

**FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGLISH 607.88
THE ANTHROPOCENE IMAGINARY**

Fall 2018

Professor: Dr. Pamela Banting

Office: SS 1010

Office hours: Th 3:30 to 4:30

Contact: (403) 220-5480; pbanting@ucalgary.ca

Classes: Tuesdays 10:00 to 12:45

Classroom: SS 1015

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Climate change presents a profound historical rupture and threatens even our presumption of our own survival as individuals and our continuation as families, communities, regions, nations, and ultimately even as a species. In this course we will analyze what the Anthropocene is and how it is represented in contemporary theoretical, literary (fiction, nonfiction, poetry), filmic, and photographic texts. How might studying such representations advance our thinking about how to live in this rapidly unfolding epoch? What role can those of us in the arts and humanities play in helping our fellow citizens comprehend this “long emergency” and forestall and mitigate widespread misery and catastrophe? When, collectively, humans – especially those of First World, capitalist nations – become agents of geological change, what happens to notions of individual agency and subjectivity, and how do we bring reconsiderations of such ideas into play in addressing climate change? What does agency mean, for instance, in light of the fact that we owe every second breath we take to plankton in the ocean, tiny creatures who face increasing difficulty in forming their shells in the acidified ocean? Is postmodernism’s privileging of a decentered and dispersed subjectivity a function, in part, of the literal and metaphorical mobility brought to us by seemingly unlimited fossil fuel networks and high-speed, long-distance transportation? In what ways are the anthropogenic planetary changes we are witnessing now different from previous generations’ fears of war or nuclear annihilation? Will the future be nomadic or settled? Will we be vaulted back to the homestead era or projected forward into dystopias of the kind we read about in speculative fiction? How can we preserve the social justice gains we have achieved under the duress presented by climate change, ocean acidification and oxygen depletion, food shortages, and mass extirpations and extinctions of fish, mammals, trees and other plants? What clues, insights and incitements can we draw from literature and theory to bring to necessary public conversations about surviving and (maybe) thriving in retooled socio-environmental formations?

The theoretical questions raised will pertain to terminology (is it the anthropocene, the capitalocene, Donna Haraway’s chthulucene, the plasticene, climate change or Margaret Atwood’s “everything change”); concepts of matter, materiality, and bodies; subjects, objects

and agency; denialism; energy; food; extirpation / extinction; system, grid and infrastructure; pollution and toxicity; plastic; elemental ecocriticism; resilience; action and activism.

TEXTS:

Sue Goyette, *Ocean*
Richard Powers, *The Overstory*
Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior*
Gail Anderson-Dargatz, *The Spawning Grounds*
Adam Dickinson, *Anatomic*
Kathleen Dean Moore, *Great Tide Rising*

Additional critical-theoretical essays, podcasts and a couple of films will also be required texts. Please consult the class and reading schedule for details.

ASSIGNMENT PORTFOLIO:

First-person mini-essay (3 pp.): 10%

Oral, in-class presentation of two terms pertaining to the Anthropocene (choose two from a list provided in class): 10%

A conference proposal (300 - 500 words) with annotated bibliography of the five best sources for the proposed paper (one paragraph per annotation): 15%

Analytical essay on one (or two) of the literary texts on the course (16 – 22 pp., including works cited and endnotes): 40%

Theoretical paper (8 – 10 pp., including works cited and endnotes): 25%

TOTAL: 100%

IMPORTANT NOTES

Passing grade: Students do not have to complete and submit all of the assignments in order to be eligible for a passing grade for the course, but it is very highly recommended.

Exam: There will be no final examination in this course.

Style: MLA Style (7th or 8th ed.)

Conference proposal. Whether one goes on to become a professor or goes into some other line of work, presenting one's ideas at conferences or other professional or public gatherings is standard practice. This assignment is designed to refine your skills in writing proposals (sometimes called abstracts) for further research and presentation.

