



## **LNDN LITR 3318 Literature and the Environment**

### **CAPA LONDON PROGRAM**

#### **Course Description**

This course examines the ways in which writers in English have engaged with the natural environment. We will read a range of authors, from the advent of industrialization in the late eighteenth century up to the present age of climate change, to consider how they have celebrated the “natural world,” and looked critically at human effects on ecosystems. Throughout, we will be attentive both to the literary qualities of writings about the environment and to their historical and political contexts. We will be studying a range of genres, including poetry, fiction, nonfiction, websites and photographic texts. The course will be organized chronologically, with units on key ideas in the study of literature in relation to the environment: pastoral, wilderness, pollution, apocalypse, and ecosystems. Since the course will be set in London, we will also consider the design and representation of “urban nature,” including parks, gardens, zoos, riverbanks, and art exhibits. There will be some out-of-class visits and walks (with attention to accessibility, as needed).

#### **Requirements and Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

- a) Students will explore and appreciate the uses of literature – and several literary genres – as a mode of representing the relations of humans with the natural world, including the pleasures and problems of those relationships.
- b) Students will analyze the function of common tropes in nature writing – pastoral, wilderness, pollution, apocalypse, and ecology – and recognize their persistence in contemporary environmental discourses, including “debates” about climate change.
- c) Students will learn how to use informal writing – including field notes, on-line blogging and timed essay-writing – to compose their understanding of course topics, to communicate their responses to texts, and to pose questions for discussion.
- d) Students will engage productively with the ethical practices of seminar-style collective inquiry: attentive listening, clear and concise speaking, respectful debate, and collaborative research.

#### **Developmental Outcomes**

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences.

#### **Class methodology**

##### Preparation:

The reading(s) should be completed for the day under which they are listed on the “Course Schedule.” I expect you to come with the text(s) in hand (or on a computer / tablet) and ready to discuss them. This means taking notes on, thinking over, and developing questions about assigned materials in advance of our class meetings.

##### Reading Quizzes:

I will be giving several pop quizzes over the course of the term. Each quiz will consist of a few straightforward multiple-choice questions based on the day’s reading.

##### Participation:

Since this is a discussion-based seminar, participation will account for a significant portion of your grade. Attendance, preparation, in-class activities and writing all factor into this grade. However, you will not receive a passing grade in partici-

pation if you do not make regular and substantive contributions to class discussions. I expect you to be engaged with the work of the class and encourage you to take notes during our meetings, since they will help when it comes time to do your discussion posts, mid-term exam, and final project.

Assignments:

Discussion Posts – Between class meetings, you will be asked to post both questions and responses to the on-line blog space in the course Wordpress website. I'll provide detailed guidelines for this informal writing. It will require writing about a page a week, including responses to each other.

Mid-term Exam – There will be an exam in which you will be asked to write two short essays that analyze the major texts and synthesize the major themes of the course, up to mid-term.

Final Project – For your last assignment, you will propose and produce a project that critically and creatively reflects and extends the work of the course. You can think of this as your own original contribution to your classmates' learning about literature and the environment.

**Assessment/Grading Policy**

• <u>Discussion Posts</u>	24%
• <u>Mid-term exam</u>	24%
• <u>Final Project</u>	24%
• <u>Quizzes</u>	16%
• <u>Participation</u>	12%

