

Environmental Studies 363: Writing in an Endangered World
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Introduction Exercise

On the first day of the semester you will bring to class an **object** or **artifact**. You will use the object or artifact to introduce yourself, and to explain your relationship to the more-than-human world. This relation may be to a familiar place, such as a forest, pond, ocean, garden; a less familiar, or perhaps a memorable place (or places) that you may have traveled; the food that you harvest, prepare, and eat; or to animals, whether wild or domesticated.

For example, although for the past twenty years I have lived and raised a family on a farm in rural New Hampshire, my object is a chunk of rhyolite lava from the Long Valley Caldera, in California, that sits on my desk at the College. The rhyolite, 760,000 year-old, helps me locate myself (I am a fourth-generation Californian) in a place where I lived and worked for close to a decade (the Eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada mountains), a place that probably more than any other shaped who I am today.

What you bring is up to you. Your object or artifact may be found or made. It might be a photograph or drawing, a piece of music, a video, a written anecdote about another person or a brief story about an experience, a poem: these are just a few of the possibilities. You may find that in thinking about your place in the world you will be thinking about others—friends and family with whom you share your connection to the world. I invite you to include these relationships in your stories.

Come prepared to introduce yourself. If you want to share something that you would like me to reproduce, whether printed or projected from the web, send it to me before 1 PM on Tuesday. We are a large group, thirty in all; and so let's plan on each of you having a minute or two to introduce yourself.

I am looking forward to meeting you next week, and to working with you this semester. If you have any questions before we get started, please contact me at mlong@keene.edu.