

GCH 103: A River Runs Through It
Action project (individual or group project) + 6 pg. individual rhetorical analysis
25% of course grade
Due: Tuesday, December 15th by 5pm

Due dates:

Thursday, December 3, Group workshop
Tuesday, December 8, Feedback on action plans
Tuesday, December 15, Action project and individual rhetorical analysis

Description:

The culmination of this class is an action project that will emerge, in part, out of your work on White Horn Brook action and the restoration snapshot. This action can be taken individually or in a group, but either way students will write individual rhetorical analyses of their work. We can think of the White Horn Brook action as a test run, and the restoration snapshot as a chance to engage much more deeply with restoration work in Rhode Island. This final action project is your chance to “give a shit about something”: to find some way to engage in an activity you care about to move an audience to share your passion. The point here is not for you to satisfy Dr. Druschke with your action, but, instead, to find something that YOU can be passionate about, to take action on that passion, and to justify your choice. The “A” action will be inspired and consequential for an identified target audience, and it will build from interdisciplinary perspectives. Remember, this class is about grand challenges related to rivers and these action projects will need to grapple with all of the complexity that entails.

Steps to take:

PART ONE: PLAN SOMETHING!

You should already be thinking about what you’d like to work on for this final action project. Many of you have already identified potential projects. Think about something that offers you a chance to act, connects with Rhode Island’s rivers in some way, and provides the opportunity to persuade an audience about something you care about.

PART TWO: DO SOMETHING!

Each student will design and execute a consequential public action that works to educate the public about the issues facing the Rhode Island’s waterways, galvanize public support for Rhode Island’s rivers, and prompt further action. These projects are your chance to put your research to work at intervening in the situation we’ve learned so much about.

PART THREE: TELL CGD ABOUT IT!

In lieu of a final exam, during finals week each student will submit a six-page (double-spaced) letter to Dr. Druschke that:

- describes—IN DETAIL!—the preparation for, execution of, and consequences of your action
- analyzes the action taken including a consideration of:
 - why this was the best possible action to take given the situation and any constraints (what other alternatives did you weigh? why did you choose this one?)
 - a description of the situation you were hoping to intervene in

- the specific audience that you targeted and why this was the appropriate audience – what do they know about the issue? what do you know about them? how did you work to connect to them specifically?
- the potential intended and unintended consequences of the action
- the particular content, design, and delivery choices and their connections to desired consequences
- how this action exemplified the scientific learning you did in this class
- what the specific exigence was that you were reacting to and why you addressed this exigence in this particular way
- how satisfied you are with your action
- attaches documentation of the action (photos, outreach materials, lesson plans, etc.)

The “A” letter will:

- Look and sound like a professional/personal letter to Dr. Druschke. You’re speaking to me!
- Demonstrate—in specific detail—an underlying understanding of the social and ecological dynamics of the river. I expect you to point to specific course concepts and readings.
- Describe in specific detail the action taken and include documentation of that action.
- Explain precisely why the student chose the action she chose, including an explanation of what was gained or lost through this choice. Why was this action appropriate to the issue, the exigence, the river, and the student?
- Explain how successful or unsuccessful your choices were and consider why or why not.
- Be grammatically and syntactically flawless.
- Explain how the student anticipated and prepared for potential intended or unintended consequences.
- Be imaginative, lively, and informative.
- Be specific.
- Frame the particular action within an arc of the student’s learning about her/himself, White Horn Brook, the Saugatucket River, and the world over the course of the semester.
- Explain how this action was your chance to give a shit about something.