Course: ENGL 2328.003 (TR 2 – 3:20 P.M., LANG 316)
Instructor: Shari M. Childers, Ph.D.
Phone: 940.369.5965 (less effective)
E-mail: SHARI.CHILDERS@UNT.EDU (most effective)
Web page: Blackboard for this course
Ofc & Hours: SAGE 302H; TR 3:20 – 3:45 P.M., or by appt

Course Description: This Land Is Your Land

American culture—political, popular, and literary—reflects the importance of land to our people and our nation. From westward expansion to Three Mile Island to the explosion of the Deep Water Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico, Americans have lived in precarious balance with their environment. Cultural evidence reflects an inherent contradiction between individualism and community, self and others, freedom and fairness. We will explore how these themes of independence and inclusion, equality and exclusion in America (have) shape(d) our use of the land and its resources. We will explore how Americans balance and represent the conflicting demands of self and society, particularly with respect to the environmental issues such as wilderness protection, environmental conservation, sustainable development, and a growing number of environmental justice concerns.

This American Literature course provides a survey of American literature (since 1870), including the diversification of the canon, the emerging themes of disillusionment, technology, mistrust of authority, and the development of a uniquely American "environmental literature." We will focus on texts that highlight the central tension in American politics and literature between rugged individualism and land ownership, on the one hand, and "common ground" on the other. Important goals of the class include introducing students to the pleasures of exploring literary texts and reinforcing their skills in literary analysis and research. As such, we will critically examine the significance of language/naming, the connection between land and value(s), the consequences of a gendered planet, domination/submission ideologies, race/class implications of land use, and a whole host of other messy, contemporary American concerns.

Required Textbooks:


General Policies for Students in American Lit I

Absence Policy:
Regular and punctual class attendance is required of all students, and poor attendance may prevent students from earning a passing grade in the course for the semester. The maximum number of permissible absences before a student automatically earns an “F” or “WF” in the course is determined by the schedule of the course:

- T-TH (or M-W; a class that meets two times a week): 5 absences

(Note: rare extenuating circumstances may occur which legitimize exception to rule, but no exceptions will be made without such circumstances. It is the students’ responsibility to keep track of their absences so that they don’t go over the allowed number permitted for the course.)

Course schedules and drops in the first two weeks
Students need to monitor their course schedule every day for the first two weeks of class in order to make sure that they have not been dropped from their courses by the registrar’s office. Students who are dropped from classes for nonpayment of financial aid or other reasons will not be readmitted to the course; it is the student’s responsibility to make sure that all of their financial records are in order so that they are not dropped.
Excused absences for university activities
In accordance with university policy, the only authorized absences are those due to participation in university-sponsored activities. Authorized absences must be approved in advance by department chairs and academic deans, and within three days after the absence, students must obtain an authorized absence card from the Dean of Students and present this card in person to their instructors. Students with authorized absences may make up the work missed or be given special allowance so that they are not penalized for the absence. All assignments and scheduled work must be turned in before or on the date of the excused absence.

Excused absences for religious holidays
In accordance with State law, students absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take examinations or complete assignments scheduled for the day missed within a reasonable time after the absence. Travel time required for religious observances shall also be excused. Please see the UNT Student Handbook for information on which holidays or holy days are covered by this policy. State law also requires that students notify their teachers at the beginning of the semester if they expect to miss class on a religious holyday during the semester but want to make up the work missed. Students will be allowed to make up the work provided they have informed their teachers in writing within the first 15 days of the semester. Once again, all assignments and scheduled work must be turned in before the date of the excused absence. University policy requires that students provide their teachers with an official notification card issued by the university if they want to make up any in-class work they missed while they were involved in a university authorized activity.

Unexcused absences
Absences due to other causes, such as illness, emergency, death in the family, car trouble, etc., are not authorized by the Department of English as excusable absences, and instructors in the Freshman Writing Program are therefore not authorized to excuse students for such absences (even with “official” notes from medical professionals, etc.). Please note that absences for reasons other than official university business or religious holidays will count against students’ permitted absences for the semester and may also result in missed grades for quizzes, assignments, exams, or writing deadlines.

The following actions may also result in a student being counted as officially absent:
• Coming to class without an adequate draft on a day when a draft is due (for peer response or for an assignment)
• Showing up to class more than 10 minutes late
• Failing to attend a mandatory scheduled conference with the instructor

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:
The UNT Policy Manual defines plagiarism as: “(A) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement and (b) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.” (18.1.11). Students in all Freshman Writing courses need to be aware of the strict policies against plagiarism and academic honesty enforced by UNT and by instructors in the Department of English. All writing in Freshman English courses must be original, and all uses of other writer’s material (i.e., for the purposes of research based argumentation) must be acknowledged and clearly cited in any writing submitted for a grade.

