Survey: Philosophical observations on the relationship between nature and culture provide the fundamentals for environmental thought, while value assessments provide the contextualized perspectives.

We begin by identifying the metaphysical-theological premises that support the edifice of the Western tradition toward nature and follow their evolution through the influential works of prominent “environmentalists”. Next we will assess the normative (value) components found in nature – culture dichotomies: anthropocentrism; intrinsic, extrinsic and inherent value systems, etc. This will have prepared us for a critique of American environmentalism.

As this is a graduate seminar, the course is based on discussions on topics derived from the assigned readings and related sources. Students are expected to participate regularly, and to advance this end each student will prepare a one-paragraph commentary on each reading for possible dissemination at the seminar meetings. In addition there are two papers (5 – 10 pages of text) on topics approved by the instructor. (Unapproved topics result in failure for the assignment.) The first paper is due on October 20th and the final paper on December 15th. The final grade for the seminar is calculated as follows: Each paper 40% (80%) and class participation 20%.

Texts:
- A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1949) [SCA]
- Wilderness and the American Mind, Roderick Nash (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press) [WAM]

Recommended texts:
• *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America*, Ben A. Minteer (MIT Press, 2006)


• *Thoreau’s Importance for Philosophy*, eds. R. Furtak, J. Ellsworth and J. Reid (Fordham University Press, 2012)


**Articles:**

• “The Chain of Being in Eighteenth-Century Thought, and Man’s Place and Role in Nature,” Arthur Lovejoy

• “Providence, Capitalism, and Environmental Degradation: English Apologetics in an Era of Economic Revolution,” William Coleman

• “Errand into the Wilderness,” Perry Miller

• “The Trouble with Wilderness: or getting back to the wrong nature,” William Cronon

• “Essay on American Scenery,” Thomas Cole


• “Nature,” J S Mill

• “The Ecological Crisis is a Crisis of Character” in *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, Wendell Berry: Chapter 2

• “On A Certain Blindness In Human Beings,” William James

• “The Straight-Cut Ditch: Thoreau on Education,” Louis B. Salomon

**Recommended Articles:**


• “The Historical Dimensions of the American Crisis,” H Paul Santmire

• “The Tragedy of the Common,” Garrett Hardin

• “Environmental Ethics: Values in and Duties to the Natural World,” Holmes Rolston III
• “Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving the Environment,” Thomas Hill
• “Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics,” Anthony Weston
• “Paths Beyond Human Centeredness: Lessons in Liberation Struggles,” Val Plumwood

**Provisional Schedule:**

Prologue, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1 – 43) in *Wilderness and the American Mind*


2. Chapter 3 “The Romantic Wilderness” and Chapter 4 “The American Wilderness” (pp. 44 – 83) in *Wilderness and the American Mind*; and “The Trouble with Wilderness: or getting back to the wrong nature,” William Cronon and “Errand into the Wilderness,” Perry Miller


4. *Walden* (pp. 1 – 93) and Chapter 5 (pp. 84 – 95) in *Wilderness and the American Mind*

5. *Walden* (pp. 94 – 163)

6. *Walden* (pp. 164 – 312) First Paper Due

7. Chapter 6 “Preserve the Wilderness”; Chapter 7 “Wilderness Preserved”; Chapter 8 “John Muir: Publicizer”; Chapter 9 “The Wilderness Cult”; Chapter 10 “Hetch Hetchy” (pp. 96 – 181) in *Wilderness and the American Mind*


9. *Sand County Almanac*, Part 2 (pp. 95 – 164)

10. *Sand County Almanac*, Part 3 (pp. 165 – 226)

11. “The Ecological Crisis is a Crisis of Character,” Wendell Berry