Course Information

Instructor: Kate Huber
Email: khuber2@uoregon.edu - This is my preferred method of communication
Phone: 541-346-0531
Office location: PLC 241
Office hours: Thursdays 11:30am-2:30pm or by appointment

Course Overview

This class introduces you to how conceptions of nature and the environment emerge in different ways around the world through an array of literary and multimedia genres. Early understandings of environmental literature and environmentalism focused on U.S. nature writing, so we will begin by examining short excerpts that sharpen our ability to recognize changing conceptions of nature over the course of a century as they came to inform mainstream environmentalism. We will also look at the ways these conceptions of nature position race, gender, and class relations. We will expand our understanding of genre and representations of environments to analyze how environmental justice literature has reworked understandings of environmentalism and relationships with the material environment. Building on these revised conceptions of surroundings, we will look at how texts from outside the U.S. reframe environmentalisms. As we delve into the many genres that populate environmental literature, we will also engage with how multimedia, including documentary film, podcasts, and even video games, are increasingly becoming part of the study of literature and the environment.

This is a reading and writing intensive course in which you will develop analytical skills for engaging with how various environmentalisms are produced and perpetuated in the public sphere through representations of and from particular perspectives. Being aware of dynamics implicit in an array of texts and media describing relationships to surroundings and material environments requires a heightened sensitivity to the various ways in which texts (in a broad sense of the term) produce meaning. In “Ordinary, Incredulous,” Judith Butler describes this “an education of the senses,” explaining: “We have to be both receptive and critical to what should be known, heard, seen, and debated within the various idioms of public life, whether they are verbal or written, visual or acoustic, architectural or haptic and performativet” (16). Sharpening our awareness and sensitivity to different ways in which texts represent particular perspectives or produce meaning about human relationships with the material world across multivalent and complex histories requires rigorous effort. By completing the reading and writing assignments for this course, you will develop the critical reading, writing, and thinking skills to be ethically engaged and nuanced interlocutors in conversations about and representations of the environment.

Required Texts and Materials

On Canvas:

- PDFs of excerpts from Henry David Thoreau’s Walden (1854), Aldo Leopold’s A Sand County Almanac (1948), and Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (1962)
- Link to the Mothers of Invention podcast

From the Duck Store or other vendor:

- A single-subject, letter sized (8.5x11 inch) notebook used exclusively for this course in which you will complete weekly writing assignments to create a reading journal for the term.

From http://neveralonegame.com:


From the reserve desk at the Knight Library Media Center:


**Learning Outcomes**

My goal for this course is that you learn to recognize the diverse ways in which people around the world engage with their surroundings and express those relationships across multiple genres. I want you to walk away with an interest in, as well as an ability to critically situate yourself amidst, the plethora of narrative voices conceptualizing the planet and the multivalent social and material relationships the planet comprises, including anthropogenic crises, like climate change.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Read environmental literature from around the world with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of its various conventions and genres.
2. Discuss the racial, gender, sexual, class, and colonial politics of global environmental literatures.
3. Perform critical written analyses of environmental texts in multiple genres.
4. Critically position your own perspective within global environmentalisms and their politics.
5. Employ primary and/or secondary sources with proper acknowledgement and citations, as they contribute to the essay’s thesis and analysis.

**Contract Grading**

**Purpose**
This course uses labor-based contract grading to emphasize process over product. To achieve the learning outcomes for this course, you will need to take risks in the way you think and write about the texts we read and discuss. The emphasis on feedback instead of grades in labor-based contract grading facilitates the cultivation of skills for examining how meaning is produced in particular historically specific contexts.

**The Contract**
Your final grade in this course will be based on the demonstrable and observable effort that you put into each of the assignment categories, namely, your reading journal, writing assignments, and out-of-class and in-class assignments. Provided you adhere to the terms of the contract, the default grade for this class is a B. That grade can go down if assignments are late, incomplete, or ignored. You can improve your grade by completing the full number of allowable assignments in each category detailed below.

*Note: You may not exceed the total number of points in a given assignment category. In other words, you cannot make up points in one category by completing extra assignments in a different category; for example, you may not complete more than five out-of-class assignments to make up missed points for in-class or reading journal assignments.*

In general, contract grading assesses the work you put into your reading journal, writing assignments, and out-of-class and in-class assignments based on the following criteria:

- **Completeness**: The assignment is complete based on the criteria detailed in the relevant rubric. An incomplete assignment loses a defined point value for each missed rubric item.

