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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Aesthetics concerns our appreciation of things as they affect our senses, and the broadest category of what we sense is the world around us, our environment. This course addresses our aesthetic appreciation of the environment, both natural and built, in historical and contemporary perspective. We begin with a survey of historical influences, especially the accounts of the beautiful and sublime in Burke and Kant and their influence on the American tradition through Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir. We then turn to a series of issues and debates in contemporary environmental aesthetics:

- What is the relationship between the aesthetic experience of nature and art? How does our cultural and scientific knowledge influence our aesthetic evaluations? Are there appropriate criteria for evaluating aesthetic experiences of nature?
- What contribution do cultural training, embodiment, emotion, and imagination make in shaping our aesthetic experiences? Are all aesthetic judgments relative to a particular cultural worldview? Are some aesthetic experiences more “serious” and significant than others?
- How do our aesthetic experiences of natural environments compare with human environments, such as agricultural landscapes and cities? How do we evaluate contemporary human environments from an aesthetic perspective?
- What does ‘environmental’ art reveal about the relation between nature and culture? Does such art play a progressive role in breaking down restrictive conceptualizations, or is it instead a testament to human domination over nature?
- What part should aesthetic evaluations play in environmental action and activism?

REQUIRED TEXTS

All course readings will be posted on blackboard, <https://blackboard.uoregon.edu/>

<u>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</u>	<u>Undergraduate</u>	<u>Graduate</u>
1. participation & attendance	10%	10%
2. average of best 5 weekly summaries	40 %	30%
3. midterm and final essays (6-7 pages)	50 %	
4. prospectus for final paper		20%
5. final term paper (12-14 pages)		40%

- **Class Participation/Attendance:** You are expected to participate actively in this class, which includes attending class, reading all assigned material prior to class, and participating productively and professionally in class discussions. Missing THREE classes FOR ANY REASON will result in a full grade reduction. An additional full grade reduction will be made for each additional missed class after the third. Three late arrivals for class will count as one absence. Discussion is crucial to this class, and I will do my best to make you feel at ease and welcome to contribute to the class conversation. Please feel free to contribute any question, objection, or other thought about the topic at hand when such occurs to you. Although no relevant remark is out of bounds in this class, you will be expected to treat all members of the class respectfully and professionally. The quality and quantity of your participation in the class discussion will be evaluated in assigning 10% of your final grade. Obviously, failure to attend class will negatively affect your participation grade.
- **Weekly Summaries:** Each week, on either Tuesday or Thursday, you will have the opportunity to submit summaries of the day's assigned readings. Summaries should be limited to one single-spaced page per article and should aim to be as clear and comprehensive as possible within that space. You may submit a summary of the readings for either Tuesday or Thursday during a particular week, but not on both days. Your summaries will be graded as either ✓+ (especially thorough and insightful), ✓ (accurate and complete), or ✓- (quality or completeness needs improvement). Numerically, these grades will be scored, respectively, as 10, 8, and 6 points out of ten possible. The average of your best five weekly summaries will count as 40% (undergraduate) or 30% (graduate) of your final grade. Reading summaries will be graded only if they are received during the class for which the readings are assigned. Extra or late summaries cannot be accepted in order to make up for delinquency in completing these assignments at the proper time.
- **Midterm and Final Essays:** Undergraduate students will complete two essays in response to questions posted on Blackboard, the first due in Week 5, and the second due on the date of the final exam. These essays should be 6-7 pages

long with standard fonts and margins, stapled, double-spaced, and proof-read. Essays must be submitted in hard copy; no emailed essays will be accepted. Essays will lose one letter grade for each calendar day that they are late. Each essay will be worth 25% of the final grade. Please see Blackboard for the standard essay grading rubric.

- **Term Paper Prospectus:** Graduate students will submit, in the 8th week, a prospectus of the final paper with two components: (1) a 2-3 page detailed description of the topic and outline of the proposed argument; and (2) an annotated bibliography of five peer-reviewed texts (articles or books), additional to the course readings, that you intend to consult. Each annotation should be around one double-spaced page and include both a summary of the book or article and an explanation of its relevance for your project. Your prospectus must receive my approval in order for your final term paper to be accepted. The prospectus will be worth 20% of your final course grade.
- **Final Term Paper:** Graduate students will complete final term papers of 12-14 pages that explore a specific independently-chosen topic or theme from the course in detail and must include (a) examination of at least five peer-reviewed secondary sources in addition to primary texts, and (b) the development of your own original position or critical response. Term papers must be stapled, double-spaced, proof-read, and use a standard system of citation (APA or Chicago). Papers are due on the date scheduled for the final exam, and extensions will be granted only in the case of genuine, documented emergencies. Late papers will lose one letter grade for each calendar day that they are late. Your term paper will count for 40% of your final course grade.

POLICIES

Incompletes and extensions will be given only in the event of documented emergencies.

