



**Rethinking Nature:
Environmentalism in the 20th-Century United States**

HIS 194
Instructor: Daniel Rinn
Summer 2017
Monday—Thursday, 9-12pm
May 22—June 15
Room: Hylan 206

Course Description

What is nature? What is environmentalism? This course will explore how Americans have answered these questions in the 20th century. We will consider the work and ideas of urban reformers, farmers, scientists, radical activists, and public intellectuals among others as we probe how Americans invented and reinvented the concepts of environment, natural, and unnatural. By incorporating films, music, art, and field trips to local parks, this class will provide students with a rich knowledge base in American cultural and intellectual history. Finally, a deep understanding of American environmental ideas will allow us to think critically about contemporary environmental problems and their implications for philosophy and policy.

Required Texts

There are no required texts to purchase for this class. All readings will be posted as PDF files on Blackboard or provided as an email attachment.

Grading

Grades for this course will be determined using the University of Rochester's grading scale:

93-100 = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
83-86 = B	63-66 = D
80-82 = B-	60-62 = D-
77-79 = C+	0-59 = F

Attendance and Participation (20%): Students are expected to attend every class session. Due to the relatively small size of this class, it is essential that every student comes to class prepared to participate and discuss course content. Failure to attend class sessions will result in a reduction of your overall grade for the course. Because this class is a mixture of lecture, discussion, and in-class exercises, students must come ready to participate. Please come prepared to discuss assigned readings and share your insights, questions, and thoughts about them. Keep in mind that on certain days students may be asked to bring discussion questions to class.

Discussion Questions (1% each day = 15%): Beginning Tuesday, June 23rd students are required to prepare two discussion questions for class each day. These questions should help facilitate lively conversation about the reading assigned for our meetings. You will need to provide a total of 30 discussion questions (two each day) over the course of this class.

Film, Music, Art, and Field Trips (5%): Each week students will engage non-written source material. The course incorporates films, music, and visual art in an effort to understand how Americans have thought about nature. This material will be accompanied by a brief series of comprehension questions relating to the environmental ideologies portrayed.

Critical Inquiry (60%): The above components of the course lay the foundation for your own inquiry into American environmental values. Although some form of written report will accompany this project, you are invited to choose from a number of modes to communicate your findings. Please talk with me about the details. A few options are included below:

Short Essays: 4 total

- these take up weekly themes addressed in the course
- due every Saturday by midnight
- 1,200 words (about 5 pages)

OR

Cumulative Paper

- this paper addresses course content in its entirety

- due Saturday, June 17th
- 4,500–5,000 words (about 18-20 pages)

OR

Research Paper

- independent research on a topic related to the course
- Week One: topic selection and approval by instructor
- Week Three: outline due on Friday, June 9th
- Final paper due Saturday, June 17th
- 3,500–4,000 words (about 14–16 pages)

OR

An assignment of your own devising

- discuss this option with the instructor during the first week of class
- examples: a short film, musical composition, visual art, and volunteer work
- this option will require a short writing component: a report, abstract, or artist's statement for example.

Classroom Procedures

This course is a seminar. Seminars operate best in a critical yet respectful environment. Differing opinions in classroom discussions are encouraged. If you happen to disagree with someone else's argument or opinion, please do so in a respectful and courteous manner. Persistent rude or insensitive comments will result in a deduction from your final grade for the course. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and will be reported to university officials for review and potential disciplinary action.

Academic Honesty

As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities, one of which is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends. A common form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. The representation of another person's work as one's own, or the attempt "to blur the line between one's own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source." More specifically, the use of an idea, phrase, or other materials from a written or spoken source without acknowledgment in a work for which the student claims authorship. Examples include: the misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship; the improper use of course materials in a work for which the student claims authorship; the use of papers purchased online and turned in as one's own work; submission of written work such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent. A student can avoid the risk of plagiarism in written work or oral presentations by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper or

presentation itself, the source of any idea or wording that he or she did not produce. Sources must be given regardless of whether the idea, phrase or other material is quoted directly, paraphrased or summarized in the student-writer's own words.

In cases where plagiarism is evident, the University of Rochester's policy governing academic dishonesty will be followed. The penalty for a first event of plagiarism in a first year writing course is a "0" for the assignment. This pertains to rough drafts as well as final drafts and informal writing assignments. As required by the University of Rochester's academic honesty policy, all instances of plagiarism will be reported to the College Board of Academic Honesty for further review.

For the complete University of Rochester academic honesty policy, see <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index>.

Academic Assistance

Please know that this classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. I invite you to talk with me about any concerns or situations that may affect your ability to complete your assignments successfully. If you have any issues throughout the semester I strongly encourage you to contact the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). CETL supports undergraduate students at the University of Rochester with services that promote academic success, including course-specific collaborative study groups, study skills counseling, a study skills course, and disability support.

