

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Spring 2009

'Heaven and Earth in Jest': Finding a Sense of Place in Turbulent Times

Creative and Critical Study of Literary Nonfiction: Annie Dillard

Student: [REDACTED]

Advisor: Dr. J. Gabriel Scala

Second Reader: Professor Marie Bongiovanni

Credits: 3

Required texts and articles:

1. *An American Childhood* by Annie Dillard
2. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard
3. *Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre* by Stephen Minot
4. "The Ecotheology of Annie Dillard: A Study in Ambivalence" by Pamela A. Smith
5. "'Man Is Not Himself Only': Senses of Place in American Nature Writing" by Heike Schafer
6. "Annie Dillard and the Book of Job: Notes Toward a Postnatural Ecocriticism" by David Mazel

This course is designed to facilitate an understanding and provide an avenue for the creative and critical study of literary nonfiction through the work of Annie Dillard. The texts the course will focus on are *An American Childhood* and *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard and *Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre* by Stephen Minot. The course will produce three papers of varied length and focus. The first will be a creative nonfiction essay that will draw upon Annie Dillard's work and hone and develop the student's own craft in the literary genre. The second essay will be a short discussion of how Dillard's work informed the writing of the first assignment. The final paper will be a critical study of Dillard's nonfiction work in the context of nature, religion, the self, and finding a sense of place. Ultimately, the goal of the course is to develop a deeper understanding of literary nonfiction and how it demonstrates the author's sense of place.