

# Tiny Ecologies

This assignment will be on-going throughout the semester beginning at the end of week three and culminate in a poster session and presentation on Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> from 5-6pm.

## **Assignment**

Choose an outdoor place for intense ecological attentiveness. During the course of this semester, you will make frequent visits to note its changes from September until November. There are no special requirements for the place you choose other than it should be outdoors and no more than 10 by 10 feet in area. The space can be a natural space, a built environment, a humanly curated space (park, garden, landscaping), an abandoned corner or lot, or recurrent puddle. The area can be as small as a garbage can or as large a tree and the environs under (and within) its branches. The best area will be a place that is near or on-campus and is a place you will be able to get to on a regular basis.

## **Observation (10 Blog Posts, total 100 points)**

Every week, you will spend at least five minutes observing your chosen space. Go at different times and during different weather conditions. Pay attention and take notes on human influences and neglect, non-human forces (weather, sunlight, microclimates, pollution, decay, gentrification), and the surfacings of particular histories (especially but not limited to the species of animals and plants evident; you may have to learn the difference between different plants, bugs, and birds).

Starting in the third week of the semester, you will write up your observations, sometimes guided by specific prompts and sometimes up to you, and post them to your Tiny Ecologies Blog (Tumblr). Your observations should be a solid paragraph, approximately 150-250 words accompanied by a picture. Some weeks, you will be asked only to post a 2-3 minute video. Give the time of day, time spent observing, and weather conditions. Closely describe the scene, focusing on the key details that you observed. Think about any changes that have occurred and why that may have happened.

Note: Other students, including those outside of our class, will be able to read and reply to your journal.

## **Poster Session & Short Presentation (total 100 points)**

At the end of the semester, you will give a two minute oral presentation (think of it as an elevator pitch) on how your Tiny Ecology changed (or didn't) as well as propose ideas for how the space might be improved or better used or better appreciated. The presentation will be during a poster session on Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> from 5pm-6pm. Location TBA.

## Criteria for Evaluation

### Blog Posts

- Adequate length each week
- Inclusion of required media
- Focuses almost exclusively on the chosen space
- Carefully describes details demonstrating human and non-human influence
- Considers how that week's observations relate to previous weeks' observations and/or to that space's past
- Writing has an appropriate tone with a clear, readable style
- Few errors in grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure
- Is appropriate for a general readership

### Presentation

- Two minutes long
- Describes the space to an audience who is unfamiliar with it
- Tells the story of that space over the course of the semester, considering why it may have changed (or not)
- Offers 1-2 suggestions for how the space might be improved, better used, or better appreciated

## Schedule

Due Date	Due	Text	Media	Prompt
September 11 <sup>th</sup>	Blog 1	150 words minimum	Selfie/Picture of yourself in the place	Why do you think this will be a good Tiny Ecology for this assignment? What do you predict might change?
September 18 <sup>th</sup>	Blog 2	150 words minimum	Picture of the place	Regular observation
September 25 <sup>th</sup>	Blog 3	150 words minimum	Picture of a detail you haven't noticed before	Regular observation + observation/description of a detail you haven't noticed before (picture)
October 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Blog 4	150 words minimum	Picture of the place	Regular observation
October 9 <sup>th</sup>	Blog 5	Video Observation	2-3 minute video of the place with your observation/description	Regular observation
October 16 <sup>th</sup>	Blog 6	150 words minimum	Picture of the place	Regular observation
October 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Blog 7	150 words minimum	Picture of "alive" things	Regular observation + careful notation of the living things, big and small in the space
October 29 <sup>th</sup>	Blog 8	150 words minimum	Picture of the place	Regular observation
November 6 <sup>th</sup>	Blog 9	Video Observation	2-3 minute video of the place with your observation/description	Regular observation
November 13 <sup>th</sup>	Blog 10	150 words minimum	Picture of the place	Regular observation
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Optional Blog 11	150 words minimum	Picture of the place	Regular observation
December 8 <sup>th</sup>	Poster Peer Review	Not more than 1,000 words	At least 4-5 pictures, may including a video component (laptop needed)	Do not affix your media to your board yet! It will need to be able to be moved around. Be prepared to give your elevator pitch to your group members
December 11 <sup>th</sup> 5pm-6pm Location TBD	Poster Session & Presentation	Not more than 1,000 words	At least 4-5 pictures, may including a video component (laptop needed)	2 minute elevator presentation about your board and findings (see directions above)
December 12 <sup>th</sup> by Midnight	"Dear Reader" Reflection Letter	Minimum 500 words	Microsoft Word/ Text, can include pictures, submitted via Blackboard	What skills you believed you developed or gained throughout all phases of this assignment and other ancillary information you'd like to share