

SYLLABUS & POLICY STATEMENT FOR ENGLISH 2329
Men and Knotholes—An Introduction to the Environment in Literature, Film, and Television

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T 12:30-1:30

Course Description

In Environment in Literature and Film, we will be looking at the specific role environment plays in literature—both fiction and non-fiction—film, and television. In part because environmental issues have increasingly been a matter of public concern, this course is intended to investigate the way popular textual and visual mediums represent environment and humanity's interaction with it. Because conceptions of environment (and therefore responsibility to it) are so wide-ranging, we will examine a number of different texts, each of which proposes a different kind of human relationship and thereby interaction with nature, in an effort to discern how nature is defined in popular culture and how human identity is closely tied to those definitions.

Course Goals

1. To encourage students to see that literary studies matter and to foster enjoyment of literature, as students engage with ideas and beliefs in ways that extend beyond the English classroom.
2. To help students recognize that literature does not occur as isolated literary events, but as complex dialogue within cultural and historical contexts.
3. To develop students' ability to read critically by studying a variety of literary elements such as form, structure, and style.
4. To enable students to demonstrate their understanding of and their ability to analyze literary texts both orally and in writing.

Required Readings

—Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*
—Kraakauer, John. *Into the Wild*
—McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*
—"Man vs. Wild" Season One—Episodes one and two
—Hogan, Linda. *Solar Storms*
—*Brokeback Mountain (2005)*
—Keseey, Ken. *Sometimes a Great Notion*
—Proulx, Annie. *That Old Ace in the Hole*
—Campbell, Sue Ellen. *Even Mountains Vanish*
—Lopez, Barry. *Of Wolves and Men*
—*An Inconvenient Truth (2006)*
—*The Green Studies Reader* (also available on-line through the UTA Library)
—In-class handouts

Grade Breakdown

Reading Response Essays (thirteen)—30%
Exam One— 20%
Exam Two— 20%
Class Participation— 10%
Discussion Facilitation—15%

Course Assignments

Reading Responses: Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write a total of thirteen essays in response to the course readings (see course calendar for specific due dates). Response essays should be a minimum of two full pages (approx. 750 words) in length. Each essay should address one or more of the pertinent cultural issues addressed in the readings for the week. These essays are not intended to be, and thus should not be, simply summaries of assigned readings. Instead, you should address a theme or a particular motif and connect it in interesting and increasingly complex ways with other readings and with your personal knowledge (or lack thereof) about nature, your community, and with more global environmentalist concerns. Prompts for each essay will be handed out in class. The purpose of these response essays is to give you the opportunity to engage with as many of

the cultural issues involved in a study of environmental literature as possible. Instead of one or two long papers, then, in which you have limited space and can only address one or two pertinent considerations, the shorter response papers will allow you to address a number of issues, each building on and informing the next essay that you write.

Exams: You will take a two exams during this course (see calendar for specific dates). Exams will be essay in format and will cover all of the texts we will discuss up to the date of the exam.

Class Participation/: Insofar as a great deal of time will be spent in discussion of the required texts, class participation carries considerable weight. Students will be expected to come to class having read the assigned texts and prepared to engage in discussion, to pose pertinent questions, and to develop significant and personal answers to the questions posed by their peers.

Discussion Facilitation: During the course of the semester, you will work in pre-arranged groups that will present on the text(s) we are reading at the time and lead the discussion that follows. You will, therefore, need to know who your group is so that you can work together outside of class. When it is your turn to lead the discussion, you will be required to come to class with material prepared to address to the class. How you do this is up to you. Presentations should be creative and address one or more of the pertinent issues under discussion for any particular text. Your group will then be required to engage your peers in active discussion of the texts and the presentation material. Further instruction will be handed out in class and a sign-up sheet will be passed around on the second class day.

Course Policies

Disruptive Behavior: I reserve the right to ask disruptive students to leave the classroom. Disruptive behavior constitutes any behavior which prevents an active learning environment from developing in the classroom. Students who are asked to leave must make an appointment with me to meet in my office before they may return to class. Disruptive behavior can range from cell phone use to abusive behavior, from open hostility to racial slurs, and so on. We are in this class together. Please, be respectful of one another.

Electronics: When you arrive, please remove headphones and turn off phones and computers and put them where they will not be a distraction. Failing to do so is not only disrespectful to both myself and your peers, but constitutes disruptive behavior. Students who fail to adhere to this policy on more than one occasion will be asked to leave the classroom for the duration of the day's discussion.

Cheating & Plagiarism:

It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonest will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or material that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2) You can get in trouble for plagiarism—even if you do not intend to cheat—by failing to correctly indicate places where you are making use of the work of another. **It is your responsibility** to familiarize yourself with the conventions of citation by which you indicate which ideas are not your own and how your reader can find those sources.

Note: I should also add that students who plagiarize on any assignment will receive a zero for the assignment with no opportunity to re-write, and the paper will be submitted for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action can range from failure of the plagiarized paper to suspension or dismissal from the university. A second offense will result in automatic failure of the course in addition to a disciplinary write-up. Plagiarism is a serious offense, amounts to thievery, and will not be tolerated. Make sure you understand conventions for quoting and citing properly to avoid plagiarism. **If you do not understand, ask me.**

Absences:

I do not have an attendance policy. However, I do keep roll, and excessive absences will result in a significant reduction of your class participation grade.

Add/Drop Policy:

Effective Fall 2006, adds and drops may be made through late registration either on the Web at [MyMav](#) or in person in the academic department offering the course. Drops may continue in person until a point in time two-thirds of the way through the semester, session, or term. In order to drop a class, you must get permission from your undergraduate advisor.

