

## CUNY Common Core Course Submission Form

Instructions: All courses submitted for the Common Core must be liberal arts courses. Courses may be submitted for only one area of the Common Core. All courses must be 3 credits/3 hours unless the college is seeking a waiver for a 4-credit Math or Science course (after having secured approval for sufficient 3-credit/3-hour Math and Science courses). All standard governance procedures for course approval remain in place.

<b>College</b>	Kingsborough Community College
<b>Course Number</b>	ENG 04800
<b>Course Title</b>	American Environmental Literature
<b>Department(s)</b>	English
<b>Discipline</b>	English
<b>Subject Area</b>	Enter one Subject Area from the attached list. <i>U.S. Experience in Its Diversity</i>
<b>Credits</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours</b>	3
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	English 12
<b>Catalogue Description</b>	A survey of American nature writing and environmental literature from its roots in the colonial era through its flowering in the twentieth century. Examples of reading include Thoreau's <i>Walden</i> , Aldo Leopold's <i>Sand County Almanac</i> , and Rachel Carson's <i>Silent Spring</i> and a representative range of shorter works from four centuries to explore the evolution of ideas about nature. Selections include natural histories, travelogues, journals and diaries, essays, poetry, and short stories.
<b>Syllabus</b>	Syllabus must be included with submission, 5 pages max

<p><b>Indicate the status of this course being nominated:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> current course    <input type="checkbox"/> revision of current course    <input type="checkbox"/> a new course being proposed</p>	
<p><b>CUNY COMMON CORE Location</b></p> <p>Please check below the area of the Common Core for which the course is being submitted. (Select only one.)</p>	
<p>Required</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English Composition</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Life and Physical Sciences</p>	<p>Flexible</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> World Cultures and Global Issues    <input type="checkbox"/> Individual and Society</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> US Experience in its Diversity    <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific World</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Expression</p>
<p><b>Learning Outcomes</b></p> <p>In the left column explain the assignments and course attributes that will address the learning outcomes in the right column.</p>	

<p><b>II. Flexible Core (18 credits)</b></p> <p>Six three-credit liberal arts and sciences courses, with at least one course from each of the following five areas and no more than two courses in any discipline or interdisciplinary field.</p>
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## B. U.S. Experience in its Diversity

A Flexible Core course must meet the three learning outcomes in the right column.

Assigned readings comprise works sharing the theme of nature by diverse authors spanning 400 years; discussion of the readings includes examination of the different contexts, perspectives, and ideas reflected in the various works. Essay and discussion topics require students to contrast different authors' conceptions of nature, e.g. "In a 500-word essay, compare and contrast the views of the American wilderness expressed by William Bradford and Thomas Morton."

- Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

Seminar discussions require close examination of the formal features, tone, imagery, and impact of literary texts to evaluate the validity of different interpretations of the texts. Students examine the contrasting definitions of nature reflected in several different sets of authors over the semester, posting their summaries of the definitions online throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, students "return to each of the three wikis and expand the definitions of 'nature,' 'wilderness,' and 'ecology' to reflect your analysis of the readings in the course."

- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

An analytical essay (1000 to 1200 words) requires students to propose interpretations of selected works of American environmental literature, and support the interpretations through specific elements of literary form and content – rhetorical approaches, descriptive details, imagery – and valid contextual information. The rubric for scoring the essays requires students to state interpretations clearly and organize support effectively according to the conventions for literary criticism.

- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

A course in this area (II.B) must meet at least three of the additional learning outcomes in the right column. A student will:

Seminar discussions require students to use concepts and methodology from literary studies, cultural studies, and history to develop interpretations of works of American nature literature; essay topics ask students to recognize cultural influences on the conceptions of nature evinced by particular literary works. Essay topic: "In a 500 word essay, explicate one of the poems by Freneau, examining his conception of nature."

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the U.S. experience in its diversity, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, history, political science, psychology, public affairs, sociology, and U.S. literature.

Prompts for required Discussion Board posts (50% of final grade), short essays, and longer final essay involve analysis of historical developments, including Native American cultures, European encounters, industrialization and urbanization, that have had profound impacts on the environment and Americans' perceptions of nature, as these developments are reflected in literary texts.

- Analyze and explain one or more major themes of U.S. history from more than one informed perspective.

Discussion Board and wiki posting assignments ask students to identify indigenous and colonialist ideas about nature and our place in nature in American environmental literature, and to discuss the influence of these literatures on environmental movements and conservation practices worldwide.

