



NHERI



University of Colorado Boulder

CONVERGE TRAINING MODULES SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT



Course: SOCY 2077: Environment and Society

Description: 3 credits, undergraduate lower-division course for students through the Department of Sociology, University of Colorado Boulder

Instructor: Heather Champeau, Doctoral Student, Department of Sociology and Research Assistant, Natural Hazards Center and CONVERGE, University of Colorado Boulder

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Session: Fall 2023

Due: Varies (see below for specific dates)

RECIPROCITY TRAINING MODULE ASSIGNMENT: EXPLORING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN YOURSELF AND THE LIVING WORLD

Overview:

This assignment is designed to introduce you to professional online training modules developed through the National Science Foundation-funded [CONVERGE facility](#), located at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder. You will complete the [CONVERGE Reciprocity in Hazards and Disaster Research Training Module](#) to strengthen your knowledge of reciprocity’s role in social science, especially with disaster-affected people and communities, by considering a living place in the world that you love with a small group of classmates.

Why This Assignment Matters:

Academic and professional training opportunities like online modules from research organizations such as the Natural Hazards Center can enhance your educational career, expose you to learning opportunities tailored to your specific interests, and demonstrate your commitment to advanced learning. Additionally, these free training opportunities (and the additional credentials they provide) augment your resume by establishing your dedication to personal and professional development.

At-a-Glance Assignment Checklist:

- Read these guidelines in their entirety.
- Visit the [CONVERGE Training Modules](#) page and click “register here” to create an account.
- Choose the “Reciprocity in Hazards and Disaster Research” module to complete. This will take approximately 60 minutes, perhaps longer, so please plan accordingly. Don’t forget to complete the quiz at the end of the module. Submit a PDF version of your **completion certificate by September 15, 2023**. (worth 10/60 points)
- Take a picture of a place in the living world that you love and print that picture.
- Attend class on Friday, **September 29, 2023** with your printed image; exchange your image with three classmates. Capture your classmates’ observations about your image.
- Prepare and submit to Canvas a 1-page reflection paper linking the training and the image of your living place; the **reflection is due October 20, 2023**. (worth 25/60 points)
- Prepare and submit to Canvas a 2-page synthesis discussing your image, 3 class readings, and the observations of 3 classmates of your image. The **synthesis is due November 17, 2023**. (worth 25/60 points)



Elements of the Training Module Assignment:

You will work on three individual parts for this assignment. Each part of this assignment is meant to teach you something new or support your personal development. **Part 1** provides you with a base of knowledge about reciprocity in disaster research. **Part 2** asks you to consider how reciprocity fits into your life—both in terms of this class and your future goals. **Part 3** pushes you to consider how you relate to your world, how we relate to the world when we have only seen it (not experienced it), and how a place or image of a place evokes feelings and memories. Below, I offer more guidance on completing this work, including submission, evaluation, and assignment guidelines.

Assignment Submission:

Emailed submissions will not be accepted for any reason. It is your responsibility to ensure you have uploaded the correct version of this assignment to Canvas on time and in a format I can grade. Only PDF and Word documents will be accepted. Please make sure to submit your work on time! The table below displays the due date, points, and description of each part to provide a quick guide:

Assignment Part	Due Date	Part's Points	Brief Description
1	09/15/2023	10	A certificate of completion showing you have completed the CONVERGE Reciprocity in Hazards and Disaster Research Training Module.
2	10/20/2023	25	A one-page reflection piece that explains how the Training Module relates to this class and your future goals (this is an intentionally broad topic, but the reflection piece should still exhibit your best writing skills with clear organization and flow).
2	11/07/2023	25	A two-page synthesis that ties together the concepts of reciprocity, a chosen prompt from below, course material, and reflections from yourself and your classmates.
		60	All work needs to be submitted to Canvas > Assignments > Training Module

Late Submissions:

10% per day will be deducted from submissions received after 7:00 p.m. This late deduction is not meant to punish you. It is a rule I have established to be fair to your classmates who submit on time and to honor my own schedule; I will begin grading these soon after the initial submission deadline passes.

Evaluation:

Your final grade for the essays (the reflection and the synthesis) will be based on your ability to follow the guidelines; the clarity, creativity, and connectedness of content in your reflection; and in relation to how well your peers do on the written assignments. I will use the rubric at the end of this document to grade your assignment. Please know that the grading items in the table at the end of this document are **not** checkboxes; each row reflects a spectrum of points from zero to the maximum number of possible points.

