

**The University of Western
Ontario London Canada
Department of Languages and Cultures**

World Literature and Film: Women and the Environment
CL 2108B / GSW 2246B / Film 2194B
Winter 2022



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The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

Instructor: Victoria Jara

Email: vjara@uwo.ca

Office: UC 1308

Office Hours: Wednesday 16.00pm-18.00pm

Lectures: Monday 14.30 pm-17.30 pm

Room: TBD

Course Description

Across the globe, contemporary women writers and filmmakers are increasingly engaging with environmental discourses in their artistic work. Intersectional in its manifestations, these artists' engagement with environmental injustice is usually accompanied by concerns regarding gender, sexual, ethnic, and class inequality. The readings and viewing for this course include authors and film directors from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds – Canada, Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, Dominican Republic, New Zealand, Brazil, India, Senegal, and Nigeria. Primary texts include fiction films, documentaries, novels, and short stories. We will analyze how canonical literary genres such as the Pastoral, Utopia or the *Bildungsroman* are reappropriated in contemporary texts and discuss the emergence of new genres such as *Petrofiction* (Ghosh, 1992) and *Cli-Fi* (Trexler, 2015).

Throughout the course we will revisit the concepts of modernity, globalization, and displacement under the light of the Environmental Humanities. We will study key concepts within Environmental Humanities such as environmental justice, Anthropocene, slow violence, and waste, among others. In doing this, we will introduce different conceptualizations that relate gender and the environment, always seeking to move beyond essentialisms.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop and practice skills of textual analysis and research within the Environmental Humanities.
- Engage critically with texts that are award winning but somewhat marginal in scholarly analysis.
- Revisit canonical genres to analyze contemporary subversions through the use of satire, parody, irony, intertextuality, etc.
- Develop an intersectional understanding of environmental discourses.
- Explore the interconnectedness of local and global environmental concerns through artistic expressions.

Required Texts:

Primary texts are available at the Bookstore (you may choose physical copy or e-book) and films through the Film Library. Secondary sources (critical and theoretical texts) are available on OWL.

Assessment

Assistance (5%)

Participation in class discussion (15%)

Pop Quizzes (10%)

Presentation on Secondary Source (10%)

Midterm Exam (20%)

Research Presentation (15%)

Final Essay (25%)

1. Assistance (5%)

This is a seminar-style course. It is of outmost importance for you to come to class. If a student is absent (without justification) for more than three classes per semester this will severely lower their assistance grade. If you are absent from a lecture or a tutorial, you need to provide supporting documentation to your Academic Counselor. For more information, please visit the Student Services website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

2. Participation in class discussion (15%)

It is mandatory for students to attend class and participate in the discussions. To ensure this, students need to have read the primary texts (novels or short stories), the academic texts (theoretical or critical articles), and have watched the required screenings. Students are encouraged to take notes while reading and watching and to bring their notes to enrich class discussions.

Participation marks will be given based on the engagement in class discussions and critical response to the questions posed by other students (preparation for class discussion component).

3. Pop Quizzes (10%)

Throughout the term there will be five pop quizzes on the novels and films for the course. Students have to answer to very specific questions about the narrative of the text. Quizzes shall not last longer than 10 minutes. The purpose of these quizzes is to corroborate that students are up to date with the primary screenings and readings.

No electronic devices, books, or class notes will be allowed during the quizzes.

4. Class presentations on secondary source (10%)

In the first week of class, students will choose one theoretical or critical article from the required and suggested readings to present on. This is a group presentation (2 to 3 students per group). Students will need to prepare a 15-minutes presentation (+/- 2 minutes). Students will have to contextualize the work of the scholar, outline the main argument of the text, and explain at least two key concepts developed by the author.

In order to do so, students will have to consult at least three other academic sources (scholarly dictionaries, academic articles, etc.) and inform the instructor about their selected bibliography prior to the presentation. The presentation is not a summary of the secondary source but an explanation of the main ideas. In the first week of class, students have to send the instructor an email with their choice. Presentations will be assigned as I hear from students.

5. Midterm Exam (20%)

In the seventh week of class, before Reading Week we will have the midterm exam in class (one hour and a half). Students will receive excerpts from primary texts (studied between week 1 and 6). They will have to select one text excerpt and:

- A) Identify to which text the passage belongs to.
- B) Contextualize the passage within the text.
- C) Develop an argument to sustain the significance and relevance of the passage within the text.
- D) Offer a detailed textual analysis of the extract by referring to class discussions and scholarly articles in the required readings.
- F) Answer one question that relates the chosen primary text to a concept studied in the secondary source.

No electronic devices, books, or class notes will be allowed during the exam.

