Description:
Landscape art is more than mere transcriptions of pretty views onto canvas, although this is certainly one aspect that provides aesthetic pleasure to large numbers of people. The “Land of the Free” and, by extension, its coasts and waterways hold a privileged position in the national imagination. Even today, it is the locus of much of our patriotic feeling. Our sense of who we are as a people is deeply bound up with our sense of our own geography.

It is the major premise of this course that landscape art is a cultural construction – that is, that the motives to make such art, the artistic conventions that govern its representation, and the uses to which such art is put, derive most of their meaning from the general culture. Through lectures, class discussions, and written assignments, this course offers the opportunity to explore landscape art as a site of meaning: commercial, spiritual, cultural, political, psychological, and scientific. The possibilities are many. Landscape can function as a sign of natural beauty and agricultural abundance. It can work as a pastoral alternative to urbanism. An appreciation of the aesthetics of landscape can be an indicator of the viewer’s, the artist’s, and the potential buyer’s refined sensibility—and his/her social class. Above all, landscape painting can reflect ideas about and construct images of our national identity.

This is a looking as well as reading and writing intensive course, that explores how the natural world was comprehended and represented by landscape architects, painters, and photographers as well as writers. Class sessions are loosely organized along chronological lines, although sometimes we leapfrog rather than charge ahead, and sometimes we study topics rather than chronologically-driven segments.
Learning Objectives:

- Become familiar with a range of American artists working in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- Refine skills in visual analysis in relation to the arts of the United States.
- Investigate the issue of national identity as it relates to the arts of the United States.
- Demonstrate the dependence of meaning upon cultural, social, and political contexts when analyzing American art.
- Consider the issue of sustainability as it relates to American art, particularly landscape painting of the nineteenth century.
- Communicate effectively through written and oral communication.

Office Location:
My office is located in 41 Wyllys on the third floor, Room 304

Email and Telephone:
You can email me at brobertson@wesleyan.edu or leave a voice message on my office telephone at 860-685-2721.

Office Hours:
My office hours are on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 1:00 – 2:00 pm, and by appointment.

Field Trip:
There will be a mandatory field trip to the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, scheduled for Saturday afternoon, February 23rd.

Required Texts:
There is one required textbook for this course. It is available for purchase at Broad Street Books.


You may also wish to buy the following books:


Reserve Readings:
Additional readings for ARHA174 are on reserve in the Art Library and available through the electronic reserve system through Wesleyan Libraries and through Moodle. Reserve readings are indicated by the letters RSRV, eRes, or PDF in parenthesis in the course outline section of this syllabus.

I also have placed several books on reserve in the Art Library that will assist you in writing your paper on sustainability and nineteenth-century landscape painting. You can access the course reserve list through the print reserve section of the library’s website.
Moodle:
You will receive paper copies of the syllabus and first assignment during the first class session. Thereafter the syllabus and all course assignments will be posted to a course Moodle site online. You are responsible for keeping track of all posts that I make to the Moodle site.

You can sign in to Moodle from your portfolio or at https://moodle.wesleyan.edu/login/index.php

Course Requirements and Criteria for Grading:
A. Readings
All readings for the course are to be done weekly. You are expected to read all of the material for this course. You will want to familiarize yourself with objects/images and themes to be addressed in lectures and you will be expected to respond to questions from the readings that might be posed in class. It’s also a VERY good idea to make a print out of on-line readings -- having a hard copy enables you to highlight important passages and make notes on the print-out.

B. Discussion Lead
At the start of the semester, the class will be divided into study groups, each of which will be assigned to lead discussion during one of the Special Topics classes. The job of that week's team will be to meet before class and develop a plan for leading class discussion based on what team members have found interesting, puzzling or controversial. As discussion leader, you are expected to raise questions pertaining to the week’s readings and to foster lively discussion among the group as a whole. Please use images to illustrate your points and to stimulate discussion.

In addition, each member of your group will be asked to compose a brief summary of the authors’ arguments and an outline of what he or she considers to be the key issues of the text. This assignment is designed to help you prepare a discussion plan and questions in advance. It must be turned in to me no later than the Monday before the class in question at 5 p.m.

