

ENGL 2054 MO1 Nature, Ecology and Literature
Professor: Dr. Timothy Ryan Day
Spring 2017, MW 17:30-18:15pm, PRH 3
Email: tday2@slu.edu
Office: Ignacio Hall 319
Office Hours: Wed 16:30-17:30pm

Course Description:

Ideas about Nature have shifted dramatically over time. Nature has been alternatively seen as the fallen version of the perfection of Eden that humanity destroyed, the cruel wilderness that must be escaped through technology, or all that must be dominated if humanity is to recover the perfection of the garden in its efforts towards creating the heavenly city. Ecology is a much more recent notion. Rather than dominate nature, humanity, in the interest of our own survival, must begin to be vigilant stewards of our now highly technological environment. What are the meanings of Nature and Ecology in the Anthropocene, or the age in which human influence has become perhaps the central factor for the condition of the biosphere, and how are those meanings reflected or even created in Literature?

We will read (and watch) various texts, each of which invokes ideas of Nature and Ecology, specifically in our contemporary and technological world. We will look at literary representations of the ethics of eating meat in a world where it has perhaps become unnecessary, the difficulty of solving the problem of global warming when we have trouble maintaining even our much more manageable personal realms, the use of medication to ‘correct’ or ‘enhance’ our natural selves, our personalities, as well as issues of migration and multi-culturalism, and the interconnection of human society and the environment across generations.

Course Objectives:

- To increase understanding of traditional ideas of Nature and Ecology and consider how they may be changing in the context of the anthropocene, and how literature may play a role in that process of change.
- To write about Nature and Ecology in critical ways that will help to guide our thinking and actions as responsible inhabitants of the planet.
- To perform in depth textual analysis and create essays which communicate ideas with a sense of urgency and relevance.
- To be more familiar with current models of how technology and human influence in our time are interacting with ideas of nature and ecology, and to be capable of interjecting ourselves into those debates in ways that recognize that they are not mere abstractions, rather conversations that have consequence for the future of our planet and our species.

Learning Outcomes:

Students who complete this course will be able to

- Generate engaged and responsive close readings of texts
- Describe and analyze the various ways in which texts reflect and help shape wide cultural conditions
- Construct clear spoken and written arguments that demonstrate awareness of purpose and audience

Required Texts:

Solar, Ian McEwan

Generosity, Richard Powers

The Lives of Animals, J.M Coetzee

Tropic of Orange, Karen Tai Yamashita

Cloud Atlas, David Mitchell

Recommended and supplementary Reading:

The Whole Animal, Wendy Wheeler

Cyborgs, Simians and Women, Donna Haraway

Material Ecocriticism, Iovino and Opperman

Dark Green Religion, Bron Taylor

Biosemiotics, Jesper Hoffmeyer

Ecologies of the Moving Image, Adrian J. Ivakhiv

Botany of Desire, Michael Pollan

The Machine in the Garden, Leo Marx

...And lots more upon request!!!

Resources:

-Recommended databases from library website: Oxford English Dictionary Online, JSTOR, Project Muse, Humanities Full Text, FirstSearch, MLA International Bibliography

Requirements:

-Regular attendance and participation 15% Class discussions are at the center of this course; it is essential that you show up on time and contribute to the intellectual climate of the group (this entails keeping up with the reading assignments, taking notes during class and as you complete the readings, posing questions in class, etc.). You are allowed four absences during the course of the semester. Additional unexcused absences will affect your final grade. You cannot pass the class if you miss eight classes or more for whatever reason (you must withdraw or you will receive an "F" as a final grade). Please take this into account if you have class trips scheduled or plan to participate in other school-sponsored activities that will require you to miss classes (I will fully support your involvement in these activities so long as you adhere to the class attendance policy). You are responsible for keeping up with class discussions and assignments, so please contact me as soon as possible if you miss a class. If you have questions or concerns about the attendance policy now or at any point in the semester, please do not hesitate to contact me. Absences will be excused upon presentation of a doctor's note (so long as the total number remains under 8).

-2 essays: 50% of final grade 3-4 pages, 5-6 pages

I will distribute the details of each assignment along with the criteria for assessment well in advance of the due dates. For now (to give you an idea of the goals for each assignment), here is a brief account of the areas of assessment for each essay:

Essay I: An in depth analysis of one of the texts from the first half of the semester particularly addressing an issue of how ecology, the natural world and/or technology impacts

or is represented in the text. The essay should invoke secondary sources and be properly formatted and cited.

