[Syllabus 3.0, March 16]

Dr. Alaimo
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Office: 205 PLC. Hours: Tuesdays: 3:30-4:30, Thursdays: 3:30-5:00, and by appointment.
[During weeks when the class is offered remotely, I will not be in my office. Please email me with questions or to set up a time for a telephone conversation.]

ENGLISH 615 (36543): Advanced Study in Lit Theory
Environmental Theory

Spring 2020: Tuesdays, 9:00-11:50, 448 PLC

[Please note: due to the unprecedented, extraordinary nature of this term, this syllabus may be altered, as necessary. I will do my very best, but it will be a work in progress.]

Course Description: Environmental theories are proliferating in the early 21st century, across many fields, areas, and topics. This seminar will introduce a diverse range of recent transdisciplinary environmental theories, focusing on current questions, concepts, topics, questions and methodologies. Students will be required to attend and participate in every class session, having done the readings carefully; write 4 very short discussion starters; write and present one short paper; write and present a medium length seminar paper; and attend one related lecture, event, or exhibit.

Required Texts:
Wald, Vázquez, Ybarra, and Ray, Latinx Environmentalisms
Natania Meeker and Antonia Szabari, Radical Botany: Plants and Speculative Fiction
Melody Jue, Wild Blue Media: Thinking Through Seawater
Yusoff, A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None
Also: PDFs of chapters and articles available on Canvas and elsewhere.
**Course Requirements:**
Participation, including one event: 15%
Discussion starters: 15%
One short paper, with presentations: 20%
Seminar paper and presentation: 50%
All requirements must be met to receive credit for the course.

**Participation and Attendance:**
*In person:* This is a graduate seminar, so all students are expected to have read the texts carefully before class and arrive with insights, comparisons, and lines of inquiry. The success of the graduate seminar will depend largely upon students’ contributions to the discussion. According to departmental standards, graduate students are expected to attend every class session, except in cases of extreme illness or emergency. Due to the unprecedented situation this term, however, we will be more flexible and consider issues that may arise on a case by case basis. Participation will be graded, from A to F. The participation grade will take both quality and quantity of participation into account. (Basics: come to class on time and refrain from using phones, social media, etc., in class.)

*Remote:* The same standards apply, as above, but will be modified, of course, to include online comments and discussions.

**Talks:** *In person:* Attend one environmental talk or event. You will be required to attend Chris Breu’s talk, Wednesday, May 20, 12:45-2:45, EMU 232, “Infrastructure as Ecology: Beyond the Politics of Representation.” Either ask a solid, informed question and give a brief summary of your question and the response at the start of the next class, or present a very brief summary of the argument of the talk and your response (3-5 minutes). This will count under participation. One class period, strategically timed, will be used to compensate for the time spent at this, or another event.

*Remote:* We will need to see what happens—will there still be events this spring? Also, given the large number of students in the class and the possibility of clunky online “meetings” occurring through the end of term, we may need to have half the students present their seminar papers the penultimate week and the other half the last week. We will discuss later.

Discussion Starters: 4 short “papers,” 200-300 words, with two parts: 1. Through Line: identify one key question, pivot, or contrasting position across at least 3 readings for that week. (For week 5, individual chapters can count as 2 readings but also include a reading from another week.) 2. Zeroing in: Focusing on one essay or chapter, construct one difficult, specific discussion question. Last names A-H: please do this on the odd weeks, weeks, one, three, etc. Last names S-Z: please take even weeks. [*In person:* bring a paper copy and hand in at the start of class and present. *Remote:* Post on Canvas by midnight the Monday before class and very present, orally, during the synchronous discussion.]

**One short paper, with presentation:**
Please sign up for papers/presentations in Canvas, under “Pages”
**In person:** Each student will sign up for one paper, which they will present at the start of class. Papers should be 4-5 pages, about 1,200-1,500 words, double spaced, stapled, with page numbers and word count. (No Works Cited necessary unless citing texts outside the syllabus.) The papers should do some combination of the following: trace through lines in the group of readings; identify key questions and concerns; compare arguments, aims, and methods; evaluate what particular readings enable us to know or to do and what remains outside their scope; identify other theorists or texts that would enable a richer understanding of the text at hand; consider how you might think with these texts, extending them to other areas; speculate about where some of these arguments might go from here, and, importantly, conclude with 3 discussion questions for the class. Note that the list does not include critique, in the sense of “mastering” the texts by identifying their flaws. Not only is this particular critical mode often overused and employed in a hasty fashion, but it may preclude more generative approaches, and sometimes more challenging modes of “thinking with.” These papers need not be written in a conventional format—they do not have to cohere or have a thesis instead they can be divided into sections. Do not strive for premature closure—dive into what is still puzzling, thorny, and generative. Pack as much solid content into the pages as you can.

**Remote:** The description of the papers, above, still applies. For the first 3 weeks of class, and perhaps after that if we are still having class remotely, your papers will be posted on the Canvas site, open for the class to read and comment on. The deadline for posting the papers will be the Sunday before class, at midnight. The deadline for commenting on the papers will be the next day, Monday, at midnight. These comments will count as participation.

