Wilderness Writers and Philosophers
OED 248

Instructor: Clayton T. Russell
Wilderness Writers and Philosophers
Office: Wheeler 326
Winter 06 Office Hours: MWF 8:30-10:20
Class Hours: T/R 9:00-10:20
Class Room CSE 247
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SYLLABUS
Required Texts
- The Enduring Wilderness, Scott, Doug
- Arctic Refuge: A Circle of Testimony, Compiled by Lentfer, Hank and Servid, Carolyn
- The Practice of the Wild, Snyder, Gary
- Women in the Wild, McCauley, Lucy, Editor

Statement of Philosophy

“I make it my business to extract from nature whatever nutriment she can furnish me, though at the risk of endless iteration. I milk the sky and the earth.”-Henry David Thoreau, November 2, 1953.

“It is only the scholar who appreciates that all history consists of successive excursions from a single starting-point, to which man returns again and again to organize yet another search for a durable scale of values. It is only the scholar who understands why the raw wilderness gives definition and meaning to the human enterprise.”

- Aldo Leopold “Wilderness” A Sand Country Almanac

Many of us have experienced the tangible values of wilderness. We have also been inspired by many of its intangible values as well. All too often, when asked why we go to the wilderness, the answer seems incomplete. Our eyes light up, but the meaning does not make it into language. In this course, we will explore the idea of wilderness, the range of tangible and intangible values, and the enabling legislation. More importantly, we will seek the “definition and meaning (of wilderness) to the human enterprise.” Many of us have been “out.” In this course, we will go “in,” in an attempt to clarify for our fellow humans, and ourselves, the meaning of wilderness.

Statement of Expectations

During this course, we will use readings, guest speakers, videos, discussion, interact sessions, and experiences to immerse ourselves in the idea of wilderness. I expect us all to come to class prepared to engage in the activities and discussion. Please have all assigned readings and papers done before coming to class. You learn more by being an active explorer of ideas than by just listening to me.

Note: I encourage individuals who have a disability, either permanent or temporary, which may affect your ability to perform in this class, to notify me as soon as possible. Adaptation of methods, materials, or testing may be made as required to provide for equitable participation. Students in need of academic or medical accommodation should contact Judi Holevatz, R.N., Disabilities Coordinator, @ X1340, and room 206 of the student center.
Intended Learner Outcomes
1. Students will be able to navigate and explain to their peers the history and intent of The Wilderness Act.
2. Students will be able to discuss and give examples of at least 12 different values of wilderness.
3. Students will become familiar with historical and current contributors to organizations involved with the wilderness movement.
4. Students will prepare written and oral arguments on the meaning and value of wilderness.
5. Students will gain an appreciation of the expanding international scope of wilderness and the many challenges it faces worldwide.
6. Personal learning goals:

Grading
All assignments must be turned in typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Assignments are due by the end of class on the day listed. Late papers will be reduced one grade level for each day after the due date.

Two Essays 100 points each
Formal Presentation 100 points
Experience Sessions 50 points each
Mid Term/Final Exam 100 points each
Class Participation 100 Points

Scale

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*Extra credit Book Review-Read one additional book relevant to this course and approved by your instructor. Distill the central ideas and comment about the influence of the principle tenets on your understanding of wilderness. Up to 25 points.

Resource Texts

*The Immortal Wilderness.* Hay, John M.

*Wilderness Visionaries.* Vickery, James D. and Huot

*Chips from a Wilderness Log.* Rutstrum, Calvin

*A Wilderness Within.* Backes, David

*The Singing Wilderness.* Olson, Sigurd F.

*Words from the Land.* Trimble, Stephen, Ed.

Sacred Trusts. Katakis, Michael, Ed.

*The Outernest House.* Beston, Henry

*Wild Ideas.* Rothenberg, David, Ed.

*The Sound of Mountain Water.* Stegner, Wallace

*Uncommon Ground.* Cronon, William

*The Land of Little Rain.* Austin, Mary

*Arctic Dreams.* Lopez, Barry

*The Unsettling of America.* Berry, Wendell

*Son of the Wilderness John Muir.* Wolfe, Linnie

*Two in the Far North.* Murie, Margaret E.

*The Idea of Wilderness.* Oelschlaeger, Max


*Northern Wild.* Boyd, David R., Ed.

*The Others.* Shepard, Paul

*The Inward Morning.* Bugbee, Henry

*Wild Knowledge.* Wright, Will

*Place of the Wild.* Burks, DavidClarke, Ed.

*Wilderness and the Heart.* Mooney, Edward, Ed.

