

ENG 660  
Winter 2014  
Thoreau and Darwin  
Thurs 9-11:50, PLC 253

Prof William Rossi  
363 PLC; 6-3955  
Office Hrs: W 1:30-3  
& Th 3-4:30

## SYLLABUS

Thoreau and Darwin are well-known as nineteenth-century cultural icons of literature and science, respectively. But Thoreau also became a professional naturalist in the second half of his career; and, before 1859, Darwin was best known as the author of a travel narrative, *Journal of Researches*, Thoreau's preferred genre. While this seminar is primarily focused on Thoreau's career as an environmental writer, situating his work alongside Darwin's will enable us to consider his writing in relation to wide-ranging transatlantic debates over natural knowledge, as these have been recovered by the last two generations of science historians. Besides evolution, those debates concerned issues of cultural authority, the variety of audiences for science writing (broadly defined), and the loss of a knowledge commons.

### Required Texts

Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*. Harvard, 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Voyage of the Beagle*, ed. Janet Browne. Penguin 1989. [Relevant chapters to be posted on Blackboard]

Henry D. Thoreau, *Cape Cod*. Ed. Joseph H. Moldenhauer. Princeton, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings*. Ed. William Rossi. Norton, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. Ed. Carl Hovde, William L. Howarth, and Elizabeth Hall Witherell. Princeton, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_, *A Year in Thoreau's Journal: 1851*, ed. H. Daniel Peck. Penguin, 1993.

### Written/Oral Work and Grading

(Deadlines below refer to hardcopies submitted at the beginning of seminar unless otherwise indicated; guidelines for written assignments will be distributed separately.)

- Short paper on *A Week* passage, January 30 (Week 4) [150 pts]
- Critical article presentation (10-12 minutes), Weeks 3-7 [150]
- Paper Prospectus, with bibliography, 5pm Monday, Feb 17 (beginning Week 7) [100]
- Draft of first 7 pp. of final paper, Week 9 [150]
- Paper presentation (10-12 minutes), March 5 (Week 9) [150]
- Final paper (10-12 pp.) 12 noon, March 22 (Week 11) [300]

### Schedule of Topics and Readings

[BB = on Blackboard; NCE = Thoreau, Norton Critical Edition]

**Week 1**

1/9 Introductions, course business, and bibliographical resources;

Readings: Darwin, “The Struggle for Existence” (1859); Thoreau, “The Succession of Forest Trees” (1860); Jonathan Hodge, “Against ‘Revolution’ and ‘Evolution’” (2005); Dana Phillips, “‘This Slimy, Beastly Life’: Thoreau on Food and Farming” (2012)

**Week 2**

1/16 Readings

Darwin, *Origin* (1859), chapters 1-4 and 14; Robert Chambers, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), selections tba [Google Books]; James Secord, *Victorian Sensation* (2000), 506-18 (518-32 also recommended) [BB]; Nicolaas Rupke, “Darwin’s Choice” (2010) [BB]

**Week 3**

1/23 Readings

Darwin, *Journal of Researches* (2/e, 1845), vol 1: chap X and 2: chap V; John Hildebidle, “The Method of the Natural Historian” (1983); Gillian Beer, “Travelling the Other Way: Travel Narratives and Truth Claims” (1996) [All BB]

Two Presentations: (1) David Knight, “Romanticism and the Sciences” (1990) and Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life* (2003), 511-16; 522-26; 552-54. (2) Bernard Lightman, “Science and the Public” (2011) [all BB]

**Week 4**

1/30 Readings

Thoreau, “Ktaadn and the Maine Woods” (1848) [BB]; *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, “Concord River” through “Tuesday” (1849)

*Short paper due*

**Week 5**

2/6 Readings

Thoreau, *A Week*, “Wednesday” through “Friday;” *Walden* Journal selections [NCE 319-344] (1845-47); *Walden*, “Economy” through “The Village” (1854)

Two Presentations: presenters’ choice

**Week 6**

2/13 Readings

Thoreau, *A Year in Thoreau’s Journal* (1851); *Walden*, “Ponds” through “Conclusion;” Sattelmeyer, “Remaking of *Walden*” (1988); Rossi, “Journal and *Walden*” (1992) [both NCE]

Three Presentations: (1) two-person team on the 1851 Journal; (2) Lorraine Daston, “Objectivity and the Flight from Perspective” (1992); (3) Neill Matheson, “Thoreau’s Inner Animal” (2012)

*Final paper prospectus w/ bibliography due next Monday, Feb 17 5pm via email*

### **Week 7**

#### 2/20 Readings

Thoreau, "Autumnal Tints" (1858-62) [BB], "Wild Apples" (1860-62), "Walking" (1851-62) [NCE]

Two Presentations: (1) Lance Newman, from *Our Common Dwelling* (2005) [NCE 645-659]; (2) Neill Matheson, "Thoreau's *Grammatica Parda*: Conjugating Race and Nature" [2001] (NCE 613-632) . . . OR presenters' choice

### **Week 8**

#### 2/27 Readings

Thoreau, *Cape Cod* (1866)

### **Week 9**

3/5 Mini-conference: *Paper presentations*  
*First 7 pp. of final paper due this week*

### **Week 10**

3/12 C19 Conference--No Class

### **Finals Week**

*Final Papers DUE* (in hardcopy) by 12 noon March 22 in 363 PLC or Prof Rossi's mailbox

## **ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **Class Participation and Attendance**

Regular and productive class participation is expected in graduate seminars. Participation will be evaluated +, ✓, or -, where a plus = points added to and a minus = points deducted from the final grade. Missing more than one session will result in a reduction of one-fourth of the final grade for each absence.

### **Plagiarism**

You are expected to abide by university regulations on the proper acknowledgement of source material, and to follow accepted conventions for the correct scholarly presentation of research papers. The university's student conduct code is posted here:

[<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx>]. Be sure to consult it if you have any questions about this.

### **Late papers/undelivered presentations**

I will deduct one-half of a letter grade for each day, including Saturday and Sunday, that a paper is late (that is, after noon Friday, unless otherwise specified). I will not accept papers after five days (Tuesday, in most cases). Failure to deliver any assigned presentation will result in a two-thirds letter grade deduction from the final grade. Extensions may be possible under some circumstances. But we will need to discuss this as far in advance of the due date as possible.

**Disability**

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to discuss this with me as soon as possible. Also please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter outlining your approved accommodations. Counselors can be contacted at Disability Services [<http://ds.uoregon.edu/>], 346-1155.