



Interdisciplinary Explorations

The Idea of Nature

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES • SPRING 2012



Thomas Cole (1801-1848). View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm - The Oxbow. 1836. Oil on canvas, 51 1/2 x 76 in. (130.8 x 193 cm). Gift of Mrs. Russell Sage, 1908 (08.228). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. Photo Credit: Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

The Series

In spring 2012, a new public lecture series will begin at Boise State University. The goal of the series is to promote interdisciplinary inquiry and to foster dialogue across the campus and community, based on the premise that *big questions need interdisciplinary answers.*

How are conceptions of nature expressed in literature, art, philosophy, music, and other humanities disciplines? How did ideas of nature change from 1660-1860, a period of radical change and revolution?

Three distinguished speakers will come to Boise State on February 17, March 15, and April 30, 2012. These lectures are free and open to the public and will be followed by a reception with a cash bar and appetizers.

Tickets for the receptions are limited: please contact Dr. Harvey at samanthaharvey@boisestate.edu or go to www.boisestate.edu/research/ahi for more information.

The Schedule

Friday, February 17, 2012 • 6-7 PM



**On Metaphor and Progress:
Nature in Literature and
Landscape Painting in
19th-Century America**

Rochelle Johnson
Professor of English, College of Idaho

Thursday, March 15, 2012 • 6-7 PM



**Henry David Thoreau and
Health in Nature**

James Engell
Gurney Professor of English,
Harvard University

Monday, April 30, 2012 • 6-7 PM



**Romanticism, Blake, and the
Politics of Nature**

Kevin Hutchings
Research Chair in Literature, Culture
and Environmental Studies,
University of Northern British
Columbia, Canada

All events will be held in the Boise State Student Union Building, Simplot Ballroom A-B, followed by a reception.

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Extended Studies
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Environmental Studies Program





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How are conceptions of nature expressed in literature, art, philosophy, music, and other humanities disciplines? How did ideas of nature change from 1660-1860, a period of radical change and revolution?

The goal of this course is not to answer all the questions - but rather, to ask the right questions. Each lecture will be a snapshot of a moment in time, taken through the lens of a particular discipline. This innovative model of pedagogy will stimulate students to think across established disciplines, time periods, and analytical methods.

"The Idea of Nature" will engage a wide variety of primary materials, including novels, poetry, essays, philosophical texts, political tracts, musical compositions, and visual art. Through a variety of assignments, the student will hone analytical skills, forge interconnections between fields of study, and expand knowledge of ideas that were fundamental to the formation of modern society and culture.

**Samantha Harvey, Assistant Professor of English
Boise State University**

"The Idea of Nature: 1660-1860"

ENG 530 T/Th 4:40-5:55 ILC 404

Boise State Lectures (not open to the public)

- 1/26 Wonder Cabinets and Natural History Museums: Curious Discoveries to a View of Nature – Chris Hill, Anthropology
- 2/2 Enlightenment Discourse: Sir Francis Bacon – John McClellan, Communication
- 2/7 "Hideous and Desolate" Wilderness of 17th-Century Puritan New England – Tom Hillard, English
- 2/23 Reading "The Book of Nature" in the Long Eighteenth Century – Samantha Harvey, English
- 3/1 Colonizing *Robinson Crusoe* – Mac Test, English
- 3/8 Jefferson's America: Nature in the Early Republic – Lisa Brady, History
- 3/22 Parlor Pieces: Women and Natural History in the Long Eighteenth Century – Janice Neri, Art History
- 4/5 The Botanic Garden of Erasmus Darwin: Poetry of/as Natural Philosophy – Steve Crowley, Philosophy
- 4/12 Melville's *Moby-Dick* – Steven Olsen-Smith, English
- 4/19 Musical Images of Romantic Nature – Jeanne Belfy, Music
- 4/26 The Darwinian Revolution: The Nature of Science and the Science of Nature – Chris Hill, Anthropology