Working course title: **Writing the Environment: Words, Ethics, Action**

Course Description:

This course will begin from the premise that environmental writing can be a form of environmental action. More precisely, finding solutions to the problems posed by our current global environmental crises requires the cultivation of different writing skills appropriate to particular aims, desires, contexts, and issues. Different forms and genres of writing can *interfere* in the world in particular ways, ways that might be useful for addressing environmental problems.

Based on this overarching premise about the connections between writing and action this course is designed to encourage a range of critical reading, thinking, and writing practices that revolve around current topical concerns of environmental studies. By focusing on developing a skill set of diverse writing practices, students will hopefully develop a strong sense of the importance of writing as a possible form of environmental action and place-based activism. In general, the course will emphasize three related activities:

1. Reading and analyzing works of environmental writing across a range of forms and genres.
2. Practicing writing by experimenting with different forms, genres styles, techniques, voices, audiences, and collaborative revision practices.
3. Reflecting on the writing process in relation to other modes of environmental action.

The goal of this course will be to allow students to think about writing, to read good writing and, most importantly, to write – all within an environmental framework. Students will consider issues ranging in scope from local environmental justice concerns in their own communities to the ethical dilemmas posed by global climate change, and explore how they can make connections between the local and the global through their own writing. Furthermore, the course will cast a large net in its definition of “environmental,” and its concerns will center not only on relatively ancient problems such as air pollution and deforestation of wilderness but also on phenomena like transgenic crops, environmental racism, and the global food crisis. Possible readings include selections by Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Vandana Shiva, William Cronon, Bill McKibben, Terry Tempest Williams, Margaret Atwood, Michael Pollan, and Rebecca Solnit. Potential assignments may include: personal narrative and place based writing, letter to the editor and political position statement, researched essay about local environmental issue, and blog/hybrid/collaborative piece of digital writing.