

LIT 280.80
The Ecology of Literature
Fall 2017

T&Th 12:30-1:50
Rankin 203

Professor David Gilcrest
Office: LA 218
david.gilcrest@mso.umt.edu

Office Hours:
T/W/Th 11-12
and by appointment

**I can no longer
Tell where I begin and leave off.**
--Kenneth Rexroth

Course Description

LIT 280 The Ecology of Literature examines literary representations of human and more-than-human relationships under the sign of ecology. Drawing on relevant ecocritical theory, we will explore a wide range of Anglophone literary texts that offer models of “identity” grounded in interanimating and interdependent affiliations. Our inquiry into the literature of the “ecological self” will focus on concepts of Nature, the Wild, and Wilderness--and their political and ethical implications.

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- demonstrate through class discussion and well-reasoned essays the ability to apply productively an essential critical vocabulary
- demonstrate through class discussion and well-reasoned essays an understanding of the many rhetorical strategies used by literary authors
- demonstrate through class discussion and well-reasoned essays the essential connection between effective thinking and effective writing about literature
- demonstrate through class discussion and well-reasoned essays an understanding of how certain writers in the Anglophone tradition construct, and make use of, the idea of wilderness.
- demonstrate through well-reasoned essays an understanding of the evolution of the ecological self in the work of select Anglophone writers

LIT 280 and the General Education Requirements

LIT 280 satisfies the Group V: Literary and Artistic Studies [L] General Education requirement.

LIT 280 Requirements

- Regular class attendance and **participation**, steady preparation
- Four (revised) critical essays
- A portfolio of your written work

Grading

Essay #1:	25%
Essay #2:	25%
Essay #3:	25%
Essay #4:	25%

Course Policies and Procedures, and Unsolicited Advice

- Attendance and Participation: Because I believe you can learn the material covered in this course only by being here, your attendance and **ACTIVE** participation are required. Your final grade will be dropped one full letter grade after **four** unexcused absences; a failing grade will be assigned after **five** unexcused absences. (An **excused** absence requires a **pre-arranged** scholastic or athletic commitment or a **bona fide and substantiated** medical emergency.)
- If you miss a class, **please make arrangements with a colleague to get notes**. Also, please check with me to see if you missed any handouts or special instructions.
- If you get confused, or have a question, raise your hand. If your hand is not in the air, I can only assume you understand the texts and ideas under consideration **PERFECTLY**.
- Texts: The texts under consideration are central to our work in this class, especially during class time. You **MUST** purchase the texts for this class **and you MUST bring the relevant texts to class**. No exceptions, no excuses.
- Laptops and tablets may be used for note taking; laptops, tablets, and cellphones used for other purposes will be confiscated and given to wayward children.
- Deadlines: All work is due in class on the assigned date. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED**.
- Presentation: Essays must be printed. Black ink. 10 or 12 pt. font. Arial, Cambria, Times, or Times New Roman are each sufficient. Please, no funky fonts. I would like you to follow the MLA citation and documentation guidelines in this class. Make sure you include on your work your name, the title and draft number, this class and section number, my name, and the date.
- Please make hard copies of all your work and keep them in a safe place.

- I do not accept work in electronic form. Recycled paper saves trees. Double-sided printing is fine.
- Revision: You may revise your first three essays, as needed. Please follow the “Guidelines for Revision” I will give you.
- The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as needed.

Scholarship

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrase) must be properly documented. Students who plagiarize face serious consequences that may range from receiving a failing grade on a given assignment to failing the course. Students who plagiarize also face additional University sanctions.

Accommodations

If you have a disability (physical or learning) that you think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the first week of the term so we can discuss whatever accommodations may be necessary.

Required Texts

Walking by Henry David Thoreau
Nature by Ralph Waldo Emerson (handout)
Summer on the Lakes by Margaret Fuller (handout)
 Selected Poems by Walt Whitman (handout)

The Epic of Gilgamesh
Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth
 Selections from the Biblical Tradition (handout)
 “A White Heron” by Sarah Orne Jewett (handout)

“Nutting” by William Wordsworth (handout)
The Wild God of the World: An Anthology of Robinson Jeffers
 Selected Poems by Gary Snyder (handout)
The Practice of the Wild by Gary Snyder

Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood

A two-pocket folder for your portfolio

Syllabus

Th 8/31	Introduction: Nature, "Nature," Ecology, Self	
Tu 9/5	Fall Trek	
Th 9/7	Fall Trek	
Tu 9/12	Fall Trek	
Th 9/14	Fall Trek	
Tu 9/19	Thoreau "Walking"	Quiz!
Th 9/21	No Class	
Tu 9/26	Emerson from "Nature" (M) ; Fuller from <i>Summer on the Lakes</i> (M)	
Th 9/28	Whitman (selected poems) [M]	
Tu 10/3	Literary Analysis/MLA Bootcamp	
Th 10/5	Essay #1.1 DUE for Workshop; Wordsworth "Nutting" (M)	
Tu 10/10	<i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i>	Essay #1.2 DUE
Th 10/12	<i>Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth</i> (3-73)	
Tu 10/17	Selections from the Biblical Tradition (M)	
Th 10/19	Jewett "A White Heron" (M)	
Tu 10/24	Jeffers (23-52 and 189-90)	
Th 10/26	Jeffers (53-105)	Essay #2.2 DUE
Tu 10/31	Jeffers (105-147)	
Th 11/2	Jeffers (148-185 and 196-201)	
Tu 11/7	Snyder (selected poems) (M)	
Th 11/9	Snyder <i>Practice of the Wild</i> (vii-51)	
Tu 11/14	Snyder <i>Practice of the Wild</i> (52-103)	
Th 11/16	<i>Practice of the Wild</i> (104-153)	
Tu 11/21	<i>Practice of the Wild</i> (154-198)	

Thanksgiving Holiday

Tu 11/28	Atwood <i>Oryx and Crake</i> (3-92)	
Th 11/30	<i>Oryx and Crake</i> Chs (93-198)	Essay #3.1 DUE

Tu 12/5 *Oryx and Crake* (199-296)

Th 12/7 *Oryx and Crake* (297-374)

Tu 12/12 Evaluations; *The Man Who Planted Trees* (short film)

Tu 12/19 **Essay #4.1, Completed Portfolio DUE by NOON**