The Wilderness: The History and Culture of Uninhabited Lands  
(HON 404/414)  
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Oct. 24-27, 2013  

Course Location  
COBA Room 316 (Oct. 24 from 6:30 to 8:00)  
Big Bend National Park (Oct. 25-27)  

Description of the Course  
This course serves at least three functions. First, it explores the idea of wilderness as a cultural construction that has changed dramatically as times, places, religions, and societies change. Second, it utilizes the idea of wilderness as an entry point for students to deeply consider the relationship between three things: God, humanity, and the rest of the natural world. And third, it helps students appreciate the complexity of the wilderness idea through a site visit to a relatively “wild” location.  

Format of the Class  
The course utilizes active learning strategies that maximize student involvement. “Classes,” as such, will take the form of leisurely periods of discussion focused on critical analysis and experiential applications of ideas presented. The seminar relies on student involvement to enhance the limited classroom experience. Students are expected to be active learners throughout the course experience.  

Required Books and Resources  
Students will read Roderick Frazier Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 4th Ed. (Yale Univ. Press, 2001). http://www.amazon.com/Wilderness-American-Mind-Roderick-Frazier/dp/0300091222/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1375806454&sr=1-1&keywords=wilderness+and+the+american+mind. In addition, the instructors will provide the students with links to and copies of other course readings.  

Course Goal  
Upon completion of this course, the student will have a good working knowledge of the wilderness idea as understood in various times and cultures. They will also be expected to begin developing a personal theology of wilderness.  

Communications  
To facilitate consistency in communications of course requirements, assignments, and general information, and to make the course as paperless as possible, your instructors will communicate with you via the course blog and your ACU email address.  

Attendance Policy  
Students must attend all class hours. Missing part of class time will result in a lowered grade.  

Grade  
Your grade in this course will be based on your class participation, discussions of assigned readings, and completion of a critical essay.
Grade Components
30% Class participation
30% Presentation and discussion of class readings
40% Critical Essay
Grade Scale – A= 90 to 100
   B= 80 to 89
   C= 70 to 79
   D= 60 to 69
   F= <60

Critical Essay
Students are expected to write a critical response related to their readings and experiences in the wilderness. This is more than a mere description of the activities of the weekend or a literature review of pertinent readings; students are expected to address the following prompt:

   Reflect deeply and meaningfully on the idea of wilderness and how it has been captured or represented in the physical landscape visited by the class. As part of your essay, begin to sketch out what role the wilderness plays in your personal theology.

The essay should demonstrate knowledge of the history of the wilderness idea from ancient times to the present, and should incorporate insights from the Nash text as well as other readings. In addition, students should make use of 4-6 outside sources, such as scholarly articles. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length. Consider the following as you write your critical essay:

   An excellent essay (A) will adhere carefully to the prompt, be on-topic and appropriate in scope and length, match the rhetorical task of the assignment, be virtually flawlessly edited, and follow the format guidelines in the Chicago Manual of Style.

   A good essay (B) will approach the excellent paper guidelines, but may have too limited a scope or fall short of editing, logical sequencing, elaboration of ideas, or well-suited research.

   An average essay (C) is a readable attempt toward answering the prompt, but lacks sufficient development.

   Below-average essays will be given a D or F.

With any writing assignment, students are encouraged to use the ACU Writing Center, whose tutors are available in person or online to provide educated feedback at any stage of writing.

Classroom Management
Class time should be dedicated to the course. As such, engaging in non class-related activities during class time will not be tolerated. In order to optimize the learning environment for all members of the class, these classroom management policies will be adhered to.

• Use of computing and communication devices (including mobile phones, iPhones, iPod Touches, laptop and desktop computers) during class is not allowed during class time except when
directed by the instructor for class activities. Disallowed activities include playing electronic games, writing email, engaging in instant messaging, text messaging, or similar activities.

- If you disrupt the class, you will be given a warning. If disruptive behavior continues, you will be asked to leave. Class time should not be disrupted by mobile phones or other devices.
- If there are special circumstances that you feel make it necessary for you to engage in any of the above mentioned activities during class (i.e. your wife is nine months pregnant), get the instructor’s permission ahead of time.

