ALIT 375: John Burroughs and Nature Writing
Summer Session I, 2010 (Class meets June 7 - June 11)
SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY
In conjunction with the “Sharp Eyes” Nature Writing Conference

Instructors: Prof. Daniel Payne (paynedg@oneonta.edu; phone: 436-3442)
Dr. John Tallmadge
Dr. Stephen M. Mercier

Available at the Red Dragon Bookstore or Damascene.

Course Description:
This intensive one-week course, offered in conjunction with the “Sharp Eyes” Conference on John Burroughs and nature writing, will explore the writing of New York’s great nature writer, John Burroughs (1837-1921). A close friend of Walt Whitman, as well as public figures like Henry Ford and Teddy Roosevelt, Burroughs had a tremendous influence on American nature study and literature.

Students must attend the presentations associated with the “Sharp Eyes” Conference, to be held on the SUNY Oneonta campus from June 7 through June 10, with a final class meeting on the morning of Friday June 11. A conference program will be distributed on the first day of the conference or you may view it online at the English Department’s website. In addition students are expected to meet with their tutorial instructors as necessary (see Conference program for time and place) to help students learn from and enjoy the readings and conference presentations. A number of special events, including field trips and a banquet will also be included as part of the conference, and you are encouraged to join in and fully experience the conference.

Course Responsibilities and Grading:
1. Students are responsible for attendance at every class session unless otherwise arranged with the instructors.

2. Active and constructive participation in class and field trips.

3. Completion of all assignments, as follows:
   a. Response paper on conference presentations.
   b. A short interview with any of the presenting scholars (Drs. Payne, Tallmadge, and Mercier will help with these).

*The primary emphasis in this class will be on learning about nature writing and the environment and enjoying the atmosphere of a professional conference—therefore students who do this with aplomb and enthusiasm will have no need to fret about a final grade!*
Reading assignments:
From *The Art of Seeing Things*, Charlotte Zoe Walker, ed. *Note: Reading assignments should be completed prior to the conference—they will help you to understand the presentations more fully.*

- “Introduction” (xiii-xx).
- “The Art of Seeing Things” (3-15).
- “Sharp Eyes” (16-29).
- “Phases of Farm Life” (79-94).
- “Reading the Book of Nature” (164-170).
- “Keeping the iron From Our Souls” (184-186).
- “Thoreau’s Wildness” (189-192).
- “An Egotistical Chapter” (209-220).
- “The Faith of a Naturalist” (221-231).
- “An Outlook upon Life” (232-243).
- “Wild Life about My Cabin” (245-259).
- “From My Boyhood” (260-276).