In *Counterculture Green: The Whole Earth Catalog and American Environmentalism*, Andrew G. Kirk argues that the pragmatic, human-centered approach to Environmentalism promoted in the pages of *The Whole Earth Catalog* provided a more feasible path for the move towards a sustainable future in the 21st century than the wilderness preservation movement alone could provide. *The Whole Earth Catalogue*, first published in 1968, was designed as a holistic guide to modern life: it gave people the tools to do things for themselves, and to think in new ways about independent living and sustainable solutions. The topics covered in the pages of *The Whole Earth Catalogue*, which “…could go in history, culture, landscape architecture, technology, lifestyle, craft, information, architecture, or environment and nature”(2) expressed a new model for environmental advocacy: small-scale, human-centered, practical ecological awareness.

Due to the wide-reaching scope of the subject matter covered in *The Whole Earth Catalogue*, *Counterculture Green* has much to contribute to the field of American Studies. Furthermore, Kirk’s interdisciplinary examination of the cultural practices and beliefs of the community of people who created *Whole Earth* is relevant to multiple courses at Connecticut College. One interesting aspect of the counterculture environmental movement relevant to “Home: The Why behind the Way We Live” (AMS/AHI 373 with professor Sassin) is *Whole Earth*s focus on domestic technology, ecological design, and the reinvention of the home as the center of the Cultural Revolution (82). Building one’s own home/ shelter was a
fundamental ritual for many individuals involved in the counterculture movement of the 60s and 70s, and many did so in the American West. Counterculture Green is therefore also relevant to “The American West” (HIS 213 & 313 with Professor Stock), in that Kirk discusses the connection between the counterculture movement westward and the American dream of the escape to the frontier, which represented pragmatic environmentalism “...with a traditional western regional libertarian sensibility, social liberalism, and technological enthusiasm that characterized the catalog”(32).

Additionally, Counterculture Green adds to the material of “Culture, Politics, and the Environment” (AMS/ES/GOV 493A with Professor Borrelli) through Kirk’s discussion of the nature versus culture debate. The alternative narrative to the environmentalist as a “back to nature” hippie who rejects technology is that of innovators such as Stewart Brand (creator of The Whole Earth Catalogue) who wanted to empower everyday people to use tools to create a more sustainable future. Kirk concludes that we do not need to choose between culture and nature. For progress to be made, the wilderness versus urbanization framework must be deconstructed. American producers and consumers must come to understand that there is common ground between capitalism and environmentalism (217).

I would recommend Counterculture Green as an important and original new work in American Studies. Kirk writes in an academic-narrative style, weaving together an informational story derived from his research of the many different interconnected facets of the counterculture environmental movement that contributed to Whole Earth. Although not exactly a page-turner, the research that
went into writing *Counterculture Green* is impressively extensive and very informative. Kirk draws on multiple disciplines in order to explore the cultural origins of the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, which hold significant cultural and political relevance today in the move towards an innovative, sustainable future.