

## **ENGL 230: Environmental Literature**

T/Th 2:00pm - 3:20pm, 201 Villard  
Winter 2016

### **Course Description**

This class explores depictions of the environment in literature with a particular emphasis on contemporary U.S. fiction and drama. By attending to the depictions of nature and the environment in short stories, novels, and plays, this class introduces ecocriticism. Ecocriticism is a way of reading literature that foregrounds the role of nature in the texts. What does a particular text suggest about nature or the environment? How do depictions of nature or the environment function in the text? How do ideas about race, gender, and class inflect the ways novels, plays, and short stories depict nature or the environment?

The course is designed around three key themes. The first part of the course focuses on the relationship between gender and nature. The second part of the course focuses on depictions on the environment, gender, and labor in the food system. The third part of the course focuses on globalization through works of toxic comedy.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Read environmental literature with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of its conventions.
2. Perform critical, formal analyses of environmental literary texts.
3. Employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments.
4. Employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis.

### **Required Texts**

- Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*. (in bookstore; on reserve in Knight Library)
- Ruth Ozeki, *My Year of Meats*. (in bookstore; available from Knight Library via Summit)
- Karen Tei Yamashita, *Through the Arc of the Rainforest*. (in bookstore; available from Knight Library via Summit)

### **Course Assessment**

- Attendance (Required)
  - Attendance is required for this course. You may miss two classes without penalty; thereafter final grades will be lowered one-third letter grade for each absence. For example, with three absences, a B would become a B-. With four absences, a B would become a C+.
  - There will be participation and class assignment points available daily. You will have the opportunity to make up these points in the case of illness, medical emergency, or conflicts with official university events that you are required to attend. Documentation may be required.

- Participation, 10%
  - To receive an A, you should attend every (or almost every) class, arrive on time, bring a copy of the readings, contribute thoughtfully to the discussion, and actively participate in group and individual activities. Contributing thoughtfully means that you pose questions and provide answers that reflect your careful reading of the material, including directly referencing passages in the reading. In responding to your peers' observations, questions, and interpretations, you engage with the substance of their ideas and model respectful disagreement. In your questions, comments, and critiques, you show a willingness to take intellectual risks. You remain focused and fully engage with any work (including group work) assigned during class. Your contributions develop bridges between different class sessions, contributing to a conversation that spans the quarter. There will be up to .5 participation points (out of 10 for the quarter) that can be earned each class day.
- In Class Assignments, 10%
  - During class you will complete a variety of assignments. Some of these assignments will be group-work and others will be individually completed. You may not be able to complete some of these assignments if you have not done the reading for the day and/or if you do not have a copy of the reading with you. These assignments may not be given every class session. Some of these assignments will be weighted more heavily than others.
- Short Responses, 25%
  - There will be a short worksheet or prompt based on the reading provided for every Thursday that you do not have a paper due. You need to respond to 5 of the 7 provided prompts. Examples might include writing discussion questions or reflecting on a particularly important quotation from a novel. If you chose to turn in more than 5 responses, only your top 5 will be included in your grade. Each prompt is worth 5% of your final grade. Prompts will be graded on a scale of 1-5. These assignments will be due on Canvas prior to the start of class.
- Close Reading Papers, 55%
  - You will write three short papers during the quarter. They will be no weekly responses on weeks with papers due. Each close reading paper will be 3-5 pages long. You will be given 2-3 prompts from which to select for each paper. Prompts will be distributed at least one week before the paper is due. The first paper will be worth 15%, and the second and third papers will each be worth 20% of your grade. These papers will be due to Canvas prior to the start of class. Formatting instructions for the papers will be distributed separately and must be followed. Please see the English Department's Undergraduate Grading Expectations sheet posted on Canvas for a rubric.
- Extra Credit
  - You will have the opportunity to revise one of your first two major papers for an improved grade. The revision is due by 2pm on Monday, 3/14/16.

## Grading Scheme

	B + (< 90% - 87%)	C + (< 80% - 77%)	D + (< 70% - 67%)	
A (100% - 94%)	B (< 87% - 84%)	C (< 77% - 74%)	D (< 67% - 64%)	F (< 60%)
A - (< 94% - 90%)	B - (< 84% - 80%)	C - (< 74% - 70%)	D - (< 64% - 60%)	

## Course Policies

**Preferred First Name:** The University of Oregon has a preferred first name policy. According to this policy, a student or employee's preferred first name will be used in university communications and reporting except where the use of the legal name is required for university purposes. If you have reasons to believe your preferred first name may not be listed correctly in the roster or you do not feel comfortable taking advantage of UO's preferred first name policy, please communicate to me the name you wish to use. The preferred first name policy can be accessed here: <http://policies.uoregon.edu/node/216>

**Accessible Education:** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please consult with Professor Wald if aspects of the instruction or course design results in barriers to your participation. Students are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (AEC) 541-346-1155; <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>. AEC helps provide services including sign language interpreting, computer-based note-taking, classroom relocation, exam modifications, and alternative text conversion. Please request that the Accessible Education Center send Professor Wald a letter outlining your approved accommodations.

**Teaching and Learning Center:** You are encouraged to take advantage of the resources offered by the Teaching and Learning Center. They offer individual and small group tutoring, writing assistance, and a variety of other support programs. <http://tlc.uoregon.edu>, 541-346-3226, 68 PLC

**Late Work:** All assignments are due prior to the start of class on Canvas. All work is to be handed in on time. We will be discussing assignments in class on the day that they are due. Late work will not be graded.

