

ENGL-UA 9675.SY1 ENVST-UA 9675.SY1

Literature and the Environment

Spring 2020

Instructor Information

- Dr. Laura McLauchlan
- Consultation by appointment
- laura.mclauchlan@nyu.edu (Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails)

Course Information

- None
- Tuesdays: 3:30 – 6:30pm
- Room 301, NYU Sydney Academic Centre. Science House: 157-161 Gloucester Street, The Rocks NSW 2000

Ecocriticism asks how the literary arts—one of the richest arenas for the practice of human imagination—does, has, or could shape environmental thought and action. We read critical environmental theory, literature and poetry (and watch a couple of films!) to pry open new and urgent questions about the past and present, in order to build alternative visions for the future. Grounded in the research and writing methods of literary studies, this course also asks participants to be global citizens and polymaths – to think across national borders and disciplinary boundaries – in order to open up earthy and alternative ways of interpreting the ecological crisis that are arguably relevant to students in any study program.

Practically speaking, the course is broken into two parts “Ecocritical Theory” and “Ecocritical Reading”, and is firmly situated in Australia. In the first half of the course we will read and investigate a variety of exciting contemporary theories, including Donna Haraway’s “Companion Species”, Stacy Alaimo’s “Transcorporeality”, Val Plumwood’s “Shadow Places” and Rob Nixon’s notion of “Slow Violence”, among others; students will also be introduced to important conceptual terms such as “the Anthropocene” and learn strategies for critiquing the distinction between nature and culture. The second part of the course is comprised of two modules—Coast and Interior—where we will read novels and watch films that represent these qualitatively different parts of the Australian continent. The first module focuses on literature of Sydney, a coastal and watery city and considers the city not only as a place full of bright lights, pretty people and tall buildings, but as a lively multispecies environment shared with animals, bacteria, plants, afflicted by the weather and with a rich geological history. The second module, “Interior” explores literature of Australia’s arid and semi-arid interior and, in particular, the Mallee Bioregion and the Western Desert, using film, fiction and poetry to investigate failed attempts to farm the semi-arid zone and the area’s rich Aboriginal history. Encouraging students to be critically engaged as both scholars and tourists in Sydney, the primary texts in the course are almost exclusively Australian, situating our creative and critical thinking in the lively real world environment

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

It is a course expectation that you have done the required reading and have prepared sufficiently to discuss them in class.

Every week a number of mandatory and optional readings are set; both primary texts, and secondary readings from the field of eco-criticism. Mandatory readings must be completed by every student prior to the seminar. Optional readings are for those students who wish to deepen their understanding of a topic, or pursue a specific area of the course in their final research essays. With the exception of the film in Week 14, films need to be watched in advance of the seminar. Note that although readings are assigned to specific weeks, many are relevant to a wide range of sections in the course.

The readings will be made available through NYU Classes or the NYUS library. With reference to the novels, you may work from editions other than those that are listed here. Books will be available to purchase from the Co-op Bookstore.

Novels (to purchase):

- Berry, Vanessa, *Mirror Sydney*. (Sydney: Giramondo, 2017).
- Wright, Alexis, *The Swan Book*. (Sydney: Giramondo, 2013).
- Tiffany, Carrie. *Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living*. (New York, N.Y.: Scribner, 2006).

Supplemental Textbooks & Materials

(Not required to purchase; available in NYU SYDNEY Library)

- Please see appendix 1

Internet Research Guideline

A citation guide will be provided, detailing the proper form of referencing online, multimedia and textual sources. Students are encouraged to read beyond the set-list for the course at their own discretion. In researching their photo essays and research essays, students should maintain a sceptical mindset with regards to the reliability and authenticity of online resources.

Course Overview and Goals

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the complex and various representations of nature;
- Demonstrate the ability to deploy appropriate critical strategies to analyse the ideological dimensions of representations of nature and ecology;
- Demonstrate the skills to reflect upon and critique both the real world environmental crisis and representations of related issues by thinking with important contemporary theoretical concepts;
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of different generic and formal modes of construction—including strategies for representing ecological disaster and threat, apocalypse, different ideas of nature (e.g. as a historical category, as the site of technological mediation) and the more than human world of animals, plants and landscape;
- Demonstrate an enhanced reading, writing, research and group communication skills; *and*
- Demonstrate the capacity to engage with secondary critical reading material, assessing the scholarly arguments that might contribute to their intellectual projects.

