**The Practice of Walking**

**Class schedule**

*Midterm walking meeting: Schedule to take a walking meeting with me sometime between October 1-7*

Blind Walking

*Oct. 5*

*Discuss* Rousseau, *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*

On our first day of our study of the practice of walking, we will go outside and walk about. In order to keep up our practices of listening, we will begin walking without sight. We will take two blind walks. The first blind walk asks us to become one long chain (or maybe two), with all but one (or two) of us blindfolded. We will walk wherever this one sighted person takes us, although we must return to our original location at the end of class. In order to truly disorient us, we will spend the whole class doing this. Before the walk, I will collect all the reading questions. As we walk, we will use some of your questions in order to guide the conversation.

*Oct. 7*

*Discuss* Rousseau (cont.)

This walk will ask us to split into groups or two or three. One member of this group will act as the seeing party, but the others will be blindfolded. The blindfolded person will walk freely, guiding him or herself, and the sighted-person will follow his or her lead, only intervening in order to ensure safety.

*Writing assignment for next class*: write a one-page philosophical reflection on a technique of walking that can be used to call us into awareness of our practices of walking, perhaps even cause a shift in our normal practices of walking. Be prepared to make the class actually employ your technique. This technique could be a literal change in our gait, pace, etc., or it could be a re-imagining the act of walking through an inventive metaphor. For example, we can imagine the act of walking as akin to swimming. As we swim, we create ripples and waves that move away from us, eventually interfering with others swimming. This helps us think of walking as constantly creating waves that effect others. Both swimming and walking are movements through media, it is just that water is more viscous than air.

*Oct. 12 Fall Break – No Class*

Techniques of walking

*Oct. 14*

*Read*: Rousseau cont.

In class we will implement these walking techniques by forming some groups. One student will start off our walk by leading us on a walk that implements her or his walking technique. We will switch leaders every five minutes so that everyone will have a chance to lead. When you lead, you should explain your thinking behind that technique, how it calls us into awareness of the practice of walking, and what you hope to accomplish by having us walk that way.

*Writing assignment for next class*: create a list of five reasons *why we walk*, and find a corresponding example, from your personal life or from elsewhere, of a walk taken for that reason.

*Read* Thoreau, *Walking*

Walking and Thinking

*Oct. 19*

*Discuss* Thoreau, *Walking*

*Oct. 21*

*Discuss* Thoreau

*Walk* through a park and discuss the reasons why we walk and examples

*Read for next class* Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City” or Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking*

*Oct. 26*

***Exam II*****due next class***.* Using the concepts and questions we took up as you practiced your practice of walking, write a philosophical reflection essay. This can take many forms. (1) You could engage a person from the community in order to learn about his or her practice of walking. Go find someone who you never engage but whose practice you always assume. Seek out an Elon custodian, a Dean, the Provost, an administrative assistant, a cafeteria worker, a groundskeeper, President Lambert, the university Chaplain, etc. Ask this person to take a walk with you and then try to learn about his or her practice of walking. Does this person take the same walk, over and over? Does he or she continuously change the walk? Why does he or she take this walk? What does he or she encounter on this walk? Think about the walk President Lambert takes every day. Where does he go? Which path does he take? Why does he take this path? Ask him to consider what it means to take a walk on Elon campus as the President of the University with an Elon student. In short, find out what walking means for him or her. The hope is that the campus and the meaning of taking a walk on campus, as an Elon student, will change. We all walk on campus, yet we all have our own unique practice of walking. (2) Or you could do something completely different, although this *must be approved by me*. (200 points or 20% of the grade)

*Second writing project due*

*Oct. 28*

**Submit Exam II**

*Discuss* exams

**Quotes**

“How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live! Methinks that the moment my legs begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow, as if I had given vent to the stream at the lower end and consequently new fountains flowed into it as the upper.” (Thoreau, *Thoreau: A Book of Quotations*, 26)

“We cannot write well or truly but what we write with gusto. The body, the senses, must conspire with the mind. Expression is the act of the whole man, that our speech may be vascular.” (Thoreau, *Thoreau: A Book of Quotations*, 26)

**Texts**

Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking* (Verso, 2015)

Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City” from *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans Stephen F. Rendall (University of California Press, 2011)

Frédéric Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*, trans. John Howe, (Verso Books, 2014)

Geoff Nicholson, *The lost art of walking* (Riverhead Books, 2009)

Karen O’Rourke, *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers* (MIT Press, 2013)

Rebecca Solnit*, Wanderlust: a history of walking*, (Penguin Books, 2001)

**Links**

<http://www.ted.com/talks/daniel_kish_how_i_use_sonar_to_navigate_the_world>

[http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/walking-helps-us-think](http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/walking-helps-us-think" \t "_blank)

<http://www.npr.org/programs/invisibilia/378577902/how-to-become-batman>

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/01/heavens-gaits>

<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/xlm-a0036577.pdf>

<http://aeon.co/magazine/society/step-by-step-americans-are-sacrificing-the-right-to-walk/>

Greensboro historical walks: <http://www.blandwood.org/events.html>