Team 1 – 12 February: Landscape & Tourism: The Catskills as Site for Tourism and Art
Team 2 – 28 February: The Incursion of the Railroad
Team 3 – 7 March: Landscape at Mid-Century and Beyond: Science and Geology
Team 4 – 16 April: Landscape Symbolism and the Civil War
Team 5 – 25 April: The New Urban Landscape

C. Short Papers
Over the course of the semester, you will complete three short writing assignments (3-4 pages) on a selected text or work(s) of art. These assignments will explore key topics in nineteenth-century American art and are designed to prepare you for the longer research paper (described below) by cultivating skills of careful looking, clear writing, and contextual analysis.

D. Research Paper
You are required to write a research paper (8-10 pages) based on the issue of sustainability and nineteenth-century landscape painting. You are to select a single landscape painting from the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum, which we will visit on our class field trip in February. You will be expected to analyze the formal/iconographic characteristics of this work of art and to situate it within its distinct historical and cultural contexts, which will require some outside research. A complete description of this assignment will be provided at a later date.
All papers must be typed and double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font (Times New Roman), standard page size (8 1/2 x 11). The research paper is worth 100 points. **The paper is due on May 15, during finals week.**

E. Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance and active participation in class sessions are essential. This involves assuming the responsibility to speak thoughtfully and listen attentively. Such participation is, of course, only possible when you have done the week’s reading and are present in class. Class participation also includes group discussions and in-class writing assignments. Please notify me in advance if you must be absent from class.

**Grading:**

Evaluation is based on the student’s assimilation of course content and active engagement with it as expressed primarily in written exams and papers, but also in class participation (including a short in-class presentation). Each written item will be evaluated on grammar, content, and clarity. You are strongly encouraged to purchase Sylvan Barnet’s *A Short Guide to Writing about Art.*

**Rubric for Writing Components:**

A  
Content: Answers the question(s) fully, demonstrating good knowledge of course materials (e.g. class lectures, assigned readings), good analytical skills, and insight. The student demonstrates a certain measure of sophistication in dealing with the material, not mere regurgitation. The student has developed a good working sense of basic chronology that s/he is able to tap into when necessary.

Writing: Good introduction, conclusion. The student organizes the material well and knows how to construct sentences properly (no run-ons or fragments). The student can communicate thoughts well in written form, does not confuse the reader, and demonstrates good word choices. The student possesses an excellent command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

B  
Content: Answers the question(s), but lacks some of the confidence and mastery needed for an A. The student occasionally synthesizes class lecture material and readings.

Writing: Good organization, paragraph and sentence construction. The student communicates well with only occasional lapses in logic, order, and/or grammar.

C  
Content: The student demonstrates a fair amount of knowledge, but fails to answer the question(s) asked. The student does not engage issues directly and wisely.

Writing: The paper has serious writing problems – lots of grammatical errors and problems with basic writing. The student scrambles sentences, chooses words that confuse rather than inform readers, and/or the argument is not logically organized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</strong></th>
<th><strong>WEIGHT</strong></th>
<th><strong>DUE DATE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation &amp; Reading Summary</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>See course calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Writing Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>See course calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>May 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class discussion based on readings, images, and lectures</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>To be determined at the end of the semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Policy:
It is a mark of courtesy to your fellow students and to me to turn all cell phones completely **OFF** during class. *Taking notes on a laptop computer is not encouraged. This is an image-intensive course and it is very easy to miss an important point if your eyes (and brain!) are trying to process the information on two (or more) screens. Better to stick with older technology – a notebook and pen.*

Class attendance and participation are very important and will be reflected in final 10% of your grade. Please arrive on time; latecomers can be disruptive. Students may be excused from class if they present documentation (from the deans’ office or health services) for personal emergencies or illness within a week of the missed class. Because you cannot participate if you are not in class, excessive absences will result in the lowering of the final grade by (at least) one full letter grade.

