

Course Title: *The Nature of Nature: Enlightenment Ideas about the Landscape*
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Rationale: This course will explore changing attitudes toward nature developed during the 18th century in Europe by surveying representations of nature in the visual arts (paintings, gardens, architecture and furniture), in the performing arts (music, dance and theater) and in texts (essays, poetry and novels). Concepts of reason, liberty and society as formed by the natural world or reflected in nature will be examined, especially in England and France during the Enlightenment.

In the late 17th century, European concepts of nature were still informed by church teachings and by political systems of strict hierarchies, as typified by the reign of Louis XIV and his gardens and palaces at Versailles. Throughout the 18th century new secular ideas about nature, based on scientific discoveries, geographic explorations, agricultural experiments, political developments, and philosophical speculations, resulted in radically varied views about Nature and in extraordinary representations of the natural world in the visual and performing arts. Country estates, such as Stowe in Buckinghamshire, were designed to reflect these political and social changes, in the statuary and pavilions placed around the garden and in the freedom to roam without pathways or an imposed agenda. People were expected to enjoy nature (Edmund Burke), to learn from nature (Jean Jacques Rousseau) and to respond to nature through reason and emotion (Immanuel Kant). By the early 19th century, nature was seen by some as a source for personal spiritual understanding, outside religious institutions, and as a resource for social improvement in new towns, public parks, and landscaped cemeteries. Such varied attitudes toward the nature of nature reveal much about the Enlightenment in Europe.

Requirements: Attendance and participation in seminar discussions, six short papers* (2-3 typed pages), and a final exam (2pm Monday 12 May 2008).

Required textbook: M. Andrew, Landscape and Western Art (LWA)
D. Defoe, Robinson Crusoe

Lecture/discussion sessions:

This seminar will survey the varied ways in which *Nature* and the landscape were viewed in Europe during the 17th -19th centuries, with particular attention to how developments in secularism affected traditional iconographic interpretations of natural elements and influenced the creation of gardens and the depiction of landscape scenes.

January:

- 23 Introduction and Changing Definitions of *nature*
- 28 Divine Realms LWA 1-51; *Geneva Bible*
Biblical and mythological representations of the natural world
- 30 * Moorish and medieval monastery gardens - visit to Margaret Fowler Garden

February:

- 04 Imperial Realms LWA 53-75
Formal gardens in Italy and France as symbols of Medici and Bourbon politics
- 06 Music, theater and visual arts in the iconographic programs at Versailles
- 11 Fantasy Realms Robinson Crusoe
Rococo architecture and the paintings of Watteau
- 13 * Discussion of Defoe's novel
- 18 Botanical Realms Rousseau's essay *Botany*
Exercises in botanical classifications and illustrations
- 20 Linnaeus and Botanic Gardens in Padua, Leyden, Paris Versailles and Oxford
- 25 Botanical Gardens and Menageries LWA 77-175
Visit to Rancho Santa Ana herbarium Darwin's *Botanic Garden*
- 27 * discussion of Landscape and Western Art

March:

- 03-05 Political Realms
Stowe and the early English landscape garden Pope's *Letter to Lord B.*
- 08 Visit to the Huntington herbarium, conservatory, and 18th c. galleries
- 10 Seasonal Realms Vivaldi's poems & music
Representing the changes in weather, seasons, and social hierarchies
- 12 * Analysis of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*

March:

- 24 Agricultural Revolutions: Plows, fertilizers, native plants, and exotic imports
handout: *Landscape Painting and the Agricultural Revolution*
chose prints for San Antonio Gardens exhibition on "The Landscape"
- 26 Viewing botanical texts and the *Encyclopédie* at Honnold Rare Book Room
* short paper due on Vivaldi
- 31 Creating the Picturesque Landscape in paintings and gardens:
freedom of thought and of movement
handout: *Landscape and Ideology*

April:

- 02 Exhibition on 18th c. ballooning at the Clark Humanities Museum
Discussion of San Antonio Gardens exhibition
- 07 Man in Nature and the Sublime Landscape
handout: Rousseau's *Julie, La Nouvelle Heloise* and *Emile*
- 09 The Sublime Realm: Ermenonville, Desert de Retz and Monceau
handout : Burke on *Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*

- 14 Poetic Realms and Picturesque Places
handout: Wordsworth's poems
- 16 Mapping our realm: seeing campus sites as "sublime" or "beautiful"
* exhibition labels due
- 21 Personalized Realms: self expression in Constable and Turner
handout: *Landscape and Ideology*: LWA 176-
- 23 The Spiritual Realm: Kant, Blake and Friedrich
handout: Kant's *Critique of Judgement*
- 28 Analysis of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony "The Pastoral"
* short paper due on Beethoven
- 30 The People's Realm: Cemeteries, public parks and planned communities

May:

05-07 Conclusion: Knowledge, Culture and Representation of *Nature*

12 Final exam 2 – 3 pm:

How does the nature of *Nature* change during the Enlightenment?