“An increasing percentage of Americans know almost nothing about the natural world. As more and more of the population becomes urbanized in physical location and cultural perspective, more people are psychologically and spiritually distanced from intimate interaction with the environment.”

Stephanie Kaza, *The Attentive Heart*

“Our situation is tragic in another way. Often those who do comprehend our plight intellectually cannot feel it and hence are not moved to do much about it.”

David Orr, *Earth in Mind*

“I have seen students and others experience profound moments of awakening to global interdependence. As their minds open, they see that the environment is everything. It is not just where we live; it is the very reason we are alive.”

Stephanie Kaza, *The Attentive Heart*

**Description**

Using literary texts as the primary guides, this course will explore a variety of relationships between humans and the natural world in North America (primarily the USA) over the last 200 years. The literary texts will be supplemented by readings and contributions from other academic perspectives and disciplines; they all will highlight the myriad factors that influence any human’s relationship with the natural world: from individual perceptions, thoughts and feelings to questions of gender, race, class and culture; from the political, economic and ethical ideas that guide people and their communities to the historical times and geographical places those communities inhabit. Intellectually, our goal will be to understand better the complexities and paradoxes inherent in humans’ relationship with the natural world, and recognize ones that seem characteristically “American,” specifically those pertaining to residents of the United States. And with these factors in mind, we will envision ways to configure them into a more ethical, sustainable relationship.

**Methodology**

This course will offer two methodologies:

Much of the academic methodology will be familiar: there will be classes to attend and readings to do; papers to write; there will be lectures and discussions and workshops. You will learn things in typical ways and your knowledge will be tested and evaluated. In this area of the course your challenge will be to analyze the divergent source materials and ideas you come across and then synthesize them—in other words, address the tensions they present.

The second methodology may not be as familiar, at least in an academic setting. It’s an empirical/contemplative methodology, and it will require a skill I’ll call “awareness.” As I’m using it here, awareness has a quality of alertness, of paying attention; it means waking up to the worlds that exist inside and outside of you at any given moment. It means being mindful, learning how to be “present,” in the moment, and without judgment. This can definitely be improved by academic learning, and that will happen this term. But it can’t be accessed that way. To access it you first need to be able to stop what you’re doing, notice where you are and what’s around you—particularly the natural world around you. Along with that mindful awareness, you need to be able to consider what it is you know and why and how you know it. In doing this you will be opening up another way of investigating humans’ relationship with the natural world, probably a more compelling and effective way, since it will feel more personally relevant.
Contemplative Place Assignments

One of the ways the “awareness” method will happen is through Contemplative Place Assignments (CPAs). No later than the second week of the term you will find a place nearby that you consider to be the “natural world,” where you can be alone and free from the distraction of other people. (For the Winter 2018 course, your place will be, or will be within, the College Park area of campus.) At least three times this term, you will be asked to visit that place (you’re welcome to visit it more than that; as you will learn during the course, research suggests that a weekly visit for at least 30 minutes can affect your mood and attention) and undertake particular assignments there. After each visit you will submit a write-up that will be evaluated.

There are many goals for the CPAs. Some have been alluded to in the “Methodology” section. Others I’ll mention in class. But the biggest, general one is:

• To become aware of what happens to your perceptions about the place, and perhaps even your attitudes about the natural world in general, when you visit it. As suggested in the paragraph above, you might even begin to notice changes in mood, attention, creativity, or empathy.

One of the benefits of an awareness practice like this is that once you become aware of your perceptions, attitudes and behaviors (in this course, toward the natural world), you can begin to change them if you want.

“College Park Plan” Project

The course materials and the two learning methodologies will become lenses that you will use to focus on a particular issue during the term: the “College Park Plan,” which is the College’s evolving plan to build one or more dormitories in the “green space” near the Bema and Bartlett Tower. Your assignment will be to assess the Plan based on the sources and ideas in the course and your experiences in College Park during the term.

