History 498B: Nature and Culture in American History

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Course Description

This course will explore some of the various responses Americans have had toward their environment from the early colonial period through the present day. Readings include primary historical documents, literary texts, and critical monographs. Many are iconic texts of American cultural or environmental history. Among the themes we will address are nature and American nationalism, attitudes towards science and technology, attitudes toward capitalism, definitions of race and gender, the role of urbanization and the place of the human body.

Students should have a strong grasp of American history and/or literature, but we will begin each class meeting with a brief overview of the period and themes to be addressed that day. Interested students may want to look at Eric Foner, ed. The New American History 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), which has several interpretative essays to guide you through the historical terrain we will navigate this term. A copy will be on reserve at Odegaard Library.

Readings

Required readings are available at the University Book Store, except for the course reader, which is available at the Suzzallo/Allen Library Copy Center (5th Floor). Both required and recommended readings will also be available on 24-hour reserve in Odegaard Undergraduate Library. The reading load for this course is substantial, upwards of 200 pages per week, but it is not unreasonable for an upper-division course at a university of this caliber.

Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia [1787] (New York: Penguin, 1998).
Ralph Waldo Emerson, Selected Essays [1836] (New York: Penguin, 1982).
Henry David Thoreau, Walden [1854] (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).
Jack Kerouac, The Dharma Bums [1958] (New York: Penguin, 1976).
Rachel Carson, Silent Spring [1962] (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1994).
Bill McKibben, The End of Nature [1989] (New York: Doubleday, 1990).
Course Reader— available at Suzzallo/Allen Library Copy Center (5th Floor).

Additionally, students are strongly urged to buy Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature, William Cronon, ed., (New York: Norton, 1996), which will be available at the University Book Store. Although this book is not required, it has several essays that will help you to investigate some of the issues we will explore this term. Many are recommended readings for the course.

Course Requirements

1. Short (4-5 pages) critical response paper. **[20% course grade]** This paper should critically review the reading for a selected week while incorporating one or more of the recommended readings. (*Students should use, at a minimum, at least one full-length monograph.*) Essays should interrogate the biases of the author, the context of their writing, and how their understandings of nature and culture relate to larger themes addressed in the course. *Students have the option of rewriting this paper once, with the average of the two counting toward your final grade.*
2. Class presentation and leading discussion. **[10% course grade]** Students will present their work for the short paper, in summary form, to the class as a way to spark discussion for that week. Students should also briefly summarize the major historical themes or events for the period under discussion in order to place our discussion of nature and culture in context. Presentations should last 10-15 minutes. Using additional materials— handouts, pictures, etc.— is encouraged. Students should use the class email list to promote discussion as well.

3. A critical thought paper (10-12 pages). **[40% course grade]** This assignment is your attempt to synthesize the material learned in this course through your own engagement with the assigned and recommended readings. Papers should incorporate one or more of the broader themes of the course and integrate your chosen topic (but not, however, the topic for your short paper) with one or more of the recommended readings. We will discuss possible topics during the quarter. In addition to using relevant secondary sources, students may incorporate additional primary sources— diaries, newspapers, scientific reports, maps, photographs or government reports— so long as they help to advance your argument. Of course, I will review as many rough drafts as you can write, within reason. *Papers are due Wednesday, 9 June.*

4. Participation in seminar activities and discussion **[30% course grade]** Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive prepared to discuss the readings for that week. Visiting me during office hours and conferring by email will also count toward participation but they are not substitutes for active involvement in the classroom.

Preliminary Schedule

Please keep this syllabus handy— we may make changes during the quarter!

29 March: **Putting nature back in: Overviews of American environmental history**

- William Cronon, "Kennecott Journey," from Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds. (New York: Norton, 1992).

Recommended:

"American Environmental History: A Roundtable," Journal of American History 76: 1 (July 1990).

Out of the Woods: Essays in Environmental History Hal K. Rothman, ed. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997).

5 April: **The American temper: nature in the Early Republic**

- Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (1787).

Recommended:

Joyce Appleby, "Commercial Farming and the 'Agrarian Myth' in the Early Republic," Journal of American History 68:4 (March 1982).

William Cronon, Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

Karl Jacoby, "Slaves by Nature?: Domestic Animals and Human Slaves," Slavery and Abolition (April 1994).

John Kasson, Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900 (New York: Grossman, 1976).

