

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERATURE eng 2315



Crumb, R. "A History of America." 1979

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 Office Hours: MWF 10 am-11 am  
                   TT 10 am-12.3 pm  
 Class Meetings: 12:30 – 1:45  
                   MAB 206

### Texts

*The Norton Book of Nature Writing*. Editor Robert Finch and John Elder. W.W. Norton, 2002.

### Course Description

This course is a survey of Environmental Literature. Our method will be to read, write and discuss, over and over. There is no greater luxury than to read and think, except perhaps to share ideas with others. Thoreau, in his essay "Walking" on education would say that to "saunter" in the woods, thinking, questioning, and connecting with real living things is the highest and holy (saintly) freedom (free from property—sans terre). This class sets aside time for reading, talking and connecting. The course's readings will be arranged in chronological order from Bill McKibben's *American Earth*. We will also read contemporary articles on current issues each week. The retreat into nature is an act of non-conformity, as are reading, writing and thinking. Why else were universities founded in remote places? Resistance--the term Thoreau used in the title of his essay on civil disobedience--is for the transcendentalists he was associated with a near synonym for non-conformity. The antidote for a corrupt, exploitative, and militaristic social system is found in nature: "In wildness is the preservation of the world," wrote Thoreau. Environmental writing does two things: it identifies with the natural world while seeking to protect it. And it casts a critical gaze at anthropocentric economic system which is destroying divine creation.

### Marketable Skills:

1. Students will communicate effectively in writing and speaking.
2. Students will use different research strategies to address problems and develop ideas that engage a variety of perspectives.
3. Students will recognize how social and cultural contexts shape meaning and language.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

**SLO 1** – Students will be able to construct documents that demonstrate unity, organization, coherence, and development, and are grammatically correct.

**SLO 2** – Students will be able to analyze and interpret literary works by applying principles of critical thinking, literary criticism, or theoretical engagement.

**SLO 3** – Students will be able to produce researched documents that demonstrate the ability to locate a variety of credible sources, employ them effectively through quotations and paraphrases, integrate them smoothly into the writer's own prose, and document them correctly using the style appropriate to the document.

**Class Participation**

The class participation grade will be determined by

- a. Participation in sustainability events
- b. Attendance
- c. Participation in classroom discussion and problem solving.

**Attendance**

Two absences are permitted during the semester. One letter grade will be subtracted from the Class Attendance percentage for each additional absence. ***More than nine (6) unexcused absences will result in the student being dropped from the course with a failing grade.*** Absences resulting from required school activities, direct personal emergencies, or health issues will be excused--but you must notify the instructor within one week of the absence and make up any class work in a timely manner.

**Projects****I. Response Papers (500 points; 10 @ 50 points each)**

There will be weekly response papers. Writing allows people to reflect, organize their ideas, and present evidence. Therefore, each response paper must be at least 300 words in length or about one page.

Write an interpretive essay about the reading. To illustrate your argument, refer to a place you know in order to compare and contrast with the landscape described in the reading. Other expectations:

- Provide a title
- Organize your ideas into paragraphs—at least two.
- Comment on one of the week's authors or compare authors.
- Quote the readings and cite the page numbers.
- Relate and extend the ideas in the reading to current environmental issues and your own life.
- Explain the meaning and relevance of the texts. Do not summarize.

11 response readings will be assigned, one of which you can skip or complete for extra credit.

**2. Excursion and Research Symposium Presentation (400 points)**

We will seek an outdoor excursion, during which we write in nature. We could go to Big Bend National Park, Mount Livermore, or Donald Judd's environmental art at Chinati in Marfa. We will plan this as a class. You will do writing at the location, contextualize the experience in one of our readings, and read the brief essay (one to two pages) at the research symposium.

**4. Final Exam (50 points)**

The final Exam will give you an opportunity to synthesize ideas—to connect and apply the ideas of multiple writers. This is sometimes called inter-textual interpretation.

**5. Class Participation (150 points)**

The class participation grade will reflect engagement in class discussion, the planning of the midterm excursion, in-class writing and attendance.

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Points</b>
Response Papers	10--About once a week 50 points each	50	500
Excursion: Writing Outside And Symposium Presentation	March or early April Symposium: Probably April 15-16	40	400
Final		5	50
Class Participation		5	50
Total Points Available		100	1000

**Deadlines**

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class on their due dates. All alternative arrangements must be approved before the relevant deadline. Late work without previous arrangement with me will only be accepted upon demonstration of extenuating circumstances.

**Blackboard**

If you confront technical issues which interfere with your ability to use Blackboard, contact the LTAC (Lobo Technology Assistance Center) at 432-837-8888 or <https://techassist.sulross.edu>

**Accommodating Students with Disabilities and Counseling Services**

Any student who because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. If an accommodation is needed, students must present their accommodation letter, obtained from Accessibility Services, as soon as possible. Please note that instructors are not permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until the appropriate verification has been received. Accessibility Services is in Ferguson Hall room 112. You can make an appointment by calling Mary Schwartze Grisham at 432 837-8203.

**SRSU Library Services**

The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

**Tutoring at the English Department's Online Writing Center**

The English Department provides tutoring through Blackboard Collaborate. I will assign extra credit for major assignments receiving feedback from the tutors in the English Department's Online Writing Center.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

Dishonest acts, such as plagiarism (using words or a specific author's ideas from another source without acknowledging the source) or collusion (having other people write parts of your paper for you), may result in an "F" on the assignment and may lead to a disciplinary hearing conducted through the office of the Dean of Students, which could result in suspension or expulsion from SRSU. If you have questions about whether your use of other sources (such as books, websites, friends, or Writing Center tutors) is fair or not, please ask before turning in the work that you have a question about.

