From the early seventeenth century to now, "wilderness" has captivated the American psyche and been projected onto landscapes from Alaska to Florida through various forms of textual and cultural discourse. This course includes literary and critical texts from Anne Bradstreet’s Puritan depiction of Nature in “Contemplations” to Cormac McCarthy’s post-apocalyptic novel The Road. Course readings will be diverse, including but not limited to poetry, fiction, drama, journalism, correspondence, diaries, film, still images, and popular non-fiction accounts, but always with a focus on how Old World ideas and ideals regarding the "natural" affected, impacted, and shaped the so-called New World in ways that linger today. Discovering how the Columbian Exchange continues to impact Turtle Island will also mean taking into account Indigenous texts.

Please purchase the following books: McCarthy, Cormac. 2006. The Road. All other texts will be made available on OLAT. Please be advised that the course can at times be graphic and harrowing.