

ENGL211-008: Thematic Approaches to Literature
Constructing Natural Worlds
Spring 2018
TR 2:00-3:15pm
HLG 303

Instructor: Hannah Ritorto
Email:

Office: H. L. Griffin 354
Office Hours: Thursday 3:30pm—5:30pm

Course Description and Objectives

ENGL211 is an introductory literature course, designed for students who have successfully completed ENGL101 and 102, which seeks to take a thematic approach to the study of literature. In our course, we will explore the concept of nature in literature from different genres, nations, and time-periods.

Ecocriticism is the study of “the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty). This course will explore the concept of nature constructed in literature by engaging in ecocritical readings of texts, as well as analyzing traditional texts of nature-writing. We will address questions such as: What is “nature”? What are some historical perspectives towards nature, and how have those perspectives changed? What is our current relationship with nature? How does this differ across regions, classes, and cultures? How do we construct nature in literature? How do we construct nature in relation to the human animal?

In this course, students will:

- Differentiate between the concepts of nature constructed by various course texts.
- Interrogate the representation of nature in literature, and query whether literature can inform, shape, or disrupt human concepts of nature.
- Assess the social, historical, and aesthetic contexts of textual representations of nature.
- Criticize concepts that have been historically naturalized, such as landscape and wilderness.
- Evaluate the potential of technology-based texts to represent the natural world.
- Construct definitions of key ecocritical concepts supported by course literature.
- Improve critical writing skills by engaging in frequent responses to course materials.
- Develop close reading skills by engaging in frequent practice with course materials.

Required Textbooks

Ron Rash, *Serena*, ISBN: 978-0061470844

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, ISBN: 978-0061233326

Julie Dunlap and Susan A. Cohen, *Coming of Age at the End of Nature*, ISBN: 978-1595347800

Sharon Hamilton. *Essential Literary Terms: A Brief Norton Guide with Exercises*, ISBN: 978-0393283891

James Cameron, *Avatar*

USC Game Innovation Lab, *Walden: A Game* (purchase from www.waldengame.com)

Index Cards: 4x6” lined or unlined (appx. 32)

Grade Distribution

Category	% of Grade	Grading Scale:
Panel Discussion	7%	90-100 = A 80-89 = B 70-79 = C 60-69 = D 59 and below = F
Quizzes	8%	
Participation	10%	
Midterm Exam	20%	
Analysis Papers (5)	25%	
Final Paper	30%	

Classroom Expectations

I take my responsibility as an instructor very seriously, and I expect you to do the same as students. Remember that your grade in this (and any) class is *your responsibility*, as you are responsible for your learning. If you find at any time during the term that you are having difficulties meeting the requirements for this course, you should speak to me immediately. Taking responsibility for your own learning means:

- 1. Attendance is vital.** I expect you to attend class, and I do not respond to emails asking “what did I miss?” nor provide make-up lectures during office hours or at any other time. You may miss three class sessions without penalty. Each subsequent absence will lower your final grade in the course by 3%. For example, if you otherwise earned a B in the course but missed seven classes, your final grade would be a C. Excessive unexcused absences will therefore automatically result in an F in the course unless you withdraw officially.
- 2. Punctuality is Important.** If on occasion you must choose between arriving late or being absent, join us as unobtrusively as possible. Three instances of being more than 10 minutes late or leaving class more than 10 minutes early will combine to count as one of your three absences. See the Assignment Guidelines document for how lateness can specifically affect your participation grade.
- 3. Preparation and Participation is Important.** Have the reading materials read, any homework/assignments completed, your class materials (texts, notebook, writing instruments) with you, and be ready to engage with your peers and the lessons. This class will be much more interesting—and you will do better—if you are prepared for it. Please see the Assignment Guidelines document for how coming to class prepared and actively participating in course discussion and activities can specifically affect your participation grade.
- 4. Handheld electronic devices and laptops are to be used responsibly during class.** Many of our course texts will be accessed online and, as you are required to bring them to class with you, of course it makes sense that you will want to use your technology to access them rather than printing them all. For this reason, the use of laptops, tablets, and phones to access course materials is perfectly acceptable. However, be aware that texting/messaging or otherwise using your technology inappropriately during class time is disrespectful to our learning community and will negatively affect your participation grade.
- 5. It is everyone’s responsibility to create an environment conducive to learning.** In order to maximize the learning experience for all, students are expected to conduct themselves professionally and to minimize behaviors that distract fellow students from concentrating on our discussion and other classroom activities. Behaviors that are particularly distracting and not allowed during our class time are as follows:
 - talking while someone else is talking (other students or the instructor)
 - allowing your cell phone to ring or vibrate
 - texting, surfing the internet, or checking e-mail on your phone during class
 - making rude or inappropriate comments to peers or instructor

Please refrain from these behaviors in order to help create the best possible learning environment for yourself and others. Please see the Assignment Guidelines document for how disruptive behavior can specifically affect your participation grade. In addition, rude or inappropriate comments will not be tolerated and will result in dismissal from class.

