

Department:American Studies

Course No.: 1700

Credits: 3

Title: Honors Core: American Landscapes

Contact:Wayne Franklin

Content Area: CA1 Arts and Humanities

Catalog Copy:-AMST 1700. Honors Core: American Landscapes. Either semester. Three credits. Open only to freshman and sophomore honors students. Real and imagined landscapes in American life as seen through the history of the land and its uses and through changing representations of those landscapes in art, literature, science, and popular culture.

Justification:

- a) This course, a more general version of an experimental Honors Core course (INTD 170) first offered in 2006 and currently approved for GEOC CA 1, is intended to introduce Honors students to interdisciplinary perspectives on American cultural and historical topics. The Honors Program wants to give INTD 170 a permanent academic home in the American Studies Program. INTD 170 will be dropped from the curriculum once AMST 1XXX is approved.
- b) This Honors Core course is intended to introduce students not only to the subject areas on which it draws but also to the concept of interdisciplinary inquiry. It will be taught by three faculty members from distinct disciplines (e.g., history, geology, and English).
- c) This course will offer a good deal to the American Studies curriculum by making interdisciplinary study available to Honors students early in their UConn careers.
- d) This course should have no deleterious effects on other departments' offerings.
- e) Given its unique focus on landscape as a material/historical/cultural topic, this course does not overlap in any significant way with existing courses.
- f) English, Political Science, and History have all given their assent to this course.
- g) This course should have minimal impact on the regional campuses.
- h) No costs are chargeable to the CLAS dean.
- i) No cross lists.

CA Justification:

a) This course takes an integrative approach to a subject--the relation of nature, history, and literature, in a given landscape (e.g., Walden Pond and its environs; the Hudson River Valley; the Grand Canyon)--too often taught in separate branches of the curriculum. Combining such fields as geology, history, literature, and art, it offers a practical demonstration of how the perspectives of different fields can come together to illuminate a single subject.

b) Five writing exercises will engage students in the various forms of analysis represented in the syllabus: (1) a short opening paper will describe their sense of place (or its lack); (2) a second paper will require them to produce a scientific description of some aspect of the subject landscape (based, where appropriate, on a field trip to the site and in accord with the instructor's guidelines); (3) a third paper will ask them to view cultural representations of the subject landscape in historical context; (4) a fourth paper will call on them to engage in close reading and examine the aesthetics of some portion of an assigned text concerned with the landscape; and (5) a final, synthetic paper will challenge them to produce an interdisciplinary analysis of the subject landscape and its manifold historical, literary, scientific, and artistic contexts.

c) Through relevant scientific evidence (e.g., the geological record), students will probe the physical context of the subject landscape; through social and economic history, they will view the dramatic changes affecting the human relationship to that landscape; through the history of art, literature, and science, as well as through biography, they will explore how individuals and groups associated with the landscape came to shape and understand it; and by connecting it to the U.S. today, they will consider their own sense of place (both individually and in terms of natural environment).

Meets Goals of Gen Ed.:

Through its interdisciplinary approach, this course will challenge students to "acquire intellectual breadth and versatility." It will require "critical judgment" in the analysis and synthesis of diverse materials; it will prompt them to become articulate through weekly small discussion sections and through the several writing exercises; it will foster both "moral sensitivity" and "awareness of their era and society" by obliging them to consider the impact of economic development (and the values propelling such growth) on the environment and the personal responsibility of the individual in the face of seemingly inevitable social change.

CA1 Criteria:

This course will engage students in investigations and historical analyses of human experience by assigning readings, in both primary and secondary sources, about the social and economic developments in the subject landscape (e.g., for Walden Pond, readings in mid nineteenth-century New England and Thoreau's hometown of Concord, Massachusetts), and about the intellectual sources of ideas about nature (aesthetic and scientific) on which human interactions with the subject landscape drew.

It will attend to symbolic representation by considering how writers and artists have crafted their representations of nature and of their experience in a specific landscape.

Supplementary Information: -Again, this course (AMST 1XXX) has been designed to replace INTD 170, which was approved as a GEOC CA 1 course last year.

Syllabus:

-Next fall, this course will be offered by Professors Robert Gross (History), Robert Thorson (EEB), and Wayne Franklin (English/American Studies) on the topic,

"Walden: A History." The syllabus of "Walden" as it was offered in 2006 by Gross, Thorson, and Janet Pritchard (Art), follows here as an exemplary guide. In other years, the course will focus on other complex landscapes (for instance, the Hudson River Valley; the Grand Canyon; the Great Plains).

Readings in Packet

9.5 1 D.W. Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene" in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. D.W. Meinig (New

York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 33–48 (P)

9.7 2 Robert M. Thorson, "Geology," in *The Encyclopedia of New England Culture*, eds.

