

ENGL 782, Current Directions in Literary Study: Environmental Criticism

Fall 2014 Tuesdays 4:00-6:50 Colson G-10

Tim Sweet tsweet@wvu.edu 213 Colson hours TR 3:00-4:00

Overview

The course will begin *in medias res* with a topically oriented overview (Garrard). We will then back up to read a history of ecological thought in the western tradition (Worster), from which we should garner some basic scientific literacy as well as general intellectual background. We will then examine the consolidation of the wilderness-pastoral and ecofeminist paradigms with an Americanist focus (Buell, Kilcup) before moving on to interdisciplinary developments: ecological economics (Daly), risk theory (Heise), environmental justice (Nixon), animal studies (Wolfe), science studies (Latour), and new materialisms (Alaimo and Hekman). At the mid-point where your prospectuses are due, a methodologically oriented overview (Clark) should help you locate your project in the larger field.

Texts

Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (2004; 2nd ed. 2011)

Timothy Clark, *Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* (2011)

Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy* (1977; 2nd ed. 1994)

Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination* (1995)

Karen Kilcup, *Fallen Forests* (2013)

Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites* (2003)

Rob Nixon, excerpts from *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2010)

Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, ed., *Material Feminisms* (2008)

Articles on ecological economics by Herman Daly

Article on risk theory and ecocriticism by Ursula Heise

Articles on the perspective of science studies by Bruno Latour

Graded Work

Weekly response papers (400-500 words each) in which you demonstrate your understanding of a week's readings by briefly summarizing and then critiquing or extending the argument(s). There are 9 opportunities. Of these, I will count your best 8 (i.e., you can skip one if you like) for a total of 40% of your final grade.

Article-length final essay (~20 pp. double spaced plus works cited), including prospectus and rough draft, worth 60% of your final grade.

Policies

Let's work to support WVU's inclusivity policy. The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>

Notwithstanding the risk to your intellectual development, you are allowed one absence. Each subsequent absence will lower your final grade by one full letter.

Late work will not be accepted. If you have to miss class for any reason and a paper is due that day, email me the paper before class time.

Schedule. Response papers are due in class for every week's readings except 10/21.

- 8/19 Introduction
- 8/26 Garrard, *Ecocriticism*
- 9/2 Worster, *Nature's Economy*
- 9/16 Buell, *Environmental Imagination*
- 9/23 Kilcup, *Fallen Forests*
- 9/30 Herman Daly, "Steady-State Economics: A New Paradigm," *New Literary History* 24 (1993): 811-16.
Mark Sagoff, "Carrying Capacity and Ecological Economics," *BioScience* 45 (1995): 610-20.
Daly, "Reply to Mark Saghoff's 'Carrying Capacity and Ecological Economics,'" *BioScience* 45 (1995): 621-24.
Ursula Heise, "Toxins, Drugs and Global Systems: Risk and Narrative in the Contemporary Novel," *American Literature* 74 (December 2002): 747-78.
Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence*, Introduction and chapter 8 (WVU Libraries e-book_
- 10/7 Wolfe, *Animal Rites*
- 10/14 Fall break – no class
- 10/21 **Prospectus due**
Clark, *Cambridge Intro to Literature and the Environment*
(no response paper due this week)
- 10/28 Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?" *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 225-48.
Latour, "Will Non-Humans be Saved? An Argument on Ecotheology," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2008): 459-75.
Latour, "An Attempt at a Compositionist Manifesto," *New Literary History* 41 (2010): 471-90.
Latour, "Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene," *New Literary History* 45 (2014): 1-18.
- 11/4 Election day – no class
- 11/11 Alaimo and Hekman, *Material Feminisms* part 1
- 11/18 Alaimo and Hekman, *Material Feminisms* part 2
- 11/25 Thanksgiving recess – no class
- 12/2 **Draft due – peer workshop**
- 12/9 **Presentations**
- Final papers due December 15**