Note: The cells that have *higher point possibilities* indicate the *most important elements* of the assignment.

Assignment Guidelines:

Part 1: The Training Module Certificate: Each student will select the training module available here: <https://converge.colorado.edu/resources/training-modules>. Please remember, you will first have to register for an account and login before you can access the training modules. I encourage you to take notes while working on the training module so you can refer to them for Parts 2 and 3.

To complete the training module, you need to progress through all topics in the training material—including the knowledge checks—until you arrive at the final quiz. You may begin the module at one point in time and complete it at another point in time by logging back into the account you created. Once you complete the module and arrive at the final quiz, you must get 8/10 questions correct to earn your certificate. You may take the quiz multiple times, but this will add more time to completing the assignment. Please **submit the PDF of your certificate by September 15, 2023**.



Part 2: The One-Page Reflection: For this part of the assignment, you will need to consider the *living* world that exists around you. What is a *living* place that you love? Do you wander the aisles of a plant nursery? Is there a particular patch of grass in a park that beckons you on nice days? The emphasis here is on living places in the world (so a picture of buildings will not work, for example).

Take a picture of this place and print it. The image needs to be at least 3x5, but can be larger. Additionally, please print your image in color; if you do not have a printer at home, you may use a printer on campus or have your image printed at a business. Please do not download an image from any online sources.

Students who are art majors/minors or have other artistic pursuits may bring a more stylized or black and white image with permission (please email me by September 15, 2023 for permission). However, please note that your image does not garner points, so the benefit of any stylizing should reflect your own personal preferences and how you see or interact with the world; to be clear, there is no expectation to stylize your image.

Please be sure to attend class on Friday, September 29, 2023 with your printed image. You will share your image with three classmates during class. Make sure to capture your classmates' observations, including questions they may ask about your living place.

Write down your own observations, feelings, and ideas about this living place. Tap your senses to the best of your ability: what do you see, hear, smell, feel, and/or taste? Consider the reciprocity of your relationship with this place—*what do you give it and what does this place give you?* How does your experience of the place differ from the image of the place for you (or perhaps there is no difference)? What would it be like if this place no longer existed? What if you learned there was an exact replica of this place somewhere? Is there a way this place could both exist and not exist at the same time—for example, if a new statue were built, or some other idea you might have? Reflect as much as possible and *write down* all your reflections for later use.

In a new document, refine your reflections into your one-pager on the place in the *living* world that you love, how the image does/does not differ from being there, and your reciprocal relationship with this place. Take care to also discuss important topics and themes from the training module, like Indigenous land relationships, reciprocity as an ethical obligation, and/or the special role of reciprocity in hazards and disaster studies. To further connect with the training module, you might discuss the important roles of time and flexibility in reciprocal relationships. What does reciprocity mean to you, in light of both the training module and after considering your own observations about your *living* place? Have you found the right balance of reciprocity with your living place; describe the balance or imbalance using your observations and lessons you took away from the training module. Make sure to **submit your one-page reflection by 7:00 pm on October 20, 2023.**

Submit your 1-page, single-spaced reflection with 1" margins using Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Please be sure to include:

- Your first and last name
- The title of your reflection paper – points for creativity!
- A well-developed one-pager that:
 - * Is written in a professional, accessible tone that someone with little knowledge about you, your image, your interests, or this class can understand.
 - * Is concise and efficient; the best reflections will be focused and use language that is not “fluffy.” Put another way, this assignment is highly biased in favor of writers who get to the point, write in an active voice, and stay on topic.
 - * Discusses your image and the concept of reciprocity together, including what the place you love gives you, what you give back to this place, and how the training relates to your image

Your final submitted reflection should be concise and focused. Use paragraphs to organize your thoughts. This assignment is intentionally short to help you practice efficient communication. **All summaries longer than one page will lose 5 points from their total grade.** Trust me, efficient communication skills will serve you well in your future! It is also important to be able to give an “elevator speech” about yourself because you never know who you might meet!



