

**CLCS 6900\_001/EHUM 6900\_003**  
**Ecocriticism - Interdisciplinary Perspectives**  
**Spring 2020**  
**T 6:00-9:00 p.m.**  
**BU C 204**

Professor: Katharina Gerstenberger  
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Required Texts

Timothy Clark. *The Value of Ecocriticism*. Cambridge UP, 2019. ISBN 9781107479241  
Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement*. U of Chicago P, 2017. ISBN 9780226526812  
Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior*. Harper Collins, 2012. ISBN 9786062124302  
Ilija Trojanow, *Lamentations of Zeno*. Verso, 2019. ISBN 9781784782207

All other texts are available through Reserves, e-Reserves or as e-book through Marriott Library.

This seminar offers an introduction to the growing field of ecocriticism. Going back to the 1970s, ecocriticism is typically defined as the literary engagement with questions of the environment. While classic texts include Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) and, importantly, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), ecocriticism as an academic discipline begins to gain prominence in the 1990s with Cheryll Glotfelty's *Ecocriticism Reader* (1996). Drawing on Feminist but also Marxist theory, the field has since grown to include historical perspectives, economic considerations, anthropological inquiries, and philosophy. Of central concern to many thinkers is the relationship between humans and nature, with some scholars calling for the abandonment of the dichotomy altogether. More recently, the growing popularity of the Anthropocene, a term that comes from geology and refers to the human impact on the fossil record, has triggered considerable discussion and controversy about the relationship between humans and the environment. In this class, we will familiarize ourselves with the field of ecocriticism as a response to environmental crisis. In addition to a range of theoretical texts, we will also read a selection of literary texts that address environmental issues.

Each student will be responsible for leading class discussion at least once (depending on the number of participants). Students will also be asked to produce a 12-15-page research paper on a topic of their choice. The paper can be based on a topic and text discussed in class, it can also go beyond works discussed in class. During the final class sessions, participants will present their work in progress to their peers. As a joint project, we will compile a bibliography of ecocriticism.

Course Requirements & Grading

Research Paper (12-15 pages)	30%
Presentation of paper at student mini-conference	20%
Lead class discussion	15%
Paper proposal/abstract	7.5%
Working bibliography/MLA style	7.5%
Participation	20%
Total	100%

## Weekly Schedule

### **Week 1— Tuesday, January 7**

#### Introduction

Readings: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, chapters 1 and 2; Cherryll Glotfelty, "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." In: *Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cherryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. pp. xv-xxxvii.

### **Week 2—Tuesday, January 14**

#### Definitions

Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p. 16-32; Timothy Clark, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, p. 1-10 (e-book); Ursula Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*, p. 17- 67.

### **Week 3—Tuesday, January 21**

#### How to Tell the Story?

Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement*.

### **Week 4—Tuesday, January 28**

#### Nature Writing/New Nature Writing

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 3-50; Robert MacFarlane, *The Wild Places*; chapter 9, "Grave," p. 159-187; Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge*; "Burrowing Owls," p. 5-20; Jos Smith, "An Archipelagic Literature: Re-Framing 'The New Nature Writing'." In: *Green Letters* 2013, Vol.17 (1), 5-15.

### **Week 5—Tuesday, February 4**

#### Toxic Discourse

Lawrence Buell, "Toxic Discourse," *Critical Inquiry* 24.3 1998; Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Introduction, p. 1-44; e-book); Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects*, "A Quake in Being," p. 1-24.

### **Week 6—Tuesday, February, 11**

#### Literary Text I

Ilija Trojanow, *The Lamentations of Zeno*, 2016.

Sabine Wilke, "Performances in the Anthropocene: Embodiment and Environment(s) in Ilija Trojanow's Climate Change Novel. In: Hofmann and Zorić, eds. *Presence of the Body: Awareness in and Beyond Experience*. Brill 2016. 174-189 (e-book).

### **Week 7—Tuesday, February 18**

#### Popular Ecocriticism

Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature*, 40-78; Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction*, 4-22; Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*, p. 1-28

### **Week 8— Tuesday, February, 25**

#### Material Ecocriticism

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke UP, 2010. p. 1-19 (e-book); Stacy Alaimo, "Trans-Corporeal Feminism and the Ethical Space of Nature." In: Alaimo and Hekman, eds. *Material Feminisms*. Indiana UP, 2008. 237-264. Serpil Opperman, "From Postmodernism to Material Ecocriticism: Creative Materiality and Narrative Agency." In: *Material Ecocriticism*, ed. Serenella Iovino and Oppermann, Indiana UP, 2014 (e-book), p. 21-36.

**Week 9— Tuesday, March 3**

Taking Stock

Timothy Clark. *The Value of Ecocriticism*. Cambridge UP, 2019.

ABSTRACT DUE

**Spring Break**

March 8-15

**Week 10—Tuesday, March 17**

Literary Text II

Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior*, 1-245.

**Week 11—Tuesday, March 24**

Literary Text II-continued

Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior*, 246-433.

Christopher Loyd, "'Family Territory' to the 'Circumference of the Earth': Local and Planetary Memories of Climate Change in Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior*. *Textual Practice*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2017, pp. 911-931.

BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

**Week 12—Tuesday, March 31**

Anthropocene

*Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, ed. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing et. al. Chapters 1-6. (e-book); Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*. Introduction and Fourth Lecture. (e-book)

**Week 13—Tuesday, April 7**

Entanglements

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke UP, 2016. Chapters Introduction – 4 (e-book); Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Duke UP, 2007. Chapter 4 (e-book).

**Week 14— Tuesday, April 14**

Literary Text III

Yoko Tawada, "The Island of Eternal Life." In: *March was Made of Yarn: Reflections on the Japanese Tsunami Disaster and Nuclear Meltdown*, ed. Elmer Luke and David Karashima. Harvill Secker 2012.

**Week 15— Tuesday, April 21**

Student Presentations

Final Papers are due on Friday, May 1, at 5pm.

**POLICIES and RESOURCES**

**Safety Statement:** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus

safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit <https://safeu.utah.edu/>.

**Diversity & Equity Statement:** The Department of World Languages and Cultures values students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. We fully endorse university policies prohibiting sexual harassment as well as discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, immigration status, color, disability, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or socio-economic status. It is our intent that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. To that end, we expect that all students treat each other with dignity and respect.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services. For more information see their website at <http://disability.utah.edu/>

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism represents a serious case of academic misconduct and is defined by the University of Utah Code as follows: “‘Plagiarism’ means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person’s work in, or as a basis for, one’s own work offered for academic consideration or credit or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one’s own, without attribution, any other individual’s words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression” ([www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html](http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html)). Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment or course. If you have any further questions as to what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

**Accommodation:** Some of the writings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience. The University Accommodation Policy may be found at <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>

**Drop/Withdrawal and Other Important Dates to Remember:** <https://registrar.utah.edu/academic-calendars/fall2019.php>

**Grades:** Grades will be assigned according to the standards reported in the Student Handbook at <https://catalog.utah.edu/#/policy/B12v3LX0G?bc=true&bcCurrent=Grading%20Policies&bcGroup=Grade%20Information&bcItemType=policies>

**University Writing Center:** <http://www.writingcenter.utah.edu/>

The Campus Wellness Connection helps students find, access, and utilize campus resources and services they may need in relation to physical, mental, intellectual, social, and spiritual wellness: <http://www.wellness.utah.edu>