Specifically, you will:
• Visit the College Park area during the term for your CPA assignments (or, preferably, more often)
• Choose a specific research topic about the effect of nature on human wellbeing
• Give a 5-10 minute presentation in class on that topic on a designated day during the term
• In your final essay, use the course materials, project research materials, and your experiences in College Park to write an assessment of the College Park plan
• Give a short reading from, or a presentation about, your final essay/assessment at the end of the term

Readings

We will read the following book-length material:

John McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid* (1971)
The Journals of Lewis and Clark, ed. John Bakeless (1804-1806)
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)
Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge* (1991)

There are other required and optional readings; they will be available as links on the weekly assignment sheets or as pdfs accessible in the appropriate weekly areas on our Canvas site. The weekly assignment sheets will indicate where the reading may be found.
Written Work

- CPA 1 Assignment (2-3pp)  
- Environmental Self/Perception essay (3pp)  
- CPA 3 Assignment (2-3pp)  
- CPA 4 Assignment (2-3pp)  
- CPA 5 Assignment (2-3pp)  
- One 5 pp. Midterm Essay  
- One 7 pp. Final Essay

approximately 7.5% of grade  
approximately 10% of grade  
approximately 10% of grade  
approximately 10% of grade  
approximately 10% of grade  
approximately 20% of grade  
approximately 25% of grade

Your work on the written assignments will be evaluated on its ability to address the assignment prompt directly and with depth and originality. It will also be evaluated relative to other students’ work submitted for that assignment. The best work is clear and focused and organized; it embraces the complexity of course ideas (and of your own ideas); and it is carefully written.

- Papers and CPAs are due to our Canvas site by 5 PM on their respective due dates.

Attendance

I expect you to attend every class. However, there may be situations, including sickness or College commitments that prevent you from attending a class; in those cases, I expect that you will let me know about them ahead of time. If I allow this absence, it will be counted as an “excused absence”; if excused absence requests become a habit, we will discuss it. If you’re not in class and I haven’t heard from you by class time, it counts as an “unexcused absence.” If you have more than one unexcused absence during the term, your final grade will be affected. And if you are going to have to miss several classes because of College commitments, this may not be the right class for you.

Intangibles

Though most of your final grade will depend on the work you do on the written assignments and the video project, I also like to give credit for what I call “intangibles”—things like your investment in the course, participation in class discussions, your effort on assignments, etc. This helps to give a more “rounded” quality to your final grade.

*Intangibles will account for up to 7.5% of your final grade.*

Community in the Classroom

As you can tell from the description above, much of this course deals with relationship: our relationship with nonhuman nature and with our own awareness. But it also deals with our relationship with other humans too, including broader elements of social communities, represented specifically by the Upper Valley Land Trust. So, I encourage you to explore the social element this term by creating a community in the classroom. The course will also offer opportunities for you to get to know your classmates. Use those opportunities to investigate if/how social relationships affect your relationship with nonhuman nature.
Student Accessibility Needs

Students with different abilities who may need ability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring ability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (205 Collis Student Center, 646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Wellness Support

I recognize that the academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, that our terms are intense, and that classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including: your undergraduate dean (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/), Counseling and Human Development (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~chd/), the Student Wellness Center (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthed/), and the Academic Skills Center (http://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/). I encourage you to take care of yourself and to use these resources and/or come speak with me anytime during the term if you need support or advice.

Religious Observances

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Dartmouth Honor Principle

Be sure to think about the Dartmouth Academic Honor Principle as it relates to this class, particularly with respect to original work and properly and accurately referenced sources on papers. Be sure to ask me if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism on course assignments.

You can view the complete Honor Principle at:
http://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/policy/academic-honor-principle

You can also find the online version of Dartmouth’s manual on sources and citations at:

The Research Center for Writing and Information Technology (RWIT)

The Student Center for Research, Writing and Information Technology (RWIT) is a place where you can meet with an undergraduate tutor to discuss a paper, research project, or multi-media assignment. The RWIT tutors are trained to help you at any phase of your process. Whether you are brainstorming or planning, drafting or structuring, tweaking or polishing, the RWIT tutors can provide feedback that will help you. RWIT is located at 183 Berry Library. You can try their walk-in hours, or you can schedule an appointment by going to https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/support-writing-research-and-composing-technology/students/make-appointment.
Schedule