6. A. Handout (5%) and

B. Research Presentation (10%)

This is an individual presentation. Students need to choose either a novel or a film from the list below (see section 7) and conduct research on the text. From the third week of class onwards, students have to present their research to the class in a 30-minute presentation (+/- 5 minutes).

Before the presentation begins, students need to provide their classmates with a handout with the following information:

- A) Title of the novel or film.
- B) Name of the artist, year of publishing or premiere, place of publication or production.
- C) Rationale for choosing the text.
- D) At least three main points on how the chosen text relates to the course.
- F) Three bibliographical references.

You may include images of the cover of the novel or poster or snapshots of the film.

In the first week of class, students must send the instructor an email with their choice of date to present. Slots will be assigned as I hear from students. There will be two to three presentations per class (depending on enrollment).

7. Final Essay (25%)

The final research project is a 2000 to 2500 (+/- 5%) word essay. Students will have to select one novel and one film to write a comparative analysis. One of these two texts has to be a required primary novel or film and the other text has to be from the list provided below (see list of possible novels and film). Students are encouraged to work on the same text as in their research presentation (section 6). If students want to propose other novels, short-stories, poems or films to analyze, they are welcome to do so.

Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the instructor about their choice of texts. Students have to establish their comparison within one of the topics presented in class. Since this is a research project essay, the bibliography of this paper has to include at least two texts of the required critical readings, five texts of the suggested bibliography, and five other sources researched by the student. Students must consult with the instructor about the relevance of the selected primary texts and their choice of bibliography.

List of possible novels

Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. 2003. [Canada]
Clement, Jennifer. *Prayers for the Stolen*. [Mexico]
Emecheta, Buchi. *Destination Biafra*. 1982. [Nigeria]
Itäranta, Emmi. *Memory of Water*. 2014. [Finland]
Khedairi, Betool. *Absent*. 2005. [Iran]
Lunde, Maja. *El End of the Ocean*. 2017. [Norway]
Maia, Ana Paula. *Saga of Brutes*. 2016. [Brazil]
Melchor, Fernanda. *Hurricane Season*. 2019. [Mexico]
Ngozi-Adichie, Chimamanda. *Purple Hibiscus*. 2003. [Nigeria]
Restrepo, Laura. *The Dark Bride*. 2003 [Colombia]
Reyes, Dolores. *Earthheater*. 2019. [Argentina]
Roy, Anuradha. *An Atlas of Impossible Longing*. 2008. [India]
Viramontes, Helena María. *Under the Feet of Jesus*. [Mexico]

List of possible films

Baichwal, Jennifer. *Manufactured Landscapes*. 2006. [Canada]
Baichwal, Jennifer and Edward Burtynsky. *Watermark*. 2013. [Canada]
Funary, Vicky and Sergio de la Torre. *Maquilapolis: City of Factories*. 2006. [Mexico and USA]
Hsu, Tiffanie. *Waterschool*. 2018. [USA, Brazil, India, Uganda, China]
Mehta, Deepa. *Water*. 2005. [Canada, India, USA]
Walker, Lucy and Karen Harley. *Waste Land*. 2010. [Brazil]

Policies

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 the following Web site:
<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>
<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/courseoutlines.pdf>

Note for students with disabilities

Please contact gswsugchair@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you. You may also contact aew@uwo.ca to find out the full range of services available to you.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be penalized 3 points per day late (including weekends). Exceptions to this policy include: properly documented medical illnesses, emergencies or unexpected circumstances. All requests of extensions and/or accommodations must come through the office of the Dean – Academic Counseling.

Missed assignments and academic accommodation

Academic Accommodation must be requested within 28 days of the missed assignment

Email Policy

The instructor will usually respond to email with 24 hours during the weekdays (not including holidays or weekends). Emails will be answered within regular work hours. Depending on availability, the instructor may choose to answer outside these hours.

Use of laptops, Ipads, and cellphone policy

If during the lecture or presentations students use electronic devices for web surfing, social networking, or other activity that the instructor considers outside the acceptable usage, your laptop will be banned from class.

Make sure to silence your cell phone and do not use it during class. This prevents disruptive behavior and might lower your participation grade.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a 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.

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers will 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 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.

Turnitin

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 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 and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>.)

(<https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/TurnItIn.html>)

Prerequisites

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Complaints

If students have a complaint concerning a course in which they are enrolled, they must discuss the matter with the instructor of the course. If students are still not satisfied, they should then take the complaint to the Film Studies Office, University College, Room 80. These regulations are in place because a failure to follow these procedures creates the potential for injustices of various kinds affecting either the instructor or the students themselves, or both parties. Concerns should not be allowed to fester but should be raised with the instructor in a timely manner, so that they can be addressed in time to make a difference to the course.

