

**FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**ENGLISH 201.08 APPROACHES TO LITERATURE**

**FALL 2013**

**Literature and the Anthropocene**

Prof. Banting

Classes meet Tu/Th 12:30 to 13:45 in EDC 388

SS 1010; 403.220.5480; pbanting@ucalgary.ca

Office hour: Tu 2:00 to 3:00

In this course we will read and discuss texts (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, documentary film) pertaining to living in the Anthropocene, the era of human-caused changes to planetary ecosystems. We will examine texts about such fundamental and pressing environmental subjects as climate, energy, water, food, plants, and wild animals. What will Canada be like in the not-so-distant future? Will we have enough clean water, healthy food and energy to live in relative comfort? What new ideas, ethics and ideologies will help us live on, and which ones might we need to critique, dismantle and abandon? What role can literature play in helping us create a healthy relationship with our ecosystems? Theoretical topics for discussion will include questions pertaining to subjectivity, community, bioregionalism, indigeneity, ecological catastrophe, food quality and food security, extinction, materiality, animality, environmental racism and justice, and activism.

Texts, assignments, lectures and discussion will address both some of the problems associated with living in the Anthropocene and some solutions.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (fiction)

James MacKinnon and Alisa Smith, *The 100-Mile Diet* [nonfiction, i.e., not fiction, not a novel]

Don McKay, *Field Marks: The Poetry of Don McKay* [poetry]

Andrew Nikiforuk, *Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of a Continent* (nonfiction)

Karsten Heuer, *Being Caribou: Five Months on Foot with an Arctic Herd* (nonfiction)

Doug Babington, Don LePan, Maureen Okun, *The Broadview Pocket Guide to Writing* (writing manual)

Documentary films: Each of these films will either be shown during class or will be available online for you to watch on your own device:

*Land of Oil and Water*, dir. Warren Cariou and Neal McArthur

*Food Inc.*, dir. Robert Kenner

*Being Caribou*, dir. Leanne Allison

Harry Rasky, dir., *The War Against the Indians*

**ALWAYS BRING THE TEXT(S) OF THE WEEK WITH YOU TO CLASS unless instructed to do otherwise by the professor.**

**Assignments:**

Four short writing assignments (10% each)	40%
2 in-class quizzes (10% each)	20%
Final examination (2 hours, closed book)	40%
Total	100%

**IMPORTANT NOTES**

**Students must complete and submit all of the assignments in order to be eligible for a passing grade for this course. Failure to complete them will result in an automatic failure of the course.**

**Late penalties:** Late penalties will be deducted for late assignments. Late penalties can and sometimes do result in a failing grade on an assignment so students will want to start assignments well in advance of the due date. **The late penalty for written work is one mark per day late. That is, if your assignment merits a 30/50 (60%) but comes in two days late, the actual mark will drop two marks to 28/50 (56%).**

**Class participation:** Attending classes regularly, participating respectfully in class, and in general playing your part in creating an intellectually engaging, friendly and positive classroom environment will enhance your own learning and pleasure in the classroom and beyond as well as that of others. An important part of intellectual work is being able to speak about it with others. Students will be expected to assume the role of active participants in the construction and dissemination of knowledge rather than merely passive consumers of it. *This includes participation in discussion and in credit-free assignments and activities carried out in class.*

If you miss a class during which we view a documentary film or portion thereof, you will want to borrow the film from the Taylor Digital Library and watch it as the films are required texts on the course too, not just ‘frills’ or ‘fill-ins’. (I believe there are screening facilities at the Library too.) *Land of Oil and Water* is probably not available any other way than by attending class.

Etiquette: Using your computer, phone or other 'smart' device for any purpose other than note-taking during class is not that smart. It detracts from your ability and that of others to pay attention and concentrate. The instructor reserves the right to eject anyone causing any kind of disruption from the class.

