

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



## Department of English & Writing Studies

### **Green Literature** **English 2091F (001)** Fall 2013

**Instructor:** Joshua Schuster

**Date/Time:** Wednesday 6:00pm-9:00pm

**Location:** University Community Centre 67

#### Course Description

Ecological sustainability is a major concern today and it influences how we view nature as both precariously fragile and extremely powerful. But how did this view develop, and are there other ways of viewing the relation of nature to culture? Should we assume there is an irrevocable gap between the natural world and the world of artificial human construction, or is there a continuum as Donna Haraway suggests with her term “natureculture”? Furthermore, is “green” a normative political movement or a rejection of politics as usual? How has nature been represented in literary form in modern literature (focusing mostly on America) - from the pastoral to the wilderness, from nature as that which can be preserved, to the idea that nature is chaotic or sublime, beyond human conception? In this course, we will take a broad look at narratives of ecology, a word not invented until the late nineteenth century. We will also look at literary criticism of what is called ecocriticism, a movement launched in the 1980s, but which has its roots in 1960s radicalism and stretching back to the critiques of modern nationalism.

#### **Objectives:**

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Write about and discuss themes including the different ways of representing nature, how to think critically about environmental history, and how to use art to reflect and act upon environmental change;
- Explain how the dominant concerns/thematics in an historical period may be used to signify social status, subjectivity, cultural identity, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, political power, and nationalism;
- Develop further their ability to analyze texts critically, and formulate and produce essays which have an effective thesis with a clear, well-articulated intent, and a logical argument supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) under discussion.

#### Course Materials

Henry David Thoreau *Walden* (Penguin)  
Jack London *The Call of the Wild* (Modern Library)  
Ernest Callenbach *Ecotopia* (Bantam)  
Margaret Atwood *Oryx and Crake*  
J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton UP)  
Mary Shelley *Frankenstein* (Oxford)  
Marian Engel *Bear* (New Canadian Library)  
Jamaica Kincaid *A Small Place* (FSG)  
Note: Course Pack will be available

Methods of Evaluation

Reading Journals (3 total)	10%
First Essay (2 pages)	15%
Second Essay (4 pages)	20%
Final	40%
Participation	15%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

**Timetable:**

Week 1 - September 11	Introduction: selections from Old Testament; Iroquois Creation Story; Aristotle; William Wordsworth "The World Is Too Much with Us"
Week 2 - September 18	Mary Shelley <i>Frankenstein</i>
Week 3 - September 25	Finish Mary Shelley <i>Frankenstein</i> ; Ralph Waldo Emerson "Nature," selections; begin Henry David Thoreau <i>Walden</i> <b>due: reading journal</b>
Week 4 - October 2	finish <i>Walden</i>
Week 5- October 9	Jack London <i>The Call of the Wild</i> ; John Berger "Why Look At Animals?"
Week 6 - October 16	David Suzuki "London in My Life"; Robert Smithson "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey,"; Rem Koolhaas "Junkspace"; film: <i>The Gleaners and I</i> <b>due: first essay</b>
Week 7 - October 23	Ernest Callenbach <i>Ecotopia</i>
Week 8 - October 30	Margaret Atwood <i>Oryx and Crake</i> <b>due: reading journal</b>
Week 9 - November 6	Finish Atwood <i>Oryx and Crake</i> ; <i>Elle</i> article on ecoterrorism
Week 10- November 13	Franz Kafka "Report to an Academy"; J. M. Coetzee, <i>The Lives of Animals</i> (read the story and the Peter Singer response) <b>due: reading journal</b>
Week 11 - November 20	Marian Engel <i>Bear</i>

Week 12 - November 27      Jamaica Kincaid *A Small Place*

Week 13 - December 4      Barry Lopez Arctic Dreams, selections; film: *Chasing Ice*  
**due: second essay**

**Assignments:**

**Reading Journals:** These will be collected at three times during the year. A reading journal is at least two pages of printed, double-spaced reflective writing. You can jot down thoughts on the readings, something green you saw or experienced, some issue that came up in class, a poem, whatever, just as long as it relates to the course (it must be in complete sentences, but it does not have to be in essay form).

**Essays:** Topics will be handed out in class. Late essays are not accepted. We will use OWL.

**Final Exam:** The format will be identifications, a few short definitions, and short essays that will require you to compare different authors on a given topic.

**MLA Documentation:** Undergraduate research papers written in Arts & Humanities follow the formatting procedures outlined by the Modern Languages Association. The complete guide to this format can be found in the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009). This guide can be found On Reserve in the D.B. Weldon Library, call no: LB2369.M57 2009. The Department of English also offers an overview of MLA documentation at: <http://uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

**Participation:**

Your participation is central to this class and is a key component of your growth as a student. Participation includes: attending class, being involved in class discussion, participating in group work, and putting real energy into all assignments and readings. Also there will be some in-class writing assignments. Read the texts before the day they are discussed.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory and obviously counts for your grade in participation. It is imperative to arrive to each class on time. No unexcused absences are permitted (I am not crazy and I do know that problems arise during the semester - but please supply a legitimate written excuse - see University policy on this). If you miss a certain number of courses, I will warn you, but already you risk getting a zero in participation and/or dropped from the course.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

**Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):**

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

### Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

### **Plagiarism Checking:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

### Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.