

**RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies**

**Critical Reading and Writing II**  
***Reading and Writing Place***

Course: 40592.CRWT102.26 (4 credits)  
Term: Fall 2016  
Class time: MR, 6:00-7:40pm  
Location: G-238

Instructor: Blevin Shelnut  
Email: mshelnut@ramapo.edu  
Office hours: MR, 4:45-5:45pm  
Office: B-221

**Catalog Course Description:**

This course aims to help students develop the skills required to think and write critically about a variety of texts. Students will learn techniques for performing close reading and critical analysis of texts, which they will illustrate by composing thoroughly revised essays. The majority of this course will be devoted to research methods, information literacy, revision strategies, MLA formatting, and the development of longer research papers. Students will learn to support their ideas and arguments using textual evidence drawn from appropriate primary and secondary sources. The course will include peer review workshops, one-on-one conferences with the instructor, and supplemental instruction provided by the Center for Reading and Writing.

**Our Class:**

In this course, we will develop skills in critical reading, writing, and thinking by exploring the concept of “place.” Notions and experiences of place can involve the very personal (your sense of where you’re from, the physical environments that make up your daily life) as well as the very political (the boundaries of a territory, its contested governance or occupation). The study of place thus offers an ideal framework for engaging different kinds of intellectual conversations and understanding the stakes of being able to participate in them. As we’ll see, debates about place have an important part to play in shaping who we are—as individuals, scholars, members of Ramapo College, and national citizens—and how we relate to the world around us. We will read texts written by a range of authors in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, considering how diverse thinkers have grappled with the idea of place, our abilities to describe and account for the places in which we live, and the payoffs of doing so. Questions to be considered include: What are the power dynamics that shape the ways we make meaning of places? What is the relationship between writing and place, and what can it tell us about the formation of individual, cultural, and national identities?

**Statement about Writing Intensive Course:**

This is a Writing Intensive course. Writing will be integrated into the life of this course. You will receive comments, direction, and support as you work on strengthening your writing skills. Your writing will be evaluated and returned in a timely fashion, allowing you to incorporate my comments into your future work. For help outside the classroom, please see me during office hours and/or work with a tutor in the Center for Reading and Writing ([ramapo.edu/crw](http://ramapo.edu/crw)).

### **Required Texts:**

- Cresswell, Tim. *Place: An Introduction*. 2d ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2015.
- Rosenwasser, David, and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*. 7th ed. Stamford: Cengage, 2015.
- You are also required to read, print, and bring to class all articles on Moodle.

### **Recommended Texts:**

- Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*. 8th ed. New York: Macmillan, 2016.
- *MLA Handbook*. 8th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2016.

### **Goals:**

In this course, you will:

- explore various modes of intellectual inquiry
- engage the ideas of others in a substantive way
- practice writing as a process with a series of flexible strategies and steps
- conduct collaborative, digital, and archival research
- develop your own critical perspective about the relationship between writing and place

### **Measurable Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

#### Outcome: Critical Inquiry

- clearly state and comprehensively describe issues or problems presented to you, providing all the relevant information necessary for your full understanding.
- identify your own and others' assumptions in discussing several relevant contexts when presenting a position.
- take a specific position on an issue (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) that takes into account the complexities of the issue.
- acknowledge others' points of view within a position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).

#### Outcome: Communication

- formulate a thesis, as appropriate for the oral or written communication task being undertaken.
- develop and present coherent arguments in ways that are effective for the intended audience.

#### Outcome: Information Literacy

- determine information needed and use information technology to find/access it.
- evaluate found information/sources and use them effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
- understand the economic, legal, ethical, and social implications of accessing information.

## **Course Requirements:**

### Attendance, Participation, and Moodle Posts

You're allowed two unexcused absences. A third absence will reduce your grade for the course by one-third of a letter grade (A to A-, etc.). A fourth absence will reduce your grade by an entire letter grade (A to B, etc.). More than four absences results in failing the course. College policy states that students must notify me within the first three weeks of the semester if they anticipate missing classes due to religious observance.

You're expected to come to class on time and having printed, read, and annotated the reading. During class, you're expected to take notes while actively and courteously engaging with me and your peers. Arriving after I've taken roll, leaving before class is over, using electronic devices, or otherwise being off-task in class will result in your being marked absent.

