



English 3265F: Ecocriticism Fall 2021

1. Course Information

English 3265F (550): Ecocriticism

Instructor(s): Dr. John Vanderheide

Contact Information: jvande29@uwo.ca

Office: A203

Office Hours: In person office hours announced first day of class; remote meetings by appointment.

Class Location: HC-W101

Scheduled Class Times: M 2:30-3:30; W 3:30-5:30

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of any 1000-level English course. [English 2265F/G](#) (Introduction to Theory) is strongly recommended as preparation for this course, or permission of the Department.

2. Course Description

As a particular method of researching and writing about literary and cultural matters, “ecocriticism” emerged in the 1990s, initially spurred on by an examination of poetic and literary nature writing, as well as by a consideration of environmentalist writers and movements from previous decades. Today, ecocriticism as a critical method and theoretical practice boasts a variety of related, overlapping forms, such as: 1) examining how literature and other artforms represent ecological and environmental issues in imagistic and narrative ways; 2) interpreting literary and other art forms from a variety of ecological or environmentally-minded perspectives; 3) attempting to understand the globe-spanning varieties of Indigenous TEK (traditional ecological knowledge); 4) producing new theoretical approaches to ecological and environmental issues, including climate change.

In this iteration of the course, students may expect to engage first and foremost with different forms of nonfiction and theoretical approaches to ecological and environmental issues, from science writer Rachel Carson’s famous groundbreaking work *Silent Spring* to Robin Kimmerer’s more recently widely celebrated book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, which contextualizes the Western scientific approach within a more expansive Indigenous metaphysical framework. As climate change is a global problem, we will be reading writers from around the world, North and South, West and East, who illuminate this problem from particular places. Specific topics in the course will range from the potential devastating consequences of nuclear power production to the new generation of environmental activists, using social media in their push for change. As with previous iterations of the course, students will have opportunities to choose and apply their theory readings in a variety of ways: critical, creative or activist.

3. Course Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the course will have the opportunity to accomplish the following:

- Develop an understanding of an important contemporary area of theoretical and critical discourse and some of the theorists and critics involved in this area
- Develop a greater understanding of the general scientific and environmentalist discourses that underwrite most ecocritical practices of the Global North and of the West
- Develop a greater understanding of Indigenous ecological approaches, in which physical and metaphysical considerations are related much more integrally.
- Further develop the capacity to apply ecocritical theoretical paradigms and their concepts to their critical reflections on literature, film and other forms of cultural production.
- Further develop a greater awareness of the different kinds of cultural politics involved in the different ways of representing (in image or narrative) ecological and environmental issues
- Building the capacity to appreciate the scholarship of a subject and write effectively in a selected scholarly (critical/theoretical) tradition. This includes learning effective research methods, utilizing and incorporating secondary sources, and formatting and documenting work in MLA format.
- Building the capacity to translate theoretical knowledge of a specific topic into creative or activist work.

4. Textbooks and Course Materials

Required:

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring* (1962/2002)

Kimmerer, Robin. *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2015)

Tsing, Anna. *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (2017)

Recommended:

Glotfelty & Harold Fromm. *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996)

Guha, Ramachandra and J. Martinez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism* (1997)

Moore, Alan, et al. *The Saga of the Swamp Thing* Vol 3. (1985/2010)

Vollman, William T. *No Immediate Danger* (2018)

5. Methods of Evaluation

Assignment	Due Date(s)	Weight
Primary text Owl Quizzes (x3)	Sept 17, Oct 22, Nov. 12	(5% each) 15%
Literature, Film, or Graphic Novel analysis	Nov 8	10%
Course Project Proposal	Oct 13	10%
Course Project	Dec 6	30%
Final Exam	December Exam Period	35%

More specific information on all of these assignments will be given in the first weeks of class.

Any students unable to attend synchronous class sessions due to international travel restrictions must identify themselves to Academic Advising and the instructor. An alternative assessment rubric may be developed.

6. Tentative Class Schedule/ Syllabus

Week 1 (Sept 8): Ursula K. Leguin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction"; Joseph Meeker, "The Comic Mode" (PDFS provided)

Week 2 (Sept 13, 15): Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (selections)

Week 3 (Sept 20, 22): Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (selections)

Week 4 (Sept 27, 29): Arundhati Roy, "The End of Imagination" (PDF provided)

Week 5 (Oct 4, 6): William T. Vollman, *Carbon Ideologies Vol 1: No Immediate Danger* (selections)

Week 6 (Oct 13): Alan Moore et al. *Swamp Thing*, "The Nukeface Papers" (PDF provided)

Week 7 (Oct 18, 20): Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass* (selections)

Week 8: Oct 25, 27: Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass* (selections)

READING WEEK NOV 1-7

Week 9 (Nov 8, 10): Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

Week 10 (Nov 15, 17): Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

Week 11 (Nov 22, 24): Ramachandra Guha and J. Martinez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South* (selections provided)

Week 12 (Nov 29, Dec 1): Vanessa Nakate, *A Bigger Picture: My Fight to Bring a New African Voice to the Climate Crisis* (selections provided)

Week 13 (Dec 6): Final exam prep



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations 2021 - 2022

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Pandemic Contingency

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, typically using a combination of synchronous instruction (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) and asynchronous material (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor. In the unlikely event that changes to the grading scheme are necessary, these changes will be clearly communicated as soon as possible.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is

malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf are met.

Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds). The Student Medical Certificate is available online at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

(a) Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, and if the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported absences, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the **Student Medical Certificate**. The instructor may not collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

(b) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca.

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf. Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at hurousss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services at hurousss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>
Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>
Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>
Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>
Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca
Community Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca
Chaplaincy: gthorne@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