- Evaluate how indigenous populations, slavery, or immigration have shaped the development of the United States.

Discussion topics require students to consider the power of literature to transform the ways a society conceptualizes its relation to nature, the ways people in the society experience nature, and the ways the society impacts nature; these topics are further expanded in revised analytical essays.

- Analyze and discuss common institutions or patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they influence, or are influenced by, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation.

Kingsborough Community College  
Department of English  
American Environmental Literature (English 48)  
Professor XXXX  
Fall 2011

Dr. XXXX  
Office CXXX  
XXXX@Kingsborough.edu

English 48-DL70W  
Telephone 718-368-XXXX

**Texts:**

*American Environmental Literature*. McGraw-Hill Custom Book, available in the Kingsborough Bookstore. Supplementary readings, accessed online (links will be provided) or on Blackboard as pdf. documents.

**Course Description:**

Welcome to English 48, American Environmental Literature! We will be embarking on an amazing journey through 400 years of American literary history, sampling classic works in nature and environmental writing. The American tradition of environmental writing is unique in its rich diversity, reflecting different and sometimes clashing cultural perspectives on nature and the American landscape. We will read selections that range from American Indian oral tales and colonial travel narratives to natural histories, essays, memoirs, poetry, and stories. We will examine how the ways we think about nature and our environment may change and evolve through history, and how cultural ideas about nature and human nature may influence the ways we relate to, and treat, our environment. We will also appreciate the works we read as literature, delving deeply into the meaning and art of the works we read.

**Course Objectives:**

- Reading: By taking this course, it is my hope that you will appreciate a great tradition in American literature. You will read works in context – that is, against the background of their times, shaped by and shaping historical events and cultural values, thereby gaining a sense of the sweeping arc of American history as we witness through the eyes of writers and artists how radically and rapidly the American landscape was transformed. You will also be introduced to a variety of literary genres, and come to appreciate the art of each genre. Since a few of our writers were artists, we will look at their paintings, which are visual texts that lend themselves to interpretation just as literary texts do. We approach all texts through close reading; it is expected that you will master the skill of explication – analyzing texts for meaning, and supporting your interpretations in your discussions and papers.
- Writing: This is a writing intensive course and fulfills the college requirement for a writing intensive course. You will post written comments to the Discussion Board each week, participate in a blog, and build collaborative, expanded definitions of key concepts on a class wiki, as well as submitting four short (500-word) essays and one longer (1000-1200-word) essay.

**Pathways Learning Outcomes for English 48:**

- Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the U.S. experience in its diversity, including, but not limited to cultural studies, art, environmental studies, history, and U.S. literature.
- Analyze and explain one or more major themes of U.S. history from more than one informed perspective.
- Evaluate how indigenous populations, slavery, or immigration have shaped the development of the United States.
- Analyze and discuss common institutions or patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they influence, or are influenced by, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, belief, and other forms of social differentiation.

### **Course Requirements:**

**Assigned Readings:** We have a custom print anthology of readings by 18 writers (available in the Kingsborough bookstore) plus additional readings accessed online or as pdf documents through the Blackboard site.

**Assigned Writing:** You are required to post on the Discussion Board at least twice a week on separate days, preferably earlier and later in the week. You will also post as assigned in the Wiki, and as you choose on the Blog. Your posts should include thoughtful responses to the readings as well as replies to others' comments. The more often you start discussion threads and the more substantial your comments, the better your grade will be. However, quality not just quantity of writing is considered in assessing the final grade. Your posts as a whole should show that you have read attentively and thought about the meaning of what you have read. As Blackboard work is all written work, the writing you do here will be given substantial weight in the final grade (50%) and also counts as classroom "attendance." Papers: 4 short papers (500 words) in which you practice explication and interpretation (20% of final grade); 1 final paper of 1000 to 1200 words (20% of final grade).

**Weekly Exams:** Weekly quizzes will be given on Blackboard (10% of final grade).

### **Course Policies:**

**Absences:** If you miss more than two weeks of postings, you may be advised to withdraw from the class or receive an Unofficial Withdrawal. Let me know right away if a situation arises that temporarily prevents you from attending class.

**Late Submission of Papers:** Late work will be downgraded and excessively late work may not be accepted.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is not tolerated, period. Kingsborough regards acts of academic dishonesty – such as plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of official documents – as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the College's Academic Integrity procedures.