Charles A. Miller, Jefferson and Nature: An Interpretation (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

Timothy Silver, A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Thomas Slaughter, The Natures of John and Thomas Bartram (New York: Knopf, 1996).

Richard White, "Discovering Nature in North America," Journal of American History 79:3 (December 1992).

12 April: **Nature's nation: Emerson, Thoreau, and the American environment**

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature" (1836).
- Henry David Thoreau, Walden (1854).

Recommended:

Lawrence Buell, The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture (Cambridge, MA: Beknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995).

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

Carolyn Merchant, Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

Sherman Paul, Emerson's Angle of Vision: Man and Nature in American Experience (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952).

Carol Sheriff, The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

Theodore Steinberg, Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature," in Problems in Materialism and Culture (London: Verso, 1980).

Donald Worster, Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

19 April: **Beyond the wide Missouri: nature, culture, and the westward expansion**

- The Journals of Lewis and Clark [excerpts] (1805).
- John Wesley Powell, Report on the Lands of the Arid Region of the U.S. [excerpts] (1879).
- Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Frontier in American Society" (1893).
- Theodore Roosevelt, "The American Wilderness" and "Hunting Lore" from The Wilderness Hunter (1893).

Recommended:

Gail Bederman, "Theodore Roosevelt: Manhood, Nation, and Civilization," in Manhood and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Daniel Botkin, Our Natural History: The Lessons of Lewis and Clark (New York: Putnam, 1995).

William Cronon, "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner," Western Historical Quarterly 18:2 (April 1987).

Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," Journal of American History 78:2 (September 1991).

R. William Truettner, ed., The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier (Washington, DC: National Museum of Art/Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

Donald Worster, Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, 1992).

Richard White, The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

26 April: **Order and disorder: science, industrialization, and urbanization**

- Frederick Law Olmsted, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns" (1870).
- Stephen Forbes, "The Lake as a Microcosm" (1887).
- Upton Sinclair, The Jungle [excerpts] (1906).
- Margaret Byington, Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town [excerpts] (1910).

Recommended:

Thomas Bender, Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century America (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975, 1982).

William Cronon, Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West (New York: Norton, 1991).

Gregg Mitman, The State of Nature: Ecology, Community, and American Social Thought, 1900-1950 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Christopher Sellers, Hazards of the Job: From Industrial Disease to Environmental Health Science (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

Anne Whiston Spirn, "Constructing Nature: The Legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted," in Uncommon Ground (New York: Norton, 1996).

Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

Anthony F. C. Wallace, St. Clair: A Nineteenth-Century Coal Town's Experience with a Disaster-Prone Industry (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

3 May: **Abundance and scarcity: attitudes of conservation of preservation**

- John Muir, "The Wild Parks and Forest Reservations of the West" and "The American Forests" from Our National Parks (1901).
- Jack London, "Yellow and White," and "A Raid on Oyster Pirates" from Tales of the Fish Patrol (1905).
- Gifford Pinchot, The Fight for Conservation [excerpts] (1910).
- William Temple Hornaday, Our Vanishing Wildlife [excerpts] (1913).
- Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac [excerpts] (1949).

Recommended:

William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in Uncommon Ground (New York: Norton, 1996).

Susan Flader, Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude toward Deer, Wolves and Forests (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974).

Michael Fox, The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

Samuel Hays, Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

Arthur F. McEvoy, The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries, 1850-1980 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

Michael Smith, Pacific Visions: California Scientists and the Environment, 1850-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

Joseph E. Taylor, III, "El Niño and Vanishing Salmon: Culture, Nature, History, and the Politics of Blame," Western Historical Quarterly 29:4 (Winter 1998).

Louis Warren, The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-Century America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

10 May: **Natural and unnatural affinities: regional thinking in the 1920s and 30s**

- Lewis Mumford, The Culture of Cities [excerpts] (1938); and Regional Planning in the Northwest: A Memorandum (1939).

- Twelve Southerners, "Introduction" and "Reconstructed but Unregenerate" from I'll Take My Stand (1930).
- Great Plains Committee, The Future of the Great Plains [excerpts] (1936).

Recommended:

Edward Ayers, ed. All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Robert L. Dorman, Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

David M. Wrobel and Michael R. Steiner, eds., Many Wests: Place, Culture, and Identity (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997).

