*Syllabus*

**Honors Parks & Preservation**

EVR 3421

TR 11-12:20; AD 206; 3 credits

**Instructor:**

Bill O’Brien

HC 151, 6-8033

[wobrien@fau.edu](mailto:wobrien@fau.edu)

Office Hours: TR 12:30-3:30 or by appointment

**Course description:** This course addresses the historical emergence and cultural meanings of parks and other preserved “natural” spaces in the United States. While the affinity for “wild” places has European antecedents that date back to the Enlightenment, the will to preserve large tracts of land to protect “special” landscapes emerged first in the U.S. By the 21st century, the preservation of land for aesthetic, recreational, and ecological purposes has spread globally. In the U.S., the unique combination of large expanses of publicly-owned land and an emergent parks movement helped to establish the vast systems of parks – at federal, state, county, and municipal levels – that visitors embrace and enjoy today. Indeed, the establishment of a national park system has been embraced as “America’s Best Idea.” In this course, we’ll be reading about ideas surrounding the creation of parks and wilderness areas in the U.S., emphasizing cultural values that inform these processes and define our relationships to these remarkable spaces. We’ll also be visiting some of South Florida’s parks.

**Note of Honors Distinction:** The writing component of the course is demanding and prepares students with skills needed for work on the Honors Thesis.  Students will be exposed to vocabulary of a specifically theoretical nature, and will be expected to comprehend these new concepts and to deploy these new terms in their own critical thinking and writing. Students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the history and the ongoing critical and scholarly conversation about these works.  Most importantly, this course will reflect the interdisciplinary nature of Honors education and will inculcate critical attitudes and skills that will teach you how to learn for yourself.

**Textbooks:**

* Roderick Frazier Nash. *Wilderness and the American Mind* (4th edition).Yale University Press. 2001.
* Ethan Carr. *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture & the National Park Service.* University of Nebraska Press. 1999.
* Richard Grusin. *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America’s National Parks.* Cambridge University Press. 2004.
* Additional readings will be made available on the course MyFAU site

**Fieldtrips:** We plan to travel to a nearby national park for an overnight trip before mid-March (before it gets warm enough for mosquitoes to take over). We’ll also take a half-day trip to MacArthur Beach State Park in North Palm Beach. We’ll discuss the dates for both trips to ensure the maximum possible student participation. Additionally, students are encouraged to visit a variety of our locally available state parks, county-level “natural area” parks, or similar municipal parks. Information from these parks will contribute to particular writing assignments as well as the final paper.

**Grading: Short papers (50%); Final paper (20%); Journal (8%); Class participation (20%); Service Learning (2%)**

* **Short papers:** you will write 4 papers that are 3-4 pages long. I’ll provide a writing prompt that is based on the theme of the readings associated with each paper. Submit them to me via email by midnight of the due date.
* **Final paper:**your final paper will be 10-12 pages long and will address a topic of your choosing related to a parks theme. I’ll provide guidelines early in the semester. Please submit a paper copy to me at the start of the final exam period on April 29th.
* **Journal:**  you will create a journal of at least 20 entries that include your impressions of visits to parks, things you’ve read beyond assigned readings that relate to course themes, and other relevant bits of information. Maintain this journal in electronic format (a file named journal\_parks\_yourname.doc will suffice) and submit it to me every three weeks for review.
* **Class participation:** you are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned material prior to arriving and ready to discuss their content in a group discussion. Verbal participation in class discuss is important.
* **Service learning:** you will contribute one hour of time helping to maintain the Huckshorn Arboretum (our campus park!).

**Attendance policy:** I expect that you will attend each and every class session, though I do understand that circumstances can it difficult to achieve that goal. Hence, I will allow you to miss two class periods without penalty. Each additional absence, however, will earn a deduction of 5% from your final grade (one half letter grade). I’ll count two late arrivals as equal to one absence.

