

# Writing through Media

## *Visualizing Environments*

### Level

First-year to mid-level undergraduate media writing course

### Themes

- Public Advocacy Writing
- Place-Based Writing
- Locative Media
- Social Media Writing
- Digital & Visual Rhetoric

### Key Texts

Carl Herndl, *Sustainability: A Reader for Writers*

Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*

Sean Morey, “Florida Econography and the Ugly Cuteness of Econs”

Laurie Gries, “Iconographic Tracking”

Nathaniel Rivers, “Geocomposition in Public Writing and Rhetoric”

Mark Skwarek, “Augmented Reality Activism”

John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?”

Casey Boyle and Nathaniel Rivers, “Augmented Publics”

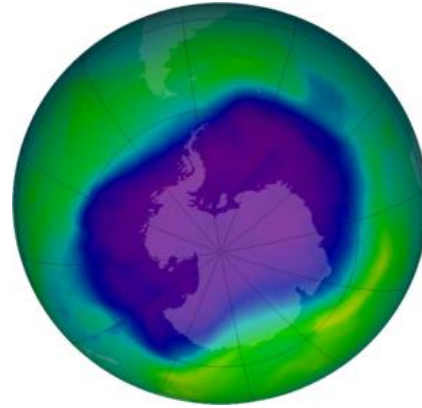
Don DeLillo, *White Noise*

*Walden, A Game* (waldengame.com)

Tactical Tech, *Visualizing Information for Advocacy Handbook*

Charlie Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*

Matt Barton, James Kalmbach, and Charles Lowe, *Web Writing Style Guide* (Online at [Writingspaces.org](http://Writingspaces.org)).



Visualization of the Ozone Hole via Wikimedia

Visual media played an important role in the emergence of the American environmental movements of the 1970s and 80s. Rhetorically compelling photographs of the earth from space, images of the surface of the earth, and visualizations of the ozone hole all helped catalyze a public environmental imagination. Today, digital media offer new ways to make ecological issues visible to publics.

Writing through EcoMedia focuses on digital representations of the environment, including technologies such as GIS maps, augmented reality, gaming, and image tracking. Course topics explore how environments are mediated and visualized in science and popular media. The course will also explore what it means to read and write in digital environments. Students will write across multimodal platforms, research environmental topics, and produce visualizations relating to environmental issues. The readings and assignments for this course include work in technology, sciences, and the humanities, and students can expect to gain interdisciplinary technical and rhetorical knowledge as they gain writing expertise.

### Learning Outcomes

- Analyze the rhetoric of visual media
- Create and design rhetorically compelling multimedia content
- Workshop and revise media projects
- Understand the importance of public engagement with environmental issues
- Utilize place-based elements of writing using locative media
- Conduct quantitative research

<b>Major Assignments</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>/100</b>
<p><b>Sustainability Blog, 2500 words (500 words per post)</b></p> <p>Throughout the semester, I will ask you to write analytical responses to readings, class discussions, or other relevant topics. Blog posts are focused, crafted, carefully edited and written accessibly for a public audience. They may be assigned in class or for homework. Review the detailed schedule below for specific deadlines. Students will be required to read and respond to two other student posts before the next class.</p>		25
<p><b>Econographic Tracking, 1250 words</b></p> <p>For this project, students will use Zotero to track the circulation of an iconic representation of ecology or an environmental image (what Sean Morey calls an “econ”) using Laurie Gries’ iconographic tracking method. Students will submit a paper describing their research, methodology, and analysis.</p>		20
<p><b>Critical Mapping and Augmented Reality Project, 750 words</b></p> <p>Students will work with either Google Maps, Aurasma, or a combination of the two to create a visualization of an environmental crisis, event, or problem. Students will source videos and images, and create voice-over narration. These videos and brief writings will be embedded either in the map, AR application, or combination of the two. Some projects, such as those dealing with ubiquitous images like brand logos, will be ideally suited for AR, whereas remote, specific locations like the gulf dead zone will be ideal for mapping.</p>		10
<p><b>Memorial ePortfolio, 1500</b></p> <p>The final project will connect the previous work in the class with a website which describes an unseen ecological problem or event. Ideally, it will bring the blog, the Econographic Tracking and Placing Environments projects into conversation using careful research. Students may choose to build an informational, argumentative website, or they may develop a MEMorial as described by Gregory Ulmer in <i>Electronic Monuments</i>. The websites should be written in a descriptive, analytical, reflective, and persuasive manner. Students will build a Wix website which they will workshop the final week of class. Students may split the word count among three modalities in this project (video, audio, and text).</p>		20
<p><b>Class Participation</b></p> <p>Class participation includes contributing to class discussions; coming to class prepared and on time, participating in class activities; providing adequate drafts for group work; participating once per week on Twitter, and paying close attention to lectures and class activities. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session. Because this course relies heavily on workshops, students should bring computers and writing tools to each class meeting. This grade includes minor assignments such as weekly writing as well as other homework and classwork assignments.</p>		25