Landscape as Destiny

This course will focus on the intrinsic relationship between American Literature and place. Specifically, the intersecting roles of history and nature will be explored in terms of their shaping influences on American social contract and identity. Ecocriticism and post-colonial theory will play key roles in understanding the degree ideas of nature and private land ownership have reconfigured notions of the individual in a setting defined by Manifest Destiny.

Required Texts:

*Shadow Country* by Peter Mattheissen
*The Maytrees* by Annie Dillard
*Ship Fever* by Andrea Barrett
*The Mosquito Coast* by Paul Theroux
*The Road Home* by Jim Harrison
*Suttree* by Cormac McCarthy

Assignments

Weekly Response: Each week the student will prepare a critical reaction of 1-2 pages to that week’s reading; on the weeks when no reading is due, the reaction should be to literary criticism the student has read in preparation for the annotated bibliography assignments.

Annotated Bibliographies:

The student will read two critical articles relevant to the theme and focus of the course and/or the specific works read. Each annotation should be approximately 150 words and observe MLA style. There will be four total annotated bibliography assignments.

Final Paper:

The final paper will be of seminar length (15-20 pages) and apply literary theory appropriate to the theme of the course.

**Tentative syllabus:**

Week 1 – Begin reading of *Shadow Country* by Mattheissen (Approximately first 1/3).
Week 2 – Continue reading *Shadow Country* (Approximately second 1/3).
Week 3 – Finish *Shadow Country*, **First annotated bibliography due**.
Week 4 – Read *The Maytrees* by Annie Dillard.
Week 5 – Read *Ship Fever* by Andrea Barrett.
Week 6 – **Second annotated bibliography due**.
Week 7 – Read *The Mosquito Coast* (First half)
Week 8 – Read *The Mosquito Coast* (Second half)
Week 9 – Read *The Road Home* (First half)
Week 10 – Read *The Road Home* (Second half) **Third annotated bibliography due.**
Week 11 – Read *Suttree* by Cormac McCarthy (First 1/3)
Week 12 - Read *Suttree* by Cormac McCarthy (Second 1/3)
Week 13 - Read *Suttree* by Cormac McCarthy (Last 1/3)
Week 14 – **Fourth annotated bibliography due.**
Week 15 - **Final paper due**