University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Curriculum Proposal Form #3

## New Course

**Effective Term:**

**Subject Area - Course Number:** **ENGLISH 260 Cross-listing:**

(See Note #1 below)

**Course Title:** (Limited to 65 characters) American Environmental Literature

**25-Character Abbreviation:** Amer Environmental Lit

**Sponsor(s):** George Savage

**Department(s):** Languages and Literatures

**College(s):**

# **Consultation took place**: NA Yes (list departments and attach consultation sheet)

Departments: Geography and Geology (Rex Hanger); History (Tony Gulig); Languages and Literatures (Marilyn Durham); proposed Environmental Sciences Major (David Travis)

**Programs Affected:**  **Languages and Literatures; Geography and Geology (Environmental Sciences minor); (proposed) Environmental Sciences Major**

**Is paperwork complete for those programs?** (Use "Form 2" for Catalog & Academic Report updates)

NA  Yes  will be at future meeting

**Prerequisites:** English 102, 105, 162, or consent of instructer

**Grade Basis:**  Conventional Letter  S/NC or Pass/Fail

**Course will be offered:**  Part of Load  Above Load

On Campus  Off Campus - Location

**College:**  **Dept/Area(s):** Languages and Literatures

**Instructor:** Alison Townsend (Languages and Literatures); tenure-track hire for 2012-13, 19th-century Americanist with expertise in environmental literature.

*Note: If the course is dual-listed, instructor must be a member of Grad Faculty.*

**Check if the Course is to Meet Any of the Following:**

Technological Literacy Requirement  Writing Requirement

Diversity  General Education Option:

Note: For the Gen Ed option, the proposal should address how this course relates to specific core courses, meets the goals of General Education in providing breadth, and incorporates scholarship in the appropriate field relating to women and gender.

**Credit/Contact Hours:** (per semester)

Total lab hours:       Total lecture hours: 48

Number of credits: 3 Total contact hours: 48

**Can course be taken more than once for credit? (Repeatability)**

No  Yes If "Yes", answer the following questions:

No of times in major:       No of credits in major:

No of times in degree:       No of credits in degree:

Proposal Information: ([***Procedures for form #3***](http://acadaff.uww.edu/UCC/Curriculum_Handbook_09/Procedures_form3.docx))

**Course justification:** This course covers important material—American environmental literature-- not found in other UWW course offerings. (UW-Whitewater has a number of environmental science courses, but only a few in the humanities.) This course will fulfill the humanities elective requirement for the proposed Environmental Sciences Major and will serve as an elective for English Majors.

**Relationship to program assessment objectives:** This course addresses assessment objectives set for the Department of Languages and Literatures, General Education, as well as the proposed Environmental Sciences Major.

**Relevant Learning Outcomes in Languages and Literatures:**

1. *analyze and interpret the techniques and themes of literary works;*

The course will include a variety of literary genres—fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry—so will offer different challenges to interpretation.

1. *discuss and evaluate the cultural diversity and ethical, aesthetic and humanistic values embodied and expressed in literature;*

The course contains cultural diversity (specifically Native American materials) and addresses ethical, aesthetic, and humanistic values in all of the readings.

1. *write clear, concise prose that is logically organized, developed and supported, and free of significant grammatical, usage and other errors.*

This will be a writing-intensive course.

**Relevant General Education Learning outcomes:**

1. *Make sound ethical and value judgments based on the development of a personal value system, an understanding of the cultural heritage students share, and a knowledge of past successes, failures, and consequences of individual roles and societal choices.*

Most of the works in class relate to ethics, at least tangentially. Some, though, have a direct connection, such as Rachel Carlson’s *Silent Spring* (with its examination of DDT and the environment), Aldo Leopold’s “The Land Ethic,” (which extends Judeo-Christian ethics to nature), and Bill McKibben (with his warning of hyper-individualism).

1. *Understand and appreciate the cultures of the U.S and other countries, both contemporary and historical, appreciate cultural diversity, and live responsibly in an interdependent world.*

This course will explore culturally diverse ways of seeing nature, both through a historical lens (from 17th Century to the present) but also through a multicultural lens, especially in looking at Native American perspectives of nature.

1. *Communicate effectively in written, oral, and symbolic form with an appreciation of aesthetic and logical considerations in conveying ideas.*

This will be a writing-intensive course.

1. *Understand the natural and physical world, the process by which scientific concepts are developed, tested, and modified, and the reliability and limitations of scientific knowledge.*

Most of the writers on the syllabus are humanists AND scientists. In fact, one of the course themes will be to consider how these two world views have recently been separated, to the detriment of both.