**Accessibility Services:** In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA), and with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Kingsborough is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented emotional, medical, physical, and/or learning disabilities consult the Access-ABILITY Center (D205 – 718-368-5175) to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please visit <http://www.kingsborough.edu/access-ability/Pages/welcome.aspx>

**Civility in the Classroom:** Kingsborough Community College is committed to the highest standards of academic and ethical integrity, acknowledging that respect for self and others is the foundation of educational excellence. Civility in the classroom and respect for the opinions of others is very important

in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything which is said or discussed in the classroom, yet courteous behavior and responses are expected. Therefore, in this classroom, any acts of harassment and/or discrimination based on matters of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and/or ability are not acceptable. Foul language, raised voices, or verbal or physical threats are not acceptable. Whether we are students, faculty, or staff, we have a right to be in a safe environment, free of disturbance, and civil in all aspects of human relations.

### **Schedule of Reading and Writing Assignments:**

Week 1 : Oral Literature of the First Americans: Origin Myths and Folktales, Nature Songs and Poems

Read "A Tale of the Sky World," "Twelfth Song of the Thunder," "Introduction to Native American Origin and Creation Tales," "Grandmother Spider Steals the Fire," "Introduction to Native American Songs and Poems," and your choice of Native American songs and poems at <http://members.cox.net/academia/origins.html>. Check the class blog for notes and commentary. Post comments on the readings in the Discussion Board forum.

Week 2: Literature of the Early Colonists: Travel Narratives. Read selections by Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, William Bradford, Thomas Morton, and Peter Kalm. Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forums. In the Wiki, post your personal definition of "nature": comment on others' definitions. This will begin an ongoing collaborative definition of the concept of nature.

Week 3: The Revolutionaries on Nation and Nature. Read Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, excerpts from *Letters from an American Farmer*, and Philip Freneau, selected poems. Check the class blog. Post your comments on the Discussion Forum. Continue to expand our definitions of nature in the wiki. Submit Paper 1: Compare and contrast the views of the American wilderness expressed by William Bradford and Thomas Morton. Alternatively, analyze Cabeza de Vaca's attitude toward the Indians he encountered or his experience of nature.

Week 4: Natural Histories. Read selections from William Bartram, *Travels*, and Meriweather Lewis, *Journals*. Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forums. Continue to expand our definitions of nature in the wiki. Submit paper 2: Explicate one of the poems by Freneau. To explicate means to unfold the meaning line by line. Think of a poem as having several layers of meaning – the literal and metaphorical or symbolic.

Week 5: Wildlife Fiction and Fact. Read the excerpt by James Fenimore Cooper, "Slaughter of the Pigeons," from *The Pioneers*, and the entry on Passenger Pigeons by John James Audubon. Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forums. Continue to expand our definitions of nature in the wiki.

Week 6: The Romantic Reaction. Read Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," Henry David Thoreau, selections, and selected poems by William Cullen Bryant, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson. Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forums. In the wiki, post your definitions of "wilderness" and "the wild"; comment on others' posts.

Week 7: Back to Nature. Read selections by John Burroughs, Thomas Cole, and John Muir. Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forums. In the wiki, continue to expand our definition of "wilderness" and "the wild."

Week 8: Choices. Read Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron." Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forums. In the wiki, continue to expand our definition of "wilderness" and "the wild." Submit paper 4: explicate a poem from our selections by Bryant, Whitman, or Dickinson. Alternatively, analyze the choice Sylvie makes in "A White Heron."

Week 9: The Writer and the American Landscape. Read Mary Austin, excerpts from *The Land of Little Rain*, and N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forums. Draft final paper (see detailed instructions, topics, and guidelines on Blackboard).

Week 10. Landscape, History, and Imagination. Read Leslie Marmon Silko, "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination" and "Deer Song," and Barry Lopez, "Arctic Dreams." Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forum.

Week 11. Toward an Ecological View of Nature. Read Luther Standing Bear, "Nature," Aldo Leopold, excerpts from *A Sand County Almanac*, and Rachel Carson, "A Fable for Tomorrow" and "The Obligation to Endure," from *Silent Spring*. Check the class blog. Post in the Discussion Forum. In the Wiki, post your personal definitions of "Ecology"; comment on others' posts.

Week 12: Read Loren Eiseley, "The Judgment of the Birds," and poems by Robert Frost and Robinson Jeffers. In our class blog, add your Reflections on the Course in the Comments section, following the directions for the "Capstone Assessment." Post your comments in the Discussion Forum. Return to each of the three wikis and expand the definitions of "Nature," "Wilderness," and "Ecology" to reflect your reading in the course. Submit your final paper on the last scheduled day of classes.