Welcome
This course will emphasize contemporary nature writing, though Niehardt’s conversation with Black Elk shows that the symbolic role of the earth in storytelling is scarcely unique to the twentieth or twenty-first centuries. Our readings will allow us to think carefully about how to define nature, what relationships exist between “nature” and “culture,” and how each of us might engage mindfully with the places we inhabit. We are living in a pivotal time, when arguments for sustainability are driven not only by the ethical imperatives that we will discover in the course readings, but also by the urgency of our survival as a species, which requires sensitivity to both global and local ecology.

Course description and objectives
Nature Writing and Environmental Literature is a blend of literary study and creative writing. The first two units will investigate questions about environmental literature through both informal and formal writing. The last unit will allow you to try your hand at nature writing, using creative nonfiction and poetry as guides for your own investigations of place. This will be a writing-intensive course with opportunities for peer review and revision of formal writing.

We will emphasize the following student learning outcomes:

- Explicate literary texts effectively
- Reflect thoughtfully on one’s strengths and abilities as a writer and thinker
- Communicate complex thoughts effectively through poised and articulate oral presentations and through class discussions
- Produce quality creative, critical, and research writing

Required texts

Attendance
Regular attendance is crucial to the success of the course, but your desire to attend is most important of all. Thus, my policy will be to grant attendance points on a variable ratio schedule. Attendance may also affect the points I reserve for a general assessment of participation.
Due dates
All work is due at the beginning of class on the specified date. Late work is not acceptable without advance notice. Technological glitches (computer crashes, faulty disks, etc.) should be anticipated, as Murphy’s Law dictates that at the last minute whatever can possibly go wrong will go wrong. It is your responsibility to be prepared.

Written assignments: Please type all assignments and use MLA style for citations.
- Blogs: These informal reading responses are designed to enrich discussion and promote strong critical thinking. See blog grading rubric for more details.
- Papers: Discussions and blogs are opportunities to test ideas that will eventually be refined in your papers. The informal writing is meant to help you work through the writing process, so that the formal work grows out of everything that we do in class.

Discussion leading: Active engagement is essential to meaningful learning experiences, so I expect you to approach all of our discussions not only as great ways to share ideas, but also as ways to deliberately challenge yourself as a speaker. To encourage you in this direction, I will divide the class into six discussion groups, each responsible for leading one class discussion.

Prof’s Points: This column in the grade book is a way for me to keep track of attendance points, which I will award on a variable ratio schedule. Whatever points remain at the end of the term will be mine to adjust as I see fit. Since the point total will accumulate gradually throughout the term, I will not include Prof’s Points in the running weighted average until recording final grades.

Grade evaluation (1,000 points total) Grade breakdown
Prof’s points: 100 100-98 A+ 97-93 A 92-90 A-
Participation: 100 89-88 B+ 87-83 B 82-80 B-
Discussion leading: 100 79-78 C+ 77-73 C 72-70 C-
Blogs: 200 69-68 D+ 67-63 D 62-60 D-
Paper 1: 150
Paper 2: 150
Creative portfolio: 200

Service Learning Option (1 additional s.h.)
Those who choose this option must schedule and document a minimum of fifteen hours with one of our community partners or with a SUSTAIN project and complete a written assignment or oral presentation to receive an additional one semester hour of credit. Students choosing this option should meet with me and with Cheri Doane during the first two weeks of the semester to plan their projects and complete the necessary paperwork.

Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty
Plagiarism and cheating of any form are serious offenses and may result in a failing grade for the assignment, the course, or expulsion from the college. The details of Central College’s Academic Integrity policy are found in the Student Handbook, on the web. A copy will be sent to you via email during the first week of the semester. It is your responsibility to read and understand the contents of that policy before you submit work to be graded. Questions regarding the policies and enforcement of the policies may be addressed to me during class or during office hours.
ADA compliance
Central College abides by interpretations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which stipulates that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education “solely by reason of a handicap.” Disabilities covered by law include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities, hearing, sight, or mobility impairments, and other health related impairments. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class, please see me and Nancy Kroese, Director of Student Support Services and Disabilities Services Coordinator (x 5247), during the first two weeks of the semester so that accommodations may be arranged.

Notification of participation in college sanctioned events
Mock Trial participants, music participants, athletes, and others who must miss a class for participating in a college sanctioned event must notify me in advance and complete work, including exams, in advance of the absence. It is your responsibility to communicate with me in advance regarding absences so that we may adjust our schedules.

COURSE CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature and Culture</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
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<td>Jan. 27</td>
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| Feb. 3          | Cather, *O Pioneers!* (Part IV, ch. III-VIII; Part V, “Alexandra”)

Feb. 5
TEACH-IN ON GLOBAL WARMING
“Can the Market Solve Global Warming?” – Brian Peterson (van Emmerik) “The End of Oil” – Anya Butt (Graham #1) Attend one session
Attend one session
Turn in notes

Feb. 10         | Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (Part I, January-June; 3-40) Discussion Group 1 |
Feb. 24         | Paper 1 due; Introduction to *Black Elk Speaks* Paper 1 due |

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<tr>
<th>Self, Community, and the Wild</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
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<td>Mar. 3</td>
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<td>Mar. 16-20</td>
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<td>Mar. 24</td>
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<td>Mar. 31</td>
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### Nature Writing – A Creative Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 2</td>
<td>Dillard, “Total Eclipse,” “Living like Weasels,” “The Deer at Providencia”</td>
<td>All bloggers</td>
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<td>Recommended: “An Expedition to the Pole,” “In the Jungle”</td>
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<td>Apr. 7</td>
<td>Dillard, “Teaching a Stone to Talk,” “Lenses,” “A Field of Silence”</td>
<td>Discussion Group 4</td>
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<td>Apr. 9</td>
<td>Dillard, “Mirages,” “Sojourner,” “Aces and Eights”</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
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<td>Recommended: “God in the Doorway”</td>
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<td>Apr. 10-13</td>
<td>Easter Break</td>
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<td>Apr. 14</td>
<td>Oliver, <em>House of Light</em> (1-45)</td>
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<td>Apr. 16</td>
<td>Oliver, <em>House of Light</em> (46-80)</td>
<td>Discussion Group 5</td>
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<td>Apr. 21</td>
<td><strong>SERVICE DAY</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>“What Kind of Light?”</td>
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<td>Recommended: “Nymph,” “Titan,” “Night Rhythms”</td>
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<td>Apr. 30</td>
<td>Price, <em>Man Killed by Pheasant</em>, “Man Killed by Pheasant,” “Prairie Asinus”</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
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<td>Recommended: “High Maintenance,” “Shoveling”</td>
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<td>Recommended: “Dave and the Devil,” “Why Geese Don’t Winter in Paradise”</td>
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<td>May 7</td>
<td>Portfolio workshop and optional conferences</td>
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<td>May 11</td>
<td><strong>Study Day</strong></td>
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<td>May 13</td>
<td>Portfolio due by 5:00 p.m.</td>
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