**Policy on Accommodations:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) – in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8010) – and follow all OSD procedures. <http://osd.fau.edu/Rights.php>

**Academic Integrity Policy:** Please remember your commitment to the Honor Code. Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001. <http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf>. The Honors College code is found at <http://www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics_honor_code.htm>

**Course schedule**

**Jan 7:** Introductions/syllabus/DVD

**Jan 9:** NPCA, *The State of America’s National Parks 2011;* Patricia Taylor et al., *Racial and Ethnic Diversity of National Park System Visitors and Non-Visitors,* 1-21

**Jan 14:**Paul Robbins et al., “Social Construction of Nature;” Setha Low et al., “Urban Parks: Historical and Social Context;” Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, xi-43

**Jan 16:** Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 44-121; Denis Cosgrove, “Habitable Earth: Wilderness, Empire, and Race in America”

**Jan 21:** Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,*122-181; Donald Worster, “John Muir and the Modern Passion for Nature”

**Jan 23:** Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 182-271; Mark Stoll, “Milton in Yosemite: *Paradise Lost* and the National Parks Idea”

**Jan 28:** DVD

**Jan 30:** Readings related to the national park we plan to visit – TBA

Short paper 1 due Friday, Jan 31 by 5:00pm

**Feb 4:**  William Cronon, ”The Trouble With Wilderness;” Kevin DeLuca & Anne Demo, “Imagining Nature and Erasing Race and Class;” Dave Foreman, “The Real Wilderness Idea”

**Feb 6:** Andrew Light, “Urban Wilderness”; Ethan Car, *Wilderness by Design,* 1-9; Richard Grusin, *Culture, Technology and the Creation of America’s National Parks* xiii-15.

Submit journal, Feb 7

**Feb 11:** Richard Grusin, *Culture, Technology and the Creation of America’s National Parks*, 161-172; Grusin, 16-53

**Feb 13:** DVD Final paper proposal due in class Feb 13

**Feb 18:** Richard Grusin, *Culture, Technology and the Creation of America’s National Parks*, 54-101

**Feb 20:** Robert Keller & Michael Turek, “Parks and Indians in America;” Louis Warren, “Blackfeet and Boundaries at Glacier National Park”

Short paper 2 due Sunday, Feb 23 by midnight

**Feb 25:** Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design,* 11-53

**Feb 27:** Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design,* 55-93

Submit journal, Feb 28

**Mar 4 & Mar 6: Spring Break**

**Mar 11:** Anne Whiston Spirn, “Constructing Nature: The Legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted”; Setha Low et al., “The Cultural Life of Large Urban Spaces”

**Mar 13:** Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design,* 249-310

Short paper 3 due Sunday, Mar 16 by midnight

**Mar 18:** Freeman Tilden, “State Parks: Their Meaning in American Life;” Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. “California State Park Survey Report”

**Mar 20:** DVD

**Mar 25:** John Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and The National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History*

**Mar 27:** DVD

Submit journal, Mar 28

**Apr 1:** Ethan Carr, “The People Who Use the Parks” (Introduction to *Mission 66*)

**Apr 3:** Ramachandra Guha, “Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation;” Paul Sutter, “When Environmental Traditions Collide”

**Apr 8:** DVD

**Apr 10:** Mei Mei Evans, “’Nature’ and Environmental Justice;” Jason Byrne & Jennifer Wolch, “Nature, Race, and Parks”

Short paper 4 due Sunday, Apr 13 by midnight

**Apr 15:** Patrick West, “The Tyranny of Metaphor;” Beth Erikson et al., “Rocky Mountain National Park: History and Culture as Factors in African American Park Visitation;” *The Negro Motorist Green Book,* 1949 Edition.

**Apr 17:** “Marginal Voices in Wild America: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and ‘Nature’ in *The National Parks,”* William O’Brien & Wairimũ Njambi; “State Parks and Jim Crow in the Decade Before *Brown v. Board of Education,” William O’Brien*

**Apr 22:** TBA Submit journal, Apr 23

**Apr 29**: Presentations; Final papers due in class during exam period (1:15pm)