Course Description:
American culture is deeply rooted in our writing about nature, from the stories of early Native Americans and colonial Europeans to modern poetry and essays. This course is a survey of American literature with a special emphasis on nature writing from the colonial period to present. Works are mostly non-fiction, but also include some fiction and poetry. Along with exploring the traditions of nature writing in America, students will develop their skills as sophisticated readers and writers of literature.

Course Vitals and Contact Information:
- Class time and room: Wednesdays 6:00-8:30 p.m. in Duncker 003
- Instructor: Dean DeVoll
- Office: Cupples II, Suite 104
- Email: mwdevoll@wustl.edu
- Phone: (office) 314-935-5392; (cell) 314-607-7028

Required Course Book:
- *Norton Book of Nature Writing*, Eds. Robert Finch and John Elder

Course Assignments and Grading Policy:
Students can receive a total of 1000 points.

A+ = 980-1000; A = 930-979; A- = 900-929
B+ = 880-899; B = 830-879; B- = 800-829
C+ = 780-799; C = 730-779; C- = 700-729
D+ = 680-699; D = 630-679; D- = 600-629; F = 599 and below.

The points are distributed as such:
- Class Participation 200 points
- Two 3-4 page interpretive essays 200 points each (400 total)
- Midterm Exam 200 points
- Final Exam 200 points

Pass/Fail
- Students taking the course pass/fail must earn a C- to pass the course.

Incompletes
- Students unable to complete the final assignments because of extraordinary circumstances beyond their control may be granted an incomplete for the course and must complete an agreement with the instructor outlining when those assignments may be turned in for a grade.
Description of Assignments (see syllabus for due dates):

Class Participation
Class participation is based on good participation and completion of daily reading responses.

- **Class Participation**
  - Quality class participation is based on preparation and engagement in discussion and respectful behavior in class. Good questions are valued just as much as insightful comments and interpretations.

- **Daily Reading Responses**
  For each reading, do the following, turned in on the day the reading is due:
  - Write the name of the reading, the author, and the original year of its writing or publication
  - Quote a sentence or brief passage that you find particularly important, interesting or strange.
  - Write 3-5 sentences about why it’s so important, interesting, or strange

Interpretive Essays
During the semester, students will write 2 interpretive essays, each 3-4 pages long (double-spaced and printed). These papers are thesis-driven, with an overall argument to make in response to a given prompt. They will be graded on their strength of interpretation, overall paper and paragraph organization, and sentence-level correctness and clarity. We will spend time in class reviewing a sample essay and discussing how to write a strong literary essay.

Mid-term and Final Exams
At the middle and the end of the semester, students will be tested on their knowledge of the material through identification, short-answer, and essay questions.
**Attendance Policy**

- Students may have 1 unexcused absence without penalty.
- Students may have 3 total absences without penalty, including the 1 unexcused and 2 excused absences.
- An absence will be excused for the following reasons; written documentation from an authority verifying the excuse is required:
  - religious holiday
  - catastrophic family emergency
  - illness requiring a doctor’s visit
  - jury duty
  - required active or reserve military service
- Each penalized absence will reduce class the course grade by 30 points.

**Statement of Accommodations for Disabled Students:**
Washington University is committed to providing accommodations and/or services to students with documented disabilities. Students who are seeking support for a disability or suspected disability should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Cornerstone. Information is available at cornerstone.wustl.edu.

**Writing Help:**
Students are encouraged to seek tutoring for their essays from the Writing Center in Olin Library. Meetings are by appointment only and fill up fast. See writingcenter.wustl.edu for details. Phone: 314-935-4981; email: writing@wustl.edu. Hours are Sun.-Th., 11 a.m.-9 p.m. and Fri. 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Saturdays.

**Academic Integrity Policy:**
At the heart of the University community is an implicit and shared sense of academic integrity among students and faculty. Such integrity fosters an atmosphere of mutual trust, which is necessary in the pursuit of excellence.

Any violation of academic integrity will be forwarded to the Academic Integrity Committee, who will provide a recommendation that may include a zero for the given assignment and possibly an F for the course as a whole. Examples of violating academic integrity include but are not limited to the following:

- Abetting: helping another student to cheat.
- Plagiarism: claiming another’s work as your own.
- Misrepresentation or dual-submission: submitting work done in one class for another class.

