

English 4110 Literary Criticism: Ecocriticism

Shortened Sample Syllabus

DRAFT

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Prerequisite: Sophomore status.

Description: A focused study of one or two methodologies of literary criticism.

This course focuses on ecocriticism, a methodology of literary criticism that is rapidly developing. Together we will survey several strains in the field, moving from a broad environmental humanities perspective to an investigation of material ecocriticism, postcolonial ecocriticism, and affective ecocriticism. This particular version of the course was also designed to be nearly free for students.

Function: This course counts to fulfill the Language and Theory requirement for the Literature concentration in the English major. It also fulfills the upper-level elective requirement English minors, and for other concentrations within the English Department. Open to other majors as an elective, by arrangement.

Expected Outcomes: As a result of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify key arguments and methodologies within the field of ecocriticism
- Analyze and evaluate different ecocritical arguments
- Apply key ecocritical concepts, terms, and arguments to literary texts
- Develop literary arguments using the theoretical and critical tools provided by ecocriticism

Grading Criteria: Student learning will be assessed through a variety of written responses, exams, in-class writing and activities, presentations, and conversation. All work will be graded on the following criteria:

- It responds to the topic as specified in the assignment.
- It demonstrates clear correct English writing or speech.
- It presents literary exposition and argument that is focused on a clear thesis, that is coherently and logically developed, and that is supported concretely with relevant quoted references to the text; and
- It integrates relevant facts about the authors(s), texts(s), contextual issue(s), and aesthetic(s) in rhetorically effective ways.

Prior to mid-semester you will receive feedback on your academic performance in this class.

Course Materials:

- Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, Ed. By Vincent Carretta. Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN: 9780142437162. \$15.00
- Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*. Penguin Classics, 1960. ISBN: 9780140421996. \$13.00.

Rather than purchasing expensive anthologies, the bulk of our reading will come from online sources. The following e-books are available at no cost to you from the GCSU library, and can be accessed from the link once you are in Unify and on Galileo. In the schedule below you will see individual essays drawn from these collections. You are free to read them online, or download the chapters, as you wish. All of these sources have unlimited availability for multiple users.

- *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*, edited by Ursula Heise, et al., Taylor & Francis Group, 2017. Unlimited access for multiple users. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gcsu/detail.action?docID=4779404>
- Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015. Unlimited access for multiple users. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gcsu/detail.action?docID=2028285>
- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* / Jane Bennett. Duke University Press, 2010. Unlimited access for multiple users. *EBSCOhost*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gcsu/detail.action?docID=1170671>
- *Material Ecocriticism*, edited by Serenella Iovino, and Serpil Oppermann, Indiana University Press, 2014. Unlimited access for multiple users. *ProQuest Ebook Central* <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gcsu/detail.action?docID=2120324>
- *Affective Ecocriticism: Emotion, Embodiment, Environment*, edited by Kyle Bladow, and Jennifer Ladino, University of Nebraska Press, 2018. Unlimited access for multiple users. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gcsu/detail.action?docID=5520528>

Environmental Humanities

Week 1

- Ursula K. Heise, “Introduction: Planet, Species, Justice—and the Stories we Tell about them.” Introduction to *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*.
- Dale Jamieson, “The Anthropocene: Love it or Leave it.” Ch. 1 in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*.

Week 2

- Olaudah Equiano, *Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa*.

Week 3

- Judith A. Carney, “They Carry the Life in their Hair: Domestication and the African Diaspora.” Ch. 3 in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*.
- Libby Robin, “Domestication in a Post-Industrial World.” Ch. 4 in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*, pp 83-97.

Week 4

- Kyle Powys White, “Our Ancestor’s Dystopia Now: Indigenous Conservation and the Anthropocene.” Ch. 21 in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*.
- Catriona Sandilands, “Some “F” Words for the Environmental Humanities.” Ch. 42 in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*,

Week 5

- Stephanie LeManger, “The Humanities After the Anthropocene.” Ch. 45 in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*,
- Hans Bergthaller, “Fossil Freedoms: The Politics of Emancipation and the End of Oil.” Ch. 40 in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*
- Heather I. Sullivan, “Material Ecocriticism and the Petro Text.” Ch. 39 in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*,

Postcolonial Ecocriticism

Week 6

- Read Introduction and Part I of *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*
- Paper Conferences
- MID-TERM Paper Due (on Equiano)

Material Ecocriticism

Week 7

- Jane Bennett, “The Agency of Assemblages.” Ch. 2 in *Vibrant Matter*
- Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” from *Leaves of Grass*

Week 8

- Serpel Opperman, “From Ecological Postmodernism to Material Ecocriticism: Creative Materiality and Narrative Agency.” Ch. 1 in *Material Ecocriticism*.

- Serenella Iovino, “Bodies of Naples: Stories, Matter, and Landscapes of Porosity.” Ch. 6 in *Material Ecocriticism*.

Week 9

- Lowell Duckert, “When It Rains.” Ch. 7 in *Material Ecocriticism*.
- Simon C. Estok, “Painful Material Realities, Tragedy, Ecophobia.” Ch. 8 in *Material Ecocriticism*.

Week 10

- Stacy Alaimo, “Oceanic Origins, Plastic Activism, and New Materialism at Sea.” Ch. 12 in *Material Ecocriticism*.
- Cheryll Glotfelty, “Corporeal Fieldwork and Risky Art: Peter Goin and the Making of Nuclear Landscapes.” Ch. 14 in *Material Ecocriticism*

Week 11

- Jane Bennett, “Of Material Sympathies: Paracelsus, and Whitman.” Ch. 15 in *Material Ecocriticism*.
- Timothy Morton, “The Liminal Space Between Things: Epiphany and the Physical.” Ch. 17 in *Material Ecocriticism*.

Week 12

- Kate Rigby, “Spirits That Matter: Pathways toward a Rematerialization of Spirituality.” Ch. 18 in *Material Ecocriticism*.
- Greta Gaard, “Mindful New Materialisms: Buddhist Roots for Material Ecocriticism’s Flourishing.” Ch. 19 in *Material Ecocriticism*.

Affective Ecocriticism

Week 13

- Joel Krueger, “An Ecological Approach to Affective Injustice.” Available online through the GCSU library: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48776805>
- Kyle Bladow and Jennifer Ladino, “Toward an Affective Ecocriticism: Placing Feeling in the Anthropocene.” Introduction to *Affective Ecocriticism*.

Week 14

- Jobb Arnold, “Feeling the Fires of Climate Change: Land Affect in Canada’s Tar Sands.” Ch. 4 in *Affective Ecocriticism*.
- Tom Hertweck, “A Hunger for Words: Food Affects and Embodied Ideology.” Ch. 6 in *Affective Ecocriticism*.

- Nicole Seymour, “The Queerness of Environmental Affect,” Ch. 11 in *Affective Ecocriticism*.

Week 15

- Paper Conferences

Week 16

- Final Paper Due (on Whitman)