Course Requirements

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade	Due
Photo Essay	20% (4.5 pages)	11:55pm, Mon 23 Mar (Wk 8)
Seminar Preparation Blog	Work in Progress (10%) Final Grade (30%) (0.5-1 pages per week)	Several between Wk 2 –14 Submit by 3pm Mondays before class
Research Essay <i>Proposal</i>	10% (6 pages, questions and answer style format)	11:55pm, Mon 13 Apr (Wk 11)
Research Essay <i>Final</i>	30% (12-15 pages)	11:55pm, Mon 11 May (Wk 15)

For this course, your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, is converted to a letter grade without rounding.

Extra credit: Site policy does not allow grading of work outside of the assignments included in the syllabus. The final grade will only be calculated from the assessment components listed here and no other work, whether additional or substituted, is permitted.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Explanation of Grade
A	Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning. Written work is of a highly sophisticated standard
B	Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research. Written work is of a superior standard.
C	Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level. Written work is of an acceptable standard.
D	Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course's topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations. Written work is of a basic standard.
F	Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Written work is weak, unfinished or unsubmitted.

Grade Conversions

For this course your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, correspond to the following letter grades:

A	94 to 100
A-	90 to < 94
B+	87 to < 90
B	84 to < 87
B-	80 to < 84
C+	77 to < 80
C	74 to < 77
C-	70 to < 74
D+	67 to < 70
D	65 to < 67
F	0 to < 65

Course Schedule

Week 1: 4-Feb-20

PART 1: ECOCRITICAL THEORY (WEEKS 1 – 6)

Part I: Rethinking Nature

This is an introductory seminar outlining the course and discussing how we plan to ecocritically rethink nature. The course is structured in two parts. In Part I we carefully read cultural theories relevant to ecocritical studies and in Part II we apply these theories to the reading of two novels and two films. The first half of the seminar will provide a comprehensive overview of the course outline, covering everything from the structure and content to assessments and expectations. We will then open the course by discussing some big conceptual questions. What and where is nature? The second half of the seminar will be a mini-lecture and discussion focused entirely on the questions: “What is ecocriticism?” and “What is ecocritical theory?” We will discuss selections from Rachel Carson’s influential *Silent Spring* and look at the various literary aspects of it, including both the apocalyptic and the pastoral and consider what this means for how we view the biophysical world around us.

Required Reading:

- Carson, Rachel. Selections from *Silent Spring* (1962). Chapter 1 “A Fable for Tomorrow” and Chapter 2 “The Obligation to Endure”. (London: Penguin Classics, 2000): pp. 21-30.
- Eli Clare. "Meditations on Natural Worlds, Disabled Bodies and a Politics of Cure" in S. Oppermann and S. Iovino (eds), *Material Ecocriticism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2014).

Recommended Reading:

- Garrard, Greg. 'Chapter 5: Apocalypse', in *Ecocriticism* (Routledge: London, 2003): 93-116.
- Garrard, Greg “Beginnings: Pollution” in *Ecocriticism* (The New Critical Idiom). (New York: Routledge, 2004): 1-18.
- Heise, Ursula K. “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Ecocriticism”. PMLA. Vol. 121, No. 2. pp. 503-516.
- Cronon, William. “Introduction: In Search of Nature”. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996): 23-56.

Announcements: Students will receive details of the assignment “Seminar Preparation Journal” and “Photo Essay”.

Week 2: 11-Feb-20

The Anthropocene and its Discontents

This seminar will begin our exploration of conceptual and theoretical strategies for undertaking ecocritical analysis. Here we deconstruct the term “Nature” and introduce you to the “Anthropocene”. In class, we will trace the path of the Tank Stream around which Sydney

was built. Returning to class, we will consider the ways in which the “Anthropocene” – further complicates the relationship between humans and this thing we call “nature”. In this context, we will begin by deconstructing the term nature and exploring the idea of the Anthropocene not only as a stratigraphic layer, but as a useful cultural concept. In this class, we will begin the work of using eco-critical theory to also ‘read’ the world around us, enabling us to get a better view of the sorts of stories which shape how we view and dwell in the world.

