



ENGL 2420

Division: Humanities

Department: English

Course: ENGL 2420

Title: Literature of the Outdoors

Catalog Description:

This course is a survey of literature addressing the theme of man and his relationship with the natural environment.

General Education Requirements: Humanities

Semesters Offered: TBA

Credit/Time Requirement: Credit: 3; Lecture: 3; Lab: 0

Clock/Hour Requirements: 0

Offered for Non-Credit: No

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

Justification:

Nature writing has always been an important literary type in western culture, and the theme of man and nature appears throughout American literature. The 21st century has been labeled the century of the environment and with the growing interest and importance of man's relationship with his environment the genre of natural history writing or nature writing has flourished. This course is designed to help students become aware of the complexities of man's relationship with the outdoors by surveying literature that deals with this particular theme. This class will fulfill the humanities general education requirement. All institutions of higher learning in the state have a literature course with a similar theme.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will examine the theme of man and his attitudes about the environment through a comprehensive survey of literature that focuses on this particular theme.
- Students will develop an appreciation and respect for the outdoors and values associated with the natural environment through the study of literature and through personal experience with the outdoors.
- Students will develop critical and creative writing skills through essay assignments which will be returned with suggestions for improving.
- Students will learn about the development of philosophies and ethics regarding the American landscape through an historical survey of American literature of man and nature.

Content:

Course Content:

- Early Attitudes
 - American Indian myths of the creation.
 - The Puritan Ethic
 - The Transcendentalists
 - Emerson
 - Thoreau
- The Land Ethic in American Literature
 - John Muir
 - Aldo Leopold
 - Wallace Stegner
 - Rachel Carson
 - John McPhee
- Contemporary American Literature of Nature
 - Barry Lopez
 - Edward Abbey
 - David Quammen
 - Terry Tempest Williams
 - Norman McClean
 - Gretel Ehrlich
 - John Krakauer
 - (and many more. . .)
- Contemporary Issues of the Outdoors (To be addressed through guest lecturers, panel discussions, group presentations and field trips to the Great Basin Environmental Education Center, and a remote area of Utah's redrock country)

General Education Outcomes:

1) Read effectively, constructively, and critically.

Students are required to read an anthology of American nature writing, and six to eight books from the genre. Students will be quizzed and tested on their reading and on the information from the class discussions generated from the reading.

2) Write clearly, informatively, and persuasively.

Students are required to write three critical essays on the readings, as well as a creative natural history essay. Essays will be returned with suggestions for improving writing skills.

5) Apply a cultural and historical awareness to a variety of phenomena.

Students will be tested on their interpretation and knowledge of the historical development of American attitudes of the landscape as reflected in the nature writing of the time.

9) Respond with informed sensitivity to an artistic work or experience.

Students will develop a respect and appreciation of the artistic merit of American nature writing through reading, discussion, and a creative writing assignment.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Reading quizzes: Approx. 10 quizzes equal to 15% of final grade.
- Exams: A mid-term and a final of essay questions to determine reading comprehension and understanding of class discussions. 35% of final grade.
- Approx. four essays. 40% of final grade.
- Journal of thoughts, comments, questions, notes, etc. 10% of final grade.

Percentages are approximate.

Representative Text and/or Supplies:

- An anthology of American nature writing, such as *The Norton Anthology of Nature Writing* or *The Wilderness Reader* by University of Nevada Press, Reno.
- Selected literary texts such as:
 - *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau
 - *A River Runs Through It* by Norman Maclean
 - *Refuge* by Terry Tempest Williams
 - *Into Thin Air and Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer
 - *Touching the Void* by Joe Simpson
 - *Ceremony* by Leslie Silko
 - *Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey
 - *The Control of Nature* by John McPhee

Optimum Class Size: 20

Maximum Class Size: 27

Signatures:

I hereby submit this course syllabus:

Melanie Jenkins, MA, Associate Professor

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the English Department:

Melanie Jenkins, MA, Associate Professor, Chair

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the Humanities Division:

Sheryl James Bodrero, PhD, Associate Professor, Dean

I have discussed the need for library resources related to this class with the person submitting the syllabus:

Lynn Anderson, MLIS, Technical Services Librarian (Main Campus)

Michelle Olsen, MLS, Campus Librarian (Richfield Campus)