

ENGLIT 0345: Literature and the Environment
Fall Term, AY 2014-02
Classroom: BH208

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1. Texts and References:

"Nature," Ralph Waldo Emerson
Walden and Other Writings, Henry Thoreau
Nature Writings, John Muir
Sand Country Almanac, Aldo Leopold
Silent Spring, Rachel Carson
Desert Solitaire, Edward Abbey
A House Made of Dawn, M. Scott Momaday,
Wilderness and the American Mind, Roderick Nash

2. Course Concept: This course will explore the canonical literature that inspired the environmental movement in America. It will trace that movement from Emerson's 1836 "Nature"—an articulation of the way in which humans are an essential and interrelated part of nature, not a master of it—a significantly change in perspective from the predominantly Judeo-Christian tradition, which posited that wild nature—or wilderness—was a site where humankind did not dwell in harmony—or symbiosis with other life forms; it was a place that humans sought to avoid since it was a desert—or space hostile to humans. Then, we'll consider Thoreau's celebration of the natural world as an essential resource and critical locus for well-balanced and psychologically fit modern men and women in the industrial world and his effort to demonstrate the need for conservation and preservation of wild areas. We'll then consider John Muir's effusive celebrations of the majestic lands that would become our first National Parks and his efforts to demonstrate the way in which these great places and spaces are critical to our individual and collective understandings of ourselves, our nation, and the environment upon which we depend. After these explorations, we'll explore the more modern twentieth century champions of the environment, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey, and M Scott Momaday and their efforts to reconsider the anthropomorphic perspectives that humankind had adopted in respect to nature—or the environment (all that was not "man-made"). These figures inspired a revolution in the way we see our roles with regard to the environment and helped us see the way in which we cannot separate our own lives from the lives of the huge array of flora and fauna that allow our lives. Leopold essentially demonstrated the symbiotic relationship of all creatures and life forms that make up the natural world and helped conservationists revise their strategies so that all species might live; Carson confronted the world with the real connection between species and the human responsibility to understand how the introduction of pesticides and chemicals effects the entire biosphere; Abbey made remote American spaces valuable and made them essential to all of America; and Momaday made the native American understanding of the import of the land and its role in native life a national reality—and continues to do so. We'll employ Roderick Nash's seminal work *Wilderness and the American Mind* as the critical glue that binds our study together, and we'll interrogate his perspectives and confront them with our own—enjoying the opportunity to wrestle with one of the more significant figures in contemporary Environmental literature and thinking about its evolution.

To succeed in this course, you must read attentively, engage thoughtfully, write clearly, and prepare intelligently. You must also devote yourself to excellence in both preparation and execution of your class assignments. They include daily response papers, an intriguing twenty minute presentation of your own perspective on one aspect of a text that we are studying, and two thoughtful essays.

3. Graded Course Requirements and Point Values:

400	Homework Essays (2 @ 200)
300	Response Papers (portfolio@ 300)
100	Instructor Points (class participation, etc.)
200	Term-End Examination
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1000	Total Points

Instructor Grade (100 pts.): A successful seminar requires on the part of all participants thorough preparation, consistent engagement, and intelligent contribution to discussion. The principle of academic freedom animates the classroom, where a premium is put on a free and open scholarly debate. I may periodically ask class members to launch a discussion or to present the assigned reading. This course is about taking risks, not playing it safe. Contributions to discussion should reflect that emphasis.

Daily Response Papers (300): These page-long mini-essays respond to a particular question/idea/issue relevant to the assigned reading and the day’s discussion (250-300 Words). You will submit them for 15 of our 28 lessons; their sum contributes to your most significant thinking in this class; as such, their sum will be your most significant submission in class. At the last day of class, you will submit 15 *graded* response papers in a portfolio. Ungraded response papers will not be considered in the assignment of your final grade.

2 x Student Choice Essay (200 pts): These essays each interrogate a concept available in the narratives that we read and present an interesting perspective about it in an argumentative essay (1250/1500 words).

Term-End Examination (200 pts.): This will be a closed-book test in which students demonstrate careful reading and comprehension of course material several essays that require synthesis of course themes and concepts.

4. Standards: Successful essays demonstrate skillful employment of:

- Substance** - a perceptive, thoughtful exploration of an interesting topic that demonstrates factual accuracy, appropriate evidence, and original analysis;
- Organization** - a clear sense of beginning, middle, and end with logical transitions between ideas and an easily identifiable thesis;
- Style** - tone, diction, vocabulary, and syntax that complement the essay’s intended effect, and are appropriate for both the subject and the audience;
- Correctness** – skillful employment of the conventions of standard written English, with special attention to the avoidance of faulty agreement, fragments, ineffective passive voice, incorrect pronouns, improper punctuation, and misspellings.