Late Assignments and Extensions:

When an assignment is due via Moodle, it is due at the time stated on the Course Schedule document. Late essays will be penalized 5% per day, including weekend days, except for valid medical or compassionate reasons (proper documentation will be required). That said, if your schedule is particularly busy in a week when an assignment is due, I am willing to discuss an extension; you must, however, contact me a full week before the original due date for the assignment. After that date, no extensions will be granted. The exception to this policy is the final paper for which, due to its proximity to the end of the semester, no late papers will be accepted.

Due to the nature of class-based assignments such as ClassCards and Panel Discussions, they are due at the start time of class unless otherwise instructed, and no late assignments are accepted. If you are absent from class, you will not receive credit for class-based assignments, including your ClassCards and your Panel Discussion. Panel Discussions may be rescheduled one time, only if rescheduling occurs more than one week before your scheduled date.

Moodle

We will be using Moodle for communication purposes and also for turning in the majority of graded course work. *You must be able to receive emails via Moodle because important announcements and notifications are sent through this platform.* Here is a Moodle student guide in case you have trouble with the system: <http://helpdesk.louisiana.edu/content/student-user-guide/1127>

Grades will not be tracked via Moodle; if you want to know your grade in the course, the grading scale is available via this document, and you may make an advance appointment with me to discuss your grade during office hours. Participation points will not be calculated until the end of the semester.

Office Hours and Support

I am available to you weekly during my office hours, and I also highly recommend making use of the Writing Center. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with me. If you find yourself struggling with the work of this course, do not hesitate to seek support. I understand the challenges of this course, and I am here to help you.

If your class schedule conflicts with my office hours, we can make arrangements to meet outside office hours by appointment. It is imperative that, if you schedule such an appointment with me, you do not miss the appointment.

Email Policy

Remember that writing an email is a rhetorical act. Thus, when you email me (or your other professors)

- begin with a salutation (Dear Professor X,)
- write in a polite and professional voice; clearly state your message
- end with a valediction, or complementary close (Sincerely, With regards, etc.)

I am happy to answer brief questions over email; for lengthier issues or complex questions, please see me during office hours. Exercise restraint when considering sending multiple consecutive emails. You can expect a response within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends. I do not provide essay feedback of any kind via email within 24 hours of the due date.

To demonstrate that you understand this process, please send me an email which contains a brief message following the above guidelines and a meme of your choice that relates to an academic subject. (Memes with cats would be appreciated.)

Academic Integrity

The UL Lafayette policy on plagiarism is as follows (text excerpted from the university catalog):

“The University holds that all work for which a student will receive a grade or credit shall be an original contribution or shall be properly documented to indicate sources. Abrogation of this principle entails dishonesty, defeats the purpose of instruction, and undermines the high goals of the University. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Students shall be assumed to know the acceptable methods and techniques for proper documentation of sources and to avoid cheating and plagiarism in all work submitted for credit, whether prepared in or out of class

“Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. The minimum penalty for a student guilty of either dishonest act is a grade of ‘zero’ for the assignment in question. The maximum penalty is dismissal from the University.”

If you have any questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty in any of its forms, consult with me as soon as possible.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free service located on the first floor of Griffin Hall, in room 107. The Writing Center consultants are experienced writers who pride themselves on creating a comfortable environment for every phase of your writing project. From thesis statements, to research planning, document design, to just getting started, the Writing Center staff works to help you become more focused, organized, and confident with your work. In addition to providing the latest style manuals and handbooks, the Writing Center also operates a computer lab, located next door in Griffin Hall, room 108. Both of these services are free, student-operated, and devoted to helping you be a more successful and productive student. Walk-ins are accepted, but scheduling an appointment in advance is recommended. Students who are more than ten minutes late to an appointment must reschedule.

For Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette makes accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office at 337-482-5252 or ssd@louisiana.edu during the first week of classes. SSD will assist you with an accommodation plan. The university also has a Supported Education Program (SEP, <http://disability.louisiana.edu/SEP.html>), which provides free confidential help on campus for students with psychological disabilities (Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, etc.). Please contact Kim A. Warren, MSW, PhD, LCSW, Supported Education Advisor, at 482-5252 or at kimawarren@louisiana.edu. She is located in the Conference Center, Room 126.

