Environmental Philosophy: Modern Naturalism

Is it okay to kill endangered animals to preserve their bodies in museums?

Should layers of plastic in landfills be classified as geologic strata?

Do writers who imbue plants and animals with human attributes like emotions help us connect to nature, or just lead us to misunderstand it?

How should we credit the citizen scientists who help collect electronic databases about nature?

In this course we cover the ethics, science, and aesthetics of human interaction with nature, through the lens of these sorts of questions about observing and classifying nature—naturalism.

This is an advanced, interdisciplinary course, and while it has no particular prerequisite, it will be helpful to have some background (academic or personal) in thinking about nature.

A major goal of the class is to help all of us become more fluent in communicating about nature to people with a different background and perspective.

Our secondary goal is to help each of you produce work that will be to your academic and professional advantage: a project that makes a good resume line, a writing sample for grad or professional school, etc.

All texts will be shared on Canvas.