Course Description
In Environment in Literature and Film, we will be looking at the specific role environment plays in literature—both fiction and non-fiction—film, and television. In part because environmental issues have increasingly been a matter of public concern, this course is intended to investigate the way popular textual and visual mediums represent environment and humanity’s interaction with it. Because conceptions of environment (and therefore responsibility for it) are so wide-ranging, we will examine a number of different “texts,” each of which proposes a different kind of human relationship with nature, in an effort to discern how nature is defined in popular culture and how human identity is closely tied to those definitions.

Course Goals
1. To encourage students to see that literary studies matter and to foster enjoyment of literature, as students engage with ideas and beliefs in ways that extend beyond the English classroom.
2. To help students recognize that literature does not occur as isolated literary events, but as complex dialogue within cultural and historical contexts.
3. To develop students' ability to read critically by studying a variety of literary elements such as form, structure, and style.
4. To enable students to demonstrate their understanding of and their ability to analyze literary texts both orally and in writing.

Required Readings
—Thoreau, Henry David. Walden
—Krakauer, John. Into the Wild
—McCarthy, Cormac. The Road
—“Man vs. Wild” Season One—Episodes one and two
—Brokeback Mountain (2005)
—Kesey, Ken. Sometimes a Great Notion
—Proulx, Annie. That Old Ace in the Hole
—Lopez, Barry. Of Wolves and Men
—Course Packet [P] (Available in the bookstore)

Grade Breakdown
Reading Response Essays—25%
Exam One— 25%
Exam Two— 25%
Class Participation— 15%
Discussion Facilitation—10%

Course Assignments
Reading Responses: Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write a total of ten two-page essays in response to the course readings (see course calendar for specific due dates). Response essays should be a minimum of two pages (600 words) in length. Each essay should address one or more of the pertinent cultural issues addressed in the readings for the week. These essays are not intended to be, and thus should not be, simply summaries of assigned readings. Instead, you should address a theme or a particular motif and connect it in interesting and increasingly complex ways with other readings and with your personal experience (or lack thereof) with nature, your community, and with more global environmental concerns. Prompts for each essay will be handed out in class on the week before each is due. The purpose of these response essays is to give you the opportunity to engage with as many of the cultural issues involved in a study of environmental literature as possible. Instead of one or two long papers, then, in which you have limited space and can only address one or two pertinent considerations, the shorter response papers will allow you to address a number of issues, each building on previous essays and
informing the next essay that you write. Furthermore, I will not accept late work. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in a zero grade for that assignment. Re-writes of assignments are allowed, but must be submitted by the time the next essay is due.

Exams: You will take a two exams during this course (see calendar for specific dates). Exams will be essay in format and will cover all of the texts we will discuss up to the date of the exam.

Class Participation/Discussion Facilitation: Insofar as a great deal of time will be spent in discussion of the required texts, class participation carries considerable weight. Students will be expected to come to class having read the assigned texts and prepared to engage in discussion, to pose pertinent questions, and to develop significant and personal answers to the questions posed by their peers. In addition, during the course of the semester, you will each serve as the discussion facilitator for one of our class discussions. When it is your turn to lead the discussion, you will be required to come to class with material prepared to address the class. How you do this is up to you. You may, for example, split the class up into discussion groups, assign each group a particular question (or two) and then have the class regroup to discuss their answers, or you may address your questions or comments to the class as a whole. Whatever you decide, be prepared with enough material to facilitate the discussion for its duration.

Course Policies

Disruptive Behavior: I reserve the right to ask disruptive students to leave the classroom. Disruptive behavior constitutes any behavior which prevents an active learning environment to develop in the classroom. Students who are asked to leave must make an appointment to meet with me in my office before they may return to class.

Electronics: I do not allow the use of cellular phones, musical technology (e.g. IPods), or computers in my classroom. When you arrive, please remove headphones and turn off phones and computers and put them where they will not be a distraction. Failing to do so is not only disrespectful to both myself and your peers, but constitutes disruptive behavior. Students who fail to adhere to this policy will be asked to leave the classroom for the duration of the day’s discussion.

Cheating & Plagiarism:
It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonest will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. “Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or material that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2) You can get in trouble for plagiarism—even if you do not intend to cheat—by failing to correctly indicate places where you are making use of the work of another. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the conventions of citation by which you indicate which ideas are not your own and how your reader can find those sources.

Note: I should also add that students who plagiarize on any assignment will receive a zero for the assignment with no opportunity to re-write, and the paper will be submitted for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action can range from failure of the plagiarized paper to suspension or dismissal from the university. A second offense will result in automatic failure of the course in addition to a disciplinary write-up. Plagiarism is a serious offense, amounts to thievery, and will not be tolerated. Make sure you understand conventions for quoting and citing properly to avoid plagiarism. If you do not understand, ask me.