E-Culture Policy:

The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at www.uta.edu/email. New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly. If you wish to reach me by email, your best bet is to email me from your university account. The system tends to kick out emails from other addresses as junk mail. If you do email me, I will respond within forty-eight hours.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112—The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364.

University Writing Center:

The Writing Center on the fourth floor of the Central Library offers its services free of charge to all UTA students on either a drop-in basis or by appointment. Its tutors can discuss any aspect of writing with you, from preliminary analysis of a text to organizing your ideas to meet the expectations of an audience. The Writing Center is not an editing service; tutors will not correct your grammar or rewrite your essay for you, but they are qualified to teach you how to do it yourself. Tutors will not predict what grade you will earn on your assignment. I highly recommend using the Center's services to assist you in this class (or any of your other courses), no matter what your writing level. Please be aware that tutoring sessions do take time, so be sure to allow sufficient time to complete a tutoring session and incorporate appropriate suggestions into your essay before it is due.

Student Support Services Available:

The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

Finally, if you are struggling, please come and see me in my office during my office hours or by appointment, or contact me via e-mail before you are hopelessly lost. Students who make use of my office hours and the University Writing Center inevitably improve their writing skills and thereby their grades.

Course Calendar

(Dates subject to—and probably will—change)

Week One: Tue 8-25: Introduction
 Reading environment
 Syllabus

Thur 8-27: Read William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness” [HO]
 Read *Walden*
 Discussion—Nature as Cultural Concept

Nature as Escape:

Week Two: Tue 9-1: Read *Walden*
 Thur 9-3: Read Louise Wrestling, “Thoreau’s Ambivalence Toward Mother Nature” [GSR 44]
Reader Response Essay One due
 Discussion—Nature as Anti-Culture

Week Three: Tue 9-8: Read *Into the Wild*
 Thur 9-10: Read Kate Soper, “The Idea of Nature” [GSR 21]
Reader Response Essay Two due
Discussion 1—Nature as Escape

Gender and Environment:

Week Four: Tue 9-15: Read *The Road*
 Read Richard Kerridge, “Ecothrillers: Environmental Cliffhangers” [GSR 242]
 Thur 9-17: Read Patrick Murphy, “Nature Nurturing Fathers in a World Beyond Our Control” [HO]
Reader Response Essay Three due.
 Discussion—Masculinity and Environment

Week Five: Tue 9-22: Read *Solar Storms*
 Thur 9-24: Read *Solar Storms*
 Read Stacy Alaimo, “Trans-Corporeal Feminisms and the Ethics of Environment” [HO]
Reader Response Essay Four due
Discussion 2—Race, Femininity, and Environment

Week Six: Tue 9-29: Watch *Brokeback Mountain*
 Thur 10-1: Read Kate Soper, “Naturalized Woman and Feminized Nature” [GSR 139]
Reader Response Essay Five due
Discussion 3—Homosexuality and Environment

Week Seven: Tue 10-6: Watch “Man Vs. Wild” (Episodes one and two, first season)
 Read Karla Armbruster, “A Poststructuralist Approach to Ecofeminist Criticism” [GSR 198]
Discussion 4—Nature as Victim of Masculine Conquest
 Thur 10-8: **Exam One**
Reader Response Essay Six due

Place and Space:

Week Eight: Tue 10-13: Read *Sometimes a Great Notion*
 Thur 10-15: Read Lawrence Buell “Space, Place, and the Imagination of Environmental Criticism”
 from *The Future of Environmental Criticism* [P]
Reader Response Essay Seven due
Discussion 5—Land, Economy, and Westward Expansion

Week Nine: Tue 10-20: Read *Sometimes a Great Notion*
 Thur 10-22: Read James Proctor, “Whose Nature? The Contested Moral Terrain of Ancient Forests”
 [HO]
Reader Response Essay Eight due
Discussion 6—Nature and Economy

Week Ten: Tue 10-27: Read *That Old Ace in the Hole*
 Read Giovanna Di Chiro, “Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and
 Social Justice” [HO]
Reader Response Essay Nine due
 Thur 10-29: No class

Week Eleven: Tue 11-3: Read *That Old Ace in the Hole*
Discussion 7—Regionalism and Environment
 Thur 11-5: Read Richard White, “Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?” [P]

Reader Response Essay Ten due
Discussion 8—Place, Space, and Environmental Justice

Representing Nature and Environment in Non-Fiction:

- Week Twelve: Tue 11-10: Read *Even Mountains Vanish*
Read Rebecca Raglon and Marian Scholtmeijer, “Heading Off the Trail: Language, Literature, and Nature’s Resistance to Narrative” [HO]
Thur 11-12: Read *Even Mountains Vanish*
Reader Response Essay Eleven due
Discussion 9—Nature and Nature Writing
- Week Thirteen: Tue 11-17: Read *Of Wolves and Men*
Read TBA
Thur 11-19: Read *Of Wolves and Men*
Read Kent Ryden, “Big Trees and Back Yards: Time, Landscape, and the Borders of Nature” [HO]
Reader Response Essay Twelve due
Discussion—The “Non-Human”
- Week Fourteen: Tue 11-24: Watch *An Inconvenient Truth*
Read TBA
Thur 11-26: Thanksgiving. No class.
- Week Fifteen: Tue 12-1: **Reader Response Essay Thirteen due**
Discussion 10—Media and Environment
Thur 12-3: **Exam Two**