Campus Safety Information

1. University Police are the first responders for all emergencies on campus. Dial 911 or 482-6447 to report any emergency.
2. The Emergency Information Floor Plan is posted in the hallways for every building. This document includes evacuation routes and other important information. Please familiarize yourself with this document.
3. In the event that the building fire alarm is sounded, please exit the building immediately and notify University Police. Do not use the building elevator - look for the illuminated Exit Signs to direct you to safety.
4. During times of emergency, information may be available on the University's Emergency Hotline- 482-2222. This number is printed on the back of your ID card.
5. The University utilizes a text message service to notify its students and employees of campus wide emergencies. To subscribe to this service, log on to www.ul.mobilecampus.com.
6. If you have a special medical condition that might render you incapacitated during class, please make this known to your instructor as soon as possible, including any emergency contact information for your next of kin or similar.

Free Counseling

The university offers free counseling services to all students to assist with a wide range of concerns, including but *not limited to* stress, panic attacks, test anxiety, loneliness, depression, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts, addiction, family problems, relationship problems, abuse, unplanned pregnancy, etc. If you are dealing with any of these or other emotional challenges, do not hesitate to contact Counseling and testing services at 482-6480, counseling@louisiana.edu, or in person at the Saucier Wellness Center (in O. K. Allen Hall). They book appointments but also welcome drop-in visitors. For emergency counseling, call 911; the campus police can connect you to an on-call counselor.

Mandatory Reporting

As an employee of the state of Louisiana, I am by law a mandated reporter of many situations dealing with violations of personal safety. I am aware that the work of this class may occasionally interact with one's personal experiences that potentially fall within the bounds of situations I am mandated to report. Please be aware of this as you consider the information you share in class/office hours or include in your written assignments.

Disclaimer Statement: This syllabus is subject to change at instructor's discretion. Students should refer to Moodle for updates to this syllabus, including changes in homework assignments and due dates, which will also be announced in class. ***Be sure to check your UL email and Moodle regularly!***

Course Schedule Spring 2018

Preparedness: For each day that there has been an assigned reading from one of the texts, students are **required to have that text in class**. Unless it is in one of our required course texts (see syllabus), the reading can be found on our Moodle page.

Disclaimer: The instructor may make changes to this schedule at any time, both to assignments and due dates, based upon instructor's discretion. Changes will be announced in class and/or via Moodle. *Please check your UL email and our course Moodle page regularly to ensure you are aware of changes.*

Section I: The Nature of Empire

Week 1:

Thursday 1/11	Due: Register for ENGL 211-008
	In Class: Discuss Syllabus/Assignments, Reading for a Lit Course

Week 2:

Tues 1/16	Due: Read Syllabus and Assignment Guidelines Document Read Introduction to <i>Essential Literary Terms</i> (Moodle) Read <i>How to Read Literature like a Professor</i> (Moodle) 9. It's More Than Just Rain and Snow 12: Is that a Symbol? 19. Geography Matters... 20. ...So Does Season 24: Don't Read with Your Eyes
	In Class: Discuss <i>How to Read Literature Like a Professor</i> and <i>Essential Literary Terms</i>
Thurs 1/18	Due: *First ClassCard Due Today Read Christopher Columbus: "Letter of Columbus, Describing the Results of his First Voyage" (Moodle) Read Samuel de Champlain "From The Voyages of Samuel de Champlain" (Moodle)
	In Class: Discuss Columbus and de Champlain

Week 3:

Tues 1/23	Due: Read Bradford "Of Plymouth Plantation" (Moodle) Read Thomas Morton <i>New English Canaan</i> Book II Ch1-5 (Moodle) Read Hamilton "Setting" (162-165) and "Simile" and "Metaphor" (34-39)
	In Class: Discuss Bradford, Morton, and Hamilton
Thurs 1/25	Due: Read <i>Serena</i> chapters 1-3 (1-51) Read Hamilton "Novel" (21-24) Analysis Paper 1 Due by 10pm
	In Class: Discuss <i>Serena</i> and Hamilton

Week 4:

Tues 1/30	Due: Read <i>Serena</i> chapters 4-12 (53-126) Read Hamilton "Personification," "Pathetic Fallacy," "Synecdoche," and "Metonymy" (42-52)
	In Class: Discuss <i>Serena</i> and Hamilton
Thurs 2/1	Due: Read <i>Serena</i> chapters 13-18 (127-181)
	In Class: Discuss <i>Serena</i>

Week 5:

Tues 2/6	Due: Read <i>Serena</i> chapters 19-25 (183-252) Read Hamilton "Voice," "Point of View" (121-132)
	In Class: Discuss <i>Serena</i> and Hamilton
Thurs 2/8	Due: Read <i>Serena</i> chapters 26-29 (253-297)
	In Class: Discuss <i>Serena</i>

Week 6:

Tues 2/13	Due:
	In Class: No Class: Mardi Gras Break
Thurs 2/15	Due: Finish Reading <i>Serena</i> (299-371) Read Deming, "Specimens Collected at the Clear Cut" (Moodle) Read Hamilton "Roles in the Plot" (141-143)
	Analysis Paper 2 Due by 10pm
	In Class: Discuss <i>Serena</i> , Hamilton, and Deming