Please retain the original copy of all work returned to you during the term until the final course grade has been posted. In the event of any question concerning whether grades have been accurately recorded, it is your responsibility to provide these original copies as documentation.

Computers and other electronic equipment: Use of electronic equipment, including cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS is prohibited during this class. Exceptions to the prohibition of laptops may be requested from the instructor and will be granted only for legitimate academic reasons. Use of laptops for academic reasons will be monitored throughout the term, and failure to restrict their use to this function will result in the revocation of any laptop privileges.

Inclement Weather: It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced on Blackboard and through the Blackboard email system.

Academic Honesty: Please review and familiarize yourself with the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct regarding academic honesty. You can find a summary in each term's Schedule of Classes or by the Office of Student Life's Duck Guide: http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/duck_guide/duckguide.htm. Violations of academic honesty will be met with disciplinary action (the usual punishment is an "F" for the course). Definitions and examples of plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating are posted on Blackboard.

Individual Differences: If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. If you have a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, you should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and facilitate your education process. The university offers a wide range of services to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements, including the following:

- *Academic Learning Services (ALS):* ALS provides numerous resources (including courses, workshops, and tutoring) to help UO students succeed. They work with a diverse student body with a wide range of needs. If you are unsure which resources would work best, they are happy to answer questions and share suggestions. Web: <http://als.uoregon.edu> – Phone: 541-346-3226.
- *University Counseling and Testing Center (UCTC):* The UCTC provides comprehensive mental health care and testing services to the University of Oregon campus. The primary mission of the UCTC is to provide quality clinical/therapeutic services, psychological testing and assessment, psychoeducational workshops and outreach as well as emergency services. Web: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~counsel/> – Phone: 541-346-3227
- *Disability Services (DS):* DS coordinates services, provides advocacy and support to students with documented physical, learning, and psychological disabilities and provides assistance to the general campus community in responding appropriately to requests for accommodations based on disability. Web: <http://ds.uoregon.edu> – Phone: 541-346-1155 TTY: 541-346-1083

TOPICS & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change as the course proceeds. Assignments will be announced at the beginning of each class.

Week 1: 9/30, 10/2	Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics Carlson & Lintott, "Introduction: Natural Aesthetic Value and Environmentalism" Hepburn, "Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty" Brady, "Aesthetic Appreciation"
Week 2: 10/7, 10/9	Historical Perspectives on the Aesthetics of Nature Burke, "The Sublime and the Beautiful" Kant, from <i>The Critique of Judgment</i> Brady, "Early Theories of Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature"
Week 3: 10/14, 10/16	Hargrove, "The Historical Foundations of American Environmental Attitudes" Emerson, "The Nature of Beauty" Thoreau, "Walking" Muir, "A Near View of the High Sierra" GUEST LECTURE, 10/16: Janet Fiskio, Environmental Studies & English (readings TBA)
Week 4: 10/21, 10/23	Phenomenology and Engagement Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art" Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt" Berleant, "Aesthetic Perception in Environmental Design" Berleant, "The Aesthetics of Art and Nature"
Week 5: 10/28, 10/30	Midterm Essays Due (undergrad): 10/30 Cognitivism Carlson, "Appreciation and the Natural Environment" Carlson, "Appreciating Art and Appreciating Nature" FILM, 10/30: Rivers & Tides
Week 6: 11/4, 11/6	Cultural Pluralism Heyd, "Aesthetic Appreciation and the Many Stories about Nature" Fisher, "What the Hills are Alive With: In Defense of the Sounds of Nature" Saito, "The Japanese Appreciation of Nature" Hepburn, "Landscape and the Metaphysical Imagination"
Week 7: 11/11, 11/13	Urban Environments Bonsdorff, "Urban Richness and the Art of Building" Berleant, "Cultivating an Urban Aesthetic" GUEST LECTURE, 11/13: David Kolb, Charles A. Dana Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Bates College (readings TBA)
Week 8: 11/18, 11/20	Final Paper Prospectus Due (Graduate): 11/20 Environmental and Earth Art Humphrey, "The Ethics of Earthworks" Carlson, "Is Environmental Art an Aesthetic Affront to Nature?" GUEST LECTURE, 11/20: Amanda Peacher, Environmental Studies (readings TBA)
Week 9: 11/25, {11/27}	Pastoral Landscapes Carlson, "On Appreciating Agricultural Landscapes" Schauman, "The Garden and the Red Barn: The Pervasive Pastoral and its Environmental Consequences" HOLIDAY, 11/27: Class Cancelled for Thanksgiving
Week 10: 12/2, 12/4	From Aesthetics to Activism Saito, "The Role of Aesthetics in Civic Environmentalism" Nassauer, "Cultural Sustainability: Aligning Aesthetics and Ecology" Hettinger, "Objectivity in Environmental Aesthetics and Protection of the Environment" Godlovitch, "Icebreakers: Environmentalism and Natural Aesthetics"
Monday, 12/8	Final Essays due in ENVS Department office, 10 Pacific, before 4:30 p.m.