

Fall 2010 ~Reading and Writing the WILD~ Bane Robert

ENG 020

Office: Anderson House B3

Hours: M 1:15-2:45, W 10:30-12

or by appointment

Contact me: jbanerob@msn.com

Don't forget...

The Writing Center in the Corner House for help with your writing. On campus call 7405 to make an appointment.



"In wildness...

is the preservation of the world." ~H D Thoreau

"We simply need that wild country available to us even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope." ~Wallace Stegner

"If we do not soon remember ourselves to our sensuous surroundings, if we do not reclaim our solidarity with the other sensibilities that inhabit and constitute those surroundings, then the cost of our human commonality may be our common extinction." ~David Abram

"To be whole. To be complete. Wildness reminds us what it means to be human, what we are connected to rather than what we are separate from." ~Terry Tempest Williams

"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" ~Mary Oliver

WELCOME! In this seminar we will be reading, blogging, journaling and workshopping our way through the American landscape (primarily) as we define and explore our connection to the wild. Though American nature writers from Emerson and Thoreau to Snyder and Dillard will be our foundation, we will take an interdisciplinary and experiential approach to our examination of wildness which will include children's literature, poetry, film, music, and visual art. We will trek at least one of central Massachusetts's green spaces to conduct a field study.

Ideas about wilderness and the wild, including the wildness of human nature, have long shaped American culture. From the "howling" wilderness to a wild that is imperiled, this course hopes to traverse the interior and exterior wilderness as we turn from our cyber-dominated world to reconnect with our roots in the natural landscape. We will examine how Americans from the 19th and 20th centuries articulated their wild lives. We will discuss what can be learned from their examples and experiences as we ask what can be learned from the wilderness. What happens to individuals and cultures when they lose touch with the wild? What is the fate and the place of wildness in our culture and personal lives? Can "wildness" really lead to the "preservation of the world"? to the "preservation" of our own humanity?

This course is a SEMINAR, not a series of lectures. We are fellow explorers together. Each of you will have the opportunity to present/lead discussion and journaling activities

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at least once during the semester. In a seminar setting we will get to know each other well; it is important that all members of the class feel safe to share their thoughts, opinions, and background experiences. Class investigations and discussions will center on course readings and responses in our Response Journals.

Required Texts: The Portable Thoreau, editor Carl Bode
The Norton Book of Nature Writing
The Dharma Bums Kerouac
The Call of the Wild, Jack London

Recommended Texts:
The Practice of the Wild, Snyder

Supplies:

A separate **Notebook** for this course.

A pocket folder-**Writing Folder**. Keep All of you Work. All drafts.

Some **Objectives:** Students will...

- *become critical, active readers.
- *make the reading, thinking, writing, connection through journal activities.
- *discuss and work cooperatively in groups.
- *become intimately familiar with at least three literary genres and will be able to analyze the elements of each genre.
- *learn and practice steps in the writing process including Writer's Workshop and revision.
- *learn how literature is a portal for self knowledge and understanding.
- *express their knowledge and understanding of texts, as well as the environment, through formal and informal written and creative mediums.

Grading:	Participation (in class & on line)	25%
	Reading Writing Journals	15%
	Quizzes/Short Writing Assignments	10%
	Essay One	20%
	Essay Two	20%
	Final Project/Paper	10%

Your Participation: quite simply is crucial to the success of this class. Please come fully prepared and be fully present and engaged during our time together. Please refrain from use of phone, iPod, and computer unless okayed by me.

Attendance Policy: Come to class. Come prepared. Three or more missed classes will decrease your grade by at least a letter, five missed classes is grounds for failure. Obviously, when you are presenting or leading discussion, you must be present.

Late Work: If you know you will be absent from class, it is your responsibility to make sure your work is turned in on time. Give it to a peer to hand in, or ask the English

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Department Secretary at the Anderson/English House to put it in my mailbox. **Papers turned in late will be reduced by one letter grade for each day (NOT CLASS) late.** Notify me as soon as possible about any difficulties, not the day the paper is due.

***If you are not prepared for a writing workshop day, you may be asked to leave and the day WILL count as an absence.

***Plagiarism:** Don't do it. Read about Clark's policies at www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/integrity.cfm .

Response Journaling:

Responses will be typed and handed in once a week--**each Friday** more or less. You are responsible for collecting them and passing the collection in at the end of the course for a final grade. These responses are informal in tone but should be rich in thought, and while they will not be graded for mechanical errors, please proofread your responses before you submit them.

Some points to consider...

