Where are we? Here. This course begins by revisiting a simple question and its simple answer. There is a temptation to glance over the simple, a temptation to move on and progress toward the bigger and bolder questions that our societies face. As the challenges that our world faces continue to mount, as words like ‘sustainability’ grow in popularity, as our increasingly mobile cultures become increasingly globalized, perhaps it could be useful to stop and reflect upon the questions that we long ago stopped asking ourselves. Where are we? Who are we? How is the ‘who’ changed by the ‘where’? We begin from the premise that who we are as individuals and as societies is based partly upon how we choose to embrace or deny our relationships to the landbases we exist within. Local landscapes affect local mindscapes; our cultures are influenced by where we are. We will spend the next eight weeks reflecting upon how other societies and individuals have seen their landscapes changed as a result of shifting perceptions of place. We will be reflecting upon how we view ourselves and whether or not we see the ways that we are connected to places near and far. Over the next several weeks, we will ask ourselves some simple questions and explore the answers that result. Where are we? What is ‘here’? Is our ‘here’ even here?

**Texts:**

Reading, reading comprehension, and thoughtful discussions are central to the course. Your timely completion of the readings will contribute greatly to the overall class experience. Please complete them prior to coming to class. There are three texts for the course (two required, one recommended):


- Course Reader. Available for purchase at Smart Copy, 1915 SW 6th Ave, next to Hot Lips.

- McCarthy, Dan and Joe Veno. 2010. *Good Night Oregon.* Gunpo-Si, South Korea: Pacom Korea. *(Recommended)*
Grading is participatory in this course. It is designed on a 100-point system, and you will earn points by completing assignments. Completed work will be given full points. Incomplete work will be given zero points. Late work will be deducted 25%. I will only provide feedback on your work if you ask for it. You will determine your grade by the amount of work you complete.

50 Points: Participation - The foundation of this course is dialogue; dialogue between classmates, with professors, with the environments we are embedded within. Dialogue can only take place if people are present and prepared to discuss the questions we will be asking ourselves. The selected readings will serve as one way of preparing ourselves for our explorations. This course requires a significant amount of reading, the percentage of your grade tied to this tier reflects the work required to digest and participate in a nuanced, consistent, and ongoing discussion of the required readings. Students may propose to add, modify, or delete readings from the syllabus; changes will be made if the unanimous consensus of the group is achieved.

Given that this course is a community process of exploring ideas, participation is central to success. It is required that you attend every class, having read all the assigned material. If you attend, but have not read, you will not be given credit for attendance. Each missed day will deduct 11 points from your attendance grade. You may make up a missed day by completing 4 Community Based Learning hours (see below) and writing a 1-page single-spaced essay exploring your relationship to the land you work within.

Community Based Learning (CBL): In a course exploring the connections between culture and place, we must be particularly mindful that nearly all of our discussions will be taking place in one room in one building; in an effort to encourage the introduction of the perspectives that other places offer us, and to allow for a degree of flexibility for the absences from class meetings that are an inevitable result of doctor appointments, vet visits, flat tires, hangovers, etc., CBL hours may be substituted for attendance at class meetings under the following conditions:

1) CBL hours may not take the place of more than 20% of the class meetings.
2) CBL hours MUST be pre-approved. To obtain approval, you must demonstrate that the hours you will perform will aid you in understanding the themes we are exploring in this course. To give an example, although both would be laudable examples of community service, you will have an easier time receiving approval to work with a group removing ivy from Forest Park than a group feeding the homeless in Chinatown.
3) For every class that is missed, you must perform 4 hours of CBL.
4) The hours must be documented and a means of verifying the performance of the CBL must be provided.
5) You must submit, with the documentation verifying the CBL, a one page (single-spaced) description of how the work you performed aided you in understanding the course topics. You must be prepared to share your work with the class if requested.

It should be noted that CBL hours are not required – attendance and participation are required. I do, however, highly recommend that you prepare for the unexpected absence by completing four hours of CBL time in advance of an absence.

