



**FACULTY OF ARTS
Department Of English**

COURSE OUTLINE

ENGL 685.10: Ecocriticism and Research-Creation

Spring 2022

Class Schedule: W 10-12

Modality: in-person, meeting in SS 1028 / on campus

Instructor	Kit Dobson
Email:	christopher.dobson@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	N/A – by email
Office Hours:	MW 14:00-15:00 or by appointment; in SS 1028 or online.

Course description

This directed reading course is designed as an interrogation of the ways in which ecocritical and ecological thinking can be brought to bear on creative practice. What, in a time of intense, ongoing, and intersecting ecological crises, are the responsibilities of writers? How can writers on Turtle Island / North America meaningfully respond to climate change? This course works between ecocritical and creative texts in order to interrogate these and related questions.

Building on the work of ecological thinkers like Rob Nixon (*Slow Violence*), Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (*The Mushroom at the End of the World*), Amitav Ghosh (*The Great Derangement*), Robin Wall Kimmerer (*Braiding Sweetgrass*), and others, we will investigate how to write meaningfully in a time of upheaval. This course actively theorizes research-creation through the work of Natalie Loveless (*How to Make Art at the End of the World*) while reading fiction and poetry that provide directions for creative interrogations and further work. It additionally seeks to make links between questions of gender, and mothering in particular, and environment in order to theorize the situatedness of the body in relation to ecocritical work.

Course learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate their understanding of contemporary ecocritical practice;
2. Demonstrate their understanding of current debates within the field;
3. Understand how approaches to literary studies can produce multiple readings of a text;
4. Analyze how intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and national or worldwide history can shape literary studies and creative practice;

5. Formulate and defend significant arguments in which they analyze, evaluate, and synthesize material effectively;
6. Work collaboratively with others in developing an argument related to creative practice;
7. Structure a complex and engaging argument; and
8. Present their own creative responses to the challenges of this time.

Texts and readings

Bringhurst, Robert, and Jan Zwicky. *Learning to Die: Wisdom in the Age of Climate Crisis*. U Regina P, 2018.

Christie, Michael. *Greenwood*. McClelland & Stewart, 2019.

Donath, Orna. "Regretting Motherhood: A Sociopolitical Analysis." *Signs*, vol. 40, iss. 2, pp. 343-67.

Foer, Jonathan Safran. *We Are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast*. Penguin, 2019.

Freitas, Donna. *The Nine Lives of Rose Napolitano*. Pamela Dorman, 2021.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. U Chicago P, 2016.

Heti, Sheila. *Motherhood*. Henry Holt, 2018.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed, 2013.

Loveless, Natalie. *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation*. Duke UP, 2019.

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard UP, 2011.

Powers, Richard. *The Overstory*. Norton, 2018.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton UP, 2015.

Supplementary reading: Additional readings will be offered as appropriate.

Learning technology requirements

N/A.

Assessments and Evaluation

Student results for this iteration of English 685.10 will be determined via the following assessments:

1. Weekly responses: 30%
2. Short Research-Creation Text: 30%
3. Research-Creation Final Response: 40%

Weekly Responses (30%): Each week, a response will be offered to the readings to be discussed in class. Responses will demonstrate engagement with the work, offer questions for further discussion or thinking, and provide links to ongoing research questions. Expected length: 500-1000 words per response. **Due date: 1 day before each meeting.**

Short Research-Creation Text (30%): This assignment will provide a creative response, developed according to research-creation principles, to the critical works investigated early in the directed reading. Length: 2500-3500 words. **Due date: TBD.**

Research-Creation Final Response (40%): The final assessment for this course will be a creative response, developed according to research-creation principles, that will demonstrate significant engagement with both the critical and creative works investigated over the duration of the directed reading. Expected length: 3500-5000 words. **Due date: TBD.**

Late assignments: Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (e.g., an A- to B+) for each calendar day (not class meeting) that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

Attendance and participation expectations

Class can only proceed if all members are present, so full participation at all scheduled classes is absolutely necessary.

Conduct

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Grading System

Grades are calculated according to the 4 point scale used in the *Graduate Calendar*:
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-h-1.html>

GRADUATE GRADING SYSTEM FOR COURSE FINAL GRADES

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding
A	4.00	Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.
A-	3.70	Very good performance
B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	All grades of "C+" or lower are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. Individual programs may require a higher passing grade.
C	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	
I	0.00	Incomplete. Sufficient work has not been submitted for evaluation or cannot be adequately assessed; or the final exam has not been submitted.
CR		Completed Requirements. Carries no weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted as "Not Included in GPA" in the calendar descriptions of applicable courses.

Please note: A B- is considered a minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-h-2.html>

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

In the case of Instructors using numerical marks in the grading of term work, the departmental conversion chart applies.

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3

50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

Academic Integrity

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

Deferral of term work and final examinations

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond five days past the deadline, an [Application of Deferment of Term Work](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor.

Grade appeals

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at engl@ucalgary.ca. Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

English Department Website

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please see the [English Department Website](#).

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students

The [Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club](#) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is smecuofc@gmail.com.

Writing support

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

[Academic regulations and schedules](#)

Student Academic Accommodations

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

Program Advising and Student Information Resources

This work is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca

Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

Instructor's Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

Sexual violence policy

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

Other important information

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)

- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI)

Please participate in [USRI Surveys](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.

COVID-19

The ongoing global pandemic remains in a fluid situation as the semester begins. Please note that this course will adhere to the University of Calgary's COVID-19's policies and practices throughout the term. While we plan to meet in person, it is possible that the entire plan for this course could change. In this context, it is important for us to take care of ourselves and of one another. Please do not hesitate to be in touch should COVID-19 impact your studies and I will do my best to ensure that your progress in our course is not hindered.