The success of this course depends on your being prepared to participate meaningfully in class discussion. To that end, you will be asked during Weeks 3-8 to post to Moodle by 4:00 pm each Thursday a response to our assigned readings. The response should identify a specific passage that you found interesting, summarize what the passage is about, and describe why you found it interesting, considering the passage's relation to the text as a whole.

### Work in the Center for Reading and Writing

You are expected to spend at least five hours in the Center for Reading and Writing during the semester. You may attend workshops or meet individually with a tutor. After a workshop, you will submit a one-page summary of what you learned. If you meet with a tutor, you will ask them to notify me of your meeting. Information about both options is available at [ramapo.edu/crw](http://ramapo.edu/crw).

### Peer-Review Exercises

A large part of this course is sharing your work with your peers during the writing process. You will be responsible for providing constructive, thoughtful feedback on one another's work in the form of peer reviews. This feedback will help you revise and strengthen your ideas and writing.

### Archive Presentation

This course includes an introduction to archival research and the resources available at Potter Library. In Week 9, we'll visit the College Archives. In small groups, you'll select an issue of the student newspaper, from any point in its history, to explore. You and your group will produce a collaborative analysis about how the issue relates to readings from the first part of the course, along with a reflection on what you learned about archival research.

### Written Assignments

*Papers should be typed in 12-point Times font with one-inch margins and formatted according to MLA guidelines. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade for each day late. All assignments must be submitted to receive a passing grade for the course.*

In the first half of the semester, we will examine readings about the concept of place and the meaning of specific places in American culture. You will compose three short papers, each geared to a different task: 1) analyzing a place of your choosing, which you will observe during

time allotted for our third class; 2) summarizing and evaluating a critical reading about place; and 3) putting that critical reading into conversation with another place to develop your own interpretation of its argument. The second half of the course will be dedicated to the development of your final writing project. Using archival and scholarly texts, you will develop a historically informed research paper (eight pages) that analyzes how a certain mode of writing about a place has shaped the way that place has been used, experienced, or understood. You will also be asked throughout the course to practice writing through Moodle posts, in-class free-writes, and quizzes.

### **Grade Distribution and Scale:**

*A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, etc.*

- 5% Peer-review exercises
- 5% Work in the Center for Reading and Writing
- 10% Archive presentation
- 20% Class participation (including attendance, discussion, Moodle posts, quizzes)
- 30% Short papers (Paper 1 = 5%, Paper 2 = 10%, Paper 3 = 15%)
- 30% Final research paper (including proposal and annotated bibliography)

### **Policies**

#### Electronic Forms of Communication

In accordance with College policy, I will use your Ramapo College address when I communicate by email about course-related matters. You will use our class Moodle site ([moodle.ramapo.edu](http://moodle.ramapo.edu)), to access assignment prompts, download readings, and submit written assignments.

#### Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Words and ideas that come from another person must be cited in your writing. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, which will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly the course. You're expected to read and understand Ramapo College's Academic Policy, which can be found in the College Catalog ([ramapo.edu/catalog-2016-2017/academic-policies](http://ramapo.edu/catalog-2016-2017/academic-policies)), and to be honest and forthright in your academic endeavors. Students who are suspected of violating this policy will be referred to the Office of the Provost.

#### Students with Disabilities

If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a disability that has been documented with the Office of Specialized Services, please let me know. The Office of Specialized Services ([ramapo.edu/oss](http://ramapo.edu/oss)) can be reached at 201.684.7514 or [oss@ramapo.edu](mailto:oss@ramapo.edu).

### **Prospective Schedule:**

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** *This schedule is subject to revisions, which will be announced in class or by email.*

#### Week 1: Introductions

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R, 9/8      Introductions to the course and one another

## Week 2: Key Concepts

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- M, 9/12 Rosenwasser, Ch. 1, "The Analytical Frame of Mind," p. 1-10  
Cresswell, Introduction, "Defining Place," p. 1-22
- R, 9/15 Individual site visits for Short Paper 1  
Before site visit, read Rosenwasser, Ch. 1, "Counterproductive Habits" and "The Five Analytical Moves," p. 10-37

## Week 3: Place and Practice

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- M, 9/19 Discuss Rosenwasser, Ch. 1, "Counterproductive Habits" and "The Five Analytical Moves," p. 10-37  
**Due: Short Paper 1**
- R, 9/22 Cresswell, "Place, Practice, and Process," p. 62-71  
Laura Ogden, "The Travels of Snakes, Mangroves, and Men" (*Swamplife: People Gators, and Mangroves Entangled in the Everglades*, Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2011), p. 73-90  
**Due: Moodle Post 1, 4:00pm**