Required Reading:

- Nixon, Rob. “Introduction” in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011): 1-30.
- Boes, Tobias & Marshall, Kate. “Writing the Anthropocene: An Introduction” *the minnesota review* Vol. 83 (2014): 60-72.

Recommended Reading:

- Kolbert, Elizabeth. “[The Lost World: Fossils of the Future](#)”. *The New Yorker*, December 23, 2013.
- Clark, Timothy. ‘Scale’, Tom Cohen (ed.) *Telemorphosis: Theory in an Era of Climate Change*, Vol. 1. Open Humanities Press, 2012.
- Haraway, Donna. “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin” *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015): 159-165.
- Masco, Joseph. “Bad Weather: On Planetary Crisis”. *Social Studies of Science*. Vol 40, No. 7 (2010): 7-40.

Field trip/excursion: The Tank Stream – a Short Perambulatory Seminar (We will leave from Science House so come to class as normal)

Week 3: 18-Feb-20

More than Human

A lively understanding of the world of things—from Animals, Plants, Fungi, Soil and Rocks, to Computers, Cyborgs, Bicycles, Cars, Roads, Coal, Atoms, Plankton, Drones and Pharmaceuticals—is essential for ecocritical thinking. This week we get down and dirty with a variety of more-than-human creatures, plants, objects and particles that share and, indeed, mutually constitute the world around us. This week we also sample some of the many emerging works animating the world beyond the human and start to think about how we can expand our own practices of noticing.

Required Reading:

- van Dooren, Thom, and Deborah Bird Rose. 2012. “Storied-places in a multispecies city.” *Humanimalia: a journal of human/animal interface studies* 3 (2):1-27.
- Crist, E. 1999. “Introduction: The Significance of Language in Portraying Animals” pp. 1-10 in *Images Of Animals*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Von Uexküll, Jacob. 2010 [1934]. “Introduction”, pp44-52 in *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Recommended Reading:

- Haraway, Donna. "[SF: String Figures, Multispecies Muddles and Staying with the Trouble](#)" Lecture from 2014 at University of Alberta.

Week 4: 25-Feb-20

What is a human, anyway? Post-human worlds in the Anthropocene?

An even more radical shift in theory has emerged from what has been called by some the 'post-humanities'. This week we will explore the emergence of this field of thought and what it means for both our approach to the environment and to ourselves. To get to this juncture in time, we will go on a whistle-stop tour of Western concepts of what a human is, so hold on to your hats! In this lecture, we will also be considering the vital position of science in posthuman and ecocritical approaches. We will then look at some examples of this 'posthuman' thinking. In particular, we will look at Donna Haraway's theories of the cyborg and of companion species as well as Nancy Tuana's analysis of the "dance of agency" of Hurricane Katrina, challenging easy divisions of the biological and cultural as well as the human and nonhuman.

Required Reading:

- Haraway, Donna. 2008. 'Chapter 1: When Species Meet: Introductions' in *When Species Meet* pp 2-42. Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tuana, Nancy. 2008. 'Viscous porosity: witnessing Katrina'. In *Material Feminisms*. Edited by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman. pp188-213. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Recommended Reading:

- Wolf, Cary. 2010. *What is Posthumanism?* . Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press.
- Braidotti, Rosi. 2016. Posthuman Feminist Theory. In *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, edited by Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth.
- Todd, Zoe. 2016. "An Indigenous Feminist's Take on The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word For Colonialism." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29 (1):4-22.
- Haraway, Donna. 2001. "A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century." In *The Cybercultures Reader*, edited by David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy, 291-324. London and New York: Routledge.