All papers must be submitted through the online submission portal on Moodle. When submitting papers electronically also be sure to:

- *Save the file in Word with either the .doc or .docx extension*
- *Name the file clearly with your name— for example:  GeorgeCLOONEY_ARHA174 Paper1.doc*

Late papers result in a loss of five (5) points per day—including Saturday and Sunday.

University Policy:

**A. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
Wesleyan University has a recognized Honor Code, administered by the Honor Board. This code sets standards for academic integrity for all undergraduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For additional information on the Honor Code visit the Student Handbook web site: [http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html).

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible [during the second week of the semester], so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at [http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/studentguide.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/studentguide.html).

**B. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**
University policy states that students should not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. Students shall be allowed, whenever practicable, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor, and make arrangements for make-up work or examinations. The student is responsible for providing written notification to the professor within the first two weeks of the semester. The notification must identify the religious holiday(s) and date(s).
# Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>Introduction to the course, explanation of course policies</td>
<td>Brief overview of the history of landscape art, with emphasis on the legacy of seventeenth-century European landscape painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Conceptualizing the Cultural Construction of Landscape: Early Images of America Landscape Practice in 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; c. America: Decorative Backgrounds, Topographical Views</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Timothy Sweet, “Filling the Field: The Roanoke Images of John White and Theodor de Bry,” in <em>A Keener Perception</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>The Beginnings of Romantic Landscape: The Case of Washington Allston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb  5</td>
<td>Thomas Cole and the Formation of the Hudson River School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Paper #1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb  7</td>
<td>Landscape as a Signifier of National Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- CZ, “The Landscape as a Cultural Artifact,” 12-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Landscape and Tourism: The Catskills as Site for Tourism and Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Group 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feb 14  No Lecture – Rescheduled for field trip to Wadsworth Athenaeum on February 23
• Visit to Davison Art Center for Paper #2

Feb 19  Cole and the “Higher Landscape”
Landscape Appreciation: An Elitist Activity?

Feb 21  Landscape and Spirituality: Finding God in the Wilderness
Case Study: Asher B. Durand, An Alternate View
• Excerpt from Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “The Over-Soul,” 1841 (PDF)

Feb 23  Field Trip to Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford

Feb 26  Against Wilderness, The Pastoral Ideal
• Paper #2 Due
• Franklin Kelly, “The Pastoral Ideal,” in Frederick Edwin Church and the National Landscape (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 67-.

Feb 28  The Incursion of the Railroad ← Group 2

Mar 5  Landscape at Mid-Century: Its Status
Second-Generation Sublime: Niagara as Seen by Frederic Church
• CZ, “The Epic Landscape,” 29-33

Mar 7  Landscape at Mid-Century and Beyond: Science and Geology ← Group 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 9-24</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Mar 26 | Luminism: An Art Historical Construct  
The Prairie  
| Mar 28 | No Lecture – Rescheduled for field trip to Wadsworth Athenaeum on February 23  
- Visit to Olin Special Collections for Paper #3 |
| Apr 2 | Exploration, Manifest Destiny, and the West: Albert Bierstadt  
| Apr 4 | Exploration, Manifest Destiny, and the West: Survey Photography  
- Class will meet at Olin Special Collections  
- Martha A. Sandweiss, “‘Westward the Course of Empire’: Photography and the Invention of an American Future,” 155-206.  
| Apr 9 | Exploration, Manifest Destiny, and the West: Thomas Moran  
- Paper #3 Due  
| Apr 11 | Presence and Absence: Race in the American Landscape I  
| Apr 16 | Landscape Symbolism and the Civil War  
- Group 4  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading and Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| April 18 | Post-War Internationalism I: The Barbizon School (Hunt, Bannister)   | A Special Case: George Inness  
  - CZ, “Post-Civil War Society,” 34-39  
  - Reading on George Inness, TBA |
  - Optional: Bruce Robertson, *Reckoning with Winslow Homer: His Late Paintings and Their Influence* (Indiana University Press, 1990), 9-18, 171. |
| May 2   | Whistler as Catalyst for Modernist Thinking                           | Paper #4 Draft Due: Workshop  
| May 14-17 | Final Exam Period                                                   | Paper #4 due by 10:00 pm on Thursday, May 16 |