

**ENLT 371.01 Literature & the Environment
Fall 2008 Syllabus & Class Schedule**

David L. Moore
120 Liberal Arts
243-6708

University of Montana
Department of English
david.moore@umontana.edu
<http://www.umt.edu/english/faculty/moore.htm>

Office hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2:30-3:30 and many other times by appointment. (Please note: be sure to confirm an appointment time with me even during posted office hours. Otherwise I might be with another student or at the copy machine.)

DESCRIPTION: If a “sense of place” drives much of literature as the “environment” drives and surrounds experience, how does literary study attend to that environment in a text? How would an “ecological” approach to literature change the way it is written or read? Literary attention to the environment of a story filters through some of the same lenses through which more common narrative elements such as character, plot, and “setting” are represented. For instance, those lenses include gender, in the feminization of the land. They include race, in the identification of the wilderness with Natives. They include class, in the politics and cultural values of land ownership. We can understand stories on the land partly in terms of such lenses. How we represent the land can be as much a projection of our own “nature” or “culture” as a reflection of nature and the environment, so we have to explore those projections as we look at the land and its stories. If we begin to look at our representations of nature and of ourselves from an environmental or ecological perspective, we begin to see new dynamics in texts. Further, how can we apply such an environmental method to literature that is not overtly focused on “nature”? What can be gained by thinking about poems, stories, essays in ways that question their representations of the “natural” against or with the “cultural”?

A NOTE ON REQUIREMENTS, OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENTS: The following list of activities tries to quantify your expected work. Frankly, no one can “quantify the quality” of your writing or discussion. Grading in arts and humanities courses inevitably entails subjective criteria. Because of that subjectivity, more dialogue between student and faculty can be part of the process of creating and grading humanities “performance.” Literature is a conversation. Literary criticism grows out of conversation. I hope you come to feel that I am open for you to get to know me in the classroom and in my office. Please come see me to talk through assignments or anything else. On written work, both form and content will be graded, and explicit writing standards will be part of each assignment. Grades are based on a combination of 1) 75% written work (content & form); 2) 15% discussion questions, participation, presentations, other in-class writing; and 3) 10% attendance (max. 2 absences = one week of class time). In addition, if you have any certifiable disability that makes meeting the course requirements difficult, I will be glad to work with you on a strategy for success.

OUTCOME CRITERIA: 1) Familiarity with ecocritical reading of major texts and issues in American nature writing and in other texts. 2) Recognition of key cultural and ideological perspectives on those issues in those major texts. 3) Recognition of different methods -- literary and historical, artistic and social, aesthetic and ethical, textual and contextual -- for considering texts. 4) Engagement with themes of the course as they apply to 21st-century lives.

OUTCOME ASSESSMENTS:

1) Discussion and Attendance: I’m strict on attendance. You are grownups, and can make your own decisions, and the class runs on a combination of readings, discussions, and lectures, all of which need your participation. So I hope you are making a commitment to this conversation. Lectures and discussions both are founded on your attendance; so more than two unexcused absences (one week of classes) can drop the final grade. An excused absence generally requires a medical crisis. Notice of any absence should be given in advance when we can arrange for your make-up work. Thus the goal here is participation as both a listener and speaker in class discussions of diverse literary texts. (Verbal assessment of Criteria 1-4)

a. Discussion Questions: Student teams will rotate responsibility for supplying questions for a discussion handout on daily readings through the semester. (I’ll give you coaching on writing discussion questions, printing logistics, etc.) Each member of the team is responsible for at least three substantive questions per handout. One team will make a handout of discussion questions for each class on a revolving basis. That means finishing the reading and preparing the DQs, including copies for everyone, before the class when your DQ group is up. You must also email me a copy of your individual questions prior to class when it’s your team’s turn, and the team’s amanuensis should email me the handout.

