

Darren Jackson

## Inquiry into Wilderness Course Description

In this course we will engage the questions “what is wilderness,” “how do our conceptions affect our understanding of ‘wilderness’,” and “how do those preconceptions affect our attitude toward the natural world and ourselves” through a series of research projects. Our examination of wilderness will include the early explorers/settlers and their perception of the “New World” and progress through contemporary writers and the burgeoning concern for the natural world. We will focus on how “wilderness” functions as a metaphor in public and private discourse as means of expressing fear of the unknown, of that which is not civilized, as well as to romanticize that which is natural as “pure.” For this inquiry we will participate in a wilderness experience (a short hike) and explore texts from antiquity to today from a wide variety of disciplines, including literature, religion, history, anthropology, and political science.