Support Services

UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and or assignments must apply to their Academic Counseling Office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Please go to the following site for information on the university Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: https://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/procedures/medical_accommodation.html
For information on the examination services provided by the Student Development Centre, please visit www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

Mental Health

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

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 3, 2022): Introduction to the course

Required Reading

- Course Syllabus
- Rita Felski (2003). *Literature After Feminism* (pp.1-20)
- Patricia White (2015). *Women's Cinema, World Cinema: Projecting Contemporary Feminisms* (pp. 1-27)

Suggested Reading

- Andrea Nightingale (2006) “The Nature of Gender: Work, Gender and Environment” (pp.1-15)

Week 2 (January 10, 2022): One or a Billion Anthropocenes?

Required Screening

- Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier, Edward Burtynsky. *Anthropocene* (2018). [Canada]

Required Reading

- Timothy Clark (2015). *Ecocriticism on the Edge*. (pp. 1-28)
- Kathryn Yussof (2018). *Billion Black Anthropocenes*. (pp. 1-21)

Suggested Reading

- David Emmett and Robert Nye (2017). *The Environmental Humanities* (pp. 1-21)

Week 3 (January 17, 2022): Configurations of the Pastoral: From Idyllic Retreat to Toxic Nightmare

Required Readings

- Samantha Schweblin. *Fever Dream*. (2014) [Argentina]. (183pp.)
- Rob Nixon. (2011) *Slow Violence*. (pp. 1-44)

Suggested Reading

- Ana María Mutis (2020). “Monsters and Agrotoxins: The Environmental Gothic in Samantha Schweblin *Distancia de rescate*” in *Ecofictions, Ecorealities, and Slow Violence in Latin America and the Latinx World*. (pp. 39-55)

Week 4 (January 24, 2022): Palimpsestic Topography and Infernal Mining

Required Readings

- Gabriela Alemán. *Poso Wells* (2007) [Ecuador]. (160pp.)
- Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2011). “Towards an Aesthetic of the Earth” in *Postcolonial Ecologies*. (pp. 1-37)

Suggested Reading

- Ursula Heise (2008). “From the Blue Planet to Google Earth: Environmentalism, Ecocriticism, and the Imagination of the Global” in *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*. (pp. 17-67)

Week 5 (January 31, 2022): Surrealist Landscapes of Petrofiction

Required Readings

- Nawal El-Saadawi. *Love in the Kingdom of Oil*. (2001) [Egypt] (134pp.)
- Amitav Ghosh. (2005) “Petrofiction: The Oil Encounter with the Novel” in *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of Our Times*. (pp. 138-151)

Suggested Readings

- Sheena Wilson. (2014) “Gendering Oil: Tracing Western Petrosexual Relations” in *Oil Culture*. (pp. 244-263)

Week 6 (February 7, 2022): Caribbean Cli-Fi: Challenging Eco-tourism

Required Readings

- Rita Indiana. *Tentacle* (2015) [Dominican Republic] (160pp.)
- Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2019). “Gendering Earth” in *Allegories of the Anthropocene* (pp. 33-63)

Suggested Reading

- Sharae Deckard and Kerstin Oloff (2020) ““The One Who Comes From the Sea”: The Oceanic Weird and Marine Crisis in Rita Indiana’s *La mucama de Omicunlé*”. (pp. 1-14)

Week 7 (February 14, 2022): Waste, Wastelands, and Wasted Lives

Required Readings

- Mahasweta Devi. “Dhowli” (1979) [India] (18 pp.)
- Jennifer Wenzel (2020) “Reading for the Planet” in *The Disposition of Nature: Environmental Crisis and World Literature*. (pp. 1-48)

Midterm exam (1.5 hours)

Week 8 (February 21, 2022): Reading Week

Week 9 (February 28, 2022): Indigenous Ecologies 1: Mythologies

Required Readings

- Leslie Marmon Silko. *Ceremony*. (1977) [USA]
- Joni Adamson and Salma Monani. “Cosmovisions, Ecocriticism, and Indigenous Studies” in *Ecocriticism and Indigenous Studies*. (pp. 1-23)

Required Screening

- Darlene Naponse. *Falls Around Her*. (2018) [Canada]

Week 10 (March 7, 2022): Indigenous Ecologies 2: Documentary and Activism

Required Screening

- Betse de Paula. *Vozes da Floresta* (2019) [Brazil]

Required Reading

- Roberto Frons-Broggi (2013) “Ecocinema and Good Life in Latin America” in *Transnational Ecocinema*. (pp. 85-101)