Burt Feintuch and David H. Watters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005),

567–69 (P)

3 Edmund A. Schofield, "The Ecology of Walden Woods," in *Thoreau's World and*

Ours: A Natural Legacy, eds. Edmund A. Schofield and Robert C. Baron (Golden,

Colorado: North American Press in cooperation with the Thoreau Society, 1993),

155–71 (P)

9.12 4 Robert M. Thorson, *Stone by Stone* (New York: Walker & Co., 2002), 11–54 (P)

9.19 5 Margaret Bryan Davis, "Holocene Vegetational History of the Eastern United States," in H.E. Wright, Jr., *Late-Quaternary Environments of the United States, Volume 2, The Holocene*. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 166-81 (P)

6 Marjorie Green Winkler, "Changes at Walden Pond During the last 600 years:

Microfossil Analyses of Walden Pond Sediments," in *Thoreau's World and Ours: A Natural Legacy*, eds. Edmund A. Schofield and Robert C. Baron (Golden, Colorado:

North American Press in cooperation with the Thoreau Society, 1993), 199–211 (P)

7 Shirley Blancke, "The Archaeology of Walden Woods," in *Thoreau's World and Ours: A Natural Legacy*, eds. Edmund A. Schofield and Robert C. Baron (Golden, Colorado: North American Press in cooperation with the Thoreau Society, 1993), 242–53 (P)

9.28 8 Robert A. Gross, "Culture and Cultivation: Agriculture and Society in Thoreau's Concord," *Journal of American History* 69 (June, 1982): 42–61 (P)

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9 Brian Donahue, "Henry David Thoreau and the Environment of Concord," in *Thoreau's World and Ours: A Natural Legacy*, eds. Edmund A. Schofield and Robert C. Baron (Golden, Colorado: North American Press in cooperation with the Thoreau Society, 1993), 181–89 (P)

10.5 10 William K. Hartmann, *The History of the Earth: An Illustrated Chronicle of an Evolving Planet* (New York: Workman Publishing, 1991), 10–17 (P)

11 Henry Faul and Carol Faul, *It Began with a Stone: A History of Geology from the Stone Age to the Age of Plate Tectonics* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983), 161–77 (P)

12 George P. Merrill, *The First One Hundred Years of American Geology* (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1969), 152–53 (P)

13 Edward Hitchcock, *Ichnology of New England* (Boston: Massachusetts State Legislature, 1858), extracts (P)

10.10 14 Rebecca Bedell, *The Anatomy of Nature: Geology and American Landscape Painting, 1825-1875* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 3–15 (P)

15 Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, "'All Nature Here is New to Art' — Painting the American Landscape in the Nineteenth Century," in *Hudson River School: Masterworks from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art*, Elizabeth Mankin

Kornhauser and Amy Ellis, with Maureen Miesmer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 3–16 (P)

16 Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 157–165 (P)

10.19 17 Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Man the Reformer: A Lecture Read before the Mechanics’ Apprentices’ Library Association, Boston, January 25, 1841,” in Larzer Ziff, ed., *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Selected Essays*, 129–47 (P)

18 Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, “Plan of the West Roxbury Community,” in Perry Miller, ed., *The Transcendentalists: An Anthology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 464–69 (P);

19 “Constitution of the Brook Farm Association for Industry and Education, West Roxbury, Mass. With an Introduction Statement,” (1844), in Joel Myerson, ed., *Transcendentalism: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 461–70 (P).

10.24 20 J. Lyndon Shanley, extract from *The Making of Walden*, in Henry David Thoreau, *Walden and Resistance to Civil Government*, William Rossi, ed., First Edition. Norton Critical Edition. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1966), 372–383 (P)

10.26 21 Robert A. Gross, “‘That Terrible Thoreau’: Concord and Its Hermit,” in William E. Cain, ed., *A Historical Guide to Henry David Thoreau* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 181–241 (P)

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11.9 22 Finis Dunaway, “Transcendental Vision: Gleason’s Transparent Eye,” in *Natural*

Visions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3–32 (P)

11.16 23 Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic” in *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1949) 201–226 (P)

24 John Muir, *The Mountains of California* (New York: Century, 1894), extracted with the title “A Wind-Storm in the Forests” in Robert Finch and John Elder, eds., *The Norton Book of Nature Writing* (2002), 251–258 (P)

12.5 25 David E. Shi, ed., *In Search of the Simple Life: American Voices, Past and Present* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Peregrine Smith Books, 1986), 3–11, 255–57 (P)

26 Joseph Wood Krutch, “Thoreau on Madison Avenue,” in Shi, ed., *In Search of the Simple Life: American Voices, Past and Present* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Peregrine Smith Books, 1986), 258–64 (P)

27 Scott and Helen Nearing, “Living the Good Life,” in Shi, ed., *In Search of the Simple Life: American Voices, Past and Present* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Peregrine Smith Books, 1986), 271–77 (P)

28 John Hanson Mitchell, *Living at the End of Time* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), 1–10, 221–23 (P)