- **Promptness**: The assignment is turned in on the due date. (This applies to in-class assignments as well.) Assignments lose points for each day they are late. *Note: You may not complete in-class assignments late. If you are not in class for an in-class assignment, you will not receive points for that assignment.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>Late</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
<th>Ignored</th>
<th>Required number of points for B Grade</th>
<th>Maximum number of points per category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Journal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16 points (8 journal)</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>10 points per assignment</td>
<td>-2 points for each day late</td>
<td>-2 points for each missed item on the assignment rubric</td>
<td>-10 points</td>
<td>40 points (4 writing assignments completed)</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out-of-Class Activities</td>
<td>2 point per activity</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>-1 point</td>
<td>-2 point</td>
<td>8 points (4 out-of-class activities completed)</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Activities</td>
<td>1 point/class</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>-0.5 for each missed item on the activity rubric</td>
<td>-1 point</td>
<td>18 points (Present and participating in 18 class sessions)</td>
<td>20 points (no absences)</td>
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**Final Grade Breakdown**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A to A+</td>
<td>93 to 100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+ to A-</td>
<td>87 to 92 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Default B Grade</td>
<td>82 to 86 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+ to B-</td>
<td>77 to 81 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- to C</td>
<td>70 to 76 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D- to D+</td>
<td>60 to 69 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 or fewer points</td>
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*While this breakdown may look like a conventional grading scale, it tallies points based on completed assignments that are turned in on time for each assignment category. Rather than assessing the quality of each rubric point, you receive the full number of points if you include what is requested by the assignment prompt. You will also receive feedback on things to consider for future assignments. Note: Incorporating feedback into future assignments may be an item on the rubric.*

**Caveats and Clemency**

Each assignment category requires the B-grade number of points to achieve a B in the class. In other words, you may not, for example, do additional out-of-class assignments to make up for in-class assignments. That said, I am happy to work with you to help you be as successful as possible in this course.

If there are extenuating circumstances that prevent or inhibit you from being able to complete assignments on time, please email me or visit my office hours so we can discuss accommodation options. Please see the section in course policies on Access for additional information about university-sanctioned accommodations.

We’ll discuss the grading contract in more depth during Week 1 to help you understand how assessment will work. This contract will also be available on our Canvas site.

**Course Work**

**Reading Journal**

I will assign a total of ten reading journal prompts throughout the term. New prompts will be posted to Canvas by Monday evening. You must complete eight for the default B grade. You may complete ten prompts to improve your final grade in this class. You will turn in your journal at the end of weeks 3, 5, 7, and 9. Each journal entry must be completed within two weeks of it being assigned, and late entries will not be accepted; for example, you cannot get credit for the week 1 journal prompt in the week 9 journal check.

Initially, the journal prompts will ask you to describe basic information about the reading assignment, such as a summary of content or context. As the term progresses, the prompts will ask you to think more critically about particular points in the text. Sometimes, you will share your journal entry with your peers during in-class activities.
The purpose of this journal is to help you reflect on the readings as we discuss how texts produce meanings about nature and the environment in different ways and across different historical and cultural contexts. The journal must be handwritten, and you should try to avoid (electronic) distractions whilst writing in it. While this may seem like an uncomfortable imposition to some of you, writing by hand often develops ideas in different ways from typing on a computer. It fosters focus through distancing you from distractions on the Internet at the same time that it allows you to explore new ways of engaging with your reading and writing and your own work environment.

Feel free to experiment in your journal. This journal is meant to be a space in which you can test out and develop ideas, as well as discover the extent to which your reading and writing processes mutually inform your ideas of nature and the environment as you learn more about and from environmental literature and our class sessions.

Writing Assignments
I will assign five short (2 to 3 pages excluding the works cited page) essay assignments during this course. You must complete four of them for a B grade in this class. These essays are due on Friday of weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 by midnight to Canvas. I will distribute detailed essay prompts in class the week prior to the due date.

All written work must be correctly formatted and include a works cited list. Uploaded essay documents should be typed and double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font and 1” margins. Include a header in the upper-right corner with your last name and page number. Use MLA format for quoting and citing sources.

