This graduate seminar introduces students to major issues related to American landscape and painting by exploring the scholarship of Rebecca Bedell, Albert Boime, Angela Miller, Barbara Novak, and William Truettner. We will examine the concept of nineteenth-century American landscape and painting through the lens of nature, culture, and the environment and consider the ways in which the interpretation of the American landscape and painting has shifted over time. We also will read selected texts that address the environment, technology, and notions of American wilderness during the nineteenth century including the work of William Cronon, Leo Marx, Roderick Nash, and Ted Steinberg. The seminar is reading-intensive—often with 300 pages of reading per week—so keeping up with assignments and participating in class discussions is an essential requirement.

Last semester, I asked my undergraduate students to write a paper on American landscape painting and the issue of sustainability, defined as the ability to provide for the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. They selected a painting they could see first hand from either the National Gallery of Art or SAAM. For the assignment, they wrote a visual analysis and had to consider the following question: How were artists of the nineteenth century concerned with or indifferent to environmental issues and what we now call sustainability? My interest in sustainability is a personal concern related to the difficult environmental issues we face living in the early twenty-first century and a professional interest connected to how to teach sustainability as a concept pertinent to the history of art. In May 2009, I participated in the Chesapeake Project: Integrating Sustainability Across the Curriculum. The Chesapeake Project is "a learning community of University of Maryland faculty who are finding unique ways of teaching about sustainability across..."
the disciplines to prepare students to find solutions to the world's most challenging problems." I hope that this graduate seminar will continue the conversation that began in the fall.

One mandatory trip is planned as part of the seminar. We will visit the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia to view the exhibition, Public Treasures/Private Visions: Hudson River School Masterworks from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Private Collections. We will discuss the possibilities of a trip to the New York Historical Society in New York City to see Nature and the American Vision: The Hudson River School at the New-York Historical Society.

OFFICE LOCATION
My office is located in the Art/Sociology Building on the 4th floor, Room 4216.

OFFICE HOURS
I have office hours on Tuesday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and by appointment. I will be on campus Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.

TELEPHONE AND EMAIL
You can reach me through email at rater@umd.edu. My office number is 301-405-1490, although I only check voice mail when I am on campus.

I. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Class participation
Class participation is essential for the success of the seminar. Every student in the class is responsible for completing the week's reading assignment before the class meeting. Although individual students will be assigned to lead discussion of selected texts, everyone in the class will participate in discussion. Please come prepared with questions/responses/ideas regarding the week's readings. In addition to the readings on reserve in the Art Library, other readings may be assigned through the semester.

B. Discussion leader
Each week, one member of the seminar will be assigned to lead class discussion. The discussion leader is required to guide a discussion of the readings and issues related to the topic of the day. Please provide a list of pertinent questions and circulate these the day before class (Sunday evening). The discussion leader should provide background information on the author(s) and also prepare a PowerPoint presentation as a way of leading discussion.

C. Presentation with abstract and bibliography
Each student is required to present a paper that is 25 minutes in length (12 pages). I will hand out a full description of the research paper on February 8. You must have your paper topic selected by March 8. All students must submit to me an abstract and one-page bibliography of their topic by April 5. I will disseminate the abstracts to seminar participants via ELMS/Blackboard.

The presentation is not your final paper. In your presentation, you may choose to address a single point or a few points that your paper will expand upon. The presentation is governed by the necessity to engage your audience with visual material and your written paper is not under the same constraints. In short, while your presentation treats the same material that your final paper does, the presentation is not the same medium of expression, and it should therefore be treated independently, so far as its form is concerned.

D. Research paper
Each student will write a research paper (25 pages) that expands on your presentation. The written paper must incorporate any critique or suggestions from the professor or seminar participants. Papers are due on May 17.

II. COURSE GRADES
Class participation and discussion leader: 20%
Presentation: 30%
Final Paper: 50%

A. Evaluation Criteria for Presentation
Presentations will be evaluated on the following criteria: the quality of the abstract; the strength and persuasiveness of your argument; the cogency and clarity of your delivery; the relevance of your illustrations; and your response to the questions your presentation raises.