Katherine G. Morrissey, Mental Territories: Mapping the Inland Empire (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

William G. Robbins, Robert J. Frank, and Richard E. Ross, eds., Regionalism and the Pacific Northwest (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1983).

Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (Boston, Ginn, 1931).

Donald Worster, "New West, True West," in Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

_____, Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

17 May: **Nuclear nightmares, green dreams: Rediscovering nature during in Cold War**

- Rachel Carson, Silent Spring [excerpts] (1962).
- Jack Kerouac, The Dharma Bums [excerpts] (1958).

Recommended:

Paul Boyer, By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985, 1994).

Joel Hagen, An Entangled Bank: The Origins of Ecosystem Ecology (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

Samuel P. Hays, Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Andrew Hurley, Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

Linda Lear, Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature (New York: Henry Holt, 1997).

David M. Potter, People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and American Character (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1954).

James D. Proctor, "Whose Nature?: The Contested Moral Terrain of Ancient Forests," in Uncommon Ground (New York: Norton, 1996).

Kirkpatrick Sale, The Green Revolution: The American Environmental Movement, 1967-1992 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993).

24 May: **Nature annihilated: Americans and environment in the post-Cold War era**

- Bill McKibben, The End of Nature (1989).

Recommended:

Daniel Botkin, Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the 21st Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Mike Davis, Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998).

Susan Davis, Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

Susan Davis, "Touch the Magic," in Uncommon Ground (New York: Norton, 1996).

Jennifer Price, "Looking for Nature at the Mall: A Field Guide to the *Nature Company*" in Uncommon Ground (New York: Norton, 1996).

Anne Whiston Spirn, The Language of Landscape (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Yi-Fu Tuan, Escapism (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

Richard White, The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

31 May **American by nature?: nature and culture at the millennium**

Memorial Day weekend— no meeting on Monday

- William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," Journal of American History 78:4 (March 1992).
- Richard White, "'Are you an environmentalist or do you work for a living?,': Work and Nature," in Uncommon Ground (New York: Norton, 1996).
- **Potluck meeting/dinner discussion— location and time TBA— this week!**
  Assignment: Bring work by your favorite (or least favorite) contemporary nature or outdoor writer to the dinner. Be prepared to evaluate critically your writer and his or her work in light the issues raised in this course. We will also wrap up our discussion for the quarter and discuss your final paper drafts.

Final paper due Wednesday, 9 June in my box by 12 noon!

Short critical response paper and class discussion— suggestions and guidelines

Short critical response paper

In order to encourage lively discussion, I'm asking you to write one short critical response paper (4-5 pages) for a selected week. The paper should review the reading for that week while incorporating one or more of the recommended readings. You are expected to use, at a minimum, at least one of the full-length monographs or books from the recommended reading list. Essays should interrogate the biases of the author, the context of their writing, and how their understandings of nature and culture relate to larger themes addressed in the course. You have the option of *rewriting this paper once, with the average of the two counting toward your final grade.* The paper is worth 20% of the course grade. It is due at the end of class for that week.

Some suggestions for writing a successful paper:

1. Begin with a thesis statement, a central argument about the books and/or weekly theme. Your paper should answer, in an analytical fashion, a question that you have about the books or weekly theme. Your answer should be your thesis statement— a concise, defendable argument around which you will build your paper. Remember: this is a critical response paper. You have to make an argument in response to what you have read.
2. Analyze, don't summarize. Avoid reiterating the books; I've already read them. Instead, offer your own interpretation of the works. Assess the authors' arguments. Question their assumptions, organization, and take on the topic. Judge what kind of evidence they use and how they present it. Put the assigned reading for that week into conversation with one or more of the recommended works. Compare and contrast the two. In sum, don't tell me what the books say. Instead, tell me how they help to complicate historical understandings of nature and culture in American history.
3. Cite evidence and give examples. Do not drift off into abstractions and big ideas without grounding them with specific examples. Choose your evidence carefully. In most cases, you can paraphrase instead of quoting directly from the text. If you quote directly from the text, keep your selections succinct. Above all, be sure to cite your evidence.
4. Make distinctions between primary and secondary sources. All of the assigned readings for this course are *primary sources*— original documents used by historians to interpret the past. All of the recommended readings are *secondary sources*— scholarly interpretations written by historians or other scholars. Distinguish between the two types of sources when writing your paper. Remember the historical context for each document: when it was written, for whom, and for what purpose.
5. Write simply and clearly. Do not mistake big words and complicated sentences for effective writing. Write in simple, declarative sentences instead. Use concrete images and themes. Begin each paragraph with clear, concise topic sentences. Craft effective transitions between paragraphs and sentences. Pay attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. How you present your argument affects what you argue. Clear writing almost always reflects clear thinking.

