

**LIT 422**  
**Ecocritical Theory & Practice**  
**Fall 2019**

LA 233  
M&W 2-3:20

Professor David Gilcrest  
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Office Hours:  
MW 1-2/Th 10-11  
and by appt.

**"Must literature always lead us away from the physical world, never back to it?"**  
**--Lawrence Buell**

**Course Description**

LIT 422 Ecocritical Theory & Practice introduces students to Ecocriticism as a multidisciplinary inquiry into the relationships between literature and nature, language and our experience of and within more-than-human environments.

Topics include: Nature under the signs of Romanticism, Modernism, and Postmodernism, the nature of phenomenology, social construction of nature, ecofeminism, urban ecocriticism, queer nature, environmental justice, posthumanism, and the nature of the Anthropocene.

**Course Goals**

Students in LIT 422 will demonstrate through class discussion and written analysis

- familiarity with key Ecocritical perspectives and methodologies
- familiarity with the critical vocabularies associated with these perspectives and methodologies
- an ability to apply productively Ecocritical perspectives and methodologies in close reading of texts

**LIT 422 Requirements**

- Regular class attendance and participation, steady preparation
- Three Critical Essays
- Ecocritical Principles and Methods Project
- A portfolio of your written work
- Graduate Students: Applied Ecocriticism Project

**Ecocritical Principles and Methods Project**

For each ecocritical approach, I would like you to prepare a succinct summary of the specific principles and methods at work. At term's end you will compile and revise these summaries. Please follow the guidelines I will give you.

## Graduate Students

Graduate students will be invited to read beyond the syllabus and to develop, in consultation with Gilcrest, an Applied Ecocriticism Project due at term's end.

## Grading (Undergraduate Students)

Essay #1	25%	
Essay #2	25%	
Essay #3	25%	
Ecocritical Principles and Methods Project		25%

## Grading (Graduate Students)

Essay #1	20%	
Essay #2	20%	
Essay #3	20%	
Ecocritical Principles and Methods Project		20%
Applied Ecocriticism Project	20%	

## Course Policies and Procedures, and Unsolicited Advice

- Students who fail to attend the first two classes of the term will be dropped.
- 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 **4** 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. (All handouts will be posted to Moodle, eventually.)
- Laptops and tablets may be used for note taking; **laptops and tablets (and cellphones) used for other purposes will be confiscated and given to wayward children**.
- Texts: The texts under consideration are central to our work in this class, especially during class time. You **MUST** secure the texts for this class **and you MUST bring the relevant texts to class**. No exceptions, no excuses.
- Deadlines: All work is due in class on the assigned date. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED**.
- Presentation: Please follow the MLA guidelines for citation, documentation, and formal presentation.
- Revision: Because true revision is an essential part of serious writing, **you are invited to revise your first two essays, as necessary**. A final grade will

only be recorded after I receive, and evaluate, your revision. Please follow the **Guidelines for Revision** that I will give you.

- 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. Printing on two sides is usually fine.
- 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.

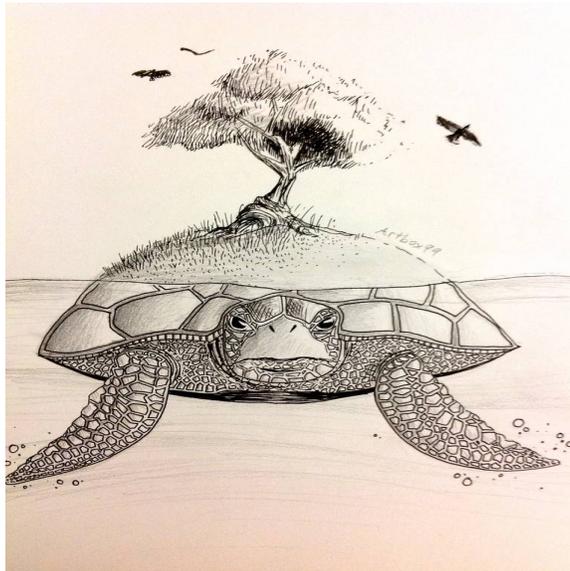
### **Required Texts**

*Ecocriticism: The Essential Reader.* Ed. Ken Hiltner

*The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism.* Ed. Laurence Coupe)

Also, a two-pocket folder for your portfolio.

Many required texts will be posted to our Moodle site. Please budget adequate \$\$ if you prefer to print these documents.