**Seminar Paper:** The medium-length seminar paper should focus on some area of environmental theory included in the course, engaging with some of the readings of the class but also including other related theories and criticism as part of the research. For this class, “application” papers will not be accepted; instead, your essay should present an original, complex contribution to theoretical questions, debates, and concerns, by working with the theoretical and scholarly texts. These papers should demonstrate an understanding of the theories in the class, present their own complex and illuminating central argument, be effectively organized, and be well written in clear, concise, and precise prose. PhD students will be required to submit a one-page statement explaining how they would revise the essay for publication; MA students may also submit such a statement if they would like feedback related to potential publication. Seminar papers should be 13-15 pages, about 5,000 words, double spaced, stapled, with page numbers and word count, Works Cited, and Explanatory Notes. Please submit an electronic version of the paper to Canvas for the standard plagiarism check and hand in a paper copy in class. In person: Everyone will present a condensed version of their seminar paper during the last (or penultimate) class session.

Remote: I hope that by the last class we will be able to have class in person, if not, I will provide instructions for what to do. TBD. Everything else in the description above remains the same. We may decide it would be better for half the class to present a rough draft of their paper the penultimate week.
What if...?

--You have an emergency. Please email me, the instructor, along with your graduate advisor from your program. Dr. Wood has said that emergency situations will be dealt with--in this difficult time--on a case by case basis, so there may be ways to manage whatever happens.
--I, the instructor, become ill or have another emergency: Since this is a graduate seminar, please stick with the schedule of readings, presentations, and discussions—whether they are supposed to occur online or in person--and keep going! This is your seminar—you should proceed! Dr. Wood and Dr. Vazquez will make necessary arrangements.
--You are not sure what the heck is going on: Please check Canvas and your university email for announcements.
--You are confused about the procedures and format of the course: Please read the syllabus carefully and then spend some time exploring the different categories on the Canvas page. Please do not email me individually with questions that pertain to the class as a whole. Instead, start by posting your comment, advice or question on the ongoing “Discussion” in Canvas called “Questions about the Course”
--You are confused about technology: For most tech questions it is best to ask the IT people at U of O. I also put an ongoing “Discussion” in Canvas called “Questions about Technology.” I am not a tech expert—students in the class will no doubt have better advice than I would!
--You would like more input from the instructor about the actual content of the course, in terms of a particular topic or question. For example, maybe you need a brief lecture about the relation between poststructuralism and new materialism or maybe you are interested in how environmental justice is or is not related to the readings in class about race and species. Or you want advice about seminar paper topics. Please feel free to post your questions on “Questions about Course Content.” Ordinarily, I would give spontaneous lectures on all sorts of topics during the seminar, but I don’t think this format will allow that. So I will consider your requests and record brief lectures and post them or make sure to discuss the topic during the synchronous time.

Muddling Through: How We Will Try to Have Class Remotely
[A work in progress: this could change]

Background: I am not an expert in online teaching—I have never taught online—and I very much value face to face discussions. My courses are not “canned”—when I lecture it is often impromptu, provoked by the need for a history of concepts and debates or wider framework of the topics and questions being discussed—very in the moment. I’ve taught many graduate seminars, but none of them remotely, and none of them with this many students, and none of them over the short space of the term. I am trying to adjust, learn new things, and do my best to make this work. I welcome suggestions.

What I’ve learned in the last 2 weeks that has shaped this class:
1. It is likely that individual internet access will fail.
2. It is likely that Canvas, Zoom, etc. will become overloaded and break down.
3. Also even if all the systems work, no one wants to be looking at a screen for, in this case, 3 hours! And as we isolate ourselves, there will be challenges in our homes—children, dogs barking, garbage trucks, etc.

4. Because of #1, #2 and #3, asynchronous classes—or portions of classes—should be used.

And yet, live, real time discussion is essential for graduate seminars. So, I’ve decided on the following plan for how our class will proceed remotely, which attempts to integrate asynchronous and synchronous formats. This is a much more detailed schedule than I would normally use, but I think it will help minimize the chaos.

1. Our seminar is roughly 3 hours. The first hour or so will be accounted for asynchronously. The two “presenters” on that week’s readings will post their papers to Canvas and each member of the class will provide brief comments on those papers. (See assignments, above.)

2. Remote Meeting: From 10:00-12:00 the class will attempt to meet synchronously.
   - We will first try Canvas, “Conferences” using the Big Blue Button (BBB). It looks like the instructor sends an invitation to the class, which I will do, at 9:45, but we won’t begin until 10.
   - If that doesn’t work, we will try Zoom. The university does not know how Zoom will interact with Canvas, as yet. Please download and obtain a U of Oregon zoom account with your U of O email address. https://zoom.us/download (select “Zoom Client for Meetings.”). Here is a link to Help articles, Sign up for a Zoom account using your UO email address: https://zoom.us/signup. Check your email for a confirmation link, and use it complete activation of your account. You will need to input your name, create a password, and accept the Privacy Policy.
   - If Zoom doesn’t work, we will “discuss,” through typing, on Canvas “Discussions.” I will post the discussion as “Week One. Backup Discussion.”
   - If that doesn’t work during the time slot, I will try to leave the discussion open, or reopen it for asynchronous “discussions,” through Thursday.
   - We may decide to change this order, but it gives us something to start with.