5. Evaluation of Student Writing: Successful writing persuades through the controlled expression of meaningful ideas. I will evaluate your writing based on its overall effectiveness and skillful employment

of substance, organization of ideas, correctness in execution, and stylistic expression of ideas. Adequate performance will earn a C. Work earning a B gives a positive impression of command of an idea and impresses the reader as meritorious. Essays receiving an A are superior and demonstrate excellence in all standards. A D essay is inadequate and impresses the reader in only very minimal ways; however, it does not fail to demonstrate a degree of thought appropriate to the assignment and/or facility with language. An F essay fails to address the essay requirement or convey an idea in a coherent way.

A+	98-100	4.0	C+	77-79	2.25			
A	93-97	4.0	C	73-76	2.0			
A-	90-92	3.75	C-	70-72	1.75			
B+	87-89	3.25	D+	67-69	1.25			
B	83-86	3.0	D	65-66	1.0			
B-	80-82	2.75	D-	63-64	.75	F	< 63	0.0

You will submit your written work at the commencement of the appropriate lesson. I will reduce by one full letter grade late submissions if they are one minute to twenty four hours late and two full letter grades if they are between twenty-four hours and forty-eight hours late. Submissions more than forty-eight hours late will receive failing grades, but you must nevertheless complete the requirement.

6. Essay Format: Format your essays as follows: cover sheet formatted in accordance with MLA standards. They ought to be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font; 1” margin top, bottom, left, and right, with a ½ inch left gutter; last name and page number in the top right header; you will include a Notes page, if required, to cite collaboration or assistance; Works Cited page IAW MLA style.

7. Documentation: We will use the *Modern Language Association* (MLA) in-text parenthetical reference method. Refer to *Rules for Writers*, pp. 457-523 chapter 47, “Writing Papers in MLA Style”, for examples. To cite assistance given by others, students will use superscript notes and a Notes page inserted before the Works Cited page.

8. Writing Portfolios: You will collect all graded work in a standard “Brown Bomber” writing portfolio with the most recent papers placed on top for turn-in at the end of the semester.

10. Schedule of Lessons:

Rebelling in America			
LSN	DATE	FOCUS	READING ASSIGNMENT
1	1 Sep	Course Introduction <i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i>	Print, read, and consider the course syllabus Prologue
2	3 Sep	<i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i>	<i>Reading Day: 1-107</i>
Labor Day Weekend (5-7 SEP)			
3	8 Sep	"Nature"	"Nature" at: http://transcendentalism-legacy.tamu.edu/authors/emerson/essays/nature1844.html
4	10 Sep	<i>Walden and Other Writings, "Walking</i>	625-664
5	15 Sep	<i>Walden and Other Writings, "The Allegash and the East Branch"</i>	529-623
6	17 Sep	<i>Walden and Other Writings, "Where I Lived and What I lived For"- "Solitude," "The Bean-Field"- "</i>	<i>Reading Day: 77-131, 146-157</i>
7	22 Sep	<i>Walden and Other Writings, "The Village"- "House Warming," "Conclusion"</i>	158-209, 300-312
8	24 Sep	<i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i>	108-181
Homecoming Weekend (25-27 SEP)			
9	29 Sep	<i>Nature Writings, "Knowledge and Inventions"- "The World and the University" "God's First Temples"- "Snow Storm on Mount Shasta" "Silent Spring"</i>	117-142, 629-648
10	1 Oct	<i>Nature Writings, "Features of the Proposed Yosemite National Park"- "American Forests," "The Wild Parks and Forest Reservations of the West"- "Forests of</i>	687-720, 721-789

		Yosemite Park”	
11	6 Oct	<i>Nature Writings</i> , “Hetch Hetchy Valley”-“Save the Redwoods” <i>Silent Spring</i>	810-831 1-51
12	8 Oct	<i>Silent Spring</i>	52-127
13	13 Oct	<i>Silent Spring</i>	128-184~ Essay 1-Due
14	15 Oct	<i>Silent Spring</i>	187-243
Fall Break (17-19 OCT)			
15	22 Oct	<i>Silent Spring</i>	245-297
16	27 Oct	<i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i> <i>Sand Country Almanac</i>	182-199 3-58
17	29 Oct	<i>Sand Country Almanac</i>	58-111
18	3 Nov	<i>Sand Country Almanac</i>	111-164
19	5 Nov	<i>Sand Country Almanac</i>	164-222
20	10 Nov	<i>House Made of Dawn</i>	5-60 *****~ Essay 2-Due
21	12 Nov	<i>House Made of Dawn</i>	61-111
22	17 Nov	<i>House Made of Dawn</i>	112-166
23	19 Nov	<i>House Made of Dawn</i>	167-185
24	24 Nov	<i>Desert Solitaire</i>	1-38
Thanksgiving Break (25-29 NOV)			
25	1 Dec	<i>Desert Solitaire</i>	39-94
26	3 Dec	<i>Desert Solitaire</i>	95-136
27	8 Dec	<i>Desert Solitaire</i>	137-205
28	10 Dec	<i>Desert Solitaire</i> <i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i>	206-263 200-271
	15 Dec	Term End Examination	