B. Evaluation Criteria for Written Paper
Written papers will be evaluated on the following criteria: the thesis; the strength and persuasiveness of the argument; the choice of sources and their use; your contribution to the problem; and the organization of the paper as a whole, its correct documentation, and other aspects of good scholarly writing.

III. COURSE TEXTS
All books for the course are on reserve in the Art Library. Articles can be accessed through the course reserve list in ELMS or in the database JSTOR. Note: We will read approximately 300 pages per week—most of the readings are straightforward. A few are more difficult. Please plan accordingly so that our discussions will be fruitful.

You may want to purchase the following texts:
IV. Course Syllabus

Week 1: February 1
Introduction

Reading:

Week 2: February 8
SNOW DAY—No Class

Week 3: February 15
The Idea of "God in Nature"

Reading:

Week 4: February 22
The Pastoral Ideal and Technology

Class Reading:

Week 5: March 1
The Scenic Panorama and Manifest Destiny

Class Reading:
Week 6: March 8
Landscape and the Formation of American Cultural Identity

Class Reading:

Week 7: Spring Break, March 15-19

Week 8: March 22
The Alliance Between Geology and Landscape Painting

Class Reading:

Week 9: March 29
Tourism and the Catskills

Class Reading:

Week 10: April 5
Discovery, Erasure, Invention: Landscape and the American West

Class Reading:
Week 11: April 12
Picturing Progress and Westward Expansion

Class Reading:

Week 12: April 19
Presentations (2)

Week 13: April 26
Presentation (2)

Week 14: May 3
Presentations (2)

Week 15: May 10
Presentation (1)
Presentation and Research Paper

For the presentation and research paper, you are to select a 19th-century painting or work on paper of a landscape familiar to you and whose title indicates that the scene is a specific location. Please pick an artwork that you can visit and see in person at a museum, historical society, or house museum. You must choose a landscape depicting a view of Maryland, Virginia, or Washington, DC. You must physically go to this location to witness the scene. If you wish, you may write about a place you know well from your home or travels in the United States, however, you must revisit this place for the research paper.

Based on our readings from the semester, you are to consider how the artist presented your particular scene and how this place came to have the shape, qualities, and associations it has to day. You should think of this paper as an exercise in art historical, geographical, and environmental interpretations. Your paper is about careful visual analysis and interpretation, historical research, and "reading" a physical landscape.

Besides the collections of the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, you may want to check out art work at the National Museum of American History, the Historical Society of Washington, DC, the Maryland Historical Society, the Virginia Historical Society, local historical houses, or a museum from your home town. For example, the Maryland Historical Society has a website with a digital collection of their painting collection.
http://www.marylandartsource.org/collections/collection_index_000000001.html

Be sure to examine archival documents, old photographs, and maps in relation to your landscape and painting or work on paper. The Library of Congress, ArchivesUM and Special Collections at the University of Maryland, and the National Archives will be invaluable resources for your project.

The Library of Congress's American Memory website has an extensive collection of photographs, brochures, and early histories related to this area titled "The Capital and the Bay: Narratives of Washington and the Chesapeake Bay Region, ca. 1600-1925."
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/lhcbhtml/lhcbhome.html

The Library of Congress's American Memory website is a wonderful source of digital documents: it also has a collection of panoramic maps from 1847-1929, panoramic photographs from 1851-1991, and American environmental photographs, 1891-1936.
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml/panhome.html
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/panoramic_photo/
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/ecology/

In the Special Collections of the University of Maryland, you will find The Maryland Map Collection, a collection of over 2,500 maps depicting Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay, and the surrounding region. Special Collections also houses the National Trust Library Historic Postcard Collection.
http://www.lib.umd.edu/sapps/mdmap/
http://www.lib.umd.edu/digital/ntlpostcards.jsp

Reading to consider besides your research


NOTE: This project is influenced by the teaching and scholarship of Professor William Cronon. He teaches an undergraduate and graduate course on American environmental history at the University of Wisconsin and has his students write a "place paper." His lectures for the undergraduate course are available through his website and may be useful to you. http://www.williamcronon.net/courses/460.htm
ARTh758
Course Reserves