Week 5: 3-Mar-20

Urban Ecologies and the politics of place

The question of place and belonging is central to the disciplines of Ecocriticism, Environmental Humanities and Environmental Justice. Who gets to live and where do they get to live? Who has the right to certain place and what particular? This seminar will explore the complexities of place as a concept for ecocriticism, through the work of one of Australia's best known environmental philosophers, the late Val Plumwood as well as the work of artist and author, Vanessa Berry whose illustrated text, *Mirror Sydney*, is the first full length text we will be discussing in this course. In the final hour of today's seminar, with Berry's work as

inspiration, we will also go outside to explore and write about place in the inner City. This will also be preparation for your photo essays.

Required Reading:

- Berry, Vanessa, *Mirror Sydney*. (Sydney: Giramondo, 2017).
- Plumwood, Val. "Shadow Places and the Politics of Dwelling". *Australian Humanities Review*. Vol 44 (2008).

Recommended Reading:

- Potter, Emily. "The Ethics of Rural Place-Making." *Cultural Studies Review* Vol. 16 No. 1 (2010).
- Van Dooren, Thom. "Urban Penguins: Stories for Lost Places". *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction*.

Field trip/excursion: Fieldwork and writing place

We will go outside and, in preparation for your photo essays, explore inner Sydney thinking about how fieldwork, traditionally a method from Anthropology, can complement and complicate critical and creative reading and writing practices.

Week 6: 10-Mar-20

From Ecofeminism to Ecosexuality

What has feminism got to do with the environment? How are ecological discourses racialised? How can love and sex save the planet? This seminar will present a range of theoretical ideas in response to a tendency within Ecocriticism and the Environmental Humanities to universalise the experience of environmental degradation. Many speak of "our" planet, "our" responsibility, the price "we" must pay for "man's" wrongdoing: but whom do we speak of? And can we speak for all? Foreshadowing some of the vexing questions and concerns raised by the fictional texts in the coming weeks, this particular seminar will focus on developing a vocabulary for discussing the ethics human difference within the environmentally oriented criticisms. Building on the critiques of the Anthropocene by Haraway in Session 2 and the anti-colonial theory of Rob Nixon, this week finds a way to discuss diversity, power, privilege, justice as linked to environmental questions

Required Reading:

- Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens. "[The Ecosex Manifesto](#)" Online Publication
- Lorde, Audre. 1984. "Uses of the erotic: The erotic as power." In *Sister Outsider: Essays and speeches*, 53-59. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Ensor, Sarah. 2017. "Queer Fallout Samuel R. Delany and the Ecology of Cruising." *Environmental Humanities* 9 (1):149-166.

Week 7: 16 – 22 MAR

SEMESTER BREAK – No Class

Week 8: 24-Mar-20

PART 2: ECOCRITICAL READING (WEEKS 8 – 15)

Part II: Ecocritical Reading and Essay Planning Workshop

Now we have acquired some theoretical tools how can we apply them to an ecocritical reading? How does the theory inform our reading of literature? How will it help us to draw out particular meanings from the primary texts? This seminar we will all read Rick Bass's short story "Fiber" and Terry Gifford's reading of the story. We will discuss Gifford's argument with regards to Bass's story and construct our own ecocritical reflection on Bass's story as a class.

After providing a way into this section of the course way of a practical example of ecocritical reading, a mini-lecture will introduce the two modules of Part II "City" and "Desert". The four texts of this half of the course, *Australia Daze*, *The Swan Book*, *Tracks* and *Everyman's Rules For Scientific Living* variously represent these different environmental regions of Australia. The lecture will also outline how the theory learned in Part I will be useful to us in Part II.

Required Reading:

- Bass, Rick. "Fiber" (short story) in *The Lives of Rocks*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007): 124-145.
- Wood, James. "Narrating" in *How Fiction Works* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008): 1-38
- Gifford, Terry. "Fiber: A Post-Pastoral Georgic" from *Reconnecting With John Muir: Essays in Post-Pastoral Practice* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006): 89-101.

