement on attendance, please note the follow policy specific to this course: Each absence after missing three (3) classes will result in deduction of 25 points (equivalent to 5% or half a letter grade) from your final point total. Missing 6 classes results in automatic failure of the course.

Workload

Students should expect an average of 100 pages of reading or 6 hours of viewing/listening time (or some combination of the two) outside of class. Reading/viewing/listening loads will be significantly lighter in weeks when major assignments are the primary concern.

Mature Themes

Quite often, course materials and class discussions will deal with issues of sexuality, race, and violence. In such cases I expect students to be respectful and to approach both the material, your classmates, and me with the utmost maturity. If students are at any point uncomfortable with these issues, I encourage you to come speak with me as soon as possible. More broadly, it is your responsibility to participate in this class with maturity and academic professionalism.

Conferences and Office Hours

I will regularly hold office hours every week at the time and place listed at the top of this syllabus. Appointments can be scheduled via email in advance, and walk-in appointments are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you need to meet with me outside of my regular office hours, this will be accommodated to the best of my ability. Occasionally, I will require students to meet with me in my office individually and in groups—sign-up sheets will be distributed in advance. I encourage students to visit my office hours as frequently as you like: whether it be to discuss course materials, project ideas, revision, or just to talk about the course.

Title IX at Georgia Tech

The Title IX Coordinator is the designated Institute official with primary responsibility for coordinating the compliance with Title IX. This includes providing leadership for Title IX activities; providing consultation, education and training; and helping to ensure the Institute responds appropriately, effectively and equitably to Title IX issues. Contact information for the Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Coordinators is [here](#).