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Overall grade 100%

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DESCRIPTOR	ALPHA	NUMERIC	GPA	REQUIREMENT/EXPECTATION
Outstanding (High Distinction)	A	93+	4.0	Maximum grade: In addition to description for grade "A-", the student shows detailed understanding of materials about which he or she can show independent analytical ability. This means the ability to question an issue from different perspectives and evaluate responses in an objective manner.
Excellent (Distinction)	A-	90 - 92	3.7	Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook/class hand-outs/class notes, and the work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for evaluation.
Very good (High Credit)	B+	87 - 89	3.3	Shows evidence of a capacity to generalise from the taught content, or the material in literature, or from class lectures in an informed manner. Also, the work demonstrates a capacity to integrate personal reflection into the discussion and an appreciation of a range of different perspectives.
Good (Credit)	B	83 - 86	3.0	The work is well organised and contains coherent or logical argumentation and presentation.
Good (Credit)	B-	80 - 82	2.7	Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook and/or notes, and, there is evidence of additional reading.
Average (Good Pass)	C+	77-79	2.3	The work demonstrates a capacity to integrate research into the discussion and a critical appreciation of a range of theoretical perspectives. Also, the work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question and its theoretical implications and demonstrates evidence of additional reading.
Adequate (Pass)	C	73 - 76	2.0	Shows clear understanding and some insight into the material in the textbook and notes, but not beyond. A deficiency in understanding the material may be compensated by evidence of independent thought and effort related to the subject matter.

Below Average (Borderline Pass)	C-	70-72	1.7	Shows some understanding of the material in the textbook and notes. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought related to the subject matter.
Inadequate (Borderline Fail)	D+	67 - 69	1.3	Fails to show a clear understanding or much insight into the material in the textbook and notes
Poor (Fail)	D	60 - 66	0.7 - 1.0	Besides the above for D+, student has not shown interest or engagement in the class work or study.
Poor (Fail)	F	<60	0	Shows little or no understanding of any of the material
Incomplete	I			Please see CAPA policy in the Faculty Handbook.

### **Dress Code**

No requirements.

### **Course Materials**

#### **Required Readings:**

Wright, David, ed., English Romantic Verse. London: Penguin, 1986.  
 Thoreau, Henry David. The Portable Thoreau. New York: Penguin, 2012.  
 White, Fred, ed., Essential [John] Muir. Heyday, 2006  
 Carson, Rachel. Silent Spring. Boston: Houghton, 2002.  
 Cowley, Jason, ed., Granta 102: The New Nature Writing, 2008  
 Kingsolver, Barbara, Flight Behavior 2012

We will also read shorter pieces of “ecocriticism,” poems, and other commentary, by writers such as Richard Jeffries, George Monbiot, Dorothy Wordsworth, Robert Macfarlane, Terry Tempest Williams, Charles Baudelaire, and Greg Garrard.

### **Weekly Course Schedule**

#### **WEEK 1**

##### **Lesson #: 1**

Meet:

Venue:

In–class activity: Introduction and Keyword “Environment”

Out–of–class activity: Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Pied Beauty” (handout)  
 W. B. Yeats, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” (handout)

Assignments:

Notes:

#### **WEEK 2**

##### **Lesson #: 2**

Meet:

Venue:

In–class activity: Romantic Pastoral and Birds

Out–of–class activity: William Wordsworth, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” (handout)  
 Wordsworth, “Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey” [Wright 109 - 113]  
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Nightingale: A Conversational Poem. April 1798” [Wright 178-81]  
 Wordsworth, “The Green Linnet” [Wright 125-26]  
 John Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale” [Wright 276-79]  
 John Clare, “The Nightingale’s Nest” [Wright 253-55]

Assignments:

Notes:

### WEEK 3

#### **Lesson #: 3**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Seasons

Out-of-class activity: James Thomson, from "Spring"; from "Winter" [Wright 4-5]  
Wordsworth, "Lines Written in Early Spring" [Wright 108-109]  
Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" [Wright 246-49]  
John Keats, "To Autumn" [Wright 282-83]  
Emily Brontë, "To a Wreath of Snow" (1837) [Wright 341]

Assignments:

Notes:

### WEEK 4

#### **Lesson #: 4**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: American Pastoral

Out-of-class activity: William Wordsworth, "Michael: A Pastoral Poem" (CourseWeb)  
Greg Garrard, from Ecocriticism : "Pastoral" (37-38) and "Romantic Pastoral" (44-53)  
Henry David Thoreau, "A Winter Walk" (27 - 44), "Ktaadn" (45-71)

Assignments:

Notes:

### WEEK 5

#### **Lesson #: 5**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Thoreau

Out-of-class activity: Walden (197 - 468)

Assignments:

Notes:

### WEEK 6

#### **Lesson #: 6**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Wilderness

Out-of-class activity: "Walking" (555 - 589)  
Greg Garrard, from Ecocriticism : "American Pastoral" (54 - 63)  
John Muir, "The World and the University" (11-21), "A Near View of the High Sierra" (37 - 53), "A Windstorm in the Forest" (55-63)

Assignments:

Notes:

### WEEK 7

#### **Lesson #: 7**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Muir

Out-of-class activity: Muir, "Yosemite Glaciers" (73 - 83), "Eskimos and Walrus" (87-92), "Stickeen vs the Glacier" (93 - 100), "God's First Temples" (113 - 117), "The Wild Parks and Forest Reservations of the West" (119 - 126)  
Greg Garrard, from Ecocriticism : "Wilderness" (66-79)

Assignments:

Notes:

### WEEK 8

#### **Lesson #: 8**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Pollution

Out-of-class activity: Rachel Carson, Silent Spring (1 - 297)

Greg Garrard, from *Ecocriticism* : "Pollution" (1 - 10)

Assignments:  
Notes:

## WEEK 9

### **Lesson #: 9**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Midterm Exam and Film: *The Power of One Voice*

Out-of-class activity: Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur," "In the Valley of the Elwy"  
Kathryn Schultz, "Pond Scum"

Assignments:  
Notes:

## WEEK 10

### **Lesson #: 10**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Apocalypse; Midterm exam discussion

Out-of-class activity: Indra Sinha, *Animal's People* (Editor's Note and pp 1 - 187)

Assignments: Due: Discussion Board 4 (by Tuesday noon)

Notes:

## WEEK 11

### **Lesson #: 11**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Apocalypse

Out-of-class activity: Indra Sinha, *Animal's People* (188-366)

"A Conversation with Indra Sinha" (last 8 pages of *Animal's People*)

Greg Garrard, from *Ecocriticism*: "Environmental Apocalypticism" (101 - 113)

Robinson Jeffers [poems TBD]

Assignments:  
Notes:

## WEEK 12

### **Lesson #: 12**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Ecosystems

Out-of-class activity: Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior* (1 - 433)

Assignments: Due: Discussion Board 5 (by Tuesday noon)

Notes:

## WEEK 13

### **Lesson #: 13**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Ecosystems

Out-of-class activity: Kingsolver, "Author's Note" (435 - 436), and "Community and Hope" (PS 4 -7)

Mary Oliver [poems TBD]

Lawrence Buell, Chapter 1 from *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (1 - 28)

Assignments: Finish final projects

Notes:

## WEEK 14

### **Lesson #: 14**

Meet:

Venue:

In-class activity: Final projects

Out-of-class activity: Final projects  
Assignments: Due: Discussion Board 6 (by Tuesday noon)  
Notes:

## **Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities**

**Attendance:** CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. Unauthorized absence from class will result in a reduction of the final grade and potentially a failure for the course.

**Missing classes for medical reasons:** If you need to miss a class for medical reasons or for a family emergency, **you must send an e-mail** to let the Director of Academic Affairs know at least one hour in advance of your class or meeting at the following e-mail:\_\_\_\_\_. Note that calling the CAPA Center (\_\_\_\_\_) is acceptable only if you do not temporarily have access to the internet. An e-mail is still required as quickly as you can get access to the internet again. You will need to provide evidence of the reason for your absence. Unexcused absences will result in a grade reduction. In the event of a missed class or field trip, it is your responsibility to contact your instructor and make up any missed assignments.

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time. Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

**Academic Integrity:** A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism and cheating will result in dismissal from the program. See the Handbook of CAPA Academic Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

**Use of electronic equipment in class:** All devices such as laptops, I-pods, I-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of Term.

**Use of Electronic Translators:** In Language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a final F grade for the course.

**Late Submission:** Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

**Behavior during Examinations:** During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.