

[Syllabus 4.0, March 20. I hope this is the FINAL version.]

Dr. Alaimo

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Office Hours: Tuesdays: 3:30-4:30, Thursdays: 3:30-5:00, and by appointment. I will be available on Zoom during those times and by phone. Email me for my phone number if you would like to meet by phone. I will email you the invitation to office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays. More information about Zoom is on the last page.

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 nature of this term, this syllabus may be altered, as necessary.]

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 Meeber 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: 15%

Discussion starters: 15%

One short paper : 20%

Seminar paper: 50%

Participation and Attendance:

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 discussions, whether they be written or spoken. Participation is a vital part of the class and will be graded. The participation grade will take both quality and quantity of participation into account. If you can’t read all the assigned texts carefully, use your judgement and choose to read some with more, and some with less, depth and rigor.

According to departmental standards, graduate students are expected to attend every class session, except in cases of extreme illness or emergency. Let’s face it, we are all in a state of emergency this term, and I expect that each of you at some point, may need a week off as a mental health recovery period. Take that week off if you need it (just email me, saying, “This is my week off”). We are all processing this pandemic, and while we may process things differently and at different rates, the demands on cognitive as well as psychological and emotional energy are real. And unexpected things are expected to occur. Longer lasting problems that interfere with your ability to complete the work for the course will be considered on a case by case basis. (Please contact me and your academic advisor, for most that would be Dr. Wood, in the same email.)

Discussion Starters: 4 short reading responses, 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.

Due: Submit as an “Assignment” on Canvas and post on the “Discussion” for that week (as a backup) by midnight the Monday before class. Present, orally, during the synchronous discussion.

One short paper, with presentation:

[Please sign up for papers/presentations in Canvas, under “Pages”](#)

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.

Please submit your papers to me under “ ” on the Canvas site AND post for the class discussion, under “Week __ Short Papers Post and Comment” “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 part of your 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. We will figure out later, how the seminar papers will be virtually “presented” and “discussed.”

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! Someone from the class can initiate the synchronous

portion on Canvas (BBB) or Zoom. Dr. Wood and Dr. Vazquez will make necessary arrangements. As long as you keep going and post things in Canvas those papers and discussions will be there for me to grade once I am well. (What a bizarre thing to write.)

--You lose internet access. Email me from your phone and let me know.

--I lose internet access. I am not able to do much from my phone, so, I may not be able to let you know. Carry on as best you can. Someone from the class can initiate the synchronous portion on Canvas (BBB) or Zoom.

--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 try 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 so 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 synchronic 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 try Zoom. Please familiarize yourself with Zoom. The password will be 934817.
- If Zoom doesn't work, move to Canvas, "Conferences" using the Big Blue Button (BBB). It looks like the instructor sends an invitation to the class.
- If Zoom doesn't work, we will "discuss," through typing, on Canvas "Discussions." We will start with "Week XXX: Short Papers" and then move to "Week XXX Backup Discussion."
- In case the typed discussion doesn't work synchronously during the time slot, I will leave it open through Friday for asynchronous discussion.

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.
- We may decide to change this.

MORE ZOOM INFO:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/214957889?pwd=YnZ5aHNqeXJGYlIiXmkdXR1ZUNdIvQT09>

Meeting ID: 214 957 889

Password: 934817

One tap mobil: 214957889# US Toll

Meeting ID: 214 957 889

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aj76Yv3tz>

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 safe.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*.

Jorge Marcone, "The Stone Guests: Buen Vivir and Popular Environmentalisms in the Andes and Amazonia," in Heise, Christensen, and Neiman, eds., *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*.

Melissa K Nelson, "Getting Dirty," in Joanne Barker, ed., *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies*.

Carolyn Fornoff, "Nahual," and Janet Tamalik McGrath, "Sila," from Schneider-Mayerson and Bellamy, *An Ecotopian Lexicon*.

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*

Video lecture: Sharon Holland "Vocabularies of Vulnerability: Human/Animal/Blackness", <https://www.crg.berkeley.edu/guest-lecture-videos/vocabularies-of-vulnerability-humanimalblackness-prof-sharon-holland/>

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*.

Mitchell, Antebi, Snyder, "Introduction" to *The Matter of Disability*.