b. Discussion groups and full-class discussions. Participation in discussion of daily readings will be in both small groups and the full class. The course is designed for your input. Some of the best lectures happen when there are good questions or comments from the floor. “Participation” can be both vocal and silent, both speaking and listening, but not all of one or the other. Discussion is one of the best ways to learn, and the class can hardly flow without you there. This pedagogy is so crucial to the course that I’ll take a few more lines here to explain: Everyone’s idea is important. When you speak, try

to give your idea away to the group. You don't need to defend it once it's out there. And equally, when you listen, give each speaker respect. Humor helps too. We don't need to have everyone agree, but perhaps we can build a community in the classroom where each of us can feel engaged with the questions.

c. Recitations: Once during the semester, each student will recite from memory a poem or passage, or sing a song, etc., and talk briefly about how it relates to the course. Schedule will circulate for sign-up early on.

2) Writing skills and critical thinking in analyzing diverse literary texts ecocritically. (Written assessment of Criteria 1-4) Note that the UM Writing Center is open for coaching writers at all levels. Writing assignments will be a combination of reading journals, response papers, microthemes, thesis exercises, and essays, all with bibliographic form, plus an optional research paper. On the microthemes, essays, and optional research paper, I expect hours/ days of work on rough drafts which should be turned in as hard copies along with the final draft, which is emailed to me. Generally, if you try to write the paper the day of class or even the night before, you will get a lower grade, so think of this as a writing exercise designed to help boost your skills. Proofreading is crucial as well. See handouts for more info on my grading criteria. In addition, writing skills require an understanding of how to avoid plagiarism (see note below in "Legalities").

The final draft of your written work must be sent to my email address as a single Word.doc attachment (don't send bibliography separately). Hard copies of earlier drafts must be handed to me in class on the due date, labeled with your name and stapled (no paper clips). My written responses to your papers will be on the electronic copy which I will email back to you with a different file name, so keep a clean electronic copy on file in case you want to revise it. NB: When you email me, be sure to put the exact spelling of the class rubric, 371.80, at the *front* of your email's subject line. Because of the overload in my inbox, I cannot guarantee that you will get credit for your online work unless you make this the start of your subject line.

a. Response Paper: A single-page response to a reading, focusing on a particular question or issue that catches your mind and heart. The short essay should include a thesis statement, not only giving your topic, but your opinion as well.

b. [change to microthemes & email info] More formal writings: For each of the three Units, there is a writing assignment: 1st Microtheme due 9/30; 2nd Microtheme due 10/31; and Essay 1 due 12/5. All are take-home short-essays, where you can combine personal response and critical analysis, graded on content and form. Microthemes are a one- or two-page essay analysis of a question or questions on the readings. The short essay is a slightly longer version (2-3pp) of similar writing, with discussion of more examples. Both formats should quote from the text(s). Skills in thesis development and in integrating quoted citations into your argument are crucial in written work. Thus plan on a Works Cited page for each essay, with proper in-text citations and bibliographic form. Get to know the *MLA Handbook*. In addition, those skills require an understanding of how to avoid plagiarism (see Legalities below).

Here's more coaching on the writing. Too often, students write about a piece of literature without coming to a thesis, i.e., without articulating or sometimes even really knowing what they have to say about it. Focusing on literary analysis, the essays should build three elements of a workable thesis statement that goes beyond summarizing or retelling a piece of literature: 1) narrow topic 2) assertion (not description) 3) preview. Generally, a thesis is preceded (in drafts if not in the final essay) by a focused question. The goal of literary analysis is to (gently) take apart and put back together some dynamic aspect of a text, listing and labeling those parts, so that the reader may understand the text more fully and deeply and acutely, with more insight into form and/or content. Such literary criticism looks beyond *what* is said to ask *how*, *why*, or *so what?* *How* does it say what it says? *Why* is it structured as it is? & *so what* is the significance of saying and structuring it that way? Writing about literature is one of the best ways to read it, and it indeed can intensify the pleasure of reading.

