



**HIS 3060  
Wilderness  
In the  
American Mind  
(Spring 2023)**

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Office Hrs:

**Course Goal:** Wilderness in the American Mind studies influential ways people in American history have thought about creation. Traditions within Christianity, romanticism, pragmatism, and scientism are woven throughout. We read and discuss the great writers on the subject from the seventeenth through the twenty-first centuries. We learn the history of the most influential conservation organizations. We also study public policy as it develops: the creation of parks, the defining of the terms such as "nature," "ecology," and "wilderness," and the issues caused by tourism, pollution, and population growth. As a history class, we emphasize people, situations, and events in the hope of gaining wisdom that will apply today in our world.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

1. Consider (evaluation & analysis) consistencies and changes in American cultural attitudes and thoughts about, and experiences with, wilderness.
2. Communicate (application, comprehension) coherent ideas, orally and in writing, about the application of historic attitudes, thoughts, and experiences to present day environmental issues.

**Required Books:**

**Silas Chamberlin, *On the Trail: A History of American Hiking***

(Yale University Press ISBN 9780300219111)

**Rick Kennedy, *The Winds of Santa Ana: Pilgrim Stories of the California Bight***

(Wipf & Stock ISBN 9781666736137)

**John Muir: *Nature Writings*, ed. William Cronon**

(Library of America ISBN 978-1883011246)

**A blank journal/sketch/notebook/scrapbook.**

(You will be asked to read and show your notes/sketches for class discussion)

**Grades:** Attendance 60%, Class presentation 15%, Final 25%

**Class Presentations:** Twice during the course, students will be asked to present with video or powerpoint images a thoughtful ten-minute, John Muir-like essay on a wilderness subject appropriate to what we have been reading and studying. The presentation should promote heightened awareness of nature or wilderness issues along with promotion of specific ways of thinking about nature. The presentation should promote class discussion.

**Final Exam** will be essay questions based upon the assigned reading in the class.

**Course Schedule:**

1. Defining our Terms: Wilderness & Civilization; Creation & Environment; Cosmology & Ecology; Natural Sciences, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. Native American Thought and TEK (Traditional Ecological Knowledge). Discussion of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmer and examples from *Wisdom Sits in Places*. (Begin reading *Winds of Santa Ana: Pilgrim Stories on the California Bight*)

Break for MLK Day

2. Christian and Classical Traditions: Discuss the methods of communication and environmental study, especially geographical-cultural links, physiologos, patron saints, allegory, baroque scholarship, and historical/chronological/geographical associations in *Winds of Santa Ana: Pilgrim Stories of the California Bight*. (Read and have notes to share from pp. 1-91. Watch and take notes on the first two episodes of Ken Burn's documentary: "National Parks: America's Best Idea." Video links are on canvas.)

3. Pre-Civil War Traditions of Observation: Cotton Mather, Richard Henry Dana Sr., and Henry David Thoreau. Geodesy and Geometricizing the Globe: the U.S. Coast Survey. Discuss *Winds of Santa Ana* (Read and have notes to share from pp. 92-182.)

4. Beginning Recognition of Humanity's Ability to Disrupt Ecology. Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and Frederick Law Olmstead's Idea of parks and his role in Protection of Yosemite and Big Trees as a State Park. (Watch video and have notes to discuss about Frederick Law Olmstead. Read and have notes to share on *John Muir: Nature Writings* pp. 721-743.)

5. The Promise of Scientific Forestry. Influence of Alexander von Humboldt's *Cosmos* and Darwin. George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature* and Gifford Pinchot. Read *John Muir: Nature Writings* (Read and have notes to share from pp. 135-170, 219-256.)

6. John Muir both Scientist and Romantic. The John Muir Trail through Evolution Valley. Alexander Agassiz, the LeConte brothers, the Harriman Expedition to Alaska, and the Challenge of Darwinian Evolution in America: Discuss *John Muir: Nature Writings* (Read and have notes to share from pp. 467-499, 553-571, 618-633.)

7. John Muir, Hetch Hetchy, Save The Redwoods, and the History of the Sierra Club. Discuss *John Muir: Nature Writings* (Read and have notes to share from pp. 687-720 and 744-831.)

8. The Public Policy of National Parks. Stephen Mather, Horace Albright, and John D. Rockefeller Jr. Watch 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> video in Ken Burn's National Parks series. Discuss *On the Trail: A History of American Hiking*, chap. 1

9. Progressive Era Ecology: William Ritter and Organismal Thinking. The Nature Study Movement, Creation Hymns, and Theosophy at Point Loma. Discuss *On the Trail: A History of American Hiking*, chap. 2

10. Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Conservation and Preservation. Thinking Like a Mountain. Discuss *On the Trail: A History of American Hiking*, chap. 3

11. The Wilderness Act of 1964 and Pragmatic Public Policy: Howard Zahniser and The Wilderness Act of 1964. The Santa Barbara Oil Spill, Declaration of Environmental Rights, and the California Coastal Commission. Discuss *On the Trail: A History of American Hiking*, chap. 4

12. The Los Angeles River and Southern California Conservation and Preservation. The Wrigley Family, Nature Conservancy, Yvon Chouinard, the Irvine Company, and the Chumash Marine Sanctuary. Discuss *On the Trail: A History of American Hiking*, chap. 5.

**Final Examination Policy**

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved. Final times are set and regulated by the administration, not by the professor. If you need to change a final time, you must talk to the Dean, Dr. Jim Daichendt or Vice Provost, Dr. Holly Irwin.

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Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the University Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

**PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy**

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at [DRC@pointloma.edu](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu). See Disability Resource Center for additional information.

**PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy**

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

**PLNU Mission To Teach – To Shape – To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modelled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.