

Tues 10:10 -11:40 Val 207 (or 204)  
Thurs 10:10-11:40 Val 207 (or 204)  
Thurs. 12:40-2:10 Johnson Science 224 computer rm

Spring 2009  
FYS 188M

### **Rivers of life, human and wildlife**

Instructor: Marilyn Mayer  
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Telephone: 7539 (don't leave message)  
Office Hours: M 10:30-12, T 11:40 -12:30, Th 2:10-3:30  
And by appointment

Mentor: McKenzie Mescon  
mtmesco5@stlawu.edu  
Sunday 6-9 pm Science writing center Madill  
Monday 9-11 pm Science writing center  
Wednesday 12-2 pm WORD studio, ODY  
**Wednesday 9-11 front room of ODY**  
**exclusive Rivers of Life hrs**

### ***Course Description***

Did you know that there are 3.5 million miles of rivers in the U.S.? Too many miles are too polluted for fishing and swimming, have been channelized, have lost their riparian habitat, lie behind dams, or have been dredged for navigation. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that half of the threatened or endangered species in the U.S. depend on rivers and streams. In this seminar, we will investigate these topics and their relevance to the north country through readings, lectures, field trips, research, interviews, class discussions and presentations. Rivers strongly influenced north country settlement and life as a key form of transportation (for people and products), a source of energy, a source of food, and a source of inspiration. We will interview locals and scour archived records to better document some of the Grasse River's historical value and current areas of concern (key habitat or suspected environmentally impacted locations). We will share our findings with the Grasse River Heritage Foundation, the Grasse River Revitalization Committee, and the NY Department of Environmental Conservation. Currently, controversy surrounds a proposal to build a hydroelectric dam near the mouth of the Grasse River. We will investigate the issue as well as why the St. Lawrence River was named one of the 10 most endangered rivers in the U.S. Once educating ourselves, we will teach local school kids and adults to assess water quality of the Grasse River and about the problems faced by the Grasse River.

### ***First Year Seminar Course Goals***

The faculty of the FYP and FYS see themselves as partners and mentors in the process of working with you to acquire the intellectual habits of mind, the writing, speaking, and research skills, and the ethical self-reflection that are at the core of a liberal education. The FYS will ask you to consider new perspectives on the world and your place in it. We hope to open you to new ideas, to help you see the complexity of issues and the complexity of ways in which knowledge gets produced and used in society, to help you evaluate and synthesize information, and to encourage you to see yourself as an active contributor in making the world a better place.

First and foremost among our goals are those related to your abilities to 1) think critically, 2) find, evaluate, synthesize and communicate information (in writing and oral presentation), and 3) construct, support, and communicate an extended argument. To become a good communicator, you need to recognize the important role of your target audience.

The learning goals for your research projects include that you:

- Be introduced to ways of conducting productive and imaginative inquiry and research in order to become a part of the various conversations surrounding issues.

Our research will include finding historical as well as current information, images as well as written information, working with the St Lawrence County Historical Society Archives and SLU Richard F. Brush Gallery and ODY Library Special Collections as well as the regular SLU library collections and databases, searching current and historical newspapers, and interviewing people for unpublished information or for

their oral histories. We will have two research projects: one focusing on an historical aspect of the Grasse River (your choice), and another focusing on a current issue for the Grasse River, Massena Electric Department's proposal to rebuild a dam on the mouth of the Grasse River.

- Learn to differentiate among the various ways that information is produced and presented, between popular and scholarly journals and books, between mainstream and alternative publications, between primary and secondary sources.
- Learn how to evaluate and synthesize information, whether gathered from traditional sources, such as books and journals, or from websites, newspapers, or interviews.
- Begin to develop the skills of critical analysis in the interpretation and use of information gathered from any source.
- Be introduced to the ethical obligations that scholars have to both responsibly represent their sources and inform their readers of the sources of their information, as well as learning, and being held responsible for the proper use of, the conventions of scholarly citation and attribution.
- Present the results of your research through writing, speaking, visual elements, and a multimedia contribution to a course website on the Grasse River, in such a way that you demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of ways. The class will give a public presentation at the St Lawrence County Historical Museum on our findings regarding the history of the Grasse River and publicly communicate (via editorials and the class website) the various arguments concerning the proposed dam at the mouth of the Grasse River.

### *Specific Course Policies for this Seminar*

#### *Attendance & participation*

Daily attendance is required. As a seminar, the course cannot function without each person's full and complete participation. On some days your presence may seem less urgent to you, but it never is: you need to be here to know what's going on, to do your own work, to contribute to the common tasks, be a member of your colleagues' thoughtful and responsive audience. I expect you to be in class, on time and ready to go, every day. Seminar members are partners in the search for knowledge. Much of your learning in this course will occur through articulating your own thoughts, beliefs, and knowledge as well as listening to the ideas of your colleagues.