Week 11 (March 14, 2022): Indigenous Ecologies 3: Girlhood

Required Screening

- Niki Caro. *Whale Rider* (2002) [New Zealand]

Required Reading

- Sandrina de Finney (2016). “Under the Shadow of the Empire: Indigenous Girls’ Precensing as Decolonizing Force” in *Girlhood and the Politics of Place*. (pp. 19-37)

Week 12 (March 21, 2022): Girl’s Takes on Bildungsroman: A Quest for Socio-Environmental Equity

Required Readings

- Gabriela Cabezón Cámara. *The Adventures of China Iron* (2017) [Argentina] (pp. 116)
- Franco Moretti (2000). “Preface” and “The Bildungsroman as Symbolic Form” in *The Way of the Word: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. (pp. 1-26)

Week 13 (March 28, 2022): Subversion of the Myth of the Zombie. The Dark Side of the Built Environment

Required Reading

- Nnedi Okorafor. "Spider the Artist" (2008) [Nigeria] (18pp).
- Jean and John Comaroff (2017). "Alien-Nation: Zombies, Immigrants, and Millennial Capitalism" in *Zombie Theory*. (pp. 137-156)
- Nancy Batty and Robert Markley (2002) "Writing Back: Speculative Fiction and the Politics of Post-Colonialism" in *Science Fiction: A Postcolonial Odyssey*. (pp. 1-10)

Suggested Screening

- Nnedi Okorafor (2017) "Sci-Fi Stories that Imagine a Future Africa" TedTalk.

Final Research Project due at 14.00pm (On OWL) and hand in hard copy at the beginning of class (14.30pm).

Suggested Bibliography

A. World Literature

Bassnett, Susan. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Blackwell, 1998

Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters* (2004)

Damrosch, David. *How to Read World Literature* (2009)

F. Jameson & M. Miyoshi, M. *The Cultures of Globalization* (1998)

Melas, Natalie. *All the Difference in the World: Postcoloniality and the Ends of Comparison*. Stanford, 2007.

Moretti, Franco. 'Conjectures on World Literature', *New Left Review* (2000)

(ed) *The Novel: Vol I: History, Geography and Culture* (2006)

—. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (2005)

Prendergast, Christopher. (ed) *Debating World Literature* (2004)

Saussy, Han. (ed) *Comparative literature in an age of globalization* (2006)

M. Valdez Moses, *The Novel and the Globalization of Culture* (1995)

B. Film Studies

Braudy, Leo and Marshal Cohen. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Oxford, 2016.

Burucúa, Constanza and Carolina Sitnisky. *The Precarious in the Cinemas of the Americas*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Dyer, Richard. *White*. Routledge, 2017.

Fay, Jennifer. *Inhospitable World: Cinema in the Time of the Anthropocene*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Gaudreault, André and Françoise Jost. *Le récit cinématographique*. Nathan, 1990.

Gustafsson Tommy and Pietari Kääpä. *Transnational Ecocinema: Film Cultures in an Era of Ecological Transformation*. Intellect, 2013.

Hughes, Helen. *Green Documentary: Environmental Documentary in the 21st Century*. Intellect, 2014.

Ivakhiv, Adrian. *Ecologies of the Moving Image: Cinema, Affect, Nature*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013.

Shoat, Ella and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. Routledge, 1996.

Willoquet-Maricondi, Paula. *Framing the World: Explorations in Ecocriticism and Film*. University of Virginia Press, 2010.

C. Ecocriticism

Berger, James. *After the End: Representation of Post-Apocalypse*. University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2005.

- Bergthaller, Hannes, Rob Emmett, Adeline Johns-Putra, et al. "Mapping Common Ground: Ecocriticism, Environmental History, and the Environmental Humanities." In *Environmental Humanities*, vol. 5, 2014, pp. 261-276.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The Climate of History: Four Theses." In *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 35, n. 2, 2009, pp. 197-222.
- Davies, Heather and Etienne Turpin. *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*. Open Humanity Press, 2015.
- Dryzek, John. S. *The Politics of the Earth. Environmental Discourses*. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Garrad Greg. *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Ghosh, Amitav. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. Chicago University Press, 2016.
- Nayar, Pramod K. *Ecoprecarity. Vulnerable Lives in Literature and Culture*. Routledge, 2019.
- Slovic, Scott, Swarnalatha Rangarajan and Vudya Sareswaran. *Ecocriticism of the Global South*. Lexington Books, 2015.
- Westling, Louise, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment*. Cambridge University Press. 2013.
- Williams, Raymond. *The Country and The City*. Chatto and Windus & Spokesman Books, 1973.