Jan. 3  W  Introduction to the Course
       Orr, “The Problem of Disciplines . . . ” (Canvas)
       Suggested Reading: Soper, “The Discourses of Nature” (Canvas)
       CPA #1 available in Assignments area on Canvas

4  Th  Creation Stories
       Read “Genesis I-III” (Canvas)
       Bruchac, Preface, Foreword, and “The Coming of Gluskabi,” from The Wind Eagle (Canvas)
       Introduction, “Telling Stories,” “Gluskabi Makes the People,” “Gluskabi Changes the Animals,” “The Faithful Hunter,” “The Deer Wife,” and “How Indian Summer Came to Be,” from The Faithful Hunter (Canvas)
       Silko, “Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination” (Canvas)
       Discussion of CPA #1

5  F  Creation Stories; Taking Baselines
       Read: Gleiser, “Creation Myths” (Canvas)
       White, Jr., “The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis” (Canvas)
       Mann, selection from “A View from Above,” from 1491 (Canvas)
       ALSO: Introduction of College Park Project
       Read about College Park Plan
       https://campus-services.dartmouth.edu/projects/projects-planning-design-phase/college-park-conceptual-design
       Gottschall, “The Witchery of Story,” from The Storytelling Animal (Canvas)
       Watch Marcelo Gleiser on “Creation Myths” (Course Media Gallery)

8  M  American Mythos
       Encounters with the Archdruid Part I
       Glotfelty, “Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis” (Canvas)

9  T  CPA #1 Due to Canvas by 5pm
       Environment/Self Perception Essay Assignment (also known as CPA #2) available on Canvas

10  W  Encounters with the Archdruid Parts I and II

11  Th  Encounters with the Archdruid Part II
       “Description” section of CPA 2 assignment sheet

12  F  Encounters with the Archdruid Parts II and III
       Koger and Winter, “Psychoanalytic Psychology: Becoming Conscious of the Unconscious,” from The Psychology of Environmental Problems (Canvas)
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 M</td>
<td>MLK Jr. Day</td>
<td>NO CLASS TODAY</td>
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| 17 W | *Encounters with the Archdruid* Parts II and III  
Dillard, “Seeing” (Canvas) |
| 18 Th | Perceptions and the Environment  
Review: Dillard, “Seeing”  
Read: Williams, “The Smell of Survival” from *The Nature Fix*  
Suggested Reading: Simons and Chabris, “Gorillas in our Midst . . . “ (Canvas) |
| 19 F | GUEST SPEAKER: JESSE BRUCHAC ON ABENAKI CREATION STORIES, LANGUAGE AND MUSIC  
Review Abenaki stories from the second class of the term.  
Read: Williams, “Birdbrain,” from *The Nature Fix* |
| 22 M | Shepard, “Introduction” to *Nature and Madness* (Canvas)  
Watch: “A Stroke of Insight” by Jill Bolte Taylor  
http://video.ted.com/talks/podcast/JillBolteTaylor_2008_480.mp4 |
| 23 T | Environment/Self Perception Assignment (CPA #2) Due to Canvas by 5pm  
CPA #3 available on Canvas |
| 24 W | Lewis and Clark: Preparation for the Journey and Scholarly Imagination  
Jefferson, “Letter to Meriwether Lewis” (Canvas)  
*Journals of Lewis & Clark* through p. 115  
Recommended Reading: Wilson “The Enlightenment” (Canvas) |
| 25 Th | *Journals of Lewis & Clark* through p. 168  
Isenberg, “The Genesis of the Nomads” (Canvas)  
Watch Colin Calloway, on “Lewis & Clark and Native Americans” (Canvas Course Media Gallery)  
Student Presentations on Nature and Human Well-Being Research |
| 26 F | Guest Speaker: Mark Kutolowski ’99  
Subtle Perception and Environmental Awareness  
Louv, “Singing for Bears,” from *The Nature Principle*  
Williams, “Birdbrain,” from *The Nature Fix* |
29  M  The Case of Demon Hill/Spirit Mound
*Journals of Lewis & Clark* through p. 210
Selected entries from online journals