**Please try to arrive a couple of minutes early for class in order to get settled and prepared. With 80 students in the classroom, late arrivals cannot be anything but noisy, intrusive and disruptive and result in lost productive class time.**

There will be a registrar-scheduled examination during the regular exam period. Students must be available for examinations up to and including the last day of the examination period (9 – 19 December). The exam will NOT be an open book exam.

There will be no extra credit assignments or opportunities to re-do and resubmit your work.

Genres: Please do not refer orally or in writing to nonfiction books as fiction. That is, do not call nonfiction books novels. Call them nonfiction, literary nonfiction, creative nonfiction, works of prose, or just call them books, but do not refer to nonfiction as fiction because it is not. I have indicated the genres of the books on the text list.

I cannot possibly accept handwritten assignments other than the final exam, in-class quizzes. All work must be typed, and properly formatted. Using incorrect formatting or trying to fudge assignment length by using larger or smaller font than required (12 point font is required) and/or putting additional spaces between paragraphs or widening or narrowing page margins is instantly noticed by anyone used to reading.

Double-sided printing is encouraged in order to save paper and trees. Using recycled paper, even paper that has already been used on one side, is permissible. Just draw a line diagonally through the material printed or written on the opposite side and make sure your pages are in order.

Written assignments are due in class at the beginning of class on their respective due dates, and they must be handed to the instructor. I cannot accept any electronic submissions (which is too bad as it would save paper and trees). If you absolutely cannot hand me your work, then do not shove your professional quality of work under my (or anyone else's) office door. It can and does get trampled, lost, etc. Instead hand them in via the English Dept. office between 830 and 430 (closed from 12 to 1) or the Drop Box just outside the office. However you submit your work, your name and mine must be on the first page or cover page.

### **Four short writing assignments:**

Assignment 1 (10%) (250 words; one page): Five possible thesis statements on selected aspects of *The Road* and *The 100-Mile Diet* (3 on one of the two books, 2 on the other).

Assignment 2 (10%) (750 words, 3 pp.): Choose one of Don McKay's poems from your text and analyze it in relation to one important idea from an article specifically on Don McKay's poetry that you locate using the CPI.Q index (Canadian Periodical Index) or the MLA.

Assignment 3 (10%) (500 to 750 words; 2 – 3 pp.): After reading *The 100-Mile Diet* visit your regular grocery store, an alternative grocery store, your on-campus residence kitchen, a farmer's market, or other food-related site, and research (talk to vendors, read packages and cans, etc.) where your food comes from. Or make a 200-kilometre meal and write about the experience of your research, shopping and cooking. Take notes (you can also take photos too if you like to include – but the photos don't count as writing, obviously). Write an essay about your discoveries and insights.

Assignment 4 (10%) (500 to 750 words): Keep track of every point of interface you have with fossil fuel or fossil fuel products for twenty-four hours. Write an essay on your relationship with fossil fuel.

### **Reading and Class Schedule:**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule, if necessary. Any changes will be announced in class. Responsibility for class attendance lies with the student (obviously).

#### **Week 1: Sept. 10, 12**

**Introduction to the course, assignments, email and course etiquette, genres. Introduction to literary criticism. Introduction to ecocriticism (ecological literary criticism, abbreviated as ecocriticism). What is the Anthropocene?**

NOTE: Please have *The Road* read by no later than the beginning of week 3.

Required reading:

Sandra Steingraber, "The Big Talk":

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/3229/>

*Broadview*: Research in English, p. 176.

Videos and articles on the Anthropocene:

Andrew Revkin video interview on TVO:

<http://www.youtuberepeater.com/watch?v=yixcdrlaaDs&name=Andrew+Revkin+Confronting+the+Anthropocene>

Water in the Anthropocene (3 minutes): <http://vimeo.com/66087863>

“Gender-Bending Fish in Southern Alberta” (U of Calgary research):  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/news/july2010/fish>

What role can literature and literary studies play in forestalling or preventing eco-catastrophe and/or helping us cope with it? Additional resource: Cheryll Glotfelty, “Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis,” in *The Ecocriticism Reader*

### **Week 2: Sept. 17, 19**

#### **Ecological imperialism; indigeneity; “The moment of the discovery of North America continues.” – Robert Kroetsch**

Interrogating the notion of ‘discovery’; how does it feel to be ‘discovered’; is the moment of discovery over and done with or is it ongoing; colonialism; the importance of truth in storytelling, including the stories we call history; the importance of learning the names our world (Gary Snyder: learn the flowers/ go light; Al Purdy, “Say the Names”)

Tuesday: The Bioregional Quiz: in-class. Credit free.

