

English 189
Dr. Julianne Newmark
Spring 2010

Literature and the Environment

Mondays and Wednesdays: 12:30 to 1:45 p.m.

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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. and by appointment in 211 Fitch.

ABOUT OUR COURSE:

In this course, we will study the roles land, space, and place (more generally known as "environment") have played in the shaping of literary texts and, as a consequence, American national identity. Course texts are drawn from the fields of literature, philosophy, ecology, film, and politics. We will investigate how "the environment" (interpreted with geographic specificity or in broad philosophical senses) has informed American textual output, and how, as a result, these texts have affected our perception of and policies concerning human relationships to physical environmental systems. We will engage in daily discussions of required reading and viewing and all students are expected to participate regularly in class discussions and online discussions on our class blog.

POLICIES:

Required texts:

- *Literature and the Environment: A Reader on Nature and Culture*. Anderson, Slovic, and O'Grady.
- *Desert Solitaire* (by Edward Abbey), *My Antonia* (by Willa Cather), and *Land of Little Rain* (by Mary Austin)
- A style-guide of your choice

Required work and grading scale:

Your grade will be based on various factors, including attendance, participation, and completion and quality of written work. Again, you will be expected to participate in daily class discussions, online discussions, and occasional group work in class. You will write two formal papers and complete two exams.

Essay one (four to five pages)	100	Grading scale:	
Essay two (four to five pages)	100	A	465 and above
Midterm Exam	75	A-	450-464
Final Exam	130	B+	435-449
Textual analysis	35	B	415-434
Quizzes (as needed)	10	B-	400-414
Blog postings	20	C+	385-399
Participation and attendance	30	C	365-384
		C-	350-364
TOTAL	500		

Class Participation:

You will be evaluated on your ability and willingness to participate in classroom discussions and other activities. Keep this in mind and be sure to be alert in class, prepared for class work, and engaged in our subject matter.

Textual Analysis:

Once during the term, each student will offer an analysis of a reading of the student's choice (by the scheduled author for the class-day's discussion). This brief presentation must also incorporate discussion of one or two pieces of pertinent criticism of the author's work along with the student's own reading (i.e. analysis) of the text.

Attendance and Tardiness:

If you miss more than three classes, you will be asked to drop the course or you will receive a failing grade. There are, of course, extraordinary situations in which absences might be excused. A stay in the hospital, for example, is what I would call "extraordinary." I do take attendance into consideration in the calculation of your final grade, along with the abovementioned factor of participation. Be sure to attend all class meetings and to be on time. Every three days that you are tardy (more than five minutes) count as one "absent" day. I consider this syllabus, incidentally, as your contract with me, and mine with you. If you choose to continue in this class, after reading this syllabus, I expect that you will abide by the requirements of this course.

Quizzes:

There will be a series of unannounced reading quizzes throughout the term.

Our Class Blog:

I will expect all students to actively participate in our class blog. I am not requiring a set number of postings per student, but I do want to see an active effort made by each student to write and think about the texts we're reading and to raise questions or present analyses on our class blog. Weekly (usually), I will start a new entry to which I will expect students to reply by entering their own "comments." We will discuss our blog, and our mutual expectations for it, in class.

Late Papers:

Papers must be turned in at the beginning of our class time on the day the assignment is due. After this time, for each day an assignment is late, I will deduct one letter grade (meaning, if the paper begins at an "A," or 100 points, and is one day late, I will begin grading it from an "A-," which is 92 points. From the second day to the third day late, the grades goes from a "A-" to a "B+," which is 89 points, and so on. Each day of the week counts in this calculation). Again, extraordinary circumstances might excuse a late assignment, but these are rare. **I will not accept emailed versions of papers;** you must come to class, or arrange to see me in my office, to turn in your paper-copy of your assignment. I reserve the right not to accept late papers.