If you are looking for examples of critical book reviews, look at Reviews in American History in Suzzallo/Allen Library Recent issues are available on line (via the Johns Hopkins Press homepage) at http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/reviews_in_american_history. You may consult reviews of the secondary works from the recommend reading list, but you must cite these reviews in your paper. One good place to start looking for academic book reviews is the JSTOR homepage at http://www.jstor.org, which has a digital database of many major historical journals. You may also consult other major journals— Environmental History Review/Environmental History, Journal of American History, Western Historical Quarterly, etc.— all of which are available at Suzzallo/Allen library.

Class presentation and leading discussion

To further encourage active discussion, you will present your work for the short paper, in summary form, to the class. This is an opportunity to raise questions and issues you were unable to address in your paper. It is also a chance to get feedback on your analysis should you choose to rewrite your paper afterwards. In essence, you get to help teach the class— which is the goal of any effective seminar. Presentations should last 10-15 minutes; you will help me to direct class discussion afterwards. Your presentation is worth 10% of the total grade

Students should distribute discussion questions to the class by email no later than the Friday before class. You can also bring the questions to class; I'll make copies for everyone. If you think of additional questions over the weekend, bring those to class as well.

Some suggestions for leading an engaging discussion:

1. Briefly summarize the major historical themes or events for the period or topic. This will help to place the discussion of nature and culture in its proper context. For example, if you are presenting on Thoreau and Emerson, you should briefly explain their significance in American literature and their position in antebellum New England society. Focus only on what themes or events you feel are significant for sparking our conversation.
2. Summarize both the assigned reading and the recommended readings you consulted for the paper. As with your short critical paper, concisely restate the prominent issues or concerns raised by each work. Be sure to analyze each author's biases, arguments, etc. Remember to distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
3. Do not read verbatim from your short paper. Again, this is an informal oral presentation. Moreover, you should try to raise questions or issues you didn't address in your paper. Write a short outline instead. You may refer to your paper, if necessary, but avoid using it for the entire presentation.
4. Use additional materials, if necessary, to help guide discussion. In some cases, you might have additional knowledge about the topic or books for that week. If you do, flaunt your expertise. Use artwork, handouts, or other documents, so long as they pertain to the discussion. If you need help or equipment (e.g., overhead projectors, etc.), let me know in advance so I can make the necessary arrangements. Do not go overboard, however, with your presentation. Remember: you only have 10-15 minutes.

After your presentation, we'll open up the questions you raised to the class. I'll let you field the questions at first, but I may jump in, as necessary, to direct the discussion. Think of your presentation as the catalyst. If it works, the reaction will result in an animated debate.

Ultimately, this is your chance to teach the class. But building a student-centered seminar takes responsibility. This means that if you are presenting, you must come to class prepared to lead that discussion. If you are not presenting, then you should also come prepared to talk about the reading. I'll be there to help if you run into trouble, but I hope to become just another participant as you take control of the material and the course for a while.

If you have any questions about the short paper or class presentation, please see me.

Critical thought paper (a.k.a. 498 Term Paper)— suggestions and guidelines

This assignment is your attempt to synthesize the material learned in this course through your own engagement with the assigned and recommended readings. Papers should incorporate one or more of the broader themes of the course and integrate your chosen topic (but not, however, the topic for your short paper) with one or more of the recommended readings. In addition to using the listed primary and secondary sources, students may incorporate additional primary sources— diaries, newspapers, scientific reports, maps, photographs or government reports— so long as they help to advance your argument. However, students do not need to range beyond the assigned and recommended readings in order to write a strong term paper.

