

## ENGL 782, Current Directions: Ecocriticism

Fall 2021 Wednesdays 4:00-6:50 223 Colson

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Office Hours: 213 Colson Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 & by appointment in-person or zoom

### Overview

We will begin with overviews of issues and methods (Heise, Clark) so you can start thinking about final projects early on. We'll build a foundation with two works central to the consolidation of ecocriticism as a field in the 1990s (Buell, Plumwood). After that, readings from the 2010s forward illustrate several developments in the field. We will begin with environmental justice (Nixon, Posmentier) and move on to examine literary structure (Ghosh), agency (Latour, Kimmerer, de la Cadena), and cross-species relations (Sweet, Haraway) in the context of current environmental crises.

### Readings

Ursula Heise, "Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism." *PMLA* 121.2 (2006): 503-16

Timothy Clark, *Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* (Cambridge 2011)

Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination* (Harvard 1995)

Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (Routledge 1993) PDF on google classroom site

Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Harvard 2011)

Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago 2016)

Sonya Posmentier, *Cultivation and Catastrophe: The Lyric Ecology of Modern Black Literature* (Johns Hopkins 2017)

Bruno Latour, "Attempt at a Compositionist Manifesto" (*NLH* 2010) and other essays.

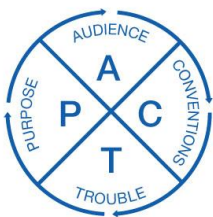
Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Learning the Grammar of Animacy," from *Braiding Sweetgrass* (Milkweed 2013), 48-59. PDF on google classroom site

Marisol de la Cadena, "Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond 'Politics.'" *Cultural Anthropology* 25.2 (2010): 334-70

Timothy Sweet, *Extinction and the Human: Four American Encounters* (Pennsylvania 2021), excerpts PDF on google classroom site

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke 2016)

### Graded Work



- **Eight** weekly response papers (500 words each)—weeks of your choice—in which you demonstrate your understanding of a week's readings by briefly summarizing and then critiquing or extending the argument(s). Together these are worth 40% of your final grade. **Due at 1:00 on the day of class.**
- A final project including prospectus, rough draft, final presentation, and article-length final paper (~20 pp. double spaced). Presentation = 10% of your final grade; Final paper

= 50%.

### **Land Acknowledgement Statement** (from WVU NAS program)

WVU, with its statewide institutional presence, resides on land that includes ancestral territories of the Shawnee, Lenape (Delaware), Haudenosaunee (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, Tuscarora), Cherokee, and other Indigenous peoples.

In acknowledging this, we recognize and appreciate those Indigenous nations whose territories we are living on and working in. Indigenous peoples have been in the land currently known as West Virginia since time immemorial. It is important that we understand both the context that has brought our university community to reside on this land, and our place within this long history.

We also recognize that colonialism is a current ongoing process, and as scholars seeking truth and understanding, we need to be mindful of our present participation in this process.

### **Policies**

Late work will not be accepted. If you have to miss class for any reason, including illness, and a paper is due that day, email me the paper ahead of time. In cases of debilitating illness, we will work together to devise a schedule for the completion of course work.

Inclusivity. The WVU community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. For more information on WVU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see the DEI website <https://diversity.wvu.edu> (304-293-5600).

Accessibility. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Accessibility Services <https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu> (304-293-6700).

Sexual Misconduct. WVU does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence. (BOG Rule 1.6) It is important for you to know that there are resources available through the Title IX office if you or someone you know needs assistance: <https://diversity.wvu.edu/equity-assurance/title-ix> (304-293-5600). You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff; keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the [Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center](#) (RDVIC), 304-292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).

Mental health concerns or stressful events can adversely affect your academic performance and social relationships. WVU offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns that you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at the Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS) website: <https://carruth.wvu.edu/>. If you are in need of crisis services, call the CCPPS main number 24/7: (304) 293-4431. Crisis services are also available through text: Text WVU to 741741 for support 24/7 from a trained Crisis Counselor.

## Schedule

**Response papers are due at 1:00 each Wednesday (except for weeks with no readings). You must turn in eight out of ten possible responses.**

- 8/18 Introduction  
Heise, "Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism," *PMLA* 121.2 (2006): 503-16.
- 8/25 Clark, *Introduction to Literature and the Environment*
- 9/1 Buell, *Environmental Imagination*, Intro, parts I and II.
- 9/8 Buell, *Environmental Imagination*, part III and Appendix
- 9/15 Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* PDF
- 9/22 Nixon, *Slow Violence*; **workshop on possible topics for final project**
- 9/29 Posmentier, *Cultivation and Catastrophe*
- 10/6 Research and Writing Week: class does not meet
- 10/13 Ghosh, *Great Derangement*
- 10/27 **Prospectus due; informal presentation on final project**
- 11/3 Latour, "Will Non-Humans be Saved? An Argument in Ecotheology," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2009): 459-75.  
Latour, "An Attempt at a Compositionist Manifesto," *NLH* 41 (2010): 471-90.  
Latour, "Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene," *NLH* 45 (2014): 1-18.  
Kimmerer, "Learning the Grammar of Animacy," from *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2016), 48-59. PDF
- 11/10 de la Cadena, "Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond 'Politics,'" *Cultural Anthropology* 25.2 (2010): 334-70.  
Sweet, *Extinction and the Human*, Introduction, chapter 3, and Reprise. PDF
- 11/17 Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*
- 11/26 Thanksgiving Recess
- 12/1 **Drafts due – peer workshop**
- 12/8 Course evaluations; **Final presentations**
- Final paper due Monday, Dec. 13**