Essay II: An in depth analysis of one of the texts from the second half of the semester particularly addressing an issue of how ecology, the natural world and/or technology impacts or is represented in the text. The essay should invoke secondary sources and be properly formatted and cited.

Rough and final drafts of papers must be typed, double spaced, and emailed to me at least one hour prior to class. Papers turned in late and without prior notice will go down 1/3 of a letter grade per class day (starting with the due date) and will not receive comments.

-Reading Reflections 10% 1/2 page essays that will be written throughout the semester.

-Group Author Presentation: 10%

Assignment: I will divide the class into small groups, each of which will be responsible for giving us a presentation on one of the authors or directors mentioned in this course.

-Individual Reading Presentations: 10%

Throughout the semester, each student will be asked to present on a given day about that days reading. Subsequently, they will be expected to guide part of the conversation about that days reading, and to present a series of questions that could be of interest to the class.

-Research project presentation: 5% You will give a brief presentation based on the topic of your research presentation. You will be evaluated on your ability to present your overall argument in a compelling manner and to provide an intriguing example from your research that supports this argument

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at: http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%206-26-15.pdf.

Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online: <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics>. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

The professor will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

Information regarding the collection of student work for assessment:

In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to accreditation requirements, SLU-Madrid regularly assesses its teaching, services and programs for evidence of student learning. For this purpose, SLU-Madrid keeps representative examples of student work from all courses and programs on file, including assignments, papers, exams, portfolios and results from student surveys, focus groups and reflective exercises. Copies of your work for this course may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If you prefer SLU-Madrid not to retain your work for this purpose, you must communicate this decision in writing to your professor.

Title IX Statement:

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University.

If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 (mmaruri@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall (counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multipletherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid (www.sinews.es; 917-00-1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address:<http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.

Accommodation statement:

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/learning-resources>.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations **must** contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also **must** notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services at disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see "Student Resources" on the SLU-Madrid webpage.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments (subject to change)

January

Week One

Mon: No class

Wed 11: Introductions

Week Two:

Mon 16: *Solar* Part 1

(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

Wed 18: *Solar* Part 2

Week Three:

Mon 23: *Solar* Part 2/3

Tues 24: **Last day to add or drop a class without a 'W'**

Wed 25: *Solar* Part 3

(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

Week Four:

Mon 30: *Generosity* Parts 1 and 2

(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

February

Wed 1: *Generosity* Part 3

Week Five:

Mon 6: *Generosity* Part 4

Wed 8: *Generosity* Part 5

(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

Week Six:

Mon 13: Conference

Wed 15: Conferences

Registration for Summer session begins

Week Seven:

Mon 20: Film

Wed 22: Film Research paper 1 due

Week Eight:

Mon 27: *The Lives of Animals*

(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

March

Wed 1: *Tropic of Orange* Monday and Tuesday

(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

Week Nine:

Mon 6: *Tropic of Orange* Wednesday and Thursday

Wed 8: *Tropic of Orange* Friday Saturday and Sunday

(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

Fri 10: **Last day to drop a class and receive ‘W’**

Week Ten:

Mon 13: *Cloud Atlas* up to “Half-Lives”

(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

Wed 15: *Cloud Atlas* up to “The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish”

Week Eleven:

Mon 20: No Class

Wed 22: *Cloud Atlas* to “The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish”

Week Twelve:

Mon 27: *Cloud Atlas* until “letters to Zedelghm”

Wed 29: *Cloud Atlas* to end
(1/2 page reflection, typed and emailed at least one hour before class)

Registration for Fall 2017 begins

April

Week Thirteen

Mon 3: Conferences

Wed 5: Conferences

Week Fourteen

Mon 10: No Class

Wed 12: No Class

Week Fifteen

Mon 17:

Wed 19: Draft of Final Paper due

Week Sixteen:

Mon 24: Presentations

Wed 26: Presentations

May

Week Seventeen:

Mon 1: No Class

Wed 3: Last Day of Class (Makeup Presentations)

FINAL EXAM

Tuesday May 9th 15:30-18:30