**Relevant Learning Outcome for the proposed Environmental Sciences Major:**

*Students will have knowledge of significant current and historical environmental issues at the regional, national, and global scales and be able to describe the origins, drivers, and implications of each from both scientific and social perspectives.*

This course is specifically about “historical environmental issues” as they are presented in a wide array of American environmental literature.

**General Education Justification:** As noted above, “American Environmental Literature” (English 260) addresses at least four of the “Goals of General Education.” It will provide students with breadth of knowledge about American culture and the natural world, and it complements existing Gen Ed requirements such as a laboratory science course and the Core curriculum. In addition, the course featuresa number of women environmental writers: Mary Rowlandson, Emily Dickinson, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Leslie Silko, Mary Oliver, Rachel Carlson, and Annie Dillard. (A full week will be devoted apiece to Silko’s *Ceremony* and Dillard’s *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*.)

**Budgetary impact:** Minimal. The course would be part of a regular rotation (one section every two years); the instructor for the course will be a replacement for George Savage (retiring January 2012).

**Course description:** Explore American environmental literature (creative non-fiction/fiction/poetry) from its origins, with special attention to key authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Emily Dickinson, John Muir, Teddy Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold, Leslie Silko, Rachel Carlson, Annie Dillard and Bill McKibben.(50 word limit)

**Course objectives and tentative course syllabus:**

See attachment.

**SYLLABUS**

**American Environmental Literature**

**Instructor:**

**Office:**

**Office Phone:** **English Department Phone:** 472-1036 (messages)

**Office Hours:**.

**E-mail:**

**Course Description:** A survey of American environmental literature from its origins, covering a variety of genres: creative non-fiction, fiction, and poetry.

**Course Objectives:**

* Students will gain a wide historical understanding of American environmental literature
* Students will learn how environmental writings are rooted in a historical/ecological context
* Students will be able to compare a variety of world views that inform environmental writing, such as utilitarian, romantic, transcendental, naturalistic, and ecological
* Students will be able to interpret a variety of genres
* Students will look at the relevance of historical nature writing to the contemporary world
* Students will re-think the relationship between the sciences and the humanities
* Students will develop their own perspective of nature, after sifting and winnowing some of the best and most enduring American nature writing

**Prerequisites**: English 102, 105, 162 or the consent of instructor

**Required Texts**:

Book rental

*The Wilderness Reader* (ed. Frank Bergon)

*Norton Anthology of American Literature* (Volume B)

Bookstore

Annie Dillard, *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

John Muir, *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*

Leslie Silko, *Ceremony*

**Grading:**

Two essay exams (midterm and final)—20% each

Semester journal—25%

Final research paper—25%

Class participation—10%

(Note: the grading scale is 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; below 60 is failing)

**Attendance:**

Attendance is required**.** You may have two absences, after which your grade goes down one full point for every absence. Three unexcused absences will seriously compromise your grade for the class. Serious illness, a death in the family, or other legitimate crises doesn’t count against you. But please be in touch and let me know what is going on.

**University Policy:**

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is dedicated to a safe, supportive and    non-discriminatory learning environment.  It is the responsibility of all undergraduate and graduate students to familiarize themselves with University policies regarding [Special Accommodations](http://www.uww.edu/StdRsces/csd/academic_index.php), [Academic Misconduct](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal1.html#Misconduct), [Religious Beliefs Accommodation](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal5.html), [Discrimination](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal6.html) and [Absence for University Sponsored Events](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal1.html#Misconduct) (for details please refer to the Schedule of Classes; the [“](file:///C:\Users\Donna\AppData\www.uww.edu\Catalog\02-04\Legal\Legal1.html)[Rights and Responsibilities](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/Legal1.html)[”](file:///C:\Users\Donna\AppData\www.uww.edu\Catalog\02-04\Legal\Legal1.html) section of the [Undergraduate Catalog](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog); [the Academic Requirements](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/Gradpolicies.php#academicinformation) and Policies and the [Facilities and Services](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/Gradpolicies.php#facilitiesandservices) sections of the [Graduate Catalog](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/gradcat0608.php); and the “[Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures](http://www.uww.edu/stdhdbk/uwsystem.html) (UWS Chapter 14); and the “[Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures](http://www.uww.edu/stdhdbk/uwsystem.html)" (UWS Chapter 17).

**Syllabus**

**Week One**

What is Nature Writing?