*Wilderness and the American Mind.* Nash, Roderick

*The Meaning of Wilderness.* Olson, Sigurd F.
Guest Speakers

I will try to bring in a number of guest speakers to discuss topics central to our task of understanding the idea of wilderness. Possible topics include: Wilderness Advocacy, Wilderness Philosophy, Controversial Issues in Wilderness Travel, Art and Wilderness, Wilderness in Christian and Eastern Traditions, Thoreau’s essay *Walking*, and possibly more.

Miscellaneous

I reserve the right to change anything in this syllabus and the class schedule at any time. Changes will be announced in class.

Course Assignments

1. Formal Presentation: Each student will lead a formal class presentation. This is a session where you will present a topic related to the themes of this course and then lead a follow-up discussion. I will supply a list of potential topics to get you started, but you are not required to select your topic from the list. The entire session should last 30-40 minutes. Once your topic proposal has been approved, you will want to spend time researching your topic, preparing your presentation, preparing questions that will stimulate further conversation and consider providing advance and/or follow-up reading material. You will also want to keep track of source material you have consulted. Finally, prepare a one page essay describing and evaluating your Formal Presentation research and preparation. Class participants will also provide feedback on your presentation. (Emphasis here is on helpful and positive feedback.) (100 points)

2. Wilderness Experience Days: These are days we will use to promote a deeper awareness, understanding, and connection to the ideas of wilderness. We will meet in the classroom and then divide up in order to pursue various forms of exploration. Over the course of five days scheduled for Wilderness Experience, students will build a collection of five pieces of reflection. A 1-2 page reflection is due one week after the experience. A recommended format will be provided in class. At the conclusion of these five days, we will discuss our experiences, thoughts, and ruminations relevant to our readings/experiences on wilderness. Of the five options listed below, you must do A, B, C and D at least one time. Item E is entirely optional. The options include: (50 points each)
   A. Reading and journaling
   B. Observation and creation
   C. Silence and solitude
   D. Fire building and high tea (One Time Only)
   E. Session with me - highly unpredictable/usually outdoors

3. Essays: You will write two essays covering the readings in this class. In these essays, I would like you to highlight five or six of the most important ideas and your reactions to them. Discuss how the authors’ views have influenced your own views of wilderness. You may want to compare and contrast ideas from several authors and continue to discuss the evolution of your own understanding of wilderness and the role it plays in your life, the field of Outdoor Education and our society at large. (100 points each)

4. Class Participation: Preparation for class discussions and presentations is essential to effective teaching and learning. We will all come to class with thoughtful and positive contributions. I do not expect you to come to class if you are sick. (100 points)

5. Final Exam: During our final exam, I will ask you to explain “Why Wilderness Matters”. This is a question that must be answered for a growing number of people in today’s world and a growing number of diverse populations who have no wilderness experience. If wilderness is to survive, we must be able to better communicate its value to our modern world. (100 points)

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January

12 Course Introduction – Read the Wilderness Act (pp 155-161/Ch.8)
17 The Idea of Wilderness – Video: Wild by Law
19 Discuss the Wilderness Act – Rewrite the definition
24 Present Wilderness Visionaries – “The Wilderness World of Sigurd Olson”
26 Present Wilderness Visionaries
31 Discuss The Enduring Wilderness

February-2 Experience Day

7 Discuss The Practice of the Wild up to page 96
9 Arctic Dance: The Life of Mardy Murie
Wilderness Writers and Philosophers Syllabus

14  – “The Crawl” (This is also an Experience Day.)
16   Finish Discussion of The Practice of the Wild
21   Wilderness Management Simulation
23   FIRST ESSAY DUE
28   Experience Day
     March- 2  Presentation-3
7    Experience Day
8-12 mid session break
14   Discussion of Arctic Refuge
16   Presentation –3
21   Presentation –2
23   Experience Day
28   Presentation –2
30   Presentation -3
28   Experience Day

April 4   Presentation –2
6   Discuss Women in the Wild  International Wilderness Issues
7-9 Student Outdoor Educators Conference, Duluth, MN. (I encourage you to attend)
11   Presentation-2  – FINAL ESSAY DUE
13   Share insights from Wilderness Experience Days- The Last Parable

Final Exam-Why does Wilderness Matter? Date to be announced in class.

FORMAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM/Sample

1. Was the presenter comfortable with the topic? Explain.

2. Did the presenter appear knowledgeable? How did the presenter engage you?

3. List ideas new to you.

4. What would you like to know more about?

5. What advise would you give our presenter in order to improve their formal presentation?
6. What was the most valuable thing you learned today?