Schedule:

Part One: American Nature and Darwin's Challenge

- Mon May 22nd: Introduction
 - Course expectations and grading
 - Course themes: Ecocentrism, Biocentrism, and Anthropocentrism
- Tues May 23rd: Transcendental Nature and the Search for Arcadia
 - *Closing the Frontier and the Rise of a Wilderness Ideal*
 - Field Trip : Highland Park and Mt. Hope Cemetery
 - Readings:
 - Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893)
 - Frederick Law Olmsted: "The Value and Care of Parks" (1865)
 - John Muir: "God's First Temples: How Shall We Preserve Our Forests?" (1876)
 - Henry David Thoreau: "The Value of Wildness" (1851)
- Wed May 24th: Red in Tooth and Claw
 - *Wilderness and the Frontier: From Nature to Darwinian Naturalism*
 - Paintings: selections from the Hudson River School

- Readings:
 - Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Nature" (1836)
 - excerpts from Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859): CH IV from: "Natural Selection; Or the Survival of the Fittest"
 - excerpts from Asa Gray: "Natural Selection and Natural Theology" (1860)
 - excerpts from Louis Agassiz: "Triple Coincidence in the Succession, Gradation, and Growth of Animals" (1862)
- Thurs May 25th: The Nature of Mind and Morals
 - *Naturalizing Humanity: Are humans somehow above their environment?*
 - Readings:
 - William James: "Radical Empiricism" (1912) and "Does Consciousness Exist?" (1904)
 - John Dewey "Ethics and Physical Science" (1887) and "Darwin's Influence on Philosophy" (1909)

Part Two: Environmentalism in an Age of Industry and Economic Depression

- Mon May 29th: Memorial Day - NO CLASS
- Tues May 30th: Industrial Blight
 - *Social Darwinism and Industrial Hygiene*
 - Readings:
 - Florence Kelley: excerpts from letters (1924-1931)
 - Jane Adams: "The Objective Necessity for Social Settlements" (1893)
 - Frederick Engels: "Industrial Manchester" (1844)
- Wed May 31st: Wilderness Cult
 - *Saving Wild Places*
 - Films: *In the land of the War Canoes* (1914) and/or *The Silent Enemy* (1930) and/or *Roosevelt in Africa* (1904)
 - Readings:
 - Teddy Roosevelt: excerpts from Governor's Conference speech
 - Liberty Hyde Bailey: excerpts from *The Holy Earth* (1915)
 - Robert Underwood Johnson: "The Neglect of Beauty in the Conservation Movement"
- Thurs June 1st: FDR and the Great Depression
 - *Nature's New Deal: Regional Planning and Environment*
 - Film: *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) and/or *The River* (1937)
 - Music: Woody Guthrie "Roll On, Columbia, Roll On" (1941)
 - Readings:
 - FDR and Robert Fechner: Statements about the CCC (1933 and 1936)
 - David Lilienthal: Statement on the TVA (1944)
 - Aldo Leopold: "Land Ethic" (1949)

Part Three: Bombs and the Birth of Environmentalism

- Mon June 5th: Science and Naturalism after WWII
 - *Apocalypse Soon, if Not Now*
 - Music: Tom Lehrer
 - Film: *Duck and Cover* (1951)
 - Readings:
 - Kenneth Boulding: excerpts from “The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth” (1966)
 - Paul Erlich: “Nuclear Winter” (1985)
 - Gar Smith: “Human Responsibility for Environments beyond Earth” (1987)
 - Barry Commoner: excerpts from *The Closing Circle* (1971)

- Tues June 6th: Population Scare
 - *Procreating in the Burbs*
 - Photography: William Garnett
 - Film: *Soylent Green* (1973)
 - Readings:
 - Garrett Hardin: “The Tragedy of the Commons” (1968) and “The Debate Over Growth” (1976)
 - Paul Erlich: “Overpopulation” from *The Population Bomb* (1968)

- Wed June 7th: Chemicals and Waste
 - *Synthetic Consumer Goods and DDT*
 - Films: documentary footage featuring Rachel Carson; *The Poisoned Dream: The Love Canal Nightmare*
 - Readings:
 - Rachael Carson: excerpts from *Silent Spring* (1962)
 - The Council on Environmental Quality (1970)
 - President’s Science Advisory Committee: “Report” (1965)

- Thurs June 8th: Enter Environmental Movements
 - *Defining Environmentalism*
 - Music: Tom Lehrer; Malvina Reynolds; Joni Mitchell; John Denver; and The Eagles
 - Film: footage including Earth First! and Greenpeace activism
 - Readings:
 - Edward Abbey and Dave Foreman: excerpts from “Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching” (1987)
 - Samuel Hayes: “From Conservation to Environmentalism” (1987)
 - Kirkpatrick Sale: “Schism in Environmentalism” (1986)
 - Robert Gottlieb: Introduction from *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (1993)

- Mon June 12th: NO CLASS

- first draft of final papers by noon.

Part Four: Environmental Ethics: Naturalizing the 'Self' in the Anthropocene

- Tues June 13th: Academic Philosophy and the Environment
 - *Philosophers, wake up!*
 - Readings:
 - Lynn White: "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" (1967)
 - J. Baird Callicott: "Animal Liberation, A Triangular Affair" (1980)
 - Holmes Rolston III: "Duties to Endangered Species" (1985)
- Wed June 14th: Metaphysics of Ecology: Field, Feminism, and Society
 - *Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, and Socioecology*
 - Field Trip: A Conversation with Darran Crabtree, Director of Conservation Programs at The Nature Conservancy, Central and Western New York Chapter
 - Readings:
 - Bill Devall and George Sessions: "Deep Ecology" (1985)
 - Val Plumwood: "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism" (1991)
 - The Nature Conservancy: "Conservation by Design: A Strategic Framework for Mission Success"
- Thurs June 15th: Climate Change and the Ethics of the Anthropocene
 - *After Nature: The Limits of Darwinian Naturalism*
 - Film: *Before the Flood* (2016)
 - Readings:
 - Lant Pritchett and Lawrence Summers: "Summers Memo" (1991)
 - Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer: "Anthropocene"
 - The Kyoto Protocol (selections)
 - The Paris Climate Agreement (selections)
 - Andrew Light: "On the Need for Front Line Climate Ethics" (2012)