That having been said, I know that sometimes life intervenes. If it does, I expect you to explain the reason for your absence to me *in person* in a professional way; beforehand if possible, but as soon as you can afterwards if not. Do not simply send me an email or leave a voicemail message, although you are free to do that too. Should you have university-related obligations that may involve missing class, I would like to know about it as soon as you know the specifics.

#### *Transportation*

For both of your research projects, you will need to travel in small groups to various locations in St. Lawrence County. Therefore, if you have a driver's license, you need to become an SLU certified driver.

## Professionalism

While attendance is the first professional expectation required of each student, there are others. You should arrive on time, turn cell phones off, and be ready to work. You should have done the day's reading, you should have the relevant book with you and, as always, you need to have a notebook and something to write with. On days when an assignment is due, it should be ready at the beginning of class and meet the standard expectations (typed, printed legibly, stapled or paper-clipped, properly formatted according to [American Chemical Society \(ACS\)](#) Style (see [www.stlawu.edu/wordstudio/citation.html](http://www.stlawu.edu/wordstudio/citation.html)). On days when you have an oral presentation yourself, you should be organized and ready to go. When one of your colleagues is presenting, you should be a thoughtful and responsive audience.

I will allow up to two unexcused absences without penalty. Beyond two unexplained absences, I will begin to deduct from your final grade (2% per absence).

## Special needs

If you need more time on an exams or need other accommodations for learning, please come talk with me about it right away.

## Late work

Missing the due date (and time) for graded exercises is unacceptable, unless in extreme circumstances. A penalty of 25% per day will be applied to late work. Computer/printer excuses are not allowed. Back up your files and don't procrastinate.

## Required Books and Readings

- Angus, C. *Reflections from canoe country: paddling the waters of the Adirondacks and Canada*. Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, 1997.
- Davis, J. P. *The Rowman & Littlefield Guide to Writing with Sources*. 3rd Edition; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.: New York, 2007.
- Hacker, D. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 5th Edition; St. Martin's Press: Boston, 2008.
- Murray, J.A. (ed.) *The River Reader: A Nature Conservancy Book*; The Lyons Press: New York, 1998.
- You will also be required to complete short readings; for these days, electronic versions of the readings and/or links to the readings will be posted on Angel or a hard copy will be put on reserve reading at the library.
  - Jackson, R.B., S.R. Carpenter, C.N. Dahm, D.M. McKnight, R.J. Naiman, S.L. Postel, S.W. Running. *Water in a changing world*, Issues in Ecology 9, Ecological Society of America, 2001.
  - American Rivers website – [www.americanrivers.org](http://www.americanrivers.org)

## Assignments and Grade Breakdowns

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Class Participation – professionalism:	Every day	5%
Guided reading assignments, short homeworks	Various	5%
Become a certified driver	March 5	required
1st personal reflective piece – a river connection	Jan 27	short homework
Field Trip reflection journal entries	Various	5%
Final reflective piece – river connection	May 7	5%
Science of rivers Exam	Feb 24	10%
Project 1: Historical aspect of the Grasse River		35%
Topic selection	Feb 17	None
Research for information and images	Feb 27	2.5%
Annotated bibliography	March 5	2.5%

<b>Interviews/ Oral history</b>		
Interview 1	March 24	<b>Homework</b> 5%
Interview 2	April 7	
<b>Multimedia Webpage piece</b>		
Draft	March 12	5%
Final version	April 9	15%
Public power point presentation	April 21	5%
<b>Project 2: Group Project-various stakeholders Proposed Dam on Grasse River</b>		<b>25%</b>
Research for information (individual journal)	Fri April 3	2.5%
Annotated bibliography (group)	April 16	2.5%
Thesis, claims, evidence (group)	Fri April 17	5%
Panel presentation/discussion	April 23	5%
Draft position multimedia webpage piece group)	April 28	5%
Final position multimedia webpage piece	May 7	5%
Stream sampling instruction & reflection	May 1	5%
Portfolio	May 7	5%
<b>Extra Credit</b>		
Newspaper article on Grasse R. historical topic	April 28	5%
Newspaper editorial regarding proposed dam	April 28	5%

### *Grading Scale*

4.0 excellent work (≥ 94%)	3.75 (≥ 90%)	3.5 (≥ 87%)	3.25 (≥ 85%)
3.0 good work (≥ 82%)	2.75 (≥ 80%)	2.5 (≥ 77%)	2.25 (≥ 75%)
2.0 below average (≥ 72%)	1.75 (≥ 70%)	1.5 (≥ 67%)	1.25 (≥ 65%)
1.0 poor (≥ 60%)	0 (< 60% failure)		

### *Research Journals/Portfolio*

You are required to keep a research journal documenting the searches you have conducted including: 1) databases used and items found, 2) an annotated bibliography of sources you evaluate, including electronic sources and images, 3) copies of key sources and images. Your research journal will be part of a portfolio of all the work you do in this course. This portfolio will be graded in terms of completeness and organization. Your portfolio should include all of your graded work, reflective journal entries, homeworks, class exercises, presentation powerpoints, and course notes.

