

**University of Puerto Rico
Rio Piedras Campus
English Department-Humanities
Undergraduate Program**

Academic Year 2018/2019: Semester I

Dr. Dannabang Kuwabong

Office: Edificio Pedreira Sotano #6A

Office Hours: Thursday 10:00 AM-2:00 PM or by Appointment

Classroom: P106. Tuesday & Thursday: 8:30 AM – 9: 50 AM.

B. Literature and Ecology

C. Ingl/English 3045

D. 45 hours/3 credit hours

E. Pre-Requisites: Level 4 or 5 on English Department Placement Test, Advanced Placement in English Levels 4 or 5, or 580 and above on the CEEB.

F. Course Description: An interdisciplinary course that examines essay, short stories, novels, and films/documentaries that address, from a variety of perspective, human relationship to the natural and non-human world during the contemporary era of planetary change, globalization, and increasing commercial and technological dependency. (In total the course will endeavor to address human cooperation with nature conceived as a dynamic, interrelated series of cyclic feedback systems. Included are ways esthetic values (literary themes, form, vision, perception, language) intersect with selected ecological concepts such as biocentrism, the food chain, and energy transfer among others. Selected works by contemporary ecologists and environmentalists. The course texts may include writers such as Paul Shepard, Alan Durning, Kincaid, J. M Coetzee, Jacques Romain, Gary Snyder, etc. including documentaries and movies.)

G. Course Objectives: By the end of the course students will:

1. develop comprehensive knowledge of the topics being discussed as well as an understanding of how it relates to the overall study of Literature and Ecology
2. gain a better understanding of ecological and environmental issues through the introduction of topically based theories and selected narratives.
3. understand how historical context, cultural values, and sites of difference: environment, spirituality, location among others, intersect to influence perceptions and interpretations of our ecological crisis and the diverse ways in which we respond to these crises.
4. develop familiarity with the growing corpus of contemporary narrative voices by non-Western Euro-American narratives and efforts to confront the looming issues of environmental and ecological catastrophe.

5. develop/enhance critical thinking and reading skills by considering a range of theoretical perspectives on significant cultural/social/political issues related to the study of ecological and literary writings across nations and cultures.
6. develop a better understanding of cultural praxes and the history of environmental and ecological ideas as well as the commentaries on and contribution by scientists and creative writers.
7. gain a better sense of current trends and topics of interest in ecological and literary studies.
8. strengthen research, oral presentation, and writing skills in the field of literature and ecology.
9. 11.25 hours might be used to teach the class through the virtual classroom, Moodle, Google Drive, Microsoft Cloud, etc.

H. Lecture Schedule:

Weeks 1: (August 21 & 23): Introduction to Main Issues in Literature and Ecology.

Film/Documentary: Documenting the rise of Food Imperialism through the patenting of Seeds. GMOs, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, among others, and the potential hazards these pose to global agriculture, and environmental sustainability. *Earthlings*, *Controlling our Food: The World According to Monsanto*. *The Lorax*.

Weeks 2 (August 28 / 30): Pollution of the Oceans. Documentaries/Films: *Finding Nemo*; *Controlling Our Food: The World According to Monsanto*.

Week 3 (September 4 & 6): Nature and a healthy humanity: Alienation from Nature as a form of psychosis "Are we Happy Yet?" by Alan Thein Durning; "Technology, Trauma, and the Wild" by Chellis Glendinning; "Nature and Madness" by Paul Shepard; "The Psychopathology of Human-Nature Relationship," by Ralph Metzner; "The Skill of Ecological Perception," by Laura Sewall.

Week 4 (September 11 & 13): Issues of biocolonialism, ecopopulism, development, and environmental justice: Movies: Tiffany Black, *Life & Debt* narrated by Jamaica Kincaid; *Erin Brockovich*. Articles: "Disposable Bodies: Biocolonialism in *The Constant Gardener* and *Dirty Pretty Things*," by Rachel Stein; "Testimonial Structures in Environmental Justice Films," by Cory Shaman; Pauline Melville "Erzulie".

Week 5: (September 18) Discussions on Movies and Readings.

Week 5 (September 20, 2018: EXAMS I)

Week 6 (September 25 & 27): Human actions and Climate Change: Towards an understanding of the sacredness of nature and the diseased planet: Program of action or inaction. Towards a narrative of survival in the face of natural or human generated ecological disasters: Jacques Romain, *Masters of the Dew*.

Weeks 7 (October 2 & 4): *Masters of the Dew*

Week 8 (October 9 & 11): The angry earth. Natural Disasters as threat to ecological balance. “Convergent Catastrophe: Past Patterns and Future Implications of Collateral Natural Disasters in the Andes,” by Michael E. Moseley; “Tell Them We’re Hurting”: Hurricane Andrew, The Culture of Response, and the Fishing Peoples of South Florida and Louisiana” by Christopher L Dyer and James R. Mcgoodwin. Yvonne Weekes’ *Volcano: A Memoire*

Week 9: (October 23 & 25): Selected Readings from *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* Eds. Elizabeth M DeLoughrey, Renée K. Gossan and George B. Handley: Antonio Benítez-Rojo “Sugar and the Environment in Cuba”; Trenton Hickman “Coffee and Colonialism in Julia Alvarez’s *A Cafecito Story*; Julia Alvarez, *A Cafecito Story*.

