

LINFIELD COLLEGE  
ENGL 304, Winter, 2016  
ENVIRONMENTAL LITERATURE

January 4 – February 4  
Instructor: Dr. Richard Lewis  
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THE MONTH OF ENGL 304 GOES BY QUICKLY. READ AHEAD. LOG IN EARLY EACH WEEK; JOIN YOUR DISCUSSION GROUP AT LEAST THREE TIMES. **NOTE:** No later than Tuesday, January 5, students must read the Syllabus and send a Blackboard email note stating that they have read it.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** ENG 304, Environmental Literature, presents fiction, essays, and poetry about the natural world and invites students to think and write about the environment. Its objectives are to develop an historical overview regarding writing about the environment; to explore the relationship between the natural environment, human uses of the environment, and a larger sense of human-natural community; and to increase our store of words and concepts about Nature.

Creative Studies (CS) students will:

Explore the media, genre, craft and presentation of literary art in relation to the environment  
Examine the contexts and influences of art

Ultimate Questions (UQ) students will articulate and evaluate core assumptions by which knowledge is acquired and assessed. They will engage in a critical discussion and analysis of fundamental beliefs, cultural practices, and competing truth claims as these are evident in environmental study with the aim to appreciate and negotiate ambiguity and to develop greater self knowledge and the ability for meaningful dialogue, and awareness of social responsibility and understanding. Students will also explore metaphors, cultural language, and normative assumptions present in core questions to gain insights into actions and ways of belonging in communities, whether secular or religious. Ultimate Questions courses are designated UQ in this catalog and each semester's registration materials.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Zwinger, Anne H., ed. *Writing the Western Landscape*, Beacon Press, 1994  
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, *Nature*, and Thoreau, Henry David, *Walking*, Beacon Press, 1991  
Poems provided by Instructor

**Blackboard Learn Elements:**

- Home Page. Log in every day to check Announcements, email, etc.
- Weekly Instruction Schedule. A weekly breakdown of three weekly tasks:
  - Reading Assignments
  - **Instructor's Commentary** (Must be read and cited in group discussion and in answers to Essay Exam questions) Posted under "Commentaries."
  - **Weekly poems** are posted under "Content."
- Email. Course Messages and Linfield Campus Mail. Use either and check daily
- Reading Report Topic List. Check this soon and choose a Reading Report subject. The Reading Report List is posted under that title.
- Announcements. Check Announcements daily. You are expected to know what is in them.
- Discussions. Students must engage substantively—i.e. with reference to the week's assigned reading and the Instructor's Commentary—as well as exchange personal thoughts and experiences. Personal experience and thoughts are encouraged, but the most important part of what you post is what you say

about what we are reading.

- Media Library. This is a list of Glossary words related to the readings. Glossary words will be on the final exam.

**Weekly Group Discussion** By Monday, January 4 all registered students will have been assigned to a discussion group. Discussion should begin early in the week, with the first post no later than Wednesday.

NOTE: Don't wait until you have finished the whole weekly assignment before your first post. If you have read five pages, you have enough information to offer an initial comment. On Monday, January 4, students must:

- check in with their group,
- share a bit of biographical information,
- start discussing the Week One topic as far as you have read in "Nature."

Weekly discussion is graded and has a large impact on your grade. To receive an A, students must participate in discussion at least three times each week and should engage in discussion over the course of the week, beginning by Tuesday or Wednesday. In discussion students should:

- respond to each other's comments; You should do more than say, "I liked it when you said...." What did you like? What from the reading can you add to the point?
- talk about the weekly topic; i.e., cite the assigned reading and the Commentary; this is a key part of discussion. Please do offer personal thoughts and experience relevant to the topic, but the focus should be mainly on the readings.
- As you read jot down notes that will be useful in your discussion postings.

Discussion topics are not exam questions. There is no "right answer." I am looking for informed and interested discussion, including references to the readings and Commentary and responses to each other. Feel free to respectfully offer an alternative view, using other text information. A paragraph or two, including short quotes is plenty. When you join the discussion, add your comment to the last comment made rather than creating a new thread.

### **Reading Report**

A Reading Report Topic List—i.e., a list of essays and chapters of books from which to choose one for the Reading Report assignment—is provided under Reading Report Topics. By midnight, Sunday, January 24, students must submit in the Assignment dropbox or as a Blackboard email attachment a 4-5 page summary of the information in one of the chapters listed on the Reading Report Topic List. Do not ask to substitute a different chapter.

The Summary should explain, with illustrative references, the ideas presented in the essay or chapter chosen. Your own reaction is relevant, but the point is to provide an informed digest of what is said in the writing. What is it about? What arguments are made? What special examples or references are used? How did the essay or chapter advance your thinking?

Observe the following formal requirements in writing your Reading Report.