Part 3: The Two-Page Synthesis: The final document to submit for this assignment is a 2-page, single-spaced synthesis with 1” margins using Times New Roman 12 pt. font that includes:

- Your first and last name
- The title of your synthesis paper – points for creativity again!
- A well-developed two-pager that:
 - * Is written in a professional, accessible tone that someone with little knowledge about you, your image, or your classmates’ images will be able to understand.
 - * Is concise, but thorough; **the best syntheses will be focused and organized by theme**, not by classmate. What similarities did you find among your classmates’ discussions of your image? How did their observations differ from your own? Use the quotes below to help guide your discussion so you have enough material to consider.
 - * Links together your discussion of your image; your classmates’ discussions of your image; one or more of the prompts below; and *any three class sources* that relate to your interests and the training. You may use only one chapter from the book; please cite it so I know which chapter you used (in addition to being a good practice, this will help me plan the course in the future so I can focus on areas that are more interesting to my students). The other two sources may come from any week or a combination of weeks. You may use more class sources if you want; very strong use of additional reading material may earn you extra points!
 - Please place your chosen prompt (or primary prompt) at the top of your paper; center it and take care to cite it in your references section!
- References
 - * Include the list of references you used in your two-page synthesis paper. You may use whatever format you know best. I only ask that you stay consistent in your chosen format.
 - * Please make sure to cite your book chapter properly!
 - * Be sure to cite your chosen prompt in your references.
 - * *References may be on a third page* and do **not** count toward your two-page limit.

Your reflection should be concise and focused. Use paragraphs to organize your thoughts. This assignment is intentionally short to help you practice efficient communication. **All syntheses longer than two pages will lose 5 points from their total grade.** Synthesizing is challenging work, like putting together a puzzle without knowing the picture it will eventually make. This page limit is intended to provide the space needed to complete the task at-hand without straying into summary (which you will have already done in Part 2). **Part 3 is due November 17, 2023.**

What does it mean to synthesize your work?

If you need support learning more about how to write a synthesis, please use the following websites:

- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/research_overview/synthesizing_sources.html
- <https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/evidence/synthesis>
- <https://www.simplypsychology.org/synthesising.html>

The following prompts for your consideration when working on Part 3 come from Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *Braiding Sweetgrass*, which inspired this set of assignments (book citation below for your references section):

- Saying it makes a living land into “natural resources.” If a maple is an it, we can take up the chain saw. If a maple is a *her*, we think twice. (page 57)
- There are some aches witch hazel can’t assuage; for those, we need each other. (page 81)
- We are showered every day with gifts, but they are not meant for us to keep. Their life is in their movement, the inhale and exhale of our shared breath. Our work and our joy is to pass along the gift and to trust that what we put out into the universe will always come back. (page 104)
- We are linked in a co-evolutionary circle. The sweeter the peach, the more frequently we disperse its seeds, nurture its young, and protect them from harm. Food plants and people act as selective forces on each other’s evolution—the thriving of one in the best interest of the other. This to me, sounds a bit like love. (page 124)
- His lifestyle, which I had condemned without understanding, protects the forest, protects the lakes and rivers,



and not just for him and furbearers, but for all the forest beings. A harvest is made honorable when it sustains the giver as well as the taker. (page 194)

- As we eventually drift off, I feel us all held beneath the dome of our bark roof, an echo of the starry dome above. The quiet settles in until all I can hear is their breathing and the whisper of the cattail walls. (page 240)
- When times are easy and there's plenty to go around, individual species can go it alone. But when conditions are harsh and life is tenuous it takes a team sworn to reciprocity to keep life going forward. In a world of scarcity, interconnection and mutual aid become critical for survival. (page 272)
- Does the diminutive scale of the moss leaves make the drops appear larger? Maybe they want to show off their sparkle just a little longer? (page 295)
- But while scientists are among those who are privy to these other intelligences, many seem to believe that the intelligence they access is only their own. They lack the fundamental ingredient: humility. After the gods experimented with arrogance, they gave the people of corn humility, and it takes humility to learn from other species. (page 346)
- Wealth among traditional people is measured by having enough to give away. Hoarding the gift, we become constipated with wealth, bloated with possessions, too heavy to join the dance. (page 381)

Book Citation: Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions.

Grading Rubric:

Assignment Part	Reciprocity Assignment Rubric	Possible Points	Actual Points
1	Module Completion		
	Certificate uploaded to Canvas by September 15, 2023	10	
	Subtotal	10	
2	One-Page Reflection		
	Overview - quality and thoroughness of the submission	6	
	Clear link to training module	8	
	Quality of spelling/grammar	4	
	Organization and flow of reflection	5	
	How creative is the title?	4	
	Subtotal	25	
3	Two-Page Synthesis		
	Overview (same as above)	6	
	Synthesized link between training module, course material, classmate reflections, and prompt	9	
	Quality of spelling/grammar	3	
	Organization and flow of reflection	6	
	How creative is the title?	1	
	Subtotal	25	
Final Total	All Points	60	

