

Our Place in Nature

FALL 2003

ENGL 311
TuTh 12:30 – 1:45
2002 Brown
CRN 38465 – 3 credit hours

Prof. Nicolas Witschi
SPR 722 – 387-2604
office hours: Wed 11:00 – 12:30
Th 9:30 – 11:00
. . . and by appointment
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READINGS:

Never Cry Wolf, by Farley Mowat
The Land of Little Rain, by Mary Austin
The Log from the Sea of Cortez, by John Steinbeck
A Sand County Almanac, by Aldo Leopold
Encounters with the Archdruid, by John McPhee
Refuge, by Terry Tempest Williams
A River Runs Through It, and Other Stories, by Norman Maclean

DESCRIPTION:

Questions about the right and proper use of natural spaces play a continuing and deeply significant role in American culture. In many respects, we may never fully resolve the conflicts that arise when we strive to designate a certain stretch of land as wilderness, or to mine it for all the resources it will yield, or to pave it over for subdivisions and strip malls. For our purposes, however, such conflicts over access to nature have made for a vital literary tradition, one marked perhaps most strongly by a persistent clarification of the questions. In this course we will read and discuss a number of works that reflect upon, illuminate, and contribute to our ongoing conversations about how the more-than-human world may be put to use. We will not survey all of America's nature-use issues, but we will develop a strong sense of how such issues have been formulated in the past and of how the literature surrounding them may guide us in the present.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

- ✓ **Response papers (at least 1 full page, typed) to each book we read** **10%**
Due on the first day of discussion for each book.
- ✓ **Preparedness, Attendance, and Participation** **10%**
- ✓ **Panel Discussion Group** **10%**
The first day of discussion for each book will be initiated by a panel of respondents. This panel will come to class with at least five discussion questions prepared and typed out in advance. The presentation of material may include bits of historical context for the text in question and also initial interpretations of the reading or a section of the reading. No one is exempt from this requirement.
- ✓ **2 analytical, argumentative papers** **15% each**
I will be handing out lists of suggested topics prior to each paper's due date.
- ✓ **Midterm Exam** **20%**
- ✓ **Final Exam** **20%**

THE FINE PRINT:

Regular attendance is expected, since there will be fascinating and informative interpretations available nowhere else (i.e., no "lecture notes" beyond those you take yourself). It should be clear that the more you show up, the more you will "get" out of this class. Each absence beyond 3 will result in the lowering of one's final grade by 3 points.

All written work for this course must be typed or word processed, and I won't be accepting papers in any other

form. They must be double-spaced, printed in 12 pt. Times-Roman or similar typeface, with one-inch margins and a snappy, makes-me-want-to-read-more title. Papers will lose one third of a grade (i.e., from A- to B+) for every calendar day late. You need to complete all assigned work (this doesn't include pop quizzes) in order to receive a passing grade.

All work submitted in this course must be your own and must be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources needs to be properly documented, using the standard MLA format. You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures that pertain to Academic Integrity (*Undergraduate Catalog* 268-70). These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

READING ASSIGNMENTS & DUE DATES

Week 1	9/2	Introductions
	9/4	discuss handouts: Austin, "The Land"; Silko, "Landscape . . ."
Week 2	9/9	Mowat, <i>Never Cry Wolf</i> (pp. 1-139)
	9/11	<i>Never Cry Wolf</i> (pp. 140-46)
Week 3	9/16	Austin, <i>The Land of Little Rain</i> (pp. 1-100)
	9/18	Waldo Library Visit – meet in the Rotunda by the front entrance
Week 4	9/23	✓ DUE: Where Have You Been? (mini research project)
	9/25	<i>The Land of Little Rain</i> (pp. 101-71)
Week 5	9/30	<i>The Land of Little Rain</i>
	10/2	✓ DUE: paper #1
Week 6	10/7	Steinbeck, <i>The Log from the Sea of Cortez</i> (pp. 1-149)
	10/9	<i>The Log from the Sea of Cortez</i> (pp. 150-224)
Week 7	10/14	REVIEW
	10/16	✓ MIDTERM EXAM
Week 8	10/21	Leopold, <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> , Part I (pp. 3-92)
	10/23	<i>A Sand County Almanac</i> , Part II (pp. 95-162)
Week 9	10/28	<i>A Sand County Almanac</i> , Part III (pp. 165-226)
	10/30	NO CLASS
Week 10	11/4	McPhee, <i>Encounters with the Archdruid</i> , Part 1 (pp. 1-75)
	11/6	<i>Encounters with the Archdruid</i> , Part 2 (pp. 77-150)
Week 11	11/11	<i>Encounters with the Archdruid</i> , Part 3 (pp. 151-245)
	11/13	✓ DUE: paper #2
Week 12	11/18	Williams, <i>Refuge</i> (pp. 1-173)
	11/20	<i>Refuge</i> (pp. 174-290)
Week 13	11/25	Maclean, "A River Runs Through It" (pp. 1-104)
	11/27	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING
Week 14	12/2	"A River Runs Through It" (pp. 1-104)
	12/4	REVIEW
	Tuesday 12/9	✓ FINAL EXAM: 2:45 – 4:45pm