

Professor Stacey Balkan
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Spring 2018 office hours: Monday (Davie) 4:00 – 6:00pm, Wednesday (Boca) 2:00pm – 4:00pm, and by appointment.
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ENG6934.001
Postcolonial Environments
Spring 2018, W 4:00 – 6:50pm, CU321

Course Description:

Postcolonial Environments are places where the social and environmental legacy of colonial occupation finds artistic expression in literatures that antagonize conventional approaches to “nature” or “wilderness.” As a study of Postcolonial Environments, this seminar will explore the imbricated chronologies of aesthetics, landscape ideology and historical trauma. We will examine the colonial origins of modern development, or “improvement,” as the material basis of the pastoral, the picturesque, and the sublime paying particular attention to the forced removal of local communities through parliamentary enclosure or corporate mandate. Writers interested in the “land question,” from Aimé Césaire to Ranajit Guha to Jamaica Kincaid to Arundhati Roy to Rob Nixon, will serve as our guides as we explore the lasting impact of colonial-era systems of land tenure on postcolonial states. Among the many questions animating the course, we shall ask: how do we bring together the historically polarized and polarizing discussions around Postcolonialism and Environmentalism? Furthermore, how, in an era marked by cataclysmic shifts in our global climate can we begin to think collectively about the fate of our species without eschewing the long history of combined and uneven development that has rendered postcolonial states more vulnerable to the exigencies of climate change? In addition to the theoretical readings outlined above, we will read fiction and poetry from Mahasweta Devi, Amitav Ghosh, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ursula Leguin, Pablo Neruda, Chris Abani, Muriel Rukeyser, Indra Sinha and others.

Required Texts:

Chris Abani, *GraceLand*, ISBN-13: 978-0312425289
Ashley Dawson, *Extinction: A Radical History*, ISBN-13: 978-1944869014
Mahasweta Devi, *Imaginary Maps*, ISBN-13: 978-0415904636
Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*, ISBN-13: 978-0312428594
--*The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, ISBN-13: 978-0226526812
Dale Jamieson & Bonnie Nadzam, *Love in the Anthropocene*, ISBN-13: 978-1939293909
Ursula LeGuin, *The Word for World is Forest*, ISBN-13: 978-0765324641
Arundhati Roy, *Walking with the Comrades*, ISBN-13: 978-0143120599
Indra Sinha, *Animal's People*, ISBN-13: 978-1416578796
Imre Szeman & Dominic Boyer, *Energy Humanities: An Anthology*, ISBN-13: 978-1421421896
*All readings appended by an asterisk will be available on Canvas.

Class requirements and Policies:

1. Weekly discussion posts. You may respond to the readings in a variety of ways: offer a close reading of one of the primary literary works; pose a series of engaging questions about the texts under discussion; examine one of the texts using a relevant theoretical lens; discuss a theme that has been developing in the course; recap and build on earlier conversations using the new material of the day. These postings must be made *no later* than 5pm each Tuesday.

2. Weekly discussions. Each student will be assigned a weekly discussion to lead. This will require a brief (3-5 minute) synopsis of central ideas; a selection of keywords to anchor class conversation; and a minimum of two questions for class discussion.
3. Preliminary seminar paper. Each student will provide a 3-5 page synthesis of the primary texts to be used for the final seminar paper. It is expected that this preliminary essay will attend to the formal elements of the works under study in addition to providing a robust critical framework.
4. Conference abstract (250-500 words). Each student will construct an abstract for our April conference, which will be held during final examination week.
5. Seminar paper (20-25 pages). Each student will produce a formal critique of selected works inclusive of appropriate secondary source material. We will discuss secondary source material, including our library's electronic resources as well as a host of digital archives focused on Environmental Humanities research, as we move through the semester. Primary and secondary source material must be reflective of the work of our class.

Grading policy:

Weekly discussion board: 30%

Seminar presentation: 15%

Synthesis of primary texts: 10%

Paper abstract: 5%

Conference presentation: 10%

Seminar paper: 25%

Participation/in class discussions: 5%

Grade Scale:

Florida Atlantic University follows a plus/minus (+/-) grading system. Numeric Values for this course are as follows: 93-100 A+; 92-90 A; 89-87 B+; 86-83 B; 82-80 B-; 79-77 C+; 76-73 C; 72-70 C-; 69-60 D; 59-0 F

Note on absences:

Your presence is vital to our classroom community, so regular attendance is required. You will be permitted *one absence* after which your grade will be negatively affected. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned texts and must bring printed texts to class.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS)—in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA 203 (954-236-1222); or in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8585)—and follow all SAS procedures. For more information, see <http://www.fau.edu/sas/>

CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see:

http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf

Course Schedule: (subject to change depending on class progress)

Week 1: Liberalism, Development and the Invention of *Otherness* (1/10)

John Locke, "Of the State of Nature" & "Of Property" from *Two Treatises of Government** (1689)

John Stuart Mill, "To What Extent Forms of Government are a Matter of Choice" from *Considerations on Representative Government** (1861)

Lisa Lowe, "The Intimacies of Four Continents" from *The Intimacies of Four Continents**

David Arnold, "Inventing Tropicality" from *The Problem of Nature: Environment, Culture and European Expansion**

Edward Said, "Introduction" from *Orientalism**

Week 2: Postcolonial Environments (1/17)

Raymond Williams, "Nature" & "Ecology" from *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society**

William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness, or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature"*

Ned Blackhawk, "Introduction" from *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West**

Rob Nixon, "Environmentalism and Postcolonialism"*

Pablo Mukherjee, "Introduction" from *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel in English**

Graham Huggan & Helen Tiffin, "Introduction" from *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment**

Week 3: Ecological Imperialism (1/24)

Richard Grove, "Edens, Islands and Early Empires" from *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism**

Ursula Leguin, *The Word for World is Forest*

Week 4: Primitive Accumulation and the Origins of Ecological Crisis (1/31)

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (chapters 1-4)*

Ashley Dawson, *Extinction: A Radical History*

Weeks 5 & 6: The Flowers of Empire (2/7, 2/14)

Thomas De Quincey, "Ceylon"*

Jamaica Kincaid, "The Flowers of Empire"*

Ranjit Guha, "Introduction" from *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement**

Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*

Week 7: New Enclosures (2/21)

Ashley Dawson, "New Enclosures." *New Formations* 69: 8-22.*

Vandana Shiva, "Principles of Earth Democracy" from *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace**

Mahasweta Devi, "Introduction" & "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha" in *Imaginary Maps*

Week 8: The Environmentalism of the Poor (2/28)

Ramachandra Guha & Juan Aliers, "Introduction" & "The Environmentalism of the Poor" from *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South**

Rob Nixon, "Introduction" from *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor**

Arundhati Roy, *Walking with the Comrades*

Week 9: Spring Recess (3/7)

Week 10: The Climate of History (3/14)

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate Of History: Four Theses" in *Energy Humanities*

Mike Davis, "Victoria's Ghosts" from *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World**

Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*

***Synthesis of primary texts due!**

Week 11: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Thermocene, Chthulucene (3/21)

Stacey Balkan, "Anthropocene." *Global South Studies: A Collective Publication with The Global South**

Jason Moore, "The Capitalocene, Part I: On the nature and Origins of Our Ecological Crisis." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44, no. 3: 594-630.*

Christopher Bonneuil & Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, "Thermocene: A Political History of CO₂" from *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us**

Donna Haraway, "Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene" from *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene**

Week 12: Toxicity (3/28)

Stacy Alaimo, from *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self**

Adam Dickinson, excerpt from *The Polymers* in *Energy Humanities*

Muriel Rukeyser, "Alloy"*

Indra Sinha, *Animal's People*

***Conference abstracts due!**

Week 13: The Resource Curse (4/4)

Imre Szeman and Dominic Boyer, "Introduction: On the Energy Humanities" in *Energy Humanities*

Timothy Mitchell, "Carbon Democracy" in *Energy Humanities*

Michael Watts, "Imperial Oil: The Anatomy of a Nigerian Oil Insurgency" in *Energy Humanities*

Ken Saro-Wiwa, from *A Month and a Day**

Chris Abani, *GraceLand*

Week 14: Petro-fictions (4/11)

Pablo Neruda, "Standard Oil Co." in *Energy Humanities*

Amitav Ghosh, "Petro-fiction: The Oil Encounter and the Novel" in *Energy Humanities*

Abdul Rahman Munif, excerpt from *Cities of Salt* in *Energy Humanities*

Ken Saro-Wiwa, "Night Ride" in *Energy Humanities*

Week 15: Combined and Uneven Disaster (4/18)

Ashley Dawson, "Climate Apartheid" from *Extreme Cities: The Peril and Promise of Urban Life in the Age of Climate Change**

Dale Jamieson & Bonnie Nadzam, *Love in the Anthropocene*

*Screening: *Mad Max: Fury Road*

Week 16: Reading Day (4/25)

*Postcolonial Environments Conference to be held during examination period—details TBA.

*Seminar papers due Thursday 4/26 via Canvas.