

# Writing Outside: Race, Gender, and the Environmental Memoir

ENGL 476/676  
Topics in American  
Literature  
TuTh 12:30-1:45

Environmental literature takes us on a journey into the strange and unfamiliar. It asks us to look more closely, and even more closely again, at our own backyards until we see them as if for the first time. It asks us to question our relationships that we take for granted—with other people, with animals, with the natural world—and offers us new ways of thinking and connecting with them. It rocks our knowledge of history and the course of human events until we become accustomed to standing on shaky ground.

This course will begin by thinking about how environmental writings shape(d) understandings of terms like “nature,” “the environment,” and “wilderness” and in turn how the environmental memoir shapes and reflects political responses, especially with an eye toward intersections of race, gender, and class. While doing so, we will connect more deeply to where we live, to the history of the Indigenous peoples who live and have lived here first, and to the global environment forces that impact our ways of living and of writing.