The consequences for plagiarism at UNT are severe, and may include failure for the course, loss of scholarships, and in some cases dismissal from the university. Please talk with your instructor if you are unsure about whether or not something you are doing in your writing might be identified as plagiarism. If your instructor believes that something you have written has been plagiarized, you will be notified of the allegations in writing and asked to meet with your instructor and respond to your instructor’s arguments. After hearing your response, your instructor will decide on a course of action and notify you in writing of any penalties or other consequences. In most cases, your instructor will also send a copy of the allegations and sanctions to the Academic Affairs office. Please note that instructors in the English Department are authorized to fail students for an assignment or for the course if they judge that an assignment is knowingly or negligently plagiarized. Students have the option of appealing the decision of their instructor in writing to the Assistant

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Chair of the Department of English within 5 days of the instructor’s decision.

**Accommodating Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, all instructors in the English Department will work with the Office of Disability Accommodations (ODA) to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have such a disability, please inform your instructor within the first week of the semester and provide your instructor with a Special Accommodation Request Form (available from the ODA). Students needing assistance must be registered with the ODA; if you need to register with the ODA or otherwise contact that office, the ODA phone number is (940) 565-4323, and the office is located in the Union, suite 321.

**Class Behavior and Disruptions**

According to the UNT Student Code of Conduct (sect. V), the following actions are considered acts of misconduct and may subject a student to university discipline:

- **Obstruction or disruption of teaching**, research, administration, disciplinary procedures or other University activities, including public service functions or other authorized activities on or off University premises. Includes interrupting, hindering or preventing classroom instruction or other official educational activities from occurring intentionally through noise, acts of incivility, or other means.

- **Physical Abuse**, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion; and/or other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person. Speech protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution is not a violation of this provision, although fighting words and statements, which reasonably threaten or endanger the health and safety of any person are not protected speech. Each allegation of a violation under this provision shall be reviewed in consideration of these factors.

- **Disruptive activities** as defined by Section 37.123 and 51.935 of the Texas Education Code, such as intentionally obstructing, restraining, preventing or attempting to prevent passage of individuals on campus or into/out of campus buildings by force, by violence or by the threat of same; seizing control of a building/portion of a building to interfere with an administrative, educational, research or other authorized activity; preventing participation in or the holding of a lawful assembly or attempting to prevent same by force/violence, by threat or by causing reasonable fear of force/violence; or disrupting an assembly in progress by one or more such means.

- **Other disruptions**, including cell phone usage and “texting” during class; sleeping and talking at inappropriate times during the class; and working on outside material during class are also forbidden and may affect your course grade.

**Format:**

All submitted work needs to be typed, printed, and submitted in person on the assigned due date. For all essays, include your name and the page number on the top right of each page (i.e.: Lastname 1). Please also include a date and the course number and section (i.e. ENGL 2210.003). Use a text font for all essays (Times Roman or Garamond for example) at 12 points, with all one-inch (1") margins, and double-spacing. Ask me if you need to see an example.

I do not accept papers late. Please contact me immediately if something may prevent you from submitting an assignment.

**Grading:**

Your grade will be calculated according to the rubric below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Class Assignments, Discussions, Quizzes, and Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Weekly response papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Essay I: Literary Analysis Argument (3-5 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Essay II: Research Essay (5-7 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
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<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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</tbody>
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The grading breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% or less</td>
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</tbody>
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**Attendance** will be taken by means of quizzes and exercises completed at the beginning of any given class period. Reading quizzes will be based on the day’s assignment. YOU MAY USE YOUR NOTES. These quizzes will range from the simple, short answers to more involved short essay responses. I will not give make-up assignments, but I will drop your lowest grade in this category.

**Weekly, informal essay assignments** are due each Tuesday and are graded non-judgmentally (~1 typed page). These come in two flavors, and I will let you know which one I am expecting each week. Instructions for both are here. Please refer to these instructions as often as necessary:

- **Response Essay**: A response essay is an analysis of a reader’s emotional response to a work. In this kind of paper, you explain both your reading experience and parts of the work that evoke your reaction. You may want to proceed through the story to discuss the stages and aspects of your response. Or you may focus on one main emotional reaction and explore its components; the elements of the story that helped to create this reaction in you.