Each writing assignment will offer two prompts to help you work on a particular analytical skill and think about how a given reading assignment uses its form (genre) and content to present a particular relationship to material surroundings. While you will write primarily about the texts we are looking at in class, you may draw on your notes from our class lectures and discussions to inform your writing. You may only use outside sources if you have received my explicit permission prior to the assignment due date.

Out-of-Class Assignments
You must complete four of the following out-of-class assignments to obtain a B in this class:

- Respond to the current reading assignment discussion board prompt in 250 words using the discussion board guidelines. See Canvas for details. This option may be used once for each reading assignment discussion board prompt.
- Reply to two reading assignment discussion board responses in 100 words using the discussion board guidelines. See Canvas for details. This option may be used once for each reading assignment discussion board prompt.
- Visit my office hours to discuss a draft of one of your essays. This option may be used five times.
- Write a paragraph that accompanies an essay assignment explaining what my feedback was on your previous essay assignment and how you are incorporating that feedback into this new assignment. This option may be used four times.
- Write a paragraph that accompanies an essay assignment explaining how a previous reading assignment deepens your thinking about the current reading assignment’s genre and content. This option may be used four times.
- Attend a public lecture on campus pertaining to an environmental issue. Write a one-page reflection summarizing the title, speaker, location, sponsor, and content of the lecture, as well as a brief discussion of one thing you learned and one critical question you have about the topic. I will post lecture announcements on our class Canvas site as I hear of them, but you are also encouraged to seek out and share relevant lectures.
- Revise an incomplete writing assignment based on my feedback. Write a paragraph on what you revised and why. This assignment must be completed within two weeks of receiving an incomplete number of points on a given writing or reading journal assignment.

Note: You may complete up to five of these out-of-class assignments for credit to improve your final grade in this class.

In-Class Assignments
In-class assignments offer different forms of engagement that generate a one-point assignment per class session. You must complete eighteen of these in-class assignments for a B grade. No late work is accepted. Note: This gives you one week off for the whole term, so make sure you choose your absences wisely.
Each class session, we will address the assigned reading in a variety of ways, including free-writes, small-group and class discussions and activities, and short presentations. In-class assignments will reflect your completion of the reading assignments and work on a particular skillset or concept that we are addressing.

In-class assignments will be completed in base groups, or assigned groups, that you will return to for each session during a given reading unit. New base groups will be assigned for each reading. You will need to sit with your base group. The first base groups will be assigned in week 2.

**Course Policies**

**Registration**
The only way to register for this course is through DuckWeb. I am sorry that I cannot admit you to the class if you are not registered.

**Communication Policy**
Over the course of the term, you may need to consult with me outside of class. You are welcome to email me or to visit me during my office hours or by appointment. **Please allow 48 hours for me to respond to your email queries.**

Your emails need to conform to the standards of professional correspondence. That is, please be sure when sending me an email to include a subject line that describes the purpose of the email, as well as a greeting, body, and closing in the content of the email. **Please note, I will not respond to emails that fail to comply with professional correspondence standards.**

**Academic Honesty**
All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. **The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented.** You may also wish to consult Purdue OWL (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/) for information on how to properly cite sources. For UO policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

**Attendance**
**Attendance is required.** You may miss the equivalent of one week of class meetings for any reason before it will affect your grade. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, except in extenuating circumstances, of which you will need to make me aware. **You are responsible for anything you miss if you are not in class. Attendance will be taken at the start of class. Arriving significantly late to class may result in an absence.**

**Late Work**
No late work is accepted for this course except in extenuating circumstances (of which you will need to make me aware).

**Cell Phone and Computer Use**
Cell phones are highly disruptive. The ringer must be turned off before the start of class. You may not text, answer or make calls in the classroom. If this is an issue, please meet with me individually so we can work out accommodation.

Personal computers may be used for note-taking and in-class work only. If this is an issue, please meet with me individually so we can work out some accommodation.