15 Points: Place-Based Reflection Journal (Due 8/9) - Select a place that is outside of our classroom and isn’t where you live. It can be a local park, a place on campus, a favorite camping spot or your favorite parking lot. Spend one hour a week in that place reflecting about the location itself and how
your views of that place have evolved as a result of the perspectives you have been exposed to in the prior week. If your views of the place haven’t changed, discuss this. All of your reflections must discuss your relationship to the same place. Your journal should contain one entry for every week of class; entries may be in any format you choose, however, each entry must reflect the effort of at least one single-spaced written page and should be performed weekly. One of the goals of this assignment is to provide you with a tangible record of the development of a relationship with a place. Here are some the questions that you could choose to reflect upon: Where am I? Who lives here? How have humans impacted this place? How am I impacting this place? How does my presence here benefit me, i.e. what are the gifts of this place? What are my responsibilities to this place? In what ways am I embracing or denying my relationship with this place?

10 Points: The Place Where You Live Essay – Based upon Orion Magazine’s “The Place Where You Live” essay series, write a brief essay or short story, no more than 350 words, reflecting on your home. Be honest. You will be asked read your essay to the class. Following your reading, we will have an informal discussion of your work and your thoughts. This assignment is designed to help us build deeper relationships with one another and richer understanding of our relations to our homes. You can find hundreds of examples of “The Place Where You Live” essays online, at http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/place_where_you_live/ Although you certainly don’t have to, you may submit your essay to Orion Magazine for publication!

15 Points: Class Facilitation – In groups of two, you will be assigned one day in which you will lead one hour of class time. Your goal will be to help the class work through the themes of the assigned readings. You can choose to use your hour however you like: guided discussion, group exercises, art projects, short field trips, poetry workshops, etc. If you would like more than one hour, please see me.

10 Points: Good Night Oregon Group Project - Using Good Night Oregon as our guide, the portion of the class interested in these points will write a children’s book that expresses our relationship with our landbase. All decisions about the project will be made by the unanimous consensus of everyone involved. Students who do not participate in this portion of class will not receive these points.
Weekly Breakdown:

Week 1 (6/21 – 6/23) Where are we?
Select a Place and begin Journal
Readings:
- Robbins: “Willamette Eden: The Ambiguous Legacy” (CP)
- Jensen: David Orr interview Pp 24-34.
Read at least 5 “The Place Where You Live” Essays http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/place_where_you_live/

Week 2 (6/28 – 6/30) Where are our minds?
Readings:
- Wirzba: “Placing the Soul” (CP)
- Shiva: “Western Science and its Destruction of Local Knowledge” (CP)
- Jensen: Max Oelschlaeger interview Pp 208-221.

Week 3 (7/5 – 7/7) What are we?
Readings:
- Barndt: “Introduction” & “Across Space and through Time” (CP)

Week 4 (7/12 – 7/14) Are we human?
Readings:
- Armstrong: “Sharing One Skin” (CP)
- Jensen: Neil Evernden interview Pp 112-121

Week 5 (7/19 – 7/21) Who are we?
Readings:
- Mackey, “Settling Differences: Managing and Representing People and Land in the Canadian National Project” (CP)
- Katz: “Wild Fermentation” (CP)
- Jensen: Charlene Spretnak interview Pp 44-52.
Week 6 (7/26 – 7/28) Is place local?

Thursday 7/28: Field Trip – Confluence Project  
Readings:  

McCarthy: “Good Night Oregon”  
Mohawk: “The Art of Thriving in Place” (CP)  
hooks: “Drive Through Tobacco” (CP)  
The Confluence Project: http://journeybook.confluenceproject.org/

Week 7 (8/2 – 8/4) What does resistance look like?  
Readings:  

Cahete, Mohawk, and Valadolid Rivera “Re-Indigenization Defined” (CP)  
Neslon “Mending the Split-Head Society with Trickster Consciousness” (CP)  
Gonzales “Re-Nativization in North America” (CP)  
Trudell “The Power of Being Human” (CP)  
Flores: “Food Not Lawns” (CP)  
Jensen: Jeanette Armstrong interview Pp 282-299.

Week 8 (8/9 – 8/11) Is sustainability sustainable?  
Place Journals Due 8/9  
Readings:  

Benyus: “Janine Benyus Shares Nature’s Designs.” Online:  
http://www.ted.com/talks/janine_benyus_shares_nature_s_designs.html  
Kimbrell: “Part Four: Organic & Beyond: Revisioning Agriculture for the 21st Century” (CP)  
Jensen: Terry Tempest Williams interview Pp 310-326.  
Readings: Berry: “Hope” (CP)