Students will search for and choose an appropriate conference for which to craft a paper proposal (FreeX, our own annual graduate student conference is an acceptable choice, as are the WLA, ASLE, SLSA (Society for Literature, Science and the Arts), ACCUTE, ACQL, ESAC, or other scholarly conferences – preferably a conference in which the student could, if their proposal were accepted, participate). Students will also research five scholarly books, book chapters, articles, review articles, scholarly podcasts, etc. that would be highly useful sources for the paper and write a one-paragraph annotation describing the contents of each.

The proposal may (but need not) be related to either the analytical essay or the theoretical essay for the course.

Personal essay. The purpose of this very short personal essay is to expose students to the personal essay, to vary the type of assignments in the course, to give pleasure in writing, and ultimately (possibly) to add a publication to the student's c.v.

Glossary entries. The Anthropocene is a whole new area of scholarship, and the scholarship is often interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary and as such requires novel terminology and concepts. There has been an outpouring of glossaries for the anthropocene and the glossary is rapidly becoming a kind of sub-genre in its own right.

Each student reads thoroughly and presents on TWO pre-selected terms / glossary entries. The instructor will provide a sign-up sheet in class in advance so that everyone presents on different terms.

Active learning: This graduate seminar course will be conducted as a mixture of lecture, class and small-group work and round-table discussion, and other forms of learning. Respectful participation in all such activities is compulsory. A crucial part of graduate work and intellectual work in general is being able to speak about it with others. In short, students will be expected to assume the role of active participants in the co-construction and dissemination of knowledge rather than that of merely passive consumers of it.

Attendance: A strong commitment to class attendance, completing the assigned readings in advance of the class for which they are scheduled, avidly participating in your own and others' learning, demonstrating respectful, and accountable and open intellectual engagement with the course materials and with fellow students and the professor are very important components of learning. A class is a community, a group of living, breathing, thinking, responding, feeling, knowledge-creating beings. It is a kind of workplace, a working group or a think tank, in effect. Intermittent attendance (more than a couple of absences per term) *always* results in losing one's place in terms of the material and the others in the course.

You may find this short article from *University Affairs* on transferable skills helpful in this regard: https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/graduate-matters/what-are-your-transferable-skills-as-you-exit-graduate-school/?utm_source=University+Affairs+e-newsletter&utm_campaign=bce7251220-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_08_15_03_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_314bc2ee29-bce7251220-425249525

Please download from D2L and save to your own computer both 1) the course syllabus and 2) the class and reading schedule for easy reference throughout the term and so that you can access it even if your internet access is temporarily unavailable.

Formatting: All written assignments must be double-spaced in 12-point font with 1” margins on all four sides of the page. Times New Roman is the default font for work in English literature, though you can use another easily readable font. “Fun fonts” do not make anyone’s work appear professional.

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 any due date. The late penalty for assignments is one mark per day late.

Taking notes: Recent research studies have shown that handwritten class notes are markedly superior in terms of acquiring a more thorough understanding of course material and for retention of material in one’s memory.

Tip: I highly recommend that you **annotate and underline** the course texts. Underlining and annotating in the margins are the best ways of acquiring and consolidating your knowledge of textual material. ‘Make tracks’ in your text (though not, of course, in any library books ever) and you will be far more likely to take ownership of the knowledge we will be co-creating in the classroom. It is also vastly more efficient when it is time to prepare for class or carry out research.

Technology: The instructor reserves the right to outlaw the use of phones, tablets, computers, or other distractions in class. **Surfing the web, checking email or social media, taking calls or texting during class is strictly forbidden!! Taking calls or texting by leaving the classroom is not allowed either.**

Bring the text(s) of the week to class.

Office hours: if you need some guidance, assistance or advice with anything course-related or related to your studies, please visit me in my office during my office hours, make an appointment or just drop in.

Double-sided printing of assignments is encouraged in order to save paper and trees. Please feel free to use