Courteousness and Cell Phones:

We will be covering topics in this class about which students have various opinions. So, I will expect you to behave appropriately and be open to different perspectives than your own. Above all, be courteous to your classmates. One sign of courteousness is that you turn off your cell phone before entering class. If there are repeated problems with your cell phone, I will ask you to leave the classroom for the day. You will take an absence that day

Equal Access:

Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

Plagiarism:

In our course, I will review the standards of correct citation, academic honesty, and intellectual property. After this information has been presented to you in class, you are responsible for it and cannot claim ignorance as a defense against an accusation of academic dishonesty. You will need to quote directly from literary texts, and appropriately cite these texts, in both of your papers and in your exams. Each of your papers must have a Works Cited page.

Plagiarism, in very general terms, is the use of someone else's words or ideas without proper citation. The style guide *Everyday Writer*, which you may have from English 111 or 112, includes information about plagiarism. All other good style guides provide detailed information on avoiding plagiarism. Also, the NMT library offers a handy website addressing many plagiarism issues and provides advice on avoiding plagiarism: <http://infohost.nmt.edu/~nmtlib/INFO/ORef/plagiarism.html>

Essay Format:

All work that is to be handed in must be in MLA format, typed, double-spaced, printed on white paper in black ink, and must use twelve-point font (preferably Times New Roman). If your paper does not conform to these stylistic requirements, I will hand it back to you without a grade and you will be required to reformat in and will suffer a late-paper penalty. Again, your papers must include correct text citations and a Works Cited page.

Course calendar:

	DATE	ITEMS DUE
1	Wednesday, January 20	Course introduction. What we mean by "literature and the environment"? Why do we read it? What our course will – and won't – cover, and why.
2	Monday, January 25	Excerpts from <i>Walden</i> . See website for instructions.
	Wednesday, January 27	Excerpts from Hart Crane's <i>The Bridge</i> on website. Also textbook (504-9)
3	Monday, February 1	Hughes (168), Muir (178), Stevens (188), Ortiz (189), and Ríos (214)
	Wednesday, February 3	See website for Glotfelty and Slovic essays
4	Monday, February 8	Student Textual Analysis Berry (222), Dodge (230), Charles et al (239), Standing Bear (273), Frost (295)
	Wednesday, February 10	<i>Land of Little Rain</i> , through "Shoshone Land" chapter
5	Monday, February 15	<i>Land of Little Rain</i> , through "The Streets of the Mountains" chapter
	Wednesday, February 17	<i>Assign Essay One</i> Student Textual Analysis <i>Land of Little Rain</i> , to end, also textbook (509-529)
6	Monday, February 22	Rose (297), Sáenz (309), O'Brien (332), Abbey (344)
	Wednesday, February 24	Wordsworth (355), Baca (365), Ginsburg (380)
7	Monday, March 1	Student Textual Analysis Piercy (402), Erdrich (404), Owens (447)
	Wednesday, March 3	Essay One Due Exam review day
8	Monday, March 8	In-Class MIDTERM EXAM
	Wednesday, March 10	<i>Desert Solitaire</i> , through "Polemic: Industrial Tourism . . ." chapter
9	Monday, March 15	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
	Wednesday, March 17	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
10	Monday, March 22	<i>Desert Solitaire</i> , through "The Moon-Eyed Horse" chapter
	Wednesday, March 24	<i>Desert Solitaire</i> , through "Tukuhnikivats, the Island in the Desert" chapter
11	Monday, March 29	Student Textual Analysis <i>Desert Solitaire</i> , to end
	Wednesday, March 31	Union of Concerned Scientists (457), Samuelson (461), Bruchac (492)
12	Monday, April 5	<i>My Antonia</i> , Book I
	Wednesday, April 7	<i>Assign Essay Two</i> <i>My Antonia</i> , Book II
13	Monday, April 12	<i>My Antonia</i> , Book III and IV
	Wednesday, April 14	Student Textual Analysis <i>My Antonia</i> , Book V
14	Monday, April 19	Essay question-and-answer day; Course evaluations
	Wednesday, April 21	ESSAY TWO DUE Viewing day (<i>Survivorman</i> , <i>The National Parks</i> , television news clips)
15	Monday, April 26	Student Textual Analysis London (31), Oates (130)
	Wednesday, April 28	Exam review day
16	Monday, May 3	In-Class FINAL EXAM Part 1
	Wednesday, May 5	In-Class FINAL EXAM Part 2