Repeat: Do not be absent on due dates for take-home papers.

c. Research Paper or Creative Project (due 12/9): Consider either a 10-15pg. essay using library resources and again emphasizing thesis development and integrated citations, or a short play, a painting, a collage, a set of photographs, a set of songs or an instrumental, etc. Pre-work due 11/20: a working thesis, prospectus or detailed outline, and bibliography of research project, or a written artist's statement of the planned piece. The class will consult 11/18 as a whole with Humanities Librarian Sue Samson on research tools.

d. Peer Editing: study groups of 3 students will meet outside of class during each of the exams. Editing each others' work can be one of the best ways to develop yourself as a writer.

e. Reading Journals: By suggestion of former students, each of you will respond directly to the readings: either write poems, sketches, analytical critiques, or whatever is inspired by the readings. Use a separate, dedicated spiral journal, or do this on computer. For each reading, on one side of a page, record the author's ideas, facts, quotes, or note other important info; on the other side, record your questions, impressions, responses, and feelings as you read. These responses might develop into discussion questions, but they may go in any other directions toward essays, poems, novels, as well. I will ask for the total of journal pages at least twice in the semester.

NB: The Writing Center is available to students of all abilities: LA 144, phone 243-2266, with on-site tutoring; plus writing and test-taking workshops, etc. Also online tutoring via <http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/>

REQUIRED TEXTS (in order):

David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Language & Perception in a More-Than-Human World*

Cheryl Glotfelty, *The Ecocriticism Reader*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," "The Poet," "Thoreau"

Henry David Thoreau, "Walden selections," "Walking"

N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

Annie Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*

Jack Kerouac, *Dharma Bums*

Gary Snyder, *Look Out: A Selection of Writings*

Barry Lopez, *Light Action in the Caribbean*

Simon Ortiz, *Out There Somewhere*

+ **articles & chapters/ handouts**

SOME LEGALITIES, 6 Items

1) See the CyberBear website <http://cyberbear.umt.edu/> or the back of the Class Schedule for Important Dates such as these: Sept. 15 is last day to add/drop with refund on Cyberbear. Oct. 6 is last day to drop without refund by drop/add form. Nov. 26 is last day to withdraw. I'm open to late drops if you find it unavoidable. & note other matters: 2) I grant a grade of Incomplete only for a medical emergency that interferes with the end of the semester, so plan your writing time carefully. 3) If the class is taken for Credit/No Credit option, an average grade of D- or above constitutes Credit, and a grade of F equals NCR. (This system replaces Pass/No Pass.) 4) Plagiarism is defined as using another's words *or ideas* (outside of common knowledge) directly or indirectly without citing them. It is still shocking, but students waste their own education and my time by plagiarizing off the Internet. If they can find it online, so can I, and I have no mercy on academic deception. Consequences of plagiarism can range from ostracism to rehabilitation training to zero credit to being dropped from the class to being dropped from the University. Please take this warning seriously. 5) & is it necessary to mention that iPods and text messaging are not acceptable in class? 6) Departmental Assessment: The English Department's ongoing process of assessing its curriculum requires professors to read student papers to learn how students in general are progressing through the program. Thus your professor may choose a copy of one of your papers or ask for an electronic version of it to use in this assessment process. All identifying information will be removed and no evaluation of student work outside the boundaries of the course will play any role in determining a student's grade. If you do not want your work used in such a way, please inform your professor and s/he will not forward it to the Assessment Committee. Otherwise, we appreciate your tacit consent.

**ENLT 371.80 LITERATURE & THE ENVIRONMENT
SEMESTER SCHEDULE, FALL 2008, T/Th**

[*ER* = *The Ecocriticism Reader* with pages listed; for other readings below, try to complete the text by the first day of discussion. ERes is via the library website.]