Required texts for this week:

Barry Lopez, “The Rediscovery of North America” (essay – available online at <http://www.strongnet.org/cms/lib6/OH01000884/Centricity/Domain/257/lopez.pdf>)

Harry Rasky, dir., *The War Against the Indians* (excerpt to be viewed in class)  
*Broadview*: The internet; Research using the internet; Observing netiquette; Point-form netiquette; Plagiarism, copyright and the web (pp. 187 – 96)

Thursday: Formatting your assignments / professional quality and presentation of work: margins, spacing, font, grammar, punctuation, spelling, typographical errors.

REMINDER: Please have *The Road* read by next class. Otherwise: spoiler alerts!

### **Week 3: Sept. 24, 26**

**Apocalypse and post-apocalypse:** Who’s colonized now? And who’s sorry now? How literature can help us envision future scenarios, and encourage us to act before it is too late.

Required texts for this week:

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (novel)

*Broadview Pocket Guide to Writing*: Wording and paragraphing, pp. 2 – 9; Citation and Documentation, p. 90; MLA Style, p. 94. Bring to class.

Supplementary: Greg Garrard, “Apocalypse”

**Week 4: Oct. 1, 3**

**Food, water, shelter**

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*, cont'd

Critical article about *The Road*

Broadview: "Computers and the Writing Process," p. 188 Bring.

**QUIZ 1: Oct. 3: 10% (on anything/everything up to Oct. 3)**

**Week 5: Oct. 8, 10**

**Forestalling Apocalypse: Food**

"Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." – Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food*

Please have at least 50% of *The 100-Mile Diet* read by this week.

Required Texts:

James MacKinnon and Alisa Smith, *The 100-Mile Diet* [nonfiction]

*Food Inc.* (documentary) (to be viewed in class 1:34)

Broadview: "Sentence Fragments / Incomplete Sentences," p. 51

"Run-on Sentences / Comma Splices," p. 52

"The Comma," p. 62

**Week 6: Oct. 15, 17**

**Food; local eating; traceability;** the proper uses of commas.

Required reading: *The 100-Mile Diet*, cont'd

Broadview: The ;, the :, the - and the –, pp. 66, 67, 68, 69.

**Written assignment 1 (10%): Five thesis statements -- due in class Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Assignment 1 (10%) (one page): Five possible thesis statements on selected aspects of *The Road* and *The 100-Mile Diet* (3 on one of the two books, 2 on the other).

**Week 7: Oct. 22, 24**

**A poetics of attention; attention as survival strategy;**

Required reading:

Don McKay, *Field Marks* (poetry and poetics):

Christopher Manes, "Nature and Silence," *The Ecocriticism Reader*

Don McKay reading his poems aloud.

**Week 8: Oct. 29, 31**

**The role of poetry in the Anthropocene; the sounds of silence; how do we know what we have lost and are losing; celebration**

Required reading:

Don McKay, *Field Marks*:

Bernie Krause, chapter 1 of *The Great Animal Orchestra*

**Week 9: Nov. 5, 7**

**Oil and other-than-human animals; the extinction of experience; action and activism – doing something;**

Karsten Heuer, *Being Caribou: Five Months on Foot with an Arctic Herd* (creative nonfiction)

*Broadview*: Parentheses (69), square brackets (70), quotation marks (71).

**Assignment 2 due Nov. 5 (10%)** (500 to 750 words, 2 to 3 pp.): Choose one of Don McKay's poems from your text and analyze it in relation to one important idea from an article specifically on Don McKay's poetry that you locate using the CPI.Q index (Canadian Periodical Index) or the MLA.

