Considering Henry Thoreau’s career in the context of recent debates about secularization and modernity, in this seminar we will study his major writings in both historical and contemporary frames. Our double aim, that is, will be to understand A Week; Walden; selected reform, natural history, and travel writings against the historical background of various reform agendas generated by the American Transcendentalist movement, while at the same time we try to assess how Thoreau’s work speaks to certain contemporary questions raised in the on-going debate over secularization. Among others, these questions will include the tension between a transcendent and an immanent metaphysics, the phenomenon of temporal emergence, and human relations to nonhuman nature.

**Required Texts**

**Recommended**

**Written and Oral Work**
(Guidelines for written assignments will be distributed at our second week meeting.)

1) Short paper on A Week passage, due **Week 4**
2) Critical article presentation (10 minutes), Weeks 2-9
3) Annotated bibliography, due Week 8
4) Short prospectus, due Week 9
5) Conference-length paper (10-12 pages) on a topic relevant to the course and discussed with me, due Finals Week

** Assignments may be submitted any time during the week they are due, but no later than noon that Friday.
Schedule of Topics and Readings
[AT= American Transcendentalists; AW = Thoreau, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers; BB = on Blackboard; NCE = Thoreau, Norton Critical Edition; REC = recommended additional reading; WC = Connolly, A World of Becoming]

Week 1
1/9 Introductions and course business; Secularization readings: Charles Taylor, excerpt from A Secular Age (2007); Bruce Robbins, “Enchantment? No, Thank You” (2011); Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The American Scholar” (1837)

Week 2
1/16 READINGS
AT: Buell, Introduction (xi-xxviii); selections by Coleridge, Channing, Carlyle; Emerson, “Divinity School Address” [1838] (129-145)
REC: Michael Warner, Editor’s Introduction Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age [BB]

Week 3
1/23 READINGS
AT: Emerson, “The Transcendentalist” (1842) [pp. 107-122]
Emerson, “Circles” (1841) [BB]
AW: Thoreau, “Concord River,” “Sunday,” “Monday” (1849)

Week 4
1/30 READINGS
AW: Thoreau, “Wednesday” (skip pp. 270-89, if you want); “Thursday,” and “Friday” (1849)
REC: Emerson, “Experience” (1844) [BB]
Short Papers Due This Week

Week 5
2/6 READINGS
NCE: Thoreau, Walden, “Economy” through “The Village” (1845-54)
NCE: Thoreau, Walden Journal selections [319-344] (1845-47)
?? NCE: “Civil Disobedience” OR “Ktaadn” [BB]
REC: Buell anthology (AT), sections III A and E

Week 6
2/13 READINGS
NCE: Thoreau, Walden, “Ponds” through “Conclusion” (1852-54)
NCE: Walden Journal selections (345-75)
REC: Buell anthology (AT), sections IV B and C

Week 7
2/20 READINGS
BB: Thoreau, “Autumnal Tints” (1862)
NCE: Thoreau, “Wild Apples” (1862)
REC: Buell anthology (AT), section IV D
Annotation Exercise

Week 8
2/27 READINGS
Thoreau, Cape Cod (1866)
Annotated Bibliographies Due This Week

Week 9
3/5 READINGS
NCE: Thoreau, “Walking” (1862)
BB: Emerson, “Fate” (1860)
Short Prospectus Due This Week

Week 10
3/12 Conferences (tba)

Finals Week
Final Papers DUE (in hardcopy) no later than 12 noon Friday in 363 PLC or mailbox

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation
Regular and productive class participation is expected in graduate seminars. In this seminar participation will comprise 10% of the final grade.

Attendance
At the beginning of every class, please sign the attendance sheet (if you arrive late, it’s your responsibility to make sure you’ve signed in). Missing more than one session will result in a lowered final grade of one-fourth grade for each absence beyond the first.

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 (Wednesday, 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.