**Incompletes and extensions** will be given only in the event of documented emergencies.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to adhere to University of Oregon's standards of academic integrity. All work should be your own, and all sources should be appropriately acknowledged. Violations of academic integrity include plagiarism, duplicate submission, cheating on examinations, and false citations. Please do not hesitate to speak to me if you have any questions about use of sources or citations. Please read the Academic Misconduct Code in full. It can be accessed at:

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx>

**Title IX Policy and Reporting Responsibilities:** The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. Consequently, all UO employees are required to report to appropriate authorities (supervisor or Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity) when they have reasonable cause to believe that discrimination, harassment or abuse of any kind has taken, or is taking, place. Students seeking to discuss a situation without talking to a mandatory reporter may call 541-346-SAFE. This 24/7 hotline is staffed by confidential, trained counselors. For confidential help, students may also contact University Health Services (<http://healthcenter.uoregon.edu/>) or Sexual Assault Support Services (<http://sass-lane.org/>).

**Inclement Weather:** In the event of inclement weather, the UO home webpage (<http://www.uoregon.edu/>) will include a banner at the top of the page displaying information about delay, cancellation, or closure decisions for the Eugene campus. Additionally, the UO Alerts blog will be updated with the latest updates and bulletins. Local television and radio stations will also broadcast delay and cancellation information. Classes will not be held if cancelled by the university. Additionally, members of the campus community are expected to use their best judgment in assessing the risk of coming to campus and returning home, based on individual circumstances. Those who believe the road conditions from home are dangerous are urged and even expected to stay there to prevent injury.

**Class Communication:** The primary means of communication outside of class in this course will be through your UO email account and Canvas. Please check your UO email account regularly. You should check Canvas at least once prior to each class session. I am also most readily available through email. I will respond much more rapidly to email than to a telephone call. Generally, you can expect an email response from me within two working days. I also request that you stop by my office hours at least once during the quarter. It will help me get to know you better, give us a chance to discuss your progress in the class, and provide the opportunity to discuss the course material one on one.

**Conventions of Address:** It is appropriate to refer to professors, administrators, staff, and GTFS by their titles. Please address me as Professor Wald or Dr. Wald, rather than Mrs. Wald, Ms. Wald, or by first name.

**Classroom Electronic Communications Policies:** Use of electronic equipment, including cell phones and laptop computers, is prohibited during this class. Exceptions to the prohibition of laptops may be requested from the instructor and will be granted only for legitimate academic reasons. Use of laptops for academic reasons will be monitored throughout the term, and failure to restrict their use to this function will result in the revocation of any laptop privileges.

### Class Outline and Schedule

Week One: Gender and Wilderness

T, 1/5: Introduction to environmental literature & course expectations

Th, 1/7: Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron" *The Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories*. (Canvas)

**Weekly Response One Due at 2pm to Canvas.**

Week Two: Gender and Wilderness

T, 1/12: Mei Mei Evans, "'Nature' and Environmental Justice," *Environmental Justice Reader* (Canvas).

Th, 1/14: Marilyn Robinson's *Housekeeping*, Chapters 1-4.

**Weekly Response Two Due at 2pm to Canvas.**

Week Three: Gender and Wilderness

T, 1/19: Marilyn Robinson's *Housekeeping*, Chapters 5-9.

Th, 1/21: Marilyn Robinson's *Housekeeping*, Chapters 10-11.

**Paper One Due at 2pm to Canvas**

Week Four: Food Systems

T, 1/26: El Teatro Campesino, "Quinta Temporada," *Los Actos*, 20-34. (Canvas)

Th, 1/28: El Teatro Campesino, "Vietnam Campesina," *Los Actos*, 104-130. (Canvas)

**Weekly Response Three Due at 2pm to Canvas**

Week Five: Food Systems

T, 2/2: Cherrie Moraga, "Heroes and Saints," *Heroes and Saints and Other Plays*, 86-149. (Canvas)

Th, 2/4: Con't Cherrie Moraga, "Heroes and Saints" (Canvas)

**Weekly Response Four Due at 2pm to Canvas**

Week Six: Food Systems

T, 2/9: Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*, 1-120.

Th, 2/11: Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*, 121-198.

**Weekly Response Five Due at 2pm to Canvas**

Week Seven: Food Systems

T, 2/16: Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*, 199-284.

Th, 2/18: Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*, 285-End.

**Paper Two Due at 2pm to Canvas**

Week Eight: Toxic Comedy

T, 2/23: *Blue Vinyl* (Watch first part of film in class)

Th, 2/25: *Blue Vinyl* (Watch final part of film in class & discuss)

**Weekly Response Six Due at 2pm to Canvas**

Week Nine: Toxic Comedy

T, 3/1: Candace Slater, "Amazonia as Edenic Narrative," *Uncommon Ground*, 114-131. (Canvas)

Th, 3/3: Karen Tei Yamashita, *Through the Arc of the Rainforest*, Part I and II

**Weekly Response Seven Due at 2pm to Canvas**

Week Ten: Toxic Comedy

T, 3/8: Karen Tei Yamashita, *Through the Arc of the Rainforest*, Part III and IV.

Th, 3/10: Karen Tei Yamashita, *Through the Arc of the Rainforest*, Part V and VI.

**Paper Three Due at 2pm to Canvas**