Engr 4630
American Nature Writers
Every genre has a history, but none as far reaching as nature writing. It is—inextricably—a literature of the more-than-human: ecological, geologic, atmospheric. The nature writing we need now is that which binds us to each other and to the damaged world we inhabit. It is a literature of connection through location, and it engages complexity in pursuit of environmental justice.

• Confronting the myth of wilderness.
Exposing the fantasy of untouched Wilderness—both in its fabrication and in its continuing impact—means examining the cultural origins and colonizing histories of the idea of wilderness and the practice of nature writing. Unsettling the ideal of non-human nature opens new space to ask: What might a genuinely ecological aesthetic look like?

• Reckoning our shared nature.
- Expanding our awareness of cultural and historical contexts.
- Considering the implications of inhabitation and use.
- Appreciating limited and inequitably distributed resources.
- Negotiating competing claims of ownership and inclusion.
- Enriching community by thinking beyond the here, the now, and the self.

• Composing a sustainable future for our local and global communities.
Aggies Are Everywhere. USU delivers courses throughout the state, and this course makes that geographical diversity part of the curriculum. The nature writing we read is part of a conversation that includes individual students in their locations. By emphasizing regionally relevant issues, we make explicit the links between the personal, the local, and the global. Students explore the literature of nature while informing themselves about the pressing environmental and social concerns impacting their regions. Moreover, they apply what they learn about the craft of contemporary nature writing in their own place-based compositions.