### Schedule

<u>Assignments Due</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	
	Jan 20 (T)	Class Introduction	Presidential inauguration
	Jan 22 (Th AM)	Science of Rivers	
	(Th PM)	trip to Falls Island	**Dress warmly**
Reflection	Jan 27 (T)	Science of Rivers	
	Jan 29 (Th AM)	Rivers & humans - sense of place	
	(Th PM)	Visit Brush Art Gallery	
	Feb 2 (T)	Science of Rivers - Human impacts	
	Feb 5 (Th AM)	Humans & Rivers - Human impacts	

<u>Assignments Due</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
	Feb 5 (Th PM)	Overview of Historical Research project & Grasse River
	Feb 10 (T)	Guest lecturer, Roger Bailey, history of Grasse R in Canton Falls Island
	Feb 12 (Th AM)	Field Trip: N and S Branch of Grasse R. <u>bring box lunch</u>
	(Th PM)	Field Trip cont.
Topic chosen	Feb 17 (T)	Library workshop – library research & Refworks
	Feb 19 (Th AM)	workshop special collections
	(Th PM)	special collections research & visit to Word Studio
Exam in class	Feb 24 (T)	Exam – Science of Rivers
Bibliography	Feb 26 (Th AM)	Present & Past discussion Impact of Human Activities
	(Th PM)	Visit SLC Historical Assoc archives
	Mar 3 (T)	Blog Workshop: using digital recorders & uploading audio & video
Ann. Bib.	Mar 5 (Th AM)	Pyrities snowshoe along the Grasse <u>bring box lunch</u>
	(Th PM)	Field trip cont.
	Mar 10 (T)	
Historical draft	Mar 12 (Th AM)	Oral history workshop at TAUNY
	(Th PM)	Google maps workshop
----- March 17 - 19 SPRING BREAK -----		
Interview 1	Mar 24 (T)	Discuss interview experience
	Mar 26 (Th AM)	--- Historical research project conferences
	(Th PM)	--- Historical research project conferences
		Some conferences Fri & possibly Wed
	Mar 31 (T)	Dams & Introduction to Massena Hydro project
	April 2 (Th AM)	Field Trip Massena: NYPA dam & site proposed Grasse R dam
	(Th PM)	Field Trip cont <u>bring box lunch</u>
Hydro ref1 & Hydro bib.	Fri April 3	
Interview 2	Apr 7 (T)	Oral presentation workshop
Historical final	Apr 9 (Th AM)	Field trip – stream water quality sampling <u>bring box lunch</u>
	(Th PM)	Field trip cont.
	Apr 14 (T)	practice historical presentation & critique
Group Ann bib.	Apr 16 (Th AM)	workshop “thesis, claims & evidence”
	(Th PM)	in class work time for groups
Group position draft	Fri April 17	
presentation panel	Apr 21 (T)	Public Presentation History of Grasse River
	Apr 23 (Th AM)	Group Panel presentations - proposed hydroproject
	(Th PM)	Discussion proposed hydroproject
Group draft	Apr 28 (T)	Class final discussion
	Apr 30 (Th AM)	Stream sampling with high school classes
	(Th PM)	Stream sampling with high school classes
Optional -	Sun May 3	Rushton Races: lunch, watch professional racers & participate in Canoe relay race
Finals Week	May 7	: due Portfolio including Final River Reflection and Final group dam project

### *The WORD Studio*

In addition to the help you can receive from me and McKenzie Mescon, the Munn Center for Rhetoric and Communication maintains The WORD Studio in ODY Library—a place to get feedback from peers on assignments in Writing, Oral communication, Research, and Design of visual projects. You can come for a consultation to plan a paper or presentation (you don't need anything but a blank piece of paper!); to find ways to improve the ideas, organization, and style of a draft; to videotape and review a presentation rehearsal; to practice a PowerPoint presentation, and more. Peer tutors are not proofreaders or editors who silently “fix” your work for you; instead, they are trained to have a conversation with you about ways you can fix problem areas yourself and become better overall communicators. You may use The WORD Studio for consultations on assignments for any of your courses, although for FYS assignments you should first seek out McKenzie during her office hours (or hours working at the Word Studio).

The WORD Studio is open Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Check out their on-line resources/guides ([www.stlawu.edu/wordstudio/resources.htm](http://www.stlawu.edu/wordstudio/resources.htm)). Walk-ins are always welcome, or you can call 229-5727 to set up an appointment. You may also IM the Studio during regular hours with quick questions about grammar, citation, and style: *SLUword*.