**Week 10: Nov. 14 (one class only this week due to Reading Days)**

**Animals and animality; cross-species relationships; extinction narratives; how does it feel to be another animal; mourning and extinction**

Karsten Heuer, *Being Caribou: Five Months on Foot with an Arctic Herd*

Leanne Allison, *Being Caribou* (documentary film)

*Broadview*: Combining verb tenses (37), Irregular verbs (39)

**Week 11: Nov. 19, 21**

*Being Caribou*, Cont'd: both book and film

Nov. 21:

McKay Jenkins, "The Weather Up There":

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/newsfrom187/entry/7335/>

Excerpt from Sandra Steingraber, *Having Faith: An Ecologist's Journey to Motherhood* "The Sound of Migration":

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/89/>

In the book the chapter is called "Egg Moon."

*Broadview*: Bias-free language (25)

**Assignment 3 due Nov. 21 (10%)** (500 to 750 words; 2 – 3 pp.): After reading *The 100-Mile Diet* visit your regular grocery store, an alternative grocery store, your on-campus residence kitchen, a farmer's market, or other food-related site, and research (talk to vendors, read packages and cans, etc.) where your food comes from. Or make a 200-kilometre meal and write about the experience of your research, shopping and cooking. Take notes (you can also take photos too if you like to include – but the photos don't count as writing, obviously). Write an essay about your discoveries and insights.

## **Week 12: Nov. 26, 28**

### **Earth, land, air, and water**

"If we get to the point where we are bringing gas from the Arctic to boil water to make steam to extract the bitumen to fuel three tonne SUVs so people can drive five kilometres to a gym to spend 15 minutes on a stationary bike, we will have let down their generation and the next!" Robert Skinner, quoted in an article by Andrew Nikiforuk in *The Tyee*, a free online news site out of Vancouver.

Required: Andrew Nikiforuk, *Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of a Continent Broadview: Numbers* (78); the apostrophe (70); italics (79)

Students: take ONE of the following online energy quizzes:

Ecological Footprint Calculator:

<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/gfn/page/calculators/>

Slavery footprint calculator: <http://slaveryfootprint.org/my-footprint>

## **Week 13: Dec. 3, 5**

### **Energy, land, air, and water; toxic trespass; environmental racism**

*Land of Oil and Water*, dir. Warren Cariou and Neal McArthur [documentary film – there is no way to view this film online or by renting it so you must see it in class]

*Tar Sands*, cont'd

### **Written assignment 4 (10%) Due Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Assignment 4 (10%) (500 to 750 words): Keep track of every point of interface you have with fossil fuel or fossil fuel products for twenty-four hours. Write an essay on your relationship with fossil fuel.

### **In-class quiz 10% Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Registrar-scheduled exam period December 9 to 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.** The University Registrar schedules examinations. Individual instructors have no say in when, where or what time the exams are scheduled.

### **Grading System:**

The University of Calgary's four-point Undergraduate Grading System, as described in the Calendar (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.html>), will be used in this course.

A+/A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); F (0)

When conversions are made between percentages and letter grades, the following Department of English system is in effect:

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

**Plagiarism:**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

**Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:**

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events <http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>. Our email address is [smec@ucalgary.ca](mailto:smec@ucalgary.ca).

**English Department Website:**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

**Writing support:**

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

**Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:****Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

**Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/it/help/articles/email/etiquette>

**Grade appeals:**

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

**Deferral of term work and final examinations:**

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

**Academic Accommodation:**

It is the students' responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodations and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact them at

403-220-6019. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodations. More information about academic accommodations can be found at [www.ucalgary.ca/access](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access).

**Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:**

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>;

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:**

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

**“Safewalk” Program:**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

**Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:**

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

**Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:**

[arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca),  
[arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)

**Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office:**

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

## **DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT**

According to the University Calendar,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>

"The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community". The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff". Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.