Week 1 Introductions, Syllabus, Logistics, and Overview of Ecocriticism / + W&C Trek
8/26 -- Intros: land and language. Response paper assignment handed out.
8/28 -- No class. W&C trek & readings: Emerson & Thoreau, *Nature/Walking* into next week

Week 2 W&C Trek & readings
9/2 -- No class. W&C trek & readings
9/4 -- No class. W&C trek & readings

UNIT 1 – “CONCENTRATE UPON . . . THE REMEMBERED EARTH”

Week 3 American Roots of Transcendentalism & Immanence
9/9 -- Emerson & Thoreau DQ1 Response paper due as hard copy in class, plus by email.
**9/11 -- Emerson & Thoreau, cont.; Glotfelty: “Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis” *ER*
 xv-xxxvii DQ2; White: “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis” *ER* 3-14 DQ3**

Week 4 Ecocriticism & Animism / N. Scott Momaday
**9/16 -- Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* DQ4; Silko, “Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination” *ER*
 264-275 DQ5**
9/18 -- Momaday cont. DQ1

Week 5 The Passion of Nature / Annie Dillard
**9/23 -- Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk* DQ2; Percy, “Loss of the Creature” on ERes DQ3; Microtheme 1
 handed out.**
9/25 -- Dillard cont. DQ4; Le Guin, “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction” *ER* 149-154 DQ5

UNIT 2 – THINKING LIKE A MOUNTAIN / CROSS-CULTURAL ECOZEN

Week 6 Language & Perception in Nature/ David Abram
9/30 -- Microtheme 1 due via email.
10/2 -- Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* DQ1

Week 7 David Abram, cont.
10/7 -- Abram cont. DQ2
10/9 -- Abram cont. DQ3 & Meeker, “The Comic Mode” *ER* 155-169 DQ4

Week 8 Language & Action / Gary Snyder
10/14 -- Snyder, *Look Out: A Selection of Writings* DQ5;
**10/16 -- Snyder cont. DQ1; ERes: Selby, “‘Coming back to oneself/ coming back to the land’: Gary
 Snyder’s Poetics” (*RUSN* 179-197) DQ2**

Week 9 Natural Epiphanies / Snyder & Kerouac
10/21 -- Snyder cont. DQ3 + handouts
10/23 -- Kerouac, *Dharma Bums* DQ4. Microtheme 2 handed out.

Week 10 Jack Kerouac, cont.
10/28 -- *Dharma Bums*, cont. DQ5; Kolodny, “Unearthing Herstory: An Introduction” *ER* 170-181 DQ1
10/30 -- Kerouac cont. DQ2; Microtheme 2 due Friday, 10/31 via email.

UNIT 3 – CROSS-CULTURAL POST?COLONIAL

Week 11 Dominating Humans, Dominating Nature / Barry Lopez
11/4 -- Election Day Holiday
11/6 -- Lopez, *Light Action in the Caribbean* DQ3

Week 12	Barry Lopez, cont.
11/11 --	Veterans Day Holiday
11/13 --	Lopez cont. DQ4 ; Reed, "Toward an Environmental Justice Ecocriticism" <i>on ERes</i> DQ5
Week 13	Researching and Expressing Ecocriticism
11/18 --	Meet in Mansfield Learning Ctr, Rm. 283 w/ Humanities Librarian Sue Samson. Bring research topic.
11/20 --	Discussion of research papers and projects. Due in hard copy at class time & by email: Draft Thesis/Prospectus/Bibliography for Research Paper or Draft Artist's Statement for Creative Project.
Week 14	American Authenticity / Simon Ortiz
11/25 --	Ortiz, <i>Out There Somewhere</i> DQ2 ; & Allen, "The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective" <i>ER</i> 241-263 DQ3 Essay 1 handed out.
11/27 --	Thanksgiving Vacation (begins Wednesday 11/26)
Week 15	Simon Ortiz, cont.
12/2 --	Ortiz cont. DQ4
12/4 --	Ortiz cont. DQ5 Review & presentations; Essay 1 due Friday, 12/5 by email.
Finals Week	
12/9 --	Research paper due by email; hard copy of drafts to my mailbox, LA133.
12/11 --	Presentations (& possible earlier times tba)