European and Native American opposing views of “nature” in Colonial America

Mary Rowlandson, *Narrative*

Keith Basso, “Stalking with Stories: Names, Places and Moral Narratives among the Western Apache”

18th Century American naturalists: Alexander Wilson, Thomas Jefferson, and John Audubon

**Week Two**

19th Century Romantic perspectives of nature

Expedition of Lewis and Clark

Hudson Valley School of Painting

William Cullen Bryant, “To a Waterfowl in Winter”

James Fennimore Cooper, excerpts from *Leatherstocking* novels

**Week Three**

Transcendental views of nature

Emerson, *Nature*

**Week Four**

Thoreau, *Walden* (chapters 1-2) and “Walking”

**Week Five**

Anti-Transcendentalism

Melville, *Moby Dick* (“The Whiteness of the Whale”) and “The Encantadas”

Francis Parkman, *The Oregon Trail* (excerpts)

First exam

**Week Six**

Synthesis of Transcendentalism and Anti-Transcendentalism

Emily Dickinson (selected poetry)

**Week Seven**

Conservationists

John Muir, *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*

Teddy Roosevelt (biography and excerpts)

**Week Eight**

A Modern Native American voice on nature

Leslie Silko, *Ceremony*

**Week Nine**

Second Exam

Film (*Koyaanisqatsi*)

**Week Ten**

A modern *Walden*:

Annie Dillard, *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

**Week Eleven**

Modern nature poetry: Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, Mary Oliver

**Week Twelve**

Ecological Crises

Rachel Carlson, *Silent Spring* (excerpts)

Bill McKibbon, *The End of Nature* (excerpts)

**Week Thirteen**

Wisconsin connections

John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Gaylord Nelson (excerpts)

**Week Fourteen**

A sense of place

Tuan, Yi-fu. *Topophilia* (excerpts)

**Week Fifteen**

Where do we go from here?

Bill McKibben, *Eaarth* (excerpts)

Final exam as scheduled

**Selected Bibliography:**

**Please note: there are myriad primary and secondary sources that could be included in this bibliography, so this list is only suggestive. Also, I have placed an asterisk by works that are in the UW-Whitewater library.**

Adamson, Joni. *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place.* Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2001.

Alaimo, Stacy. *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space.* Ithaca: Cornell Press, 2000.

\*Allister, Mark. *Refiguring the Map of Sorrow: Nature Writing and Autobiography.* Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2001.

Baron, Robert C. and Elizabeth Darby Junkin eds., *Of Discovery and Destiny: an anthology of American writers and the American land*. Golden Colo.: Fulcrum Press, 1986.

Bergon, Frank ed., *TheWilderness Reader*. N.Y.: American Library Publishers, 1980.

Branch, Michael P. ed. *Reading the Roots: American Nature Writing before Walden.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 2004.

\*Brooks, Paul. *The House of Life: Rachel Carson at Work*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

Brooks, Paul. *The Pursuit of Wilderness*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin,1971.

Brower, David, ed., *Wilderness: America's living heritage*. San Francisco: Sierra Club 1961.

\*Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1995.

Gangewere, Robert J. ed, *The Exploited Eden:  literature on the American environment*. N.Y.: Harper, 1972.

Gifford, Terry. *Reconnecting with John Muir: Essays in Post-Pastoral Practice.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 2006.

Glotfelty, Cheryll, and Harold Fromm. eds. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996.

\*Gould, Stephen Jay. *Ever Since Darwin: Reflections on Natural History*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1977.

Halpern, Daniel ed. with advisory editors Annie Dillard, Gretel Ehrlich, Robert Finch, John Hay, Edward Hoagland, and Barry Lopez, *On Nature: Nature, Landscape, and Natural History*. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987.

\*Kolodny, Annette. *The Lay of the Land*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Lyon, Thomas J. ed. and with a history by...*This Incomparable Lande: a book of American Nature Writing.*  Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989.

\*Marx, Leo. *The Machine and the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Mazel, David. *American Literary Environmentalism.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 2000.

\*McKusick, James C. *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology .* NY: St. Martin's, 2000.

McMurry, Andrew. *Environmental Renaissance: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Systems of Nature.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 2003.

Nash, Roderick ed., *Environment and Americans*.  Melbourne: Krieger, 1979.

Philippon, Daniel J. *Conserving Words: How American Nature Writers Shaped the Environmental Movement.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 2004.

Quetchenbach, Bernard W. *Back From the Far Field; American Nature Poetry in the Late Twentieth Century.* Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2000.

Vermes, Jean,  ed., *The Wilderness Sampler*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Stockpole, 1968.

Whicher, George F. ed., *Poetry of the New England Renaissance 1790-1890*. N.Y.:  Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1950.

Zimmerman, Michael E. *Contesting earth's future: radical ecology and postmodernity.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1994.