**Access**
The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoecc@uoregon.edu.

**Emergencies**
UO Emergency Management & Continuity Program (UOEMC) has an entire website dedicated to helping students, staff and faculty become better prepared in the event of an emergency: [http://emc.uoregon.edu/](http://emc.uoregon.edu/). Although this website offers a wide range of helpful tips, including how to create your own emergency supply kit to updates on any recent
alerts, three recommendations pertain to this class: confirm that you are signed up for emergency alerts (for both emails and text messages), practice at least two routes out of this classroom so that you already know them in the event of an evacuation (there are evacuation maps available in most hallways that you can consult to help you identify the best routes) and know the evacuation assembly area. For emergency assistance on campus call 911. For non-emergency assistance on campus call 541-346-2919. Never assume others have called when you witness an emergency situation that endangers yourself or others.

Support for students experiencing gender-based violence
Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, coercion, and/or sexual harassment is encouraged to seek help. Please visit https://safe.uoregon.edu for information. You are also strongly encouraged to contact Renae DeSautel, Sexual Violence Response & Support Services Coordinator, desautel@uoregon.edu. She will keep your information confidential. In addition, the UO Ombudsperson Bruce MacAllister (541 346-6400 or ombuds@uoregon.edu) can provide confidential support and assistance. You can also contact any pastor, priest, imam, or other member of the clergy. All of these people, including all UO faculty members, have an obligation not to reveal your name or other specific information without your permission, although faculty members do have to provide “general information” that will help us create a safer campus. As your instructor, I can and will help you access the services and support you need, and I can reassign work partners and make other necessary accommodations.

DACA Support
“There is no ambiguity…about the importance of continuing DACA. My view of morality dictates that young people, many of whom were brought here as infants or toddlers, must be allowed to remain in the United States to learn, work, and make a life for themselves.” –UO President Schill 9/4/17

Justine Carpenter, director of Multicultural and Identity-Based Support Services, is the campus point-person in support of undocumented and DACA students. Carpenter and can be reached at 541-346-1123 or justcarp@uoregon.edu. For additional information on the UO’s support for DACA students, please visit the UO DREAMers Workgroup website. Should an immigration official ask for information about a UO student, employee, or visiting scholar, please immediately contact the Office of the General Counsel at 541-346-3082 or gcounsel@uoregon.edu.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introductions and overviews
Monday, January 7, 2019: First discussion board thread open for responses and replies.

Tuesday, January 8, 2019
- Theme: Introduction to Environmental Literature Course
- Reading assignment: None
- In-class assignment: Student Questionnaire

Thursday, January 10, 2019
- Theme: Reading Nature and Environmentalisms at Different Historical Moments
- Reading assignment:
  o Available on Canvas: “Solitude” (pp. 200-208), from Henry David Thoreau’s Walden (1854), “Good Oak” (pp. 6-18) and “Conservation Esthetic” (pp. 256-269) from Aldo Leopold’s A Sand County Almanac (1948), and “Earth’s Green Mantle” (pp. 63-83), from Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (1962). **Bring printed copies of the readings to class prepared to share, reflect on, and work on your reading strategies and habits.**
  - In-class assignment: Annotated reading assignment. **Note: After week 1, the in-class assignments are TBA. I have left a space for you to write them in if that’s helpful for you.**

Week 2: Novels and Natures
Monday, January 14, 2019: Second discussion board thread open for responses and replies.

Tuesday, January 15, 2019
- Theme: Novels and Cross-Cultural Conversations
- Reading assignment:
  o Part 1 of Under the Feet of Jesus by Helena Maria Viramontes, pp. 3-46.
- In-class assignment:
Thursday, January 17, 2019:
- Theme: Summarizing vs. Comparing/Critiquing
- Reading assignment:
  o Part 2 of Under the Feet of Jesus, pp. 49-90.
- In-class assignment:

Friday, January 18, 2019: First essay assignment, “Situating Your Conception of Nature,” due on Canvas by midnight. I will provide essay prompt details in class during week 1.

Week 3: Comparing Environmentalisms
Tuesday, January 22, 2019
- Theme: Defining Characters through their Environments
- Reading assignment:
  o Part 3 of Under the Feet of Jesus, pp. 93-130.
- In-class assignment:

Thursday, January 24, 2019
- Theme: Generating Critical Conversations
- Reading assignment:
  o Part 4 of Under the Feet of Jesus, pp. 133-180.
- In-class assignment:

Week 4: Reading Memoir
Monday, January 28, 2019: Third discussion board thread open for responses and replies.