Details on academic integrity and sanctions for violation are found at http://studentconduct.wustl.edu/academic-integrity/
Course Schedule:
All readings are from the Norton Book of Nature Writing, unless noted as handouts, which are handed out in class and posted to Blackboard. Course schedule is subject to change at the professor’s discretion. Any changes will be announced in class and noted as announcements at Blackboard. Students who miss class are responsible for finding out if there have been any changes.

Jan. 14  **Brave New World**
Columbus, from Letter of Columbus (handout)
Bradford, from Of Plimouth Plantation (handout)
Rowlandson, from Sovereignty and Goodness of God (handout)

Jan. 21  **Gardens in the Desert**
“New World Encounters” (handout)
Crevecoeur, from Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches (51-63 and handout)
Jefferson, from Notes on the Present State of Virginia (handout)
Freneau, “On the Emigration to America” and “To Sir Toby” (handouts)

Jan. 28  **Exploring the New Nation**
“1850-1914: Evolving Environmental Awareness” (handout)
Bartram, from Travels through North & South Carolina, etc. (64-76)
Lewis, from Journals of Lewis and Clark (95-104)
Audubon, from Ornithological Biography (117-122)
Bryant, “The Prairies” (handout)
Catlin, from Letters and Notes on ... North American Indians (129-140)

Feb. 4  **“In Wildness is the Preservation of the World”**
Thoreau, “Walking” and “Ktaadn” from Maine Woods 168-169, 180-211

**Paper 1**

Feb. 11  **Cultivating an Original Relation to the Land**
Emerson, from Nature and Journals 140-51
Thoreau, “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” from Walden (handout)

Feb. 18  **Opening of the West**
Muir, “A Wind-Storm” and “The Water-Ouzel” (250-268)
Powell, from Exploration of the Colorado River (230-238)
Bird, from A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains (handout)
Whitman, “Song of the Redwood-Tree” (handout)
London, “To Build a Fire” (handout)

Feb. 25  **Nature Faker Controversy**
Seton, from *Wild Animals I have Known* (305-312)
Williamson, “Tarka the Otter” (410-415)
London, from *White Fang* (handout)
Burroughs, “Real and Sham Natural History” (handout)
T. Roosevelt, “Nature Fakers” and interview in *Everybody’s Magazine* (handouts)
London, “The Other Animals” (handout)

Mar. 4  **Midterm**

Mar. 11  **Spring Break—No Class**

Mar. 18  **Rise of Bioethics**
*Green Perspectives*, “1915-1949” and “1949-1975” (handouts)
Leopold, from *Sand County Almanac* (376-397)
Carson, “The Marginal World” (479-485)
Stegner, “Coda: Wilderness Letter” (504-519)

Mar. 25  **Gardens and Farms**
Thaxter, from *An Island Garden* (239-243)
Wright, “Story of a Garden” (299-304)
Berry, “Making of a Marginal Farm” (728-736)
Kincaid, “Alien Soil” (1015-1022)
Pollan, “Weeds Are Us” (1078-1090)

Apr. 1  **Desert Places**
Austin, “Land of Little Rain” (320-326)
Abbey, from *Desert Solitaire* (614-627)
Grover, “Cutover” (891-899)
Frost, “Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening” and “Desert Places” (handout)

Apr. 8  **Communion with Nature**
McLean, from *A River Runs Through It* (457-465)
Merton, “Rain and the Rhinoceros” (545-553)
Peacock, “The Big Snow” (832-841)
Dillard, “Heaven and Earth in Jest” and “Living Like Weasels” (867-879)

Apr. 15  **Science, Myth, and Nature: Toward New Fables of Nature**
*Green Perspectives*, “1976-1993” (handout)
Thomas, “The World’s Biggest Membrane” (533, 536-38)
McKibben, from *The End of Nature* (1120-1130)

**Field Trip to Tyson Research Center**
**Paper 2 Due**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 22</td>
<td>Modern Native American Visions of Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luther Standing Bear, “Nature” (326-331)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Least Heat-Moon, from <em>PrairyErth</em> (773-781)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Momaday, Introduction to <em>Way to Rainy Mountain</em> (737-742)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erdrich, “Big Grass” (1043-1047) and “Captivity” (handout)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 29</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>