- **“Think” Writings**: Choose a text from the weekly reading list and write a short paper analyzing it. This is NOT a book report or summary; rather, the purpose is to make connections with other readings, draw attention to bias or contradiction in the text, and/or recognize the broader implications of the information presented. “Think” writings should demonstrate serious thought or reflection on form and/or content of readings. Some suggestions for approaching these essays include: in-depth analysis of a passage, treatment of a single literary technique, focusing on a particular theme, or debating with a position that is suggested by the reading.

**Exams** will vary with respect to formatting, but are generally a mix of short answer, matching, true/false, etc. They are just as likely to cover in-class discussion topics as they are to cover course readings.

**Failure to complete any major assignment (essay or exam) will result in failure of this course.**

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**Course Schedule:**
(Notes: Schedule is provisional and may change; All assignments are due on the class period listed below.)

**Week 1** (Jan 15)
- Introduction to policies, instructor, and course plan
- Writing diagnostic
- Introduction by Bill McKibben (xxi-xxx)

**Week 2** (Jan 22, Jan 24)
- **Nature/Wild: Thoreau & Olmstead**
  - Thoreau, all excerpts (2+)
  - Olmstead, “A Review of Recent Changes...” (120+)

**Week 3** (Jan 29, Jan 31)
- **Nature as a Construct?**
  - Thoreau, “Ktaadn” excerpt (Bb)
  - Whitman, excerpts (62+)
  - Spirin, “The Legacy of Frederick Law Olmstead” (Bb)

**Week 4** (Feb 5, Feb 7)
- **Women's Environmental Lit & Gendered Nature**
  - Ortner, “Is Female to Nature as Male is to Culture?” (Bb)
  - Cooper, from Rural Hours (48+)
  - Austin, “The Scavengers” (134+)

**Week 5** (Feb 12, Feb 14)
- **Nature’s Virtue, to Cultivate Virility**
  - Roosevelt, excerpts (130+)
  - Turner, “The Frontier Thesis” (Bb)
  - Gottlieb, excerpt “A Male Preserve” (Bb)
  - Nash, Ch 9 (Bb)

**Week 6** (Feb 19, Feb 21)
- **Muir**
  - Bio & “A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf” (84-89)
  - “Hetch Hetchy Valley” (104+)
  - Burroughs, excerpts (146+)
Week 7 (Feb 26, Feb 28)

- **The Dust Bowl & Other Problems**
  - Pinchot, “Prosperity” (173+)
  - Henderson, “Letter...” (239+)
  - Steinbeck, from *The Grapes of Wrath* (254+)
  - Leopold, from *A Sand County Almanac* (266+)

Week 8 (Mar 5, Mar 7)

- **Mid-term Exam, no response paper due**
- **Setting the stage for Silent Spring**
  - Dreiser, “A Certain Oil Refinery” (186+)
  - Marquis, “what the ants are saying” (235+)

Spring Break (Mar 11-17)

Week 9 (Mar 19, Mar 21)

- **The Spark of Environmentalism**
  - Carson, *Silent Spring* (any version)

Week 10 (Mar 26, Mar 28)

- **Some Early Solutions**
  - “Wilderness Act of 1964” (392+)
  - “Highway Beautification Act” (395+)
  - MacKaye, “The Indigenous and the Metropolitan” (209+)
  - Nearing, from *Living the Good Life* (318+)
  - Jacobs, from *The Death and Life of... Cities* (359+)

Week 11 (Apr 2, Apr 4)

- **More and More Problems**
  - White, “Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis” (405+)
  - Abbey, “Polemic” (413+)
  - Erlich, from *The Population Bomb* (434+)
  - Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons” (438+)

Week 12 (Apr 9, Apr 11)

- **The Public Response—Earth Day+**
  - Multiple excerpts in your AE text (469-506)

Week 13 (Apr 16, Apr 18)

- **Responses in Fiction/Essay**
  - Silko, from *Ceremony* (582+)
  - Walker, “Everything in a Human Being” (659+)
  - Williams, from *Refuge* (739+)

Week 14 (Apr 23, Apr 25)

- **Responses in Fiction/Essay**
  - Dick, from *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (451+)
  - Quammen, “Planet of Weeds” (874+)
  - Ray, from *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* (898+)

Week 15 (Apr 30, May 2)

- **(Re)Constructing Wild(er)ness**
  - Berry, “Preserving Wildness” (516+)
  - Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness” (Bb)
  - Hawken, “Blessed Unrest” (961+)
  - Solnit (971+)

Week 16 (Thursday, May 9)

- **Final Exam, 1:30p - 3:30p**