- Double-space the text and use 10-point font size.
- leave 1" margins on all sides of each page; if submitted as surface mail, use white bond paper
- Put the paper's title, followed by full name, on the first page, above the start of the paper, not on a separate cover page.
- Put last name and page number on each page.
- Short quotations are encouraged; however, quoted passages should not be longer than 4 single-space lines; use no more than 4 quotations in the paper. Provide citation information in a list of Endnotes, giving author, text, publisher, and page number(s).

**Final Exam** A two-part exam will be posted at 10:00 AM on Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. The first part will be a 20-question True/False Multiple Choice Quiz accessed through “Quizzes and Exams.” TFMC answers must be returned by midnight, Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The second part will be a Glossary/Essay Answer Exam. This exam is also accessed through Quizzes and Exams. The glossary/essay answers are to be returned through the Drop Box or as a Blackboard email attachment by midnight, Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Glossary answers are provided under that heading in Tools. A HEADS UP will be posted on Wed., Jan. 27, describing the final exam questions. NOTE: You will be allowed to enter the TFMC Quiz twice. This allows for any problem that might throw you out while you are taking the quiz. The first set of answers submitted is graded.

**Late Work** Assignments submitted late will be graded, but will lose half a grade level. Thus, a B grade would be reduced to B-. No incomplete grades will be given.

**Incompletes** I only give an Incomplete where a documented emergency prevents the student from completing the Final Exam.

**Academic Integrity** I adhere to the college policy on academic honesty, as published in the Linfield College Course Catalog.

**Students With Disabilities** Students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student with a disability and feel you may require academic accommodations contact Cheri White, Program Director of Learning Support Services (LSS), as early as possible to request accommodation for your disability. The timeliness of your request will allow LSS to promptly arrange the details of your support. LSS is located in Loveridge Hall, Room 24, (503-413-8219). We also encourage students to communicate with faculty about their accommodations. Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know of, or who need special arrangements should discuss his or her situation with the instructor as early as possible, no later than the first week of the term.

**Course Grade** There are three components in the grade: discussion (30%), Reading Report (20%), and the final exam (50%).

## WEEKLY INSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1, JANUARY 4-10

Read: Week 1 Commentary

Emerson, *Nature*, Chapters 1-5, pp. 3-40; Chapter 8, pp. 58-67

Week 1 Poem: “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” William Butler Yeats

**Discussion Topic:** Modern readers may find Emerson’s somewhat figurative and grand language a challenge to understand. Yet, there are, from start to finish, brief, summary observations that contain much of the essay’s meaning. (e.g., “If a man would be alone, let him look at the stars” or “The moral law lies at the center of Nature.”) Note two or three such pithy assertions, say what you think he means, and relate it to your experience. What have you seen or heard that fits Emerson’s thought? Be sure to quote from “Nature.” See how many different such statements your group can discuss.

### WEEK 2, JANUARY 11-17

Read: Week 2 Commentary

Thoreau, *Walking*, pp. 71-122

Week 2 Poem: "For the Last Wolverine" James Dickey

Discussion Topic: Thoreau says that he wishes to make an *extreme statement* so that he can make an emphatic one, hoping to leave strong meanings in our mind. Choosing from early in the essay, in the middle, and near the end, list and comment on three ideas that you think are particularly important to Thoreau. Quote them and say whether you regard them as extreme statements and why.

### **WEEK 3, JANUARY 18-24**

Read: Week 3 Commentary

Mary Austin, *Writing the Western Landscape*, "The Land of Journey's Ending," pp. 46-85

John Muir, *Writing the Western Landscape*, "The Grand Canyon of the Colorado," pp. 91-115

Week 3 Poem: "I Walked In a Desert," Stephen Crane

Discussion Topic: Discuss Mary Austin's vivid pictures of natural forms and her humanizing way of writing about them. How many different forms can the group identify and comment on? How would you characterize her relationship with the desert? Are there significant or interesting connections between Austin's essay and Muir's on the Grand Canyon? Be sure to cite passages to illustrate or explain your general points.

### **WEEK 4, JANUARY 26-31<sup>st</sup>**

Read: Week 4 Commentary

John Muir, *Writing the Western Landscape*, "Travels in Alaska," pp. 121-182

Discussion Topic: Consider how Muir talks about the Alaskan world he is exploring, about the aspects that attract and excite him. Think of things like the sense of scale and geologic age, color and biological diversity, humanlike qualities. Identify a few such things and tell each other what seems memorable. How do you respond to the poems?

### **FINAL EXAM: Sunday, January 31, 10:00 AM**

Part I, True/False/Multiple Choice. Available under Quizzes and Exams. Answers must be returned in Blackboard no later than midnight, Tuesday, Feb. 2.

Part II, Glossary/Essay Questions. Available under Quizzes and Exams. Answers must be returned in the Drop Box or as Blackboard email attachment no later than midnight, Tuesday, Feb. 2.