Senses of Place in American Literature

In this course we will explore the many ways American writers have represented senses of place—and senses of being displaced—in poetry, fiction, and non-fiction from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Within the limitations of a ten-week quarter, we will examine these varying of senses of place in relation both to key literary historical movements and to particular geographical regions, giving due attention to selected ethnic groups and landscapes.

Required Texts
Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (Random House, 1984)

Attendance
Two unexcused absences are permitted; thereafter final grades are lowered one-third letter grade for each absence.

Readings Schedule
BB= available on Blackboard

1/6 T: Introductions and course overview; key terms from *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th ed. (2000) [handout]
1/8 Th: Edward Casey, “Implacement” and “Displacement” from *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (1993); and Lawrence Buell, pp. 57-78, from *Writing for an Endangered World* (2001) [BB]

1. Romantic Implacement and Displacement
1/13 T: Wm Wordsworth, “Tintern Abbey” (1798); Henry Thoreau, “Spring” (from *Walden*, 1854) [BB]
1/15 Th: Walt Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (1855); Herman Melville, “Bartleby, the Scrivener” (1853) [BB]

2. Regionalism, Ethnic Landscape, and Alienation
1/20 T: Janice Monk, “Gender in the Landscape” (1992); Barry Lopez, “Landscape and Narrative”; Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron” (1886), Willa Cather, “Paul's Case” (1905) [all BB except Lopez]
an Indian Girl,” “An Indian Teacher among Indians,” “Why I Am a Pagan” (1900-1901) [all BB]
1/29 Th: Mason, “Residents and Transients,” “Nancy Culpepper,” “A New-Wave Format”

3. Loss, Memory, and Resistance
2/3-5 TTh: William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses stories (1942): “The Old People,” “The Bear,” “Delta Autumn”
Place/alternate essay description due

4. Imagining Globalizations
2/19 Th: Doreen Massey, “Imagining Globalisation: Power-Geometries of Time-Space” (1999); Barry Lopez, “Flight”
2/24, 26, 3/3 TThT: Leslie Marmon Silko, Ceremony (1977); Franz Boas, from Keresan Texts (1928) [BB], and Silko, “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective” (1979) [handout]
Place Project oral presentations (tba)
3/10 Final Take-Home Essays distributed
3/12: Last things and last day to turn in personal place/alernate essay
3/18: FINAL ESSAYS DUE by 12noon in PLC 363

Written and Oral Graded Work
For 469 students, the graded work for the class will consist of three 2-3 page papers (10% each); group work (15%); a personal place or additional literary studies essay, described below (20%); and a take-home final essay examination (35%). 569 students will also participate in the group work (15%) and do the personal place or alternate essay (20%). In addition, they will write a two-book review essay (15%) and present an oral summary to the class (5%). For their final essay grad students may either write a longer version of the take-home final or a comparable paper on a topic to be worked out in conference with me (45%). Guidelines for group work, the short papers, book review essay and presentation based on it will be distributed separately.

Personal Place Essay/Alternate Literary Analysis
During the term, each student will work independently on a 4-5 page essay that either explores his/her own sense of “place” or, building on approaches to place literature and issues in class, examines an additional literary work by a writer not included in our readings. A two paragraph description of this essay--detailing your topic, rationale, and approach--is due no later than February 17. Email is preferred, so that I can more readily return a response with suggestions. This project will culminate in a brief in-class oral description of your project during an evening in early March (tba) and the submission of your essay on or before March 12, our last class day.