3. Schedule of the Synchronous Class Discussions: Tuesdays 10:00-12:00
   - 10:00-10:30: The two people who are “presenting” their short papers will respond to the comments they received, about 5-10 minutes each, then discussion.
   - 10:30-12:00: The 7 people who did “Discussion Starters” will start the discussion, quickly reading their “Through Lines.” We will discuss. Then, if we haven’t already addressed their discussion questions, they will read them, quickly. Then we will discuss. Finally, a more open discussion.
   - This may change.
Official University of Oregon Policies

“In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also encouraged to continue the readings and other assignments as outlined on this syllabus or subsequent syllabi.”

Accessible Education - (see https://aec.uoregon.edu/best-practices-faculty for more information) “The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.”

Academic Misconduct - (See https://dos.uoregon.edu/academic-misconduct for more information) “The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.”

Inclement Weather: “It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced on Canvas and by email. Updates on inclement weather and closure are also communicated in other ways described here: https://hr.uoregon.edu/about-hr/campus-notifications/inclement-weather/inclement-weather-immediate-updates”

Academic Disruption due to Campus Emergency: “In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also encouraged to continue the readings and other assignments as outlined in this syllabus or subsequent syllabi.”

Reporting Obligations: “I am a [designated reporter/student-directed employee]. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see Employee Reporting Obligations on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment, including sex or gender-based violence, may seek information and resources at sfce.uoregon.edu, respect.uoregon.edu, or investigations.uoregon.edu or contact the non-confidential Title IX office/Office of Civil Rights Compliance (541-346-3123), or Dean of Students offices (541-346-3216), or call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE for help. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect.”
Schedule (this may be adjusted)

[With the exception of the four required books, all readings will be PDFs posted on Canvas. Some of these copies will not be clean, so feel free to obtain your own copies of the books, essays, or chapters, as you desire.]

March 31. Week One. Indigenous Knowing, Indigenous Environmentalisms
Enrique Salmon, “Kincentric Ecology.”
Karin Amimoto Ingersoll, from Waves of Knowing.

April 7. Week Two. Latinx Environmentalisms
Wald, Vázquez, Ybarra, and Ray, Latinx Environmentalisms, selected essays

April 14. Week Three. New Materialisms and Posthumanisms
Karen Barad, from Meeting the Universe Halfway.
Stacy Alaimo, “New Materialism” forthcoming in After the Human, edited by Sherryl Vint.
Rosi Braidotti, “Posthuman Critical Theory” and Cary Wolfe, “Posthumanism,” from Braidotti and Hlavajova, Posthuman Glossary
Nate Otjen, “Inscriptive Energetics.”
Johanna Bruckner, “Molecular Sex and Polymorphic Sensibilities”:
https://transmediale.de/content/molecular-sex-and-polymorphic-sensibilities
Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, “’Theorizing in a Void’: Sublimity, Matter, and Physics in Black Feminist Poetics.”

April 21. Week Four. Species and Race
Jacques Derrida “The Animal Therefore I am.”
Jennifer Wenzel, “Turning Over a New Leaf: Fanonian Humanism and Environmental Justice.”
Rachel Lee, “Everybody’s Novel Protist,” from The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies
Claire Jean Kim, from Dangerous Crossings: Race, Species, and Nature in a Multicultural Age

April 28. Week Five. Disability and Queer Ecologies
Eli Clare, “Meditations on Natural Worlds, Disabled Bodies, and a Politics of Cure,” from Material Ecocriticism + excerpt from Brilliant Imperfection.
Eva Hayward, “More Lessons from a Starfish.”
Cate Sandilands, “Into This Blue.”

May 5. Week Six. Speculating with Plants
Natania Meeker and Antonia Szabari, Radical Botany: Plants and Speculative Fiction.

May 12. Week Seven. Oceans, Mediated
Melody Jue, Wild Blue Media: Thinking Through Seawater.
Alaimo, “Violet Black” from Prismatic Ecologies, ed. Jeffrey J. Cohen
Melody Jue, “~” from An Ecotopian Lexicon.

May 19. Week Eight. Anthropocene Futures?
Kathryn Yusoff, A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None.
Donna J. Haraway, “Tentacular Thinking,” from Staying with the Trouble
Stacy Alaimo, “Your Shell on Acid,” from Exposed
Kyle Whyte, “Indigenous SF for the Anthropocene.”
Collard, Dempsey and Sundberg, “A Manifesto for Abundant Futures.”

May 26. Week Nine. ?
One class period to compensate for attending a related lectures, events, or exhibits.
Or, an open week in case one of the weeks is a disaster due to technology failure or a meteor crash, or some other weird thing we haven’t foreseen.
Or, a week for half the students to present drafts of their seminar papers.
Meet or “meet” with Dr. Alaimo about your seminar papers.

June 2. Last Class.
Short Presentations of Seminar Papers.
Seminar Papers Due: submit electronic versions on Canvas and paper versions in class.