You are not allowed to rewrite this paper, but I will review as many rough drafts as you can produce, within reason. You are also strongly encouraged to use the History Writing Center in 210C Smith Hall. To make an appointment, drop by or email the Center at hwc@u.washington.edu. This assignment is worth 40% of your course grade. **Papers are due Wednesday, 9 June at 12 noon.**

I've listed some possible topics, inspired by the readings and themes we'll discuss this quarter, on the back of this sheet. You may choose any topic you wish so long as it engages with one or more of the assigned and recommended readings from this course. Papers also must analyze the relationship between nature and culture in American history— showing how attitudes towards and ideas of nature by particular individuals or groups in the United States have changed over time.

Some general suggestions for writing a successful paper:

1. Begin with a thesis statement, a central argument about the books and/or your chosen theme. Your paper should answer, in an analytical fashion, a question that you have about the books or your chosen theme. Your answer should be your thesis statement— a concise, defendable argument around which you will build your paper. This thesis statement should appear in the beginning of your paper. A good thesis statement usually answers a question or set of questions you have about the material. Remember: this is a critical response paper. You have to make an argument in response to what you have read.
2. Analyze, don't summarize. Avoid reiterating the books; I've already read them. Instead, offer your own interpretation of the works. Assess the authors' arguments. Question their assumptions, organization, and ideas. Judge what kind of evidence they use and how they present it. Put your ideas into conversation with one or more of the recommended works. Compare and contrast the two. In sum, don't tell me what the books say. Instead, tell me how they help to complicate historical understandings of nature and culture in American history.
3. Cite evidence and give examples. Do not drift off into abstractions and big ideas without grounding them with specific examples. Choose your evidence carefully. In most cases, you can paraphrase instead of quoting directly from the text. If you quote directly from the text, keep your selections succinct. Above all, be sure to cite your evidence.
4. Make distinctions between primary and secondary sources. All of the assigned readings for this course are *primary sources*— original documents used by historians to interpret the past. All of the recommended readings are *secondary sources*— scholarly interpretations written by historians or other scholars. Distinguish between the two types of sources when writing your paper. You are required to use both types of sources for your term paper. Remember the historical context for each document: when it was written, for whom, and for what purpose.
5. Write simply and clearly. Do not mistake big words and complicated sentences for effective writing. Write in simple, declarative sentences instead. Use concrete images and themes. Begin each paragraph with clear, concise topic sentences. Craft effective transitions between paragraphs and sentences. Pay attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. How you present your argument affects what you argue. Clear writing almost always reflects clear thinking. If you need help, consult William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, The Elements of Style.

Papers must include a bibliography of all sources consulted and use proper citation methods. The preferred method is the so-called Chicago Style. For details, consult Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). If you use sources from the Internet, these must be cited as well. Be warned that I take plagiarism very seriously. Enough said.

Again, if you are looking for examples of critical book reviews, look at Reviews in American History in Suzzallo/Allen Library. Recent issues are available on line (via the Johns Hopkins Press homepage) at http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/reviews_in_american_history. You may consult reviews of the secondary works from the recommend reading list, but you must cite these reviews in your paper. One good place to start looking for academic book reviews is the JSTOR homepage at http://www.jstor.org, which has a digital database of many major historical journals. You may also consult other major journals— Environmental History Review/Environmental History, Journal of American History, Western Historical Quarterly, etc.— all of which are available at Suzzallo/Allen library.

A final note on grading. My standards are tough but fair. The attached handout details my grading standards for papers. I'll be less rigorous on your section discussions. You need to participate in section in order to do well in this course. Remember: attendance is part of your grade, and I will take roll each meeting. Your grade will be determined by class participation, performance on written assignments and discussion presentation, and attendance. Two absences will result in a drop of one full grade point from your grade (e.g., from A to B or from B to C). You cannot pass the class if you do not attend. If you cannot come to class, please notify me in advance. Since participation is part of your grade in this course, I reserve the right to raise your final mark by 1/3 for extraordinary involvement or improvement over the term.

Suggested paper topics for the critical thought paper:

- Americans and their national parks, public lands, and monuments
- Defining and managing "wilderness" on public lands
- Environmental racism and environmental justice
- Science and the perception of environmental problems
- The role of nature in American literature or art
- American attitudes toward disease and sickness
- Gender and different understandings of nature
- Religion and spirituality in American nature writing
- Attitudes toward urban and rural living
- Urban growth, growth management, and environmental quality
- Racial thinking and attitudes toward nature
- Labor, nature and gender roles in American history
- Nature and regional identity
- The development of nature writing in American literature
- Natural disasters and American culture