This course explores concepts of nature, ecology, and environmental sustainability in Germany. We examine ecological thinking from medieval nature writing to climate change literature, from protest against the cutting down of trees and groves considered holy in Germanic paganism to practical perspectives for environmental engagement today. And we ask how these approaches might be seen as amalgamations of longstanding (mythological, religious, folkloristic, literary) forms of engagement with the natural realm and aspects of modern (scientific) thinking and technology.

Questions & Perspectives
- How have German-speaking peoples positioned themselves spatially, aesthetically, emotionally, intellectually, symbolically, and practically in their relationship to nature?
- What relationships exist between various theoretical and practical approaches?
- How do concepts of nature and ideas of sustainability (in literature, arts, philosophy, religion) relate to crises/responses to crisis?
- How can we develop along the axis of more emotional, intuitive, and metaphorical approaches vs. (merely) cognitive, conceptual approaches?
- How do we negotiate the intersection/relationship?
- How do historical approaches inform today's/tomorrow's thinking and acting?
- How can we employ an interdisciplinary approach (Green Studies, Memory Studies, History, Mythology, Social Anthropology, Sociology, and Natural Sciences)?

Methodology
Lines of synchronic and diachronic investigation focus and enrich the textual and contextual analysis:
- Thematic focus on trees & forests, mountains, bodies of water, and the sky/air
- Examination of the contrast between country and city, the German fascination with wilderness and desert landscapes, and paradigmatic landscapes of solitude
- Chronological overview over the Germanic engagement with nature, landscape, the environment spanning several centuries (Celtic period through the Middle Ages to today)
- Analysis of contemporary German approaches to recycling and renewable energy sources
- Reflection of how these approaches might be seen as an amalgamation of longstanding (mythological) forms of engagement with the natural realm and aspects of (scientific) modern thinking and technology

Activities
- Participate in Creating an Artwork: Stickwork Willow Sculpture by Patrick Dougherty (Sept., USU)
- Attend a Conference: Tanner Talks, God & The Challenge of Preserving Our Planet (Oct., USU)
- Formulate a Paper Proposal: Future Memory—Mapping the Anthropocene (Nov., USU)
- Study Something Innovative: Science and Art in The Crossroads Project
- Look beyond your Discipline: Guest lectures by Antje Graul (Huntsman School), Carsten Meier, (Caine College), Christopher Conte (History)
- Topping Out Ceremony with traditional Craftsmen

Goals
- Analysis of concepts of nature, landscape, and environment in the context of German identity formation and self-image
- Cultural Memory & Future Trajectory: Deeper appreciation of connections between past and present, North-American and European cultures
- Discussion of contemporary institutions and initiatives, including cultural and recreational phenomena and habits
- Introduction to discourse criticism with emphasis on the disconnect between imaginary construct and historical reality

Outcomes
- Interdisciplinary & Innovative Approach: Drawing on a combination of methods and backgrounds allows for an inter-/multi-disciplinary approach, innovative close-readings, topical contextualizations, and socio-historically sensitive and informed discussions
- Intellectual Understanding & Experiential Learning: Students gain experiential as well as intellectual engagement with nature, landscape, the environment spanning several centuries (Celtic period through the Middle Ages to today)
- Cultural Memory & Future Trajectory: Discussion of contemporary German institutions and initiatives, as well as cultural, environmental, and recreational phenomena and habits