**Students with Disabilities**
Abilene Christian University is committed to providing a learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you feel you have a disability which may impair your capacity to successfully complete this course, please contact the Director of Disability Services (674-2667) in Alpha Academic Services. Student Disability Services assists students with disabilities in obtaining appropriate academic accommodations.

**Academic Integrity**
Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU’s Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one’s desire to imitate God’s nature in our lives. Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship and research. The full Policy is available for review at the Provost’s office web site (http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost) and the following offices: provost, college deans, dean of the first-year program, dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life, and academic departments.

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**Extended Course Description**

This course is a weekend colloquium that introduces students to social, cultural, and theological conceptualizations of “the wilderness.” The wilderness plays a unique role in history, as it represents the place where people do not live, among other things. From social, cultural, and theological perspectives, the wilderness has meant different things to people throughout history:

- a desolate place characterized by the absence of humans and God
- in contrast to the City, a holy place where one goes to meet God
- a fearsome land of savage animals and dangerous natural conditions (often called “the howling wilderness” in the 18th and 19th centuries)
- a weekender’s paradise for the leisure class, replete with scenic and recreational value
- a place where humanity can retreat from technology in order to re-establish a right relationship with nature
- a repository of natural resources to be extracted and exploited
- a natural preserve that requires legal protection from undue human encroachment

Our goal is to discuss each of these conceptualizations of the wilderness in an interdisciplinary setting. We will read the Bible, literature, history, philosophy, ecology, and law. We will learn to “read” the wilderness itself, as we intend to conduct the course off-site while camping in a wilderness setting.
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<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment of Itemized SLOs</th>
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<tr>
<td>An understanding of how humans conceive of and create the wilderness</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion of primary and supplemental readings (30%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific involvement with a landscape exhibiting wilderness qualities</td>
<td>Class immersion and participation (30%)</td>
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<td>A more thorough and nuanced appreciation for the human relationship with and in “nature”</td>
<td>8-10 page reflection paper (40%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of a personal environmental theology that incorporates the wilderness</td>
<td>8-10 page reflection paper (40%)</td>
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**Readings**


2. Supplemental readings in the following areas:
   A. What is “wilderness”?
      a. Wilderness Act of 1964:
      b. William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness”:
   B. What is the value of wilderness?
      a. Henry David Thoreau, “Walking”
      b. Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature”
      c. Nicole Hill, “Wilderness Therapy as a Treatment Modality for At-Risk Youth”
      d. Belden C. Lane, “The Sinai Image in the Apophatic Tradition”
   C. What is the biblical view of wilderness?
      a. Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”
      b. George H. Williams, “Wilderness and Desert: Garden and Paradise in the Bible”
      c. Robert Barry Leal, “Negativity Toward the Wilderness in the Biblical Record”
      d. Richard Bauckham, “Where the Wild Things Are”
   D. What should we do with wilderness?
      c. Scott Russell Sanders, “Wilderness as Sabbath for the Land”
      d. Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic”
      e. Wendell Berry, “Renewing Husbandry”

**Logistics and Timetable**

Students will carpool in their own vehicles (splitting gas costs evenly per car). Lunches on Friday and Sunday will be on the road at your own expense. Dinner on Friday, all meals on
Saturday, and breakfast Sunday will be cooked by your professors, and will cost you $25.

Thursday, Oct. 24
6:30-8:00pm: meet in room 316 of the Mabee Business Bldg. to discuss: 1) the details of the wilderness trip that will begin the next day; and 2) the academic theme and expectations of the course

Friday, Oct. 25
6:00am: depart for Big Bend National Park
1:00pm: arrive in Big Bend, set up camp
3:00pm: short hike to Cattail Falls, one of the most ecologically fragile areas in Big Bend
6:30pm: dinner and discussion of readings

Saturday, Oct. 26
7:00am: breakfast and discussion of readings
9:30am: depart for day hike (Lost Mine Trail), lunch and discussion of readings at trail terminus
3:00pm: depart for trip to Mariscal Mines or other site demonstrating human use of the wilderness
6:30pm: dinner and discussion of readings

Sunday, Oct. 27
7:00am: breakfast and worship
8:00am: break camp
9:00am: final discussion of readings
11:00am: depart for Abilene, with educational experiences to occur along the drive back