Week 10 (October 30 & November 1): Writing for endangered species, bioregionalism, and Environmental Apocalypse: Mayra Montero’s *in the palm of darkness*, translated by Edith Grossman.

Weeks 11 (November 6): Writing for endangered species, biopiracy, and environmental apocalypses: Mayra Montero’s *in the palm of darkness*, translated from Spanish by Edith Grossman.

Week 11 (November 8): EXAM II

Week 12 (November 13 & 15): Student Group Seminar Research: J. M. Coetzee, *Life & Times of Michael K*; Louise Erdrich, *Tracks*; *To Build a Fire*, by Jack London

Week 13 (November 20 & 22): Group Seminar Research

Week 14 (November 27): Group Seminar Research

Week 14 (November 29): Group Seminar Presentations

Week 15 (December 4 & 6): Group Seminar Presentations

Teaching Strategies: The pedagogical strategies to be used will primarily be lectures, seminars, and discussions.

When necessary, 11.25hours of class contact time will be through alternative methods of teaching using any one of the following: MOODLE, GOOGLE GROUP, PBWORKS, YOUTUBE, MOVIES, DOCUMENTARIES.

Class Attendance and Participation: Active participation in class discussion is not optional; it is required. You should not just be in the habit of periodically attending class and/or barely uttering a word in seminars.

Two sit in exams: Students will be given test questions in class to write essay responses to them. They will also be pop-up quizzes or multiple choice questions or short definitions of literary terms.

Group Seminar Presentations: Each Student is expected to join a group to prepare and give two oral presentations lasting no more than Twenty minutes per group.

Absences: Students who miss more than 8 periods without prior written permission or a medical certificate should not hope to pass the course.

Late Assignments: Inability to take the tests or participate in the group seminar presentations without a written medical reason will attract a grade lower for each class period. Failure to take the tests or do the group presentation for four periods will earn the student a D grade in that particular assignment.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is intellectual theft, and therefore will not be tolerated. A student that plagiarizes gets an F grade for the particular assignment. In the first instance of plagiarism, the student will be cautioned. If caught again, the student will be reported to the appropriate University authorities to be dealt with according to University regulations on plagiarism. Plagiarism can involve downloading essays from the internet, copying from books without acknowledgment, etc. Be sure that you will be found out.

Cell Phones, I-phones, Smart Phones, and Beepers, IPADs: Students must turn these off during class hours, and there should be no texting or Facebooking or any other social media interferences during class. Not only is it disrespectful to other students but to the professor, and this will result in reduction of participation grade.

J. Required Resources: Access to all UPR library facilities, electronic search and on-line access, and internet access.

K. Methods of Evaluation:

The following evaluation criteria will be used:

Term Papers:	60%
Seminar Presentation and Post Presentation write-up:	30%
Class participation	10%
Total:	100%

L. Grading System: A, B, C, D, F

****Ley 51: Los estudiantes que erreciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el(la) profesor(a) al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Assuntos para las Personas con impedimento (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren de algún tipos de asistencia o acumodo deben comunicarse con el (la) profesor(a).**

**** Evaluación diferenciada para estudiantes con necesidades especiales.**

M. Required Texts: (Subject to change)

Documentaries/Movies:

Controlling our Food: The World According to Monsanto

The Lorax

Earthlings

Erin Brockovich

Finding Nemo

Life & Debt

Some Books:

Masters of the Dew, by Jacques Romain

Life & Times of Michael K, by J. M. Coetzee

A Cafecito Story by Julia Alvarez

In the palm of darkness by Mayra Montero

Volcano: a memoire, by Yvonne Weekes

Articles and Selected Essays from books:

Glofelty, Cheryl and Harold Bloom, Editors. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Selected Essays.

Shaman, Cory. "Testimonial Structures in Environmental Justice Films."

Stein, Rachel. "Disposable Bodies: Biocolonialism in *The Constant Gardner* and *Dirty Pretty Things*."

Antonio Benítez-Rojo. "Sugar and the Environment in Cuba."

Trenton Hickman. "Coffee and Colonialism in Julia Alvarez's *A Cafecito Story*."

Moseley, Michael E. "Convergent Catastrophe: Past Patterns and Future Implications of Collateral Natural Disasters in the Andes."

Dyer, Christopher L and James R. Mcgoodwin. "Tell Them We're Hurting": Hurricane Andrew, The Culture of Response, and the Fishing Peoples of South Florida and Louisiana."

Durning, Alan Thein. "Are we Happy Yet?"

Glendinning, Chellis. "Technology, Trauma, and the Wild."

Shepard, Paul. "Nature and Madness."

Metzner, Ralph. "The Psychopathology of Human-Nature Relationship."

Sewall, Laura. "The Skill of Ecological Perception."