Announcements: Students will receive details of the assignments Research Essay Proposal & Research Essay Final

Week 9: 31-Mar-20

(Part II, Module I) City not Country (*Australia Daze*)

The late Australian poet Dorothy Porter once described Sydney as a "glittering tart", and cultural theorist Ross Gibson added "Aqueous. Shiny. Shifty. Stupid. Braggart. Gorgeous beyond measure. Cruel. Exorbitant. A geist that puts hooks in you when you do your hardest wanting". While these are evocative descriptions of Sydney today, there is more to Australia's largest city than its brash and beautiful current incarnation. Indeed, the city is built on land stolen from its indigenous custodians, in a historical act of violence that has never been properly reconciled. To introduce our ecocritical study of the City will watch the documentary *Australia Daze*, made as a response to the "celebration" of the Bicentenary of the British Colonisation of Australia in 1988. Dramatised re-enactments of first contact clash with one of the biggest Indigenous protest marches in the Nation's history, in a filmic pastiche that highlights the contested nature of the land beneath our feet. Winding up our final considerations of the city before we venture 'up North' and into the 'outback', we also read a short story by Ellen van Neerven, an aboriginal author who who write about indigenous identity in the city.

Required Viewing and Reading:

- Fiske, Pat (Director). [Australia Daze](#). Graham Isaac, 1988. [Advice on accessing this film to be provided closer to the date]
- Van Neerven, Ellen. "[North and South](#)". *Sydney Review of Books*. 4th November, 2016.

Recommended Reading:

- Lorange, Astrid (ed.) [Cordite Poetry Review #38.0](#): Sydney 2012.
- Spencer, Gwen Morton *Portrait of Sydney: a photographic impression with an Illuminating Article* by Kenneth Slessor. (Sydney: U. Smith, 1950).

Field trip/excursion: Aboriginal Walking Tour

Week 10: 7-Apr-20

Environmental hope and despair, apocalypse and promise (The Swan Book)

After spending much of the course so far in cities, we will now be heading to the far north of Australia to the Gulf of Carpentaria, the ancestral country of Alexis Wright. Wright is an award-winning novelist who has won particular acclaim for her unique voice, her ability to evoke sensations of place and for her decentring of the human. Her work thus encompasses and extends much of the theory you have learned in this course. The Swan Book is Wright's third novel and, as with her previous two books, it opens in her ancestral country in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Hailed as both a beautiful and challenging book, it is set in a post-apocalyptic Australia, in which climate change has rendered much of the world uninhabitable. Questions of exile, despair and hope run through this book.

In this first week of considering The Swan Book, we will return to lecture 1 think about the history of apocalyptic environmental writing. We will have a mini-lecture on climate fiction and Australia's place in the imaginary of climate fiction. We will also discuss the politics of hope.

Required Reading:

- Wright, Alexis, *The Swan Book*. (Sydney: Giramondo, 2013).

Recommended Reading:

- Garrard, Greg. 'Chapter 5: Apocalypse', *Ecocriticism* (Routledge: London, 2003): 93-116.

Week 11: 14-Apr-19

More Than Human Worlds (The Swan Book)

While we often read for the stories of human (or humanised) characters, Wright offers us a wealth of other beings and vital forces, from Dreamtime figures, to toxins and weather to, of

course, the swans themselves. In this seminar we return to questions of the more-than-human raised in the first half of this course. This seminar will methodically move through the novel and, using the theory of Jane Bennett and Donna Haraway, explore the variety of ways the author weaves the more-than-human world into her narrative.

In this seminar, using the work of Timothy Morton in particular, we will also look at what ecological thinking might look like and, in particular, how seeing ourselves as a product of connections (many of which we cannot fathom) changes how we see ourselves and our place in the world. Using Wright's work to question mainstream concepts of ecology, we will look at the humilities of being human and the possible joys of relational ontologies.

Required Reading:

- Wright, Alexis, *The Swan Book*. (Sydney: Giramondo, 2013).

Recommended Reading:

We will also draw on previous post-human readings for this week's seminar, in particular:

- Todd, Zoe. 2016. "An Indigenous Feminist's Take On The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word For Colonialism." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29 (1):4-22.
- Haraway, Donna. Haraway, Donna. "Playing String Figures with Companion Species" in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016): 9-29
- Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria. "Making time for soil: Technoscientific futurity and the pace of care" *Social Studies of Science* 45 (2015).