**Take-Home Midterm Assignment Available on Canvas**

30  T  CPA #3 Due to Canvas by 5pm

31  W  *Journals of Lewis & Clark*
Martin and Szuter, “War Zones and Game Sinks” (Canvas)

Suggested Reading: LaLiberte and Ripple, “Wildlife Encounters of Lewis and Clark . . .” (Canvas)

Student Presentations on Nature and Human Well-Being Research

Feb  1  Th  Guest Speaker: Bill Cook on *Beloved*
Read *Beloved* through p. 158 (Vintage edition), p. 134 (Plume)

2  F  *Beloved* through p. 257 (Vintage), p. 218 (Plume)

5  M  *Beloved* through end

Suggested: Merchant, “Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History” (Canvas)

6  T  **CPA #4 available on Canvas**

7  W  Race, Culture and the Natural World; Environmental Justice
DiChiro, “Nature as Community” (Canvas)
Mohai, “Dispelling Old Myths: African American Concern for the Environment” (Canvas)

Suggested Reading: Cole and Foster, “History of the Environmental Justice Movement” (Canvas)

8  Th  Race, Culture and the Natural World

Look at the “Legacy on the Land” website: [www.legacyontheland.com](http://www.legacyontheland.com/)
Look at the “Growing Power” website: [http://www.growingpower.org/index.htm](http://www.growingpower.org/index.htm)
Look at the “Outdoor Afro” website: [http://www.outdoorafro.com](http://www.outdoorafro.com)
Look at the “Clean Greens Farm” website: [http://www.cleangreensfarm.com](http://www.cleangreensfarm.com)

Listen to: “Get Out: Nurturing a Bond Between Black People and Nature”
[https://the1a.org/shows/2017-12-18/get-out-nurturing-a-bond-between-black-people-and-nature](https://the1a.org/shows/2017-12-18/get-out-nurturing-a-bond-between-black-people-and-nature)

9  F  CARNIVAL HOLIDAY—NO CLASS TODAY

**Take Home Midterm Due to Canvas by 5pm.**
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<td>12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td><em>Ceremony</em> through p. 113</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td><strong>Final Essay Assignment Available on Canvas</strong></td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td><em>Ceremony</em> through p. 213</td>
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<td>Student Presentations on Nature and Human Well-Being Research</td>
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<td>Watch “Leslie M. Silko” Video (Canvas Course Media Gallery)</td>
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<td>Suggested Reading: Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia” (Canvas)</td>
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<td><strong>CPA #4 Due to Canvas by 5pm</strong></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td><em>Ceremony</em> through end</td>
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<td>Allen, “The Sacred Hoop” (Canvas)</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion of Final Essay</strong></td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness” (Canvas)</td>
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<td>Mann, “Artificial Wilderness,” from <em>1491</em> (Canvas)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Leopold, “The Land Ethic” (Canvas)</td>
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<td>Parker, “Pragmatism and Environmental Thought” (Canvas)</td>
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<td>Suggested Viewing:</td>
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<td><em>Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for our Time</em> (Canvas Course Media Gallery)</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td><strong>Guest Speaker: Scott Stokoe</strong></td>
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<td>“Educating for a New Paradigm”</td>
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<td><strong>CPA #5 Due to Canvas by 5pm</strong></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td><em>Refuge</em> through p. 166</td>
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<td>Suggested Reading: Manes, “Nature and Silence” (Canvas)</td>
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| 26 M   |     | *Refuge* through p.216  
Kolbert, “The Siege of Miami” (Canvas)                                    |
| 28 W   |     | *Refuge* through end  
Abram, “In the Landscape of Language” (Canvas)                             |
| March 1 Th |     | *Refuge* through end  
Abbey, “Deadman at Grandview Point” (Canvas)                              |
|        |     | Watch: “Memoirs of an Environmentalist” (Canvas)                          |
| 2 F    |     | **Final Essay Drafts Due**  
Readings from Final Essay Drafts                                             |
| 5 M    |     | **Readings from Final Essay Drafts**                                      |
| 7 W    |     | **Final Essay Due**                                                      |