Syllabus

This course surveys four centuries of writing, in both British and American traditions, that represents human relations to the natural world. Reading classic as well as little-known works in the major genres of poetry, non-fiction, and fiction, we will focus on important topics (knowledge, gender, ethnicity, and extinction) and on the key literary forms that have been especially involved in representing human-nonhuman relations.

Required Texts
Wendell Berry, *Fidelity: Five Stories* (Pantheon)
Barbara Kingsolver, *Prodigal Summer* (Harper)
William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (Oxford)

Additional Readings to be posted on Blackboard
(All texts are available at the UO Bookstore)

Course Policies
This course combines lecture and discussion, so regular attendance and class participation are essential. Attendance will be taken throughout the term. Two unexcused absences are permitted; thereafter final grades are lowered one-third letter grade for each absence. All assigned work--reading and writing--must be completed on time. No late work, including exercises, can be accepted. Make-up exams can be given only in cases of documented emergency and the final exam cannot be given in advance.

Written and Oral Graded Work
We will have a midterm and a non-comprehensive final exam, each worth 25% of the final grade. In addition, I will assign three short papers or exercises during the term (totaling 15%); students will participate in collaborative groups at least once (15%); and each student will write a 5-7 page paper (20%), due by the end of Final Week. Detailed descriptions of the exercises, paper, and group assignments will be distributed in class.

Readings Schedule (subject to change)
Please note that assigned readings are to be completed by the dates listed below. Readings not in the required texts listed above may be found on Blackboard [BB] as noted.

Week 1
1/6 Introductions and course overview; creation stories [Iroquois, Greco-Roman (Ovid), and Judeo-Christian (*Genesis*)]
Pastoral History in Poetry

1/8 Introducing the Pastoral Tradition

Week 2 Renaissance Pastoral
William Shakespeare, As You Like It, Acts I and II
Exercise 1 due

1/15 As You Like It, Acts III-V

Week 3 Arcadia Lost, Epic Found
1/20 John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book 4, lines 1-287 + all asterisked footnotes;
From Scott Elledge, “Important Concepts in Paradise Lost”: “The Universe;”
“Reason,” “The Scale of Nature,” and “Knowledge” [all BB]
1/22 Paradise Lost, 4:288-775

Week 4 Neo-Classical and Romantic Nature
1/27 Alexander Pope, excerpts from “Windsor Forest” and “Essay on Man”
Oliver Goldsmith, “The Deserted Village;” Gifford, “Anti-Pastoral” [all BB]
Exercise 2 due
Optional Review Session (tba)

Week 5
2/3 EXAM

Varieties of Environmental Nonfiction
An American Pastoral Experiment
2/5 Henry Thoreau, selections from Walden, “Economy” (first twenty-one paragraphs); “Where I Lived and What I Lived For;” “Solitude;” “The Village;”

Week 6 Pastoral Evolutions
2/10 Walden (con’t) “The Ponds” (first six paragraphs); “Brute Neighbors;”
“Housewarming” (paragraph 11); and “Spring”
Leo Marx, Walden’s Transcendental Pastoral Design” (in Norton Walden, 450-464)
2/12 Charles Darwin, Origin of Species, Darwin’s “Introduction,” 65-69; chap 1, 89-100; chap 2, 101-2; all of chap 3
Week 7

2/17 Darwin, (con’t) chap 4, 130-136, 169-172; and chap 14, 452-460
Exercise 3 due

Elegies and Toxicity

2/19 Aldo Leopold, “The Marshland Elegy” [BB] Rachel Carson, selections from Silent Spring (tba)

Week 8

2/24 Silent Spring (con’t)

Environmental Fiction


Week 9

3/3 Wendell Berry, “Fidelity” [note: only the title story in Wendell Berry’s Fidelity: Five Stories is assigned] and “The Prejudice Against Country People” [BB]

3/5 Barbara Kingsolver, Prodigal Summer

Week 10

3/10 Barbara Kingsolver, Prodigal Summer
3/12 Kingsolver, Prodigal Summer

FINAL PAPER: due in 363 PLC btwn Friday, 3/13 and Wednesday, 3/16 at 5pm

Final Week

3/16 Monday, 8-10am FINAL EXAM