**Classroom Climate of Respect**

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

**Diversity Statement**

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

**Course Calendar**

<b>DATES</b>	<b>Readings to Discuss</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>DUE DATES</b>
Week One			
1.19	Introduce Syllabus  First-day assessment on Mary Oliver's "The Summer Day"		 MLK Day January 16
Week Two			
1.23	William Bartram		Response 1: January 25

1.25	Meriwether Lewis		
Week Three			
1.30	John James Audubon		Response 2: February 1
2.1	George Catlin		
Week Four			
2.6	Ralph Waldo Emerson		Response 3: February 8
2.8	Charles Darwin		
Week Five			
2.13	Henry David Thoreau		Response 4: February 15
2.15	Thoreau		
Week Six			
2.20	Walt Whitman		Response 5: February 22
2.22	John Wesley Powel		
Week Seven			
2.27	John Muir		Response 6: 2.29
2.29	Muir		
Week Eight			
3.5	Gerard Manley Hopkins		Response 7: March 8
3.7	Gene Stratton Porter		
Week Nine			
3.12 3.14	Spring Break		
Week Ten			
3.19	Mary Austin		Response 8: March 22

3.21	Luther Standing Bear		
Week 11			
3.26	Aldo Leopold	<b>Excursion?</b>	
3.28	Donald Culross Peattie		
Week 12			
4.2	Rachel Carson	<b>Excursion?</b>	Response 9: April 4
4.4	Loren Easley		
Week 13			
4.9	Edward Abbey		Outdoor Writing Due April 11
4.11	Gary Snyder		Response 10: April 12  April 12: Last day to withdraw with a W.
Week 14			
4.16	Wendell Berry	SRSU Symposium Presentations	
4.18	Jim Harrison		
Week 15			
4.23	Annie Dillard		Response 10: April 26
4.25	Barry Lopez		
Week 16			
4.30	April 30: Last Day of Class Gary Nabhan		Response 11: Due April 30 For EC
Week 17 (Finals Week)			
5.8	Final Exam May 8: Final Exam from 10:15 am to 12:15 pm		

Educator Standards: For students seeking certification, this course will cover aspects of the following TEA educator competencies:

English Language Arts and Reading EC-6 Subject I:

*Competency 004 (Literacy Development): The teacher understands that literacy develops over time, progressing from emergent to proficient stages and uses a variety of approaches to support the development of students' literacy.*

*Competency 006 (Fluency Reading): The teacher understands the importance of fluency for reading comprehension and provides many opportunities for students to improve their reading fluency.*

*Competency 007 (Reading Comprehension and Applications): The teacher understands the importance of reading for understanding, knows the components and processes of reading comprehension and teaches students strategies for improving their comprehension, including using a variety of texts and contexts.*

*Competency 009 (Reading, Inquiry, and Research): The teacher understands the importance of research and inquiry skills to students' academic success and provides students with instruction that promotes their acquisition and effective use of those study skills in the content areas.*

*Competency 010 (Writing Conventions): The teacher understands the conventions of writing in English and provides instruction that helps students develop proficiency in applying writing conventions.*

*Competency 011 (Written Communication): The teacher understands that writing to communicate is a developmental process and provides instruction that promotes students' competence in written communication.*

*Competency 012 (Viewing and Representing): The teacher understands skills for interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and producing visual images and messages in various types of media, and provides students with opportunities to develop in this area.*

*Competency 013 (Assessment of Developing Literacy): The teacher understands the basic principles of literacy assessment and uses a variety of assessments to guide literacy instruction.*

English Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Domain II:

*Competency 004 (Reading Comprehension and Assessment): The teacher understands the importance of reading for understanding, knows components and processes of reading comprehension and teaches students strategies for improving their comprehension.*

*Competency 005 (Reading Applications): The teacher understands reading skills and strategies appropriate for various types of texts and contexts and teaches students to apply those skills and strategies to enhance their reading proficiency.*

*Competency 006 (Written Language—Writing Conventions): The teacher understands the conventions of written English and provides instruction that helps students develop proficiency in applying written conventions.*

*Competency 007 (Written Language—Composition): The teacher understands that writing to communicate is a developmental process and provides instruction that promotes students' competence in written communication.*

*Competency 008 (Study and Inquiry Skills): The teacher understands the importance of study and inquiry skills as tools for learning in the content areas and promotes students' development in applying study and inquiry skills.*

English Language Arts and Reading 7-12

Domain I:

*Competency 001: The teacher understands and applies knowledge of relationships among the language arts and between the language arts and other aspects of students' lives and learning.*

Domain II:

*Competency 004: The teacher understands reading processes and teaches students to apply these processes.*

*Competency 005: The teacher understands reading skills and strategies for various types of nonliterary texts and teaches students to apply these skills and strategies to enhance their lifelong learning.*

*Competency 006: The teacher understands literary elements, genres, and movements and demonstrates knowledge of a substantial body of literature.*

*Competency 007: The teacher understands strategies for reading literary texts and provides students with opportunities to formulate, express, and support responses to literature.*

*Competency 008: The teacher understands and promotes writing as a recursive, developmental, integrative and ongoing process and provides students with opportunities to develop competence as writers.*

*Competency 9: The teacher understands effective writing and teaches students to write effectively in a variety of forms and for various audiences, purposes, and contexts.*