Joshua Kupetz, "Disability Ecology and the Rematerialization of Literary Disability Studies," from *The Matter of Disability*.

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.

Discuss your seminar papers with Dr. Alaimo.

June 2. Last Class.

Short Presentations of Seminar Papers.

Seminar Papers Due.

ZOOM INFO:

Stacy Alaimo is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Synchronous Class Meetings

Time: Mar 31, 2020 10:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Tue, 10 occurrence(s)

Mar 31, 2020 10:00 AM

Apr 7, 2020 10:00 AM

Apr 14, 2020 10:00 AM

Apr 21, 2020 10:00 AM

Apr 28, 2020 10:00 AM

May 5, 2020 10:00 AM

May 12, 2020 10:00 AM

May 19, 2020 10:00 AM

May 26, 2020 10:00 AM

Jun 2, 2020 10:00 AM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly:

https://zoom.us/meeting/v5UpfuyvpjMjMrsxenaNqOHFAszwcNW_CA/ics?icsToken=98tyKuupqjIvHdyduV-CZ7YvA5X7bvHMiFxcubtYkh7LEg97RCLILPVBHIVAM_mB

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/214957889?pwd=YnZ5aHNqeXJGYlIXMkdXR1ZUNdIvQT09>

Meeting ID: 214 957 889

Password: 934817

One tap mobile

„214957889# US Toll

Dial by your location

US Toll

Meeting ID: 214 957 889

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aj76Yv3tz>

Stacy Alaimo is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Tuesday OFFICE HOURS

Time: Mar 31, 2020 03:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Tue, 9 occurrence(s)

Mar 31, 2020 03:30 PM

Apr 7, 2020 03:30 PM

Apr 14, 2020 03:30 PM
Apr 21, 2020 03:30 PM
Apr 28, 2020 03:30 PM
May 5, 2020 03:30 PM
May 12, 2020 03:30 PM
May 19, 2020 03:30 PM
May 26, 2020 03:30 PM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: <https://zoom.us/meeting/u5ltc-6gpzwtvvQVxe9CeSzFiLWUUvrcYw/ics?icsToken=98tyKu-urj8tEt2St1yCe7lqW9rqbuH2lmdYm5VFmUbGBhNJRaraAdd3JKB8Kc-B>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/660478977?pwd=WkxqcWl4cmVaeHFCTVltMVhCalZaQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 478 977

Password: 011437

One tap mobile

„660478977# US Toll

Dial by your location

US Toll

Meeting ID: 660 478 977

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aj76Yv3tz>

Stacy Alaimo is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Thursday OFFICE HOURS

Time: Mar 20, 2020 03:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Fri, until May 29, 2020, 11 occurrence(s)

Mar 20, 2020 03:30 PM

Mar 27, 2020 03:30 PM

Apr 3, 2020 03:30 PM

Apr 10, 2020 03:30 PM

Apr 17, 2020 03:30 PM

Apr 24, 2020 03:30 PM

May 1, 2020 03:30 PM

May 8, 2020 03:30 PM

May 15, 2020 03:30 PM

May 22, 2020 03:30 PM

May 29, 2020 03:30 PM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: [https://zoom.us/meeting/uJMqf-](https://zoom.us/meeting/uJMqf-yopzkoKQxbXRnxYsNDcPjJqJIHuw/ics?icsToken=98tyKuyvqTMvGt2Xslz9f7cvW5XibuHqjVp_sqFlrhH9OjN9RgDGPMhTGJtXBc-B)

[yopzkoKQxbXRnxYsNDcPjJqJIHuw/ics?icsToken=98tyKuyvqTMvGt2Xslz9f7cvW5XibuHqjVp_sqFlrhH9OjN9RgDGPMhTGJtXBc-B](https://zoom.us/meeting/uJMqf-yopzkoKQxbXRnxYsNDcPjJqJIHuw/ics?icsToken=98tyKuyvqTMvGt2Xslz9f7cvW5XibuHqjVp_sqFlrhH9OjN9RgDGPMhTGJtXBc-B)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/577850922?pwd=Ni9jcEhPekRLZHJjZjNuREpwa1FXQT09>

Meeting ID: 577 850 922

Password: 678745

One tap mobile

„577850922# US Toll

Dial by your location

US Toll

Meeting ID: 577 850 922

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aj76Yv3tz>