

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
COURSE OUTLINE

**ENGLISH 201.09 APPROACHES TO LITERATURE :**  
**Environmental Literature**

Fall 2014

Prof. Banting

Classes meet Tu/Th 11:00 to 12:15

Classroom: EDC 388

Contact: SS 1010; 403.220.5480; pbanting@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: Thursdays 15:30 to 16:30 (any necessary changes to this schedule will be announced in class)

General Calendar Description: This course emphasizes fundamental skills in critical reading and writing.

Special Topics Course Description: Environmental Literature

In this course we will read and discuss texts (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, documentary film, and a play) pertaining to survival in 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, seeds, 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 some degree of comfort? Will wild animals survive into the near future? If not, what would a world without them be like? Are there new ideas, ethics and ideologies that could help us live on, and are there others we need to analyze, critique and dismantle? What role can literature, literary studies and the arts play in helping us create a healthy relationship with our ecosystems?

Topics for discussion will include but not be restricted to questions pertaining to genre; disaster; apocalypse and post-apocalypse; earth, air, water and energy; personhood and subjectivity; community; bioregionalism; indigeneity; ecological catastrophe; infrastructure; food quality and food security; extinction; materiality or the world of matter and things; animals and animality; environmental racism and justice; collectivities; etc.

Texts, assignments, lectures and discussion will address both some of the problems and some of the solutions associated with living with climate change and other ecological challenges.

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

Wendell Berry, "Questionnaire," a poem

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/03/22/1286619/-Questionnaire#>

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

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (novel) (the big picture; post-apocalypse; post-peak everything)

Annabel Soutar, *Seeds* (play) (food and agriculture; eating; genetic modification; corporations and food; the law and notions of ownership; patenting life)

*Food Inc.*, dir. Robert Kenner (documentary film) (food; agriculture; GM; corporate control over the food supply; treatment of animals)

Don McKay, *Camber: Selected Poems* (poetry) (other-than-human animals; our place in nature; poetry and thinking)

James MacKinnon, *The Once and Future World: Nature As It Was, As It Is, As It Could Be* (non-fiction, i.e., not fiction, i.e., this book is not a novel) (necessary context or background; getting the big picture; extirpation and extinction; restoration; re-wilding of species)

Colin McAdam, *A Beautiful Truth* (novel)

*Responsibility for the Land*: (short student-made documentary films, U of Alberta at Augustana) (land; property rights; energy; extraction)

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

**ALWAYS BRING THE TEXT(S) OF THE WEEK WITH YOU TO CLASS unless instructed to do otherwise by the professor!** If you aren't bringing to class the book or other text(s) we are studying in any particular week, then you are mistaking the methodologies and purposes of studying literature. That is, "just getting the general drift" of a book or lecture is far from sufficient to pass a literature course: all literature courses – indeed all courses – begin from a close and detailed reading of the texts and materials at hand.

### Assignment Portfolio:

Reading and writing journal* (2 typed, double-spaced pages per entry, 10 entries, for a total of 20 pp. responses related to the readings of the week)	50%
Two quizzes, exercises or mini-assignments (10% each)	20%
Final examination (2 hours, closed book)	30%
Total	100%

\* The weekly reading and writing journal (or diary, if you prefer to call it your reading and writing diary) entries are tied to the readings, films, lectures, and class discussion each week. Follow the class and reading schedule to see that you are on track for each entry each week. Some of your entries will be assigned by the instructor (e.g. one week I will ask you to locate, read and respond to a critical article on one of the texts we are studying and prepare a citation for that article using proper MLA style) while others will involve you responding freely to that week's text or texts or conducting some research of your own and writing about your findings. You *must* keep up your entries week by week. Writing while your responses are fresh and lively takes *far* less time and makes for much better entries. Your journal is designed to deepen and enhance your learning and your ability to respond to texts and to your own thoughts as they surface. Merely filling pages for the benefit of the instructor is not the purpose of the assignment.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES**

**Students must complete and submit in a timely fashion 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 (F).**

**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 mark will drop two marks to 28/50 (56%) in order to ensure a level playing field.**

**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.)

Etiquette: Using your computer, phone or other 'smart' device for any purpose other than note-taking or instructor-designed activities during class is not permitted. 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 classroom. (Incidentally, recent studies have shown that handwritten notes are more effective in terms of recollection and memory and therefore understanding of the material than notes typed on an electronic device.)

**Please try to arrive a couple of minutes early for class in order to get settled and prepared. With 90 students in the classroom, late arrivals cannot be anything but noisy, intrusive and disruptive. Such disruptions result in lost productive class time for all of us.**

There will be a registrar-scheduled examination during the regular exam period. Students are required by the University of Calgary to be available for examinations up to and including the last day of the examination period (Dec. 8-18). The final examination will NOT be an open book exam.

There will be no extra credit assignments or opportunities to re-do and resubmit your work. That is simply impossible with current class sizes.

A word about genre: Please do not refer to nonfiction books as fiction. That is, do not call nonfiction books novels. You can refer to them as nonfiction, literary nonfiction, creative nonfiction, works of prose, or books, but do not refer to nonfiction as fiction because it is not. Nonfiction is not fiction. I have indicated the genres of the books on the text list.

We cannot possibly accept handwritten assignments other than the final exam and in-class assignments. All work must be typed, and properly formatted. Using incorrect formatting or trying to fudge assignment length by using a 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 unprofessional. Such improperly formatted assignments may be penalized in terms of grade and/or returned to the student for reformatting, and a late penalty will be applied.

Double-sided printing is highly encouraged in order to save paper and trees.

Using factory recycled paper or even paper that has already been used on one side only is permissible and even admirable. Just draw a line diagonally through the material printed or written on the “wrong” side and make sure your pages are stapled in order.

Please DO NOT use any plastic cover sheets. They have an annoying tendency to flap shut while one is trying to read them, for one thing, and for another using more plastic than is absolutely necessary contributes to waste and pollution. Just a simple staple in the upper left-hand corner of the page is perfect. (Please staple your work before handing it in. I do not carry a stapler with me.)

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 work under my (or anyone else's) office door. It can and does get trampled, lost, put under the wrong professor's door, etc. Instead hand them in via the English Dept. office between 8:30 and 4:30 (the office is closed from 12:00 to 1:00) or the Essay Drop Box just outside the English Department office.

However you submit your work, your name and mine must be on the first page or cover page. If my name is not on the front page, the office staff cannot know into whose mailbox to place your work.

#### Grading System:

Course grades are based on the University of Calgary four-point Undergraduate Grading System and the standard percentage conversion chart of the Department of English.

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 4-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>

**Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:**

<http://www.enough.utoronto.ca/computeruse/eetiquette.htm>

**Library and Research Support:**

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact:

[maboyd@ucalgary.ca](mailto:maboyd@ucalgary.ca)

Find *The English Pages* research guide here: <http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/english>

**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>

**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>

**Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):**

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses ([www.ucalgary.ca/usri](http://www.ucalgary.ca/usri)). Your responses make a difference - please participate in USRI Surveys."

## **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.