## Syllabus

(M) = text available via Moodle

(ECO)= text found in *Ecocriticism: The Essential Reader*

(GSR) = text found in *The Green Studies Reader*

- M 8/26 Overview: Theory and Perspective  
W 8/28 Disciplinary History: Glottfelty (ECO 120-130); Heise (ECO 164-177)
- M 9/2 **Labor Day—NO CLASS**
- W 9/4 Writing “Nature”: Soper (ECO 267-277); Soper (GSR 123-26); Gifford (GSR 173-181)
- M 9/9 Writing “Nature”: Buell (ECO 97-101); Rigby (ECO 357-367); Manes “Nature and Silence” **(M)**
- W 9/11 Roots: Biblical Cosmogony and Eschatology **(M)**; White (ECO 39-46); Berry “The Gift of Good Land” **(M)**
- M 9/16 Romanticism/Pastoral: Williams (ECO 35-38); Wordsworth “Michael” **(M)**; Gifford (GSR 219-222); Garrard (GSR 182-186)
- W 9/18 Romanticism/Sublime: Emerson from *Nature* **(M)**; Thoreau from “Ktaadn” **(M)**; Hitt “Toward an Ecological Sublime” **(M)**
- M 9/23 Modernism: Lawrence (GSR 70-72); Leavis & Thompson (GSR 73-76); Adorno & Horkheimer (GSR 77-80)
- W 9/25 Excursion 1: Dillard “Seeing” **(M)**
- M 9/30 Cross-cultural Perspectives: Snyder (ECO 70-76); Snyder “Good, Wild, Sacred” **(M)**; Silko “Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination” **(M)** **Essay #1 DUE**
- W 10/2 Wilderness: Thoreau “Walking” **(M)**; Turner “The Abstract Wild: A Rant” **(M)**; Snyder “The Etiquette of Freedom” **(M)**
- M 10/7 Wilderness: Cronon (102-119); White “Black Women and the Wilderness” **(M)**
- W 10/9 Urban Ecology: Bennett & Teague “Urban Ecocriticism: An Introduction” **(M)**; Wallace “All Things Are Strange” **(M)**
- M 10/14 Deep Ecology: Naess (47-61); “Deep Ecology” from *EEEEP* **(M)**; Janik “Environmental Consciousness in Modern Literature” **(M)**

- W 10/16 Phenomenology: Abram "Philosophy on the Way to Ecology" 1 **(M)**
- M 10/21 Phenomenology: Abram "Philosophy on the Way to Ecology" 2 **(M)**;  
Cantrell "The Flesh of the World" (GSR 275-281)
- W 10/23 Ecofeminism: Merchant (ECO 10-34); Kolodny "Unearthing Herstory"  
**(M)**
- M 10/28 Ecofeminism: Westling "Lost Innocence" **(M)**; Alaimo & Hekman (ECO  
143-153)
- W 10/30 Queer: Mortimer-Sandilands & Erickson (ECO 159-163); Alaimo  
"Eluding Capture" **(M)**; Sturgeon "Penguin Family Values" **(M)**
- M 11/4 Excursion 2: Maclean "USFS 1919" **(M)**
- W 11/6 Trans/Posthumanism: Haraway from "A Cyborg Manifesto" **(M)**;  
"Transhumanist Declaration" [2012] **(M)**; More "A Letter  
to Mother Nature" **(M)** **Essay#2 DUE**
- M 11/11 **Veterans Day—NO CLASS**
- W 11/13 Postcolonial: Huggan & Tiffin (ECO 178-195); Nixon (ECO 196-210)
- M 11/18 Postcolonial: Tsing (ECO 211-231); Tobin (ECO 310-321)
- W 11/20 Environmental Justice: Adams, Evans & Stein (ECO 135-142); Bullard  
(ECO 154-158)
- M 11/25 Environmental Justice: Reed "Toward and Environmental Justice  
Criticism" **(M)**; Evans "'Nature' and Environmental Justice" **(M)**
- Thanksgiving Holiday**
- M 12/2 Dark Ecology: Kingsnorth "Dark Ecology" **(M)**; Calvert "So What If  
We're Doomed?" **(M)**
- W 12/4 Dark Ecology: Morton "The End of the World" **(M)**; Chakrabarty (ECO  
335-352); Evaluations
- W 12/11 Essay #3, Completed Portfolio DUE no later than NOON**