Week 7:

Tues 2/20	Due: Watch <i>Avatar</i> and prepare DQs
	In Class: Discuss <i>Avatar</i>
Thurs 2/22	Due: Prepare for Class Discussion
	In Class: Discuss <i>Avatar</i> , <i>Serena</i> , and the Nature of Empire

Section II: British Romanticism, American Transcendentalism

Week 8:

Tues 2/27	Due:
	In Class: Midterm Exam
Thurs 3/1	Due: Read Charlotte Smith "Written at the Close of Spring" (Moodle) Read William Wordsworth "Lines Written in Early Spring" and "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (Moodle) Read Dorothy Wordsworth <i>Grasmere Journals</i> Excerpts (Moodle) Read Hamilton "Imagery" "Symbolism" "Atmosphere" (90-98)
	In Class: Lecture on British Romanticism; Discussion of Readings
	Last day to drop class with a grade of "W"

Week 9:

Tues 3/6	Due: Read Wordsworth "The World is Too Much with Us" and "Steamboats, Viaducts, and Railways" (Moodle) Read Hamilton "Tone" (168-175) and "Sounds and Sound Patterns" (243-25)
	In Class: Possible Quiz on Romanticism, Discuss Wordsworth and Hamilton
	Due: Read Emerson <i>Nature</i> Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (Moodle)
Thurs 3/8	Analysis Paper 3 Due by 10pm
	In Class: Lecture on Transcendentalism; Discussion of Emerson

Week 10:

Tues 3/13	Due: Read Thoreau <i>Walden</i> Excerpt (Moodle), including: "Economy" "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" "Spring" "Conclusion"
	In Class: Possible Quiz on Transcendentalism, Discussion of Thoreau
Thurs 3/15	Due: Read Walt Whitman "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" and "Song of Myself" sections 1-7 (Moodle)
	In Class: Discussion of Whitman

Week 11:

Tues 3/20	Due: <i>Walden: The Game</i>
	In Class: Discussion of <i>Walden, The Game</i>
Thurs 3/22	Due: Analysis Paper 4 Due 10pm
	In Class: NO CLASS: Deep South in the Global South Conference

Week 12:

Tues 3/27	Due: Read Dillard <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> ch1-3, 6
	In Class: Discuss <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i>
Thurs 3/29	Due: Read Dillard <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> ch 11, 12, 14
	In Class: Discuss <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i>

Week 13:

Tues 4/3	Due:
	In Class: NO CLASS: Spring Break
Thurs 4/5	Due:
	In Class: NO CLASS: Spring Break

Week 14:

Section III: Contemporary Views

Tues 4/10	Due: Read Dunlap, Cohen “Introduction” Read Braverman, “Post Nature Writing” (Dunlap, Cohen) Read Cooke, “Why Haiti?” (Dunlap, Cohen) Read Hamilton “Diction” (74-78) and “Analogy” (82)
	In Class: Discuss Readings
Thurs 4/12	Due: Read Aldo Leopold: <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> (Moodle) Read Brown “An Orange County Almanac” (Dunlap, Cohen) Read Coplen “Tamale Traditions” (Dunlap, Cohen) Read Hamilton “Allusion” (81-83) Analysis Paper 5 Due by 10pm
	In Class: Discuss Readings

Week 15:

Tues 4/17	Due: Read Richard “The Longest Main Street in the World” (Moodle) Read Goldfarb, “Rebuild or Retreat” (Dunlap, Cohen) Read Patricia Smith Poems: (Moodle) “5 p.m., Tuesday, August 23, 2005” “Man on the TV Say” “Won’t Be But a Minute” “8 a.m., Sunday, August 28, 2005”
	In Class: Discuss Readings
Thurs 4/19	Due: Read Robinson Jeffers, “The Deer Lay Down Their Bones” (Moodle) Read James Dickey, “Heaven for Animals” (Moodle) Read Louise Erdrich, “The Red Sleep of Beasts” (Moodle)
	In Class: Discuss Readings

Week 16:

Tues 4/24	Due: Read William Heyen, “The Swamp” (Moodle) Read W. S. Merwin, “For a Coming Extinction” (Moodle) Read Lucille Clifton “the earth is a living thing,” and “the beginning of the end of the world” (Moodle)
	In Class: Discuss Readings
Thurs 4/26	Due: Read Catherine Pierce, “Anthropocene Pastoral” (Moodle) Read Hemphill “We are the Fossil Fuel Freedom Fighters” (Dunlap, Cohen) Read Staaf “True to our Nature” (Dunlap, Cohen)
	In Class: Discuss Readings, Last Day of Class

Finals Week:

Thurs 5/3	Due: Final Paper Due by 10pm (posted to Moodle)
-----------	--