## Week 4: Rhetorics of Place

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- M, 9/26 Rosenwasser, Ch. 2, "Reading Analytically," p. 39-70
- R, 9/29 Cresswell, "Place and Memory," p. 119-128  
Cresswell, "Place and Art," p. 150-160  
Robert Smithson, "The Monuments of Passaic" (*Artforum* Vol. 6, No. 4, 1967, reprinted in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, Berkeley: U of California P, 1996), p. 68-74  
**Due: Moodle Post 2, 4:00pm**

## Week 5: Reading Places

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- M, 10/3 Rosenwasser, Ch. 5, "Interpretation," p. 119-146
- R, 10/6 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Man of the Crowd" (*Graham's Magazine* Vol. 7, No. 6, 1840), p. 267-270  
Kevin J. Hayes, "Visual Culture and the Word in Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Man of the Crowd'" (*Nineteenth-Century Literature* Vol. 5, No. 4, 2002), p. 445-465  
**Due: Moodle Post 3, 4:00pm**

## Week 6: Place and the Environment

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M, 10/10 Rosenwasser, Ch. 4, “Reasoning from Evidence to Claims,” p. 89-118

**Due: Short Paper 2**

R, 10/13 Vanez T. Wilson and Rachel Carson, “Bear River: A National Wildlife Refuge”  
(*Conservation in Action* No. 8, 1950), p. 1-13

Bryan G. Norton and Bruce Hannon, “Environmental Values: A Place-Based Theory”  
(*Environmental Ethics* Vol. 19, No. 3, 1997), p. 227-245

**Due: Moodle Post 4, 4:00pm**

## Week 7: Internet and Place

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M, 10/17 Rosenwasser, Ch. 6, “Finding and Evolving a Thesis,” p. 147-180

R, 10/20 Cresswell, “Digital Place,” p. 144-150

Matthew A. Zook and Mark Graham, “The Creative Reconstruction of the Internet:  
Google and the Privatization of Cyberspace and DigiPlace” (*Geoforum* Vol. 38, No.  
6, 2007), p. 1322-1343

**Due: Moodle Post 5, 4:00pm**

## Week 8: People Displaced

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M, 10/24 Rosenwasser, Ch. 7, “Conversing with Sources,” p. 181-206

R, 10/27 Cresswell, “The Homeless – People without Place,” p. 173-186

Rob Kitchin, “‘Out of Place’ [. . .]: Space, Power and the Exclusion of Disabled  
People” (*Disability & Society* Vol. 13, No. 3, 1998), p. 343-356

**Due: Moodle Post 6, 4:00pm**

## Week 9: Evidence and History

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M, 10/31 Archive workshop—meet in Potter Library

**Due: Short Paper 3**

R, 11/3 **Archive presentations**

## Week 10: From Research to Analysis

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M, 11/7 Rosenwasser, Ch. 8, “Finding, Evaluating, and Citing Sources,” p. 207-220

Information literacy workshop—meet in Potter Library

R, 11/10 Research and brainstorming workshop—bring your laptops to class

Week 11: Formulating Beginnings

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M, 11/14 Rosenwasser, Ch. 9, “From Paragraphs to Papers,” p. 229-262

R, 11/17 Writing workshop  
**Due: Proposal and Annotated Bibliography**

Week 12: Drafting

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M, 11/21 Individual conferences

R, 11/24 Thanksgiving

Week 13: Analyzing Model Arguments

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M, 11/28 William Wyckoff and Lary M. Dilsaver, “Promotional Imagery of Glacier National Park” (*Geographical Review*, Vo. 87, No. 1, 1997), p. 1-26

R, 12/1 Ann Marie Murnaghan, “The City, the Country, and Toronto’s Bloor Viaduct, 1897-1919” (*Urban History Review*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2013), p. 41-50

Week 14: Some Thoughts on Style

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M, 12/5 Rosenwasser, Ch. 10, “Style: Choosing Words, Shaping Sentences,” p. 263-304

R, 12/8 Writing workshop  
**Due: Draft of Final Paper**

Week 15: Revising

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M, 12/12 Rosenwasser, Ch. 11, “Nine Basic Writing Errors and How to Fix Them,” p. 305-332

R, 12/15 Writing workshop

Week 16: Finals

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R, 12/22 **Due: Final Paper**