- ***provide a brief interpretation of the work along with your reaction to the reading***
- ***identify quotes or language that move you or hold a key point to which you could respond***
- ***point out similarities and differences between this reading and others***
- ***list a couple of questions this piece of writing raises for you***
- ***relate this piece--its plot, themes, events--to your own life and experiences***
- ***identify and type a passage that speaks to you or that you regard as central and explain why***

Ranking: 1=Poor, lacking thought, time, care, inadequate length
 2=Good, few grammatical errors, some astute questions and observations, adequate length
 3=Exceptional, rich in content and thought

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Wild Schedule:

Note: NB=Norton Book of Nature Writing

Date	Assignments
T-Aug 31	Beginings & Introductions, Day One Journaling
F-Sept 3	Defining Terms: Nature, Wild, Wildness, Wilderness: “Practice of the Wild” by Gary Snyder (hand out), Emerson’s “Nature” p. 141-in NB, Thoreau’s “Walking” p. 180 in NB *Assign Transcendentalists Groups
T-Sept 7	Meet in Goddard Library: Group Research Work, the Roots of Transcendentalism: 1. The Time Period 1840-1860, 2. The Philosophy, 3. The Contemporaries, 4. Key Transcendental Artists and Their Works
F- Sept 10	More on Transcendentalism: Emerson “Self Reliance” (on the web), From Walden read “Economy” & “Where I lived and what I lived for” in Portable Thoreau pp. 295-351 *Bring Research to class with you. Some in Class time to Work with Groups.
T-Sept 14	Group Presentations on The Roots of Transcendentalism Thoreau Continued... “Higher Laws” & “Conclusion” in Portable Thoreau *Hand Out Essay One Prompt
F- Sept 17	Thoreau Wrap-Up “Spring” pp.539-558 & “Civil Disobedience” pp. 109-137 In class read passage from Thich Nhat Hanh’s “The Heart of Understanding...” comp. to Thoreau’s “Spring”, Clay Ex. Inter-being/interconnectedness
T-Sept 21	Essay One ~ Writer’s Workshop -bring a clean copy of your essay plus all of your group members’ essays, which you have printed, read, and commented on <u>prior</u> to class
F-Sept 24	Visitor /Trip to Walden Pond “Going to Walden” Mary Oliver Journaling with Thoreau and Worcester’s Native Poet Stanley Kunitz Thoreau’s Writing Process *short essay or poem based on the trip and your journaling to be posted on-line
T-Sept 28	Challenging the Wild: “The End of Nature” McKibben in NB p. 1120 “The Trouble with Wilderness” William Cronon (handout/online)

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Date	Assignments
F- Oct 1	Wild Child: In class, Where the Wild Things Are, Call of the Wild pp. 1-65 Excerpts from Last Child in the Woods (hand out/online) *Make a post to online CICADA discussion blog
T-Oct 5	Call of the Wild Continued pp. 65-end Today's Class is Brought to You by the Wild Element ~ F I R E "To Build a Fire" London (on-line/handout) & "Life Times With Fire" Snyder (handout/on-line), In class "Fire and Ice" Robert Frost <u>Writing Due:</u> Final Essay One
F-Oct 8	WILD Animal: "Living Like Weasels" Dillard NB p.876, , "The Third Eye of the Lizard" Gonzalez NB p. 1027, "Friends, Foes, and Working Animals" Gretel Ehrlich NB p. 944
F-Oct 15	Rick Bass Short Story "The Myths of Bears" (on-line/handout)
T-Oct 19	Women Gone Wild: "A City Person's Encountering Nature" Maxine Hong Kingston NB p. 787, "Wilderness Tips" Short Story by Margaret Atwood (on-line/handout), "Big Grass" Louise Erdrich NB p.1043 "Going Out Doors and Other Dangerous Expeditions" by Ann Filemyr (in class hand out) "Her Kind" poem by Anne Sexton (in class handout)
F-Oct 22	The Dharma Bums pp. 3-84 The Beat Generation
T-Oct 26	The Dharma Bums pp. 85-161
F-Oct 29	The Dharma Bums pp. 161-end
T- Nov 2	Film Study- TBA
F- Nov 5	Film Study Cont. *make post on-line
T- Nov 9	Not Oprah's Book Club
F- Nov 12	Book Club/group presentations Assign Essay 2-Compare/Contrast
T-Nov 16	Wild Poets & Wilderness Painters ~ Art and Awe: On Writing Description and Translating Awe Paintings by: Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, Fredrick Church Poems by... Jeffers, Berry, Oliver, Snyder & Others Use Wormser's Profile of a Poem from The Moves
F-Nov 19	Poetry Gallery/Auction Due: Poem Response/Analysis-3 pages

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Date	Assignments
T-Nov 23	Thanksgiving Break
T- Nov 30	Essay Two Due Writing Workshop/Peer Edit
F-Dec 3	"Your Wild Expressions" Presentations
T-Dec 7	Presentations Cont.
F-Dec 10	Presentations Concluded-Papers Due, Journals Due LAST CLASS- Go Wild!