COMMON COURSE OUTLINE: Course discipline/number/title: ENGL 2284: Literature and the Environment

A. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

1. Credits: 3
2. Hours/Week: 3
3. Prerequisites (Course discipline/number): College level reading and writing skills recommended.
4. Co-requisites (Course discipline/number): None

Students will read and examine a number of primary texts in order to explore answers to a key question—How shall we live? In order to develop an appreciation and awareness of environmental literacy from a multicultural perspective, students will be introduced to a wide variety of texts that have influenced our understanding of the natural world. Students will also be encouraged to reconnect with the natural world through field trips, field work, and/or service learning projects.

B. DATE LAST REVISED (Month, year): May, 2009

C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS:

1. How perception, language, image, and culture shape or “construct” human relations to place/land/nature/environment
2. How humans have represented human-nonhuman relationships in the arts—literature, film, art, music.
3. How these constructions function as stories within which we live—sustainably and unsustainably—and as imaginative resources for alternative constructions.
4. A brief history of nature in literature, including the basis for the environmental movement
5. Traditional wisdom of indigenous peoples and the cultural role of storytelling
6. Contemporary nature writing
7. Deep ecology and other theories of nature and human/nature relationship
8. An examination of human responsibility through issues of environmental justice, environmental ethics, ecofeminism, the “greening” of religion, or “The Land Ethic.”

One such course may focus on key texts in American literature such as Thoreau’s Walden, Aldo Leopold’s The Sand County Almanac, Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring, Edward Abbey’s Desert Solitaire, Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony, and Terry Tempest-Williams’ Refuge.

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (GENERAL): The student will be able to:

1. Read and analyze a variety of texts to acquire environmental literacy.
2. Work to process the content and be able to share and use the information acquired.
3. Reflect on and contemplate the deep meaning of the information.
4. Integrate content, process, and reflection in order to develop into a responsible global citizen.

E. LEARNING OUTCOMES (MNTC):

Goal 2/Critical Thinking: The student will be able to:
1. Gather factual information and apply it to a given problem in a manner that is relevant, clear, comprehensive, and conscious of possible bias in the information selected.
2. Imagine and seek out a variety of possible goals, assumptions, interpretations, or perspectives, which can give alternative meanings or solutions to given situations or problems.
3. Analyze the logical connections among the facts, goals, and implicit assumptions relevant to a problem or claim; generate and evaluate implications that follow from them.
4. Recognize and articulate the value assumptions, which underlie and affect decisions, interpretations, analyses, and evaluations made by ourselves and others.

Goal 6/The Humanities-the Arts, Literature, and Philosophy: The student will be able to:
1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within a historical and social context.
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.
4. Engage in the creative process or interpretive performance.
5. Articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.
E. **LEARNING OUTCOMES (MNTC): Continued...**

   Goal 10/People and the Environment: The student will be able to:
   1. Explain the basic structure and function of various natural ecosystems and of human adaptive strategies within those systems.
   2. Discern patterns and interrelationships of biophysical and socio-cultural systems.
   3. Describe the basic institutional arrangements (social, legal, political, economic, and religious) that are evolving to deal with environmental and natural resource challenges.
   4. Evaluate critically environmental and natural resource issues in light of understandings about interrelationships, ecosystems, and institutions.
   5. Propose and assess alternative solutions to environmental problems.
   6. Articulate and defend the actions they would take on various environmental issues.

F. **METHODS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:**

   1. Objective exams
   2. Essay exams
   3. Research papers/projects
   4. Short interpretive essays
   5. Small group discussions/projects/presentations.

G. **SPECIAL INFORMATION (if any):** None