In the seminar I will also introduce you to the following pieces:

- Lavau, Stephanie. 2011. "The nature/s of belonging: Performing an authentic Australian river." *Ethnos* 76 (1):41-64.
- Somerville, Alice Te Punga. 2017. "Where oceans come from " *Comparative Literature* 69 (1):25-31.
- Morton, Timothy. 2018. *Being Ecological*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Week 12: 21-Apr-20

Desert Ecologies (Tracks)

How do we imagine the vast and dry expanses of this great southern land? Recently, the politician Bob Katter said "If you drop a series of hydrogen bombs from the back of Cairns ... all the way across to Broome, you won't kill anybody. There's nobody living there. There's only 670,000 people living on 95 percent of the surface area of this country." But of course such an act would cause incredible loss of life. Australia may be big and sparsely populated, but the land is not empty and the flow on effect of such bombing would devastate the island ecology. Moreover, indigenous Australians traditionally inhabited the whole continent and the land is dotted with sacred sites. The colonial and anthropocentric attitude that Australia is empty is complicated by Robyn Davidson's journey across the centre in *Tracks*. This seminar will use the 2013 film and an excerpt from Davidson's own memoir *Tracks* (1980) as a way to frame our understanding of the interior.

Required Viewing:

- Curran, John (Director). *Tracks*. See-Saw Films, 2013.

Recommended Reading:

- Davidson, Robyn. *Tracks*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2012)
- Brett, Judith. "Fair Share: Country and City in Australia", *Quarterly Essay*, 42, 2011.
- Rose, Deborah Bird. "Dialogue with Place: Towards an Ecological Body". *Journal of Narrative Theory*. Vol. 32, No. 3, 2002. pp. 311-325.

Week 13: 28-Apr-20

Part II: Module II: Farm not Desert (Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living) and Essay Writing Workshop

For the next three weeks of the course, we head to the desert. Although we are one of the most urbanized populations on earth and all our major cities are on the coast, our imaginations are fixated in the interior. Indeed, award winning novels and films of our country tell stories of what Ken Gelder calls the "Rural Apocalypse", including such tales as Carrie Tiffany's novel *Everyman's Rules For Scientific Living*. This seminar will explore the desire to shape the environment of the semi-arid and arid regions of Australia, and reflect on the role of the environment itself in the failure of that dream as represented in Tiffany's novel.

Required Reading:

- Tiffany, Carrie. *Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living*. (New York, NY: Scribner, 2006).

Recommended Reading:

- Potter, Emily. "The Ethics of Rural Place-Making." *Cultural Studies Review* Vol. 16 No. 1 (2010).

Week 14: 5-May-20

Urban/Rural Divide (Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living)

This week we seek to further complicate received understandings of the urban and rural in Australian cultural life as we continue our consideration of Tiffany's novel. Australian colonial and modernist concerns with a continental interior have been accompanied by a neglect of Aboriginal place-making and landscapes. In answer to this we consider Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu* which challenges an enduring settler-colonial failure to understand Aboriginal country as occupied, and as rich with meaning and productive activity. This week's field trip introduces a further turn as we find agriculture within urban space: the exploitative divisions of labour and space implied by the separation of rural from urban, and the would-be system that locks us into particular patterns of production and consumption, are arguably challenged by this (re)emergence of urban farming. Also, we will gain a distinctive experience of space and place to that of surrounding urban life.

Required Reading:

- Pascoe, Bruce. "Introduction", *Dark Emu: Black Seeds (Agriculture or Accident)* (Broome: Magbala Books, 2014).

Recommended Reading:

- Giggs, Rebecca. "Eye in the Sand: On Creative Remoteness". *Meanjin* Vol. 72, No. 4 (Dec 2013).
- Rose, Deborah Bird. "Dialogue with Place: Towards an Ecological Body". *Journal of Narrative Theory*. Vol. 32, No. 3, 2002. pp. 311-325.

Field trip/excursion: Pocket City Farms, Camperdown

Week 15: 12-May-20

The Beach and the Future

Aaaand, we're done! At the beginning of Seminar 15 you will hand in your final assessment piece. In this seminar we will revise the course together, its themes and key learnings over the semester. We will consider 'where to from here' options for when you return from Sydney to the United States, and we will ask for your feedback to help strengthen the course into the future. And discuss the politics of hope.

Recommended Reading:

- Head, Leslie. 2016. *Hope and Grief in the Anthropocene: Re-conceptualising human-nature relations*. London: Taylor and Francis
- Braidotti, Rosi. 2006. "Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Affectivity" *Rhizomes* (11/12).

Course Policies

Submission of Work

Assignments (excluding in-class presentations and exams) must be submitted electronically via NYU Classes. It is the student's responsibility to confirm that the work has been successfully been uploaded. In the unlikely event that a submission to Classes fails, students must immediately submit the work to their instructor as well as the Academic Programs Coordinator via email before the original submission deadline accompanied by an explanation of the issue. Please note that the work will not be graded until it is uploaded to NYU Classes. All in-class presentations and exams must be completed during the scheduled class time. An assessment component is considered completed when the student has met all the terms for that assessment component as outlined by the instructor.

All written assignments must be submitted at the due date and time outlined in the syllabus. An assessment component receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) for each day the work is late (including weekend days) up to a maximum of 10 points. If the work is completed beyond five days after the due date, it receives a mark of zero, and the student is not entitled to feedback for that piece of work. Because failure to

submit or fulfil any required assessment component will result in failure of the course, it is crucial for students to complete every assignment even when it will receive a mark of zero.

Extensions

Any request for approval to submit an assignment after the due date must be received by the instructor, in writing, prior to the due date. The request must include evidence of work in progress before an extension is considered. If an extension is granted and the work is submitted by the agreed time, the late penalty will be waived. If an extension is granted and a student fails to submit within the agreed time, the late penalty will apply from the original due date of the assignment. Students will not be granted an extension because of workload commitments in other classes: assignment deadlines are available to students from the beginning of semester.

Plagiarism Policy

The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University's plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU's various schools and colleges.

Attendance Policy

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. The class roster will be marked at the beginning of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are expected to be present for the duration of the session: anyone leaving class early will also be considered absent. This attendance policy also applies for classes involving a field trip or other off-campus visits. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at the agreed meeting point on time. If you are travelling on a weekend, or during the break, you must plan to return to Sydney the day prior to your next class. No excused absences will be given to students who miss class on the same day that they return from a trip, even when this is due to circumstances outside of the student's control (such as a delayed flight).

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalised by a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to two unexcused absences. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

Faculty cannot excuse an absence. Requests for absences to be excused must be directed to the Academic Programs Coordinator. Students must provide appropriate documentation for their absence. In the case of illness, students must contact the Academic Programs Coordinator on the day of absence. They must provide medical documentation to the Academic Programs Coordinator within three days of the absence in order to be medically excused. The note must be obtained from a medical professional licensed to practise in Australia. The note must include a medical judgement indicating that the student was unfit to attend class/work on the specific day or dates of the absence. Faculty will be informed of excused absences by the Academic Programs Staff.

Religious Observance

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Academic Programs Coordinator in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

Classroom Expectations

This is a seminar subject and requires the active participation of all students. It also requires engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Your behaviour in class should respect your classmates' desire to learn. It is important for you to focus your full attention on the class, for the entire class period. In all classes we expect that students will follow the common classroom expectations outlined here in order to support constructive and effective classroom experience.

- Arrive to class on time.
- Once you are in class, you are expected to stay until class ends. Leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not acceptable behaviour.
- Phones, digital music players, and any other communications or sound devices are not to be used during class. That means no phone calls, no texting, no social media, no email, and no internet browsing at any time during class.
- Laptop computers and tablets are not to be used during class except in rare instances for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor.
- The only material you should be reading in class is material assigned for that class. Reading anything else, such as newspapers or magazines, or doing work from another class, is not acceptable.
- Class may not be recorded in any fashion – audio, video, or otherwise – without permission in writing from the instructor.
- Be mindful of the space you take up in class and make space for others.
- Listen actively and be engaged and present when others are speaking.
- Do not use profanities in class discussion (they may still occasionally appear in course readings and assignments where considered appropriate)

- Criticise ideas, not people (groups and individuals).
- Use 'I' statements when giving opinions. Don't try to speak for any group with which you identify.

You will be advised if there are additions to these common procedures for participation in this class.

Inclusion, Diversity, Belonging and Equity

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton has said, "...not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities." At NYU Sydney we are committed to creating a learning environment that:

- fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and
- promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavours.

Provisions to Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Centre for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Instructor Bio

Dr Laura McLauchlan (Ph.D., University of New South Wales) is a multispecies ethnographer whose research interests lie at the intersection of material feminism, multispecies studies and environmental activism. In particular, she is interested in the ontological and material aspects of human-environmental relationships. Her current research centres on how our self-concepts and worldviews influence how we interact with and care for our environments and vice versa. Her anthropological work focuses on the crafts of those engaged in a wide range of ecological care and environmental activism and, in particular, attends to often overlooked everyday practices and emergent ontologies which might allow for greater environmental flourishing.

Laura currently teaches Environmental Justice and Environmental Advocacy and Activism at the University of New South Wales and Literature and the Environment at New York University Sydney.

Appendix 1

Supplemental Textbooks & Materials

(Not required to purchase; available in NYU SYDNEY Library)

PRIMARY TEXTS

Films (DVDs available Online or at NYU Sydney):

- Fiske, Pat (Director). [Australia Daze](#). Graham Isaac, 1988.
- Curran, John (Director). *Tracks*. Sea-Saw Films, 2013.

Autobiography (available on NYU Classes):

- Davidson, Robyn. *Tracks*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2012): 59-77

Short-Story/Essay (available on NYU Classes):

- Bass Rick. "Fiber" (short story) in *The Lives of Rocks*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007. pp.124-145.
- van Neerven, Ellen. "[North and South](#)". *Sydney Review of Books*. 4th November, 2016.

Poetry (available on NYU Classes and to be provided in class):

- Selections from: Saunders, Brenda *Looking for Bullin Bullin*. Ormond: Hybrid, 2012.

Theory & Criticism (available on NYU Classes):

- Boes, Tobias & Marshall, Kate. "Writing the Anthropocene: An Introduction" *the minnesota review* Vol. 83 (2014): 60-72.
- Carson, Rachel. Selections from *Silent Spring* (1962). Chapter 1 "A Fable for Tomorrow" and Chapter 2 "The Obligation to Endure". (London: Penguin Classics, 2000): pp. 21-30.
- Cronon, William. "Introduction: In Search of Nature". *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996): pp. 23-56.
- Nixon, Rob. "Introduction" in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011): pp.1-30.
- Gifford, Terry. "Fiber: A Post-Pastoral Georgic" from *Reconnecting With John Muir: Essays in Post-Pastoral Practice* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006): 89-101.
- Haraway, Donna. "Playing String Figures with Companion Species" in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016): 9-29
- Masco, Joseph. "Bad Weather: On Planetary Crisis". *Social Studies of Science*. Vol 40, No. 7 (2010) 7-40.
- Pascoe, Bruce. "Introduction", *Dark Emu: Black Seeds (Agriculture or Accident)* (Broome: Magbala Books, 2014).

- Plumwood, Val. "Shadow Places and the Politics of Dwelling". *Australian Humanities Review*. Vol 44 (2008).
- Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria. "Making time for soil: Technoscientific futurity and the pace of care" *Social Studies of Science* 45.
- Robin, Libby. "Desert Nationalism" in *How a Continent Created a Nation*. (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2007): pp.99-122.
- Wood, James. "Narrating" in *How Fiction Works* (New York: Farar, Straus & Giroux, 2008): 1-38.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS

- Clark, Timothy. *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*. Cambridge; New York, N.Y.; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

There are also optional recommended readings for each seminar, listed in the week-by-week guide part of the syllabus. The instructor can also provide further supplementary reading; interested students should book a consultation time to discuss.