Tuesday, January 29, 2019:
- Theme: Situating Kenya in Environmentalism
- Reading assignment:
  o Chapter 1 “Beginnings” and Chapter 2 “Cultivation,” from Wangari Maathai’s Unbowed: A Memoir, pp., 3-52
- In-class assignment:

Thursday, January 31, 2019
- Theme: Memoir and Audience
- Reading assignment:
  o Chapter 4 “American Dream,” pp., 73-97, and Chapter 6 “Foresters Without Diplomas,” from Wangari Maathai’s Unbowed: A Memoir, pp., 119-138
- In-class assignment:

Friday, February 1, 2019: Second essay assignment, “Novels and Environmentalisms,” due on Canvas by midnight. I will provide essay prompt details in class during week 3.

Week 5: Global Environmentalisms
Tuesday, February 5, 2019
- Theme: Historically and Contextually Specific Environmental Movements
- Reading assignment:
  o Chapter 8 “Seeds of Change,” pp., 164-183, and Chapter 10 “Freedom Turns a Corner,” from Wangari Maathai’s Unbowed: A Memoir, pp., 206-229
- In-class assignment:

Thursday, February 7, 2019
- Theme: International Environmental Movements
- Reading assignment:
- In-class assignment:
Week 6: Creative Non-fiction
Monday, February 11, 2019: Fourth discussion board thread open for responses and replies.

Tuesday, February 12, 2019
- Theme: Creative Non-fiction Narratives
- Reading assignment:
  - “Part 1: Stories,” Chapters 1-11, from Amitav Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement*, pp., 3-44
- In-class assignment:

Thursday, February 14, 2019
- Theme: Climate Change Narratives
- Reading assignment:
  - “Part 1: Stories,” Chapters 11-18, from Amitav Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement*, pp., 44-84
- In-class assignment:

Friday, February 15, 2019: Third essay assignment, “Memoir and Global Environmentalisms,” due on Canvas by midnight. I will provide essay prompt details in class during week 5.

Week 7: Writing about Climate Change
*A screening of The Pipe will be scheduled for this week after a survey of student and facility availability.*

Tuesday, February 19, 2019
- Theme: Competing Narratives
- Reading assignment:
  - “Part 2: History,” Chapters 1-9, from Amitav Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement*, pp., 87-115
- In-class assignment:

Thursday, February 21, 2019
- Theme: Strategic Narratives
- Reading assignment:
  - “Part 3: Politics,” Chapters 1-9, from Amitav Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement*, pp., 119-162
- In-class assignment:
  - Journal check due in class

Week 8: Multimedia Environmentalisms: Documenting Struggle
Monday, February 25, 2019: Fifth discussion board thread open for responses and replies.

Tuesday, February 26, 2019
- Theme: Documentaries about Nature and Environmentalism
- Reading assignment: *The Pipe*
- In-class assignment:

Thursday, February 28, 2019
- Theme: Situating Environmental Struggle
- Reading assignment: *The Pipe*
- In-class assignment:

Friday, March 1, 2019: Fourth essay assignment, “Creative Non-fiction and Narratives of Climate Change,” due on Canvas by midnight. I will provide essay prompt details in class during week 7.

Week 9: Iñupiat Stories in New Media
Tuesday, March 5, 2019
- Theme: Critically Situating and Discussing an Iñupiat Narrative
- Reading assignment:
  - *Never Alone* (play for at least 2 hours prior to class)
- In-class assignment:

Thursday, March 7, 2019
- Theme: Reading Nature and Environmentalisms in the Never Alone video game
- Reading assignment:
  - Never Alone (play for at least 2 hours prior to class)
- In-class assignment:
- Assignment due: Journal check due in class

Week 10: Environmental News in Popular Genres
Tuesday, March 12, 2019
- Theme: News Media and Environmentalisms
- Reading assignment: Podcast from Mothers of Invention (Episode: TBA)
- In-class assignment:

Thursday, March 14, 2019
- Theme: Connecting Conversations Across the Course
- Reading assignment: None! Review and reflection.
- In-class assignment:

Friday, March 15, 2019: Fifth essay assignment, “Multimedia Environmental Narratives,” due on Canvas by midnight. I will provide essay prompt details in class during week 9.

The End! There is no final for this course.