[Course number]

**Reading Poetry in an Era of Climate Change**

Autumn Semester 2017 ARTSCI. [Day]

Assistant Professor Zoë Brigley Thompson

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**Office hours**

You can sign up for office hours via this google drive document: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_zsW8zCQ-jp4Hkbg1dsi9iKGWpkkV2n5bksnB8EaKcs/edit?usp=sharing>

**Course Description:** We are living in a moment characterised by social and ecological crises. In such a time, how might poetry contribute to fostering understanding of how to live more ethically in the world? Mass extinction, global ecosystem collapse, and the climate emergency make it unclear whether life on earth can continue, and there are far too many instances of violence against less privileged groups. The time has come to explore new perspectives, to tell ourselves new stories about how to approach the natural world ethically.

In *The Song of the Earth*, Jonathan Bate poses “poetic dwelling” as a way of existing *with* the earth which means viewing the natural world with respect, acknowledging it as an autonomous life-force not just something to be possessed or exploited. We will interrogate the concept of the natural world, an idea perhaps only as old as the agricultural fence-line distinguishing crop-field and forest. What would it mean to dwell beyond separation of the natural and the human? In an age of mass extinction, can we relate to nonhumans in ways other than as pets, pests, or commodities? Indeed, how arbitrary is the borderline between the human and the nonhuman? In many traditional cultures, animals and plants, rivers and mountains, are recognised as persons. We will read work that smudges or re-draughts our customary paintings of the natural, explores the personhood of the nonhuman, and questions the distinction between the domestic and the wild.

Links to poems online will be provided

**Biographical Statement**

I am Assistant Professor in English and Sexuality Studies, originally from the UK. I regularly teach classes on fiction and poetry (including honors students), as well as Creative Writing workshops, and I also teach courses on gender and sexuality (undergraduates and graduates). Students have reported enjoying my classes, because I often try to relate more universal issues to the specific challenges and concerns that relate to them. I have published peer review essays on fiction, gender, and violence, as well as two poetry collections, and an edited volume on violence. I am currently editing an anthology of poems on ecological themes, *100 Poems to Save the Earth.*

**Grading:**

Class participation: 30%

Planning: 15%

Final project: 50%

**Required Activities:**

1. You will need to attend all classes and your participation in discussions will count towards your grade. Reading the novels and stories carefully is an important part of the class, watch the films at home, but film clips will be shown in class, so we can pause and discuss.

**Poetry Poster**

This project asks you to take a poem and create a poetry poster. We will be viewing many poetry posters over the course of semester, and we will be having discussions about how poetry and images might work together to complement each other.

1. Part of your assessment will I would like you to work on planning and preparing for your Poetry Film/Poster Project. In your plan, I would like to see:

* a copy of the poem that you will be interpreting;
* 200 words describing what you aim to do;
* any images (or links to the files) or work that you have already;
* or a sketch of the design if you are making a poster.

1. The final poster will be submitted at the end of semester. A poetry poster must include:

* a whole poem, the title, and the author’s name;
* an original image that connects or builds on the poem’s meaning;
* and a clear and thoughtful design (color/layout/text style/picture placement) that reflects the poem’s content.

There is a great deal of software available from the university to help you with this project. To create a poster, or simple film, you can use:

* Adobe Spark, or Photoshop, both available on university computers or you can download it onto one privately owned computer;
* or Mike Biershenk, our technology expert in the English department, also recommends CANVA to create posters, and he is currently working on a guide for this group to use, which I will post on Carmen when it is ready.

Here are some helpful links:

Digital Union: <https://odee.osu.edu/digital-union/reserve>

OSU Software Downloads: <https://ocio.osu.edu/software>

CANVA: <https://www.canva.com>

**Grading**

Final grades are based on your written assignments, your group project, any extra credit exercises, and the constructive nature of your class participation; the schema for final grades appears below. **All assignments are due on the days specified. Late papers will be penalized by an entire letter grade for every day they are past due**.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | 93-100% | **B** | 83-86 | **C** | 73-76 | **D** | 60-66 |
| **A-** | 90-92% | **B-** | 80-82 | **C-** | 70-72 | **E** | 59% or less |
| **B+** | 87-89 | **C+** | 77-79 | **D+** | 67-69 |  |  |

**BREAKDOWN OF ASSIGNMENTS**

Participation and Attendance (35%)

Planning (15%)

Reflective Writing (50%)

**Course Objectives:**

1. Students will analyze, interpret, and critique poems.
2. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students will appraise and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures.
3. Students will analyze and interpret major forms of human thought about culture and the environment, particularly regarding climate change, mass extinction, and the Anthropocene.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week 1-2

**Introduction.**

Week 3-4

**Poems about “dwelling”**

Week 5 & 6

**Poems about birds**

Week 7 & 8

**Poems about animals**

[AUTUMN BREAK]

Week 9 & 10

**Poems about climate change**

Week 11 & 12

**Poems about ecojustice**

Week 13-14

**Poems about the future**

[THANKSGIVING BREAK]

Week 15: **Review and workshop.**

**HAND IN DATE FOR FINAL PROJECT: [Date] December**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu/).”

[Other relevant, more detailed course information to be added here.]