Absences:
You are allowed one personal absence for which there will be no penalty. There will be no questions asked and no explanation expected. I will not judge whether your absence is valid or not, which means that there are no excused or unexcused absences (except for those designed by a university organization); thus, you may use your absence without penalty for whatever emergency/illness/personal time/ etc. which you encounter over the course of the semester. You are responsible for all material presented in class whether or not you are in attendance. Projects are due whether or not you are present on the due date. Students missing more than one-third of the semester for any
reason will be asked to repeat the course. Two percentage points (2%) will be deducted from your final grade percentage (0-100%) for each absence beyond the allowed absences.

**Add/Drop Policy:**
Effective Fall 2006, adds and drops may be made through late registration either on the Web at MyMav or in person in the academic department offering the course. Drops may continue in person until a point in time two-thirds of the way through the semester, session, or term. In order to drop a class, you must get permission from your undergraduate advisor.

**E-Culture Policy:**
The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at www.uta.edu/email. New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly. If you wish to reach me by email, your best bet is to email me from your university account. The system tends to kick out emails from other addresses as junk mail. If you do email me, I will respond within forty-eight hours.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**
The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112—The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364.

**University Writing Center:**
The Writing Center on the fourth floor of the Central Library offers its services free of charge to all UTA students on either a drop-in basis or by appointment. Its tutors can discuss any aspect of writing with you, from preliminary analysis of a text to organizing your ideas to meet the expectations of an audience. The Writing Center is not an editing service; tutors will not correct your grammar or rewrite your essay for you, but they are qualified to teach you how to do it yourself. Tutors will not predict what grade you will earn on your assignment. I highly recommend using the Center’s services to assist you in this class (or any of your other courses), no matter what your writing level. Please be aware that tutoring sessions do take time, so be sure to allow sufficient time to complete a tutoring session and incorporate appropriate suggestions into your essay before it is due.

**Student Support Services Available:**
The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

**Finally,** if you are struggling, please come and see me in my office during my office hours or by appointment, or contact me via e-mail before you are hopelessly lost. Students who make use of my office hours and the University Writing Center inevitably improve their writing skills and thereby their grades.

**Course Calendar**

**Week One:**
- Mon.: Introduction
  - Syllabus
  - Discussion—Literary and Filmic Representations of Environment
Nature as Escape:
Tue: Read William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness” [P]
   Read Walden
   Reader Response Essay One due.
   Discussion—Nature as Cultural Concept

Wed: Read Walden
Thur: Read Walter Benn Michaels, “Walden’s False Bottoms” [P]
   Reader Response Essay Two due
   Discussion—Nature as Recreation

Week Two:
Mon: Read Into the Wild
Tue: Read Roderick Nash “Prologue” of Wilderness and the American Mind [P]
   Reader Response Essay Three due
   Discussion—Nature as Escape

Gender and Environment:
Wed: Read The Road
Thurs: Read Patrick Murphy, “Nature Nurturing Fathers in a World Beyond Our Control” [P]
   Reader Response Essay Four due.
   Discussion—Masculinity and Environment

Week Three:
Mon: Watch Brokeback Mountain
   Read Donna Haraway, “Otherworldly Conversations; Terran Topics; Local Terms” from The Donna Haraway Reader [P]
   Discussion—Homosexuality and Environment
Tue: Read Stacy Alaimo, “Trans-Corporeal Feminisms and the Ethics of Environment” [P]
   Reader Response Essay Five due
   Discussion—Race, Femininity, and Environment
Wed: Watch “Man Vs. Wild” (Episodes one and two, first season)
   Discussion—Nature as Victim of Masculine Conquest
Thur: Exam One
   Reader Response Essay Six due

Place and Space:
Week Four:
Mon: Read Sometimes a Great Notion
Tue: Read Lawrence Buell “Space, Place, and the Imagination of Environmental Criticism” from The Future of Environmental Criticism [P]
   Reader Response Essay Seven due
   Discussion—Land, Economy, and Westward Expansion
Wed: Read Sometimes a Great Notion
Thurs: Read That Old Ace in the Hole
   Reader Response Essay Eight due
   Discussion—Regionalism and Environment/ Nature and Economy

Week Five:
Mon: Read That Old Ace in the Hole
Tue: Read Richard White, “Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?” [P]
   Reader Response Essay Nine due
   Discussion—Place, Space, and Environmental Justice
Representing Nature and Environment in Non-Fiction:

Discussion—Nature and Nature Writing
Tue: Read Of Wolves and Men
Wed: Read Of Wolves and Men
Read Kent Ryden, “Big Trees and Back Yards: Time, Landscape, and the Borders of Nature”
[P]
Discussion—The “Non-Human”
Thurs: Exam Two (Final Exam)
Reader Response Essay Ten due