

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 4470F (001)
Climate Humanities
Fall 2025**DESCRIPTION**

How might art and literature help us navigate the urgent reality of human-caused global warming and ecological devastation? What perspectives do the humanities offer when the terms of human life seem increasingly precarious, governed as they are by the logics of extraction and accumulation, nationalism and colonialism? Our approach to these questions will be guided by decolonial thinkers, artists, and organizers who are developing critical, creative, and collaborative practices for spurring climate action and renewing our relationship with nature. We will draw on these models to devise our own hands-on experiments in imagining and enacting more collective, constructive ways of being in the world.

CONTACT

Mondays, 1:30 to 4:30pm | University College (UC) 4401

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MATERIALS

In keeping with the ethos of Thoreau's model of the everyday life project, our reading and writing practices will be as hands-on as possible. We will be working with printed copies of the readings and notebooks in an analogue classroom. Please purchase hard copies of the two required books listed below and bring the printed copies of the readings provided to class.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Theory of Water: Nishnaabe Maps to the Times Ahead* (Haymarket 2025) [\$35.00]

Simpson and Robyn Maynard, *Rehearsals for Living* (Knopf 2023) [\$23.00]

ASSIGNMENTS

Pedagogy Practice	45%
Teaching Exercise	15%
Workbook (Oct 27, Dec 1)	30%
Everyday Life Project	55%
ELP Proposal (Sept 15)	5%
ELP Letter #1 (Draft: Oct 20; Due: Oct 24)	15%
ELP Letter #2 (Draft: Nov 10; Due: Nov 14)	15%
ELP Zine (Dec 1)	20%

SCHEDULE & READINGS

September 8	i) Epstein, Andrew. "Everyday-Life Projects' in Poetry and Beyond," from <i>Attention Equals Life</i> . Oxford UP, 2016, p. 29-35. ii) Song, Min Hyung. "Introduction: The Practice of Sustaining Attention to Climate Change," p. 1-3, 15; "Chapter 4: How Should I Live? Inattention and Everyday-Life Projects," p. 89-97, from <i>Climate Lyricism</i> , Duke UP, 2022.
September 15	i) Case, Kristen. "Following Thoreau," from <i>Now Comes Good Sailing: Writers Reflect on Henry David Thoreau</i> , ed. Andrew Blauner. Princeton UP, 2021, p. 148-58. ii) Case, Kristen. "The Art of Losing: Reading Thoreau's Journal Practices," <i>The Thoreau Society Bulletin</i> , No. 287 (Fall 2014), p. 5-6. iii) Thoreau, from "Economy," "Where I Lived and What I Lived for," from <i>Walden</i> . iv) Thoreau, from <i>Journals</i> . DUE: ELP Proposal

September 22	(i) Rosenblatt, Louise. "The Poem as Event." <i>The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work</i>. Southern Illinois UP, 1994. p. 6-21. (ii) Limon, Ada. "Introduction," from <i>You Are Here: Poetry in the Natural World</i>. Milkweed, 2025, p. 1-3. (iii) Limon, "In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa." (iv) Limon, "Startlement" (v) From Limon's <i>Poetry in Parks</i> Project Mary Oliver, "Can You Imagine?" (Cape Cod) A. R. Ammons, "Uppermost" (Mount Ranier) Francisco C. Alarcon, "Never Alone" (Redwood) Jean Valentine, "The Valley" (Cuyahoga Valley) Lucille Clifton, "the earth is a living thing" (Great Smoky) June Jordan, "Ecology" (Everglades) Ofelia Zepeda, "Na:nko Ma:s Cewagí / Cloud Song" (Saguaro)
September 29	(i) Diaz, Natalie, "The First Water is the Body," from <i>Postcolonial Love Poem</i>. Graywolf, 2020. (ii) Limon, Ada, and Natalie Diaz. "Envelopes of Air." <i>The New Yorker</i>, 23 May 2018. (iii) Song, "The Artful Things of Climate Change," <i>Racial Ecologies</i>, edited by LeiLani Nishime and Kim D. Hester Williams, U of Washington P, 2018. (iv) Poem as Event #1
October 6	Maynard, Robyn, and Leanne Simpson. Part One, from <i>Rehearsals for Living</i>. Knopf, 2022, p. 7-53. Climate Practices Workshop (1:30-3:00pm)
October 13	Thanksgiving
October 20	Maynard & Simpson, Parts Two and Three, from <i>Rehearsals for Living</i>. Workshop: ELP Letter #1 Draft (in class) DUE: ELP Letter #1 – October 24
October 27	i) Maynard & Simpson, from <i>Rehearsals for Living</i>, Part 6 ii) Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, from <i>Theory of Water</i>, Chs 1, 2, 4, 5 iii) Poem as Event #2: Mary Oliver, "Can You Imagine?" (Cape Cod) DUE: Workbook (in class)
November 3	Fall Reading Week
November 10	(i) Simpson, <i>Theory of Water</i>, Chs 6, 10, 13 (107-112), 20, 22, 23 (ii) Kristen Case, "Introduction" (ix-xxvi), from Thoreau's Kalendar Project. Milkweed 2025. (iii) Poem as Event #3: A. R. Ammons, "Uppermost" (Mount Ranier) Workshop: ELP Letter #2 Draft (in class) DUE: ELP Letter #2 – November 14 Guest: Jules Lee – Zine Workshop
November 17	i) Kristen Case, "November: Seek Sheltered Places" (105-117), November Kalendar (118-134), from <i>Thoreau's Kalendar Project</i>. Milkweed 2025. ii) Poem as Event #4: Francisco C. Alarcon, "Never Alone" (Redwood) Guest: Kristen Case, on "Thoreau's Temporal Imagination"
November 24	i) TBD ii) Poem as Event #5: Jean Valentine, "The Valley" (Cuyahoga Valley)
December 1	Sharing Zines DUE: Workbook (in class) Poem as Event #6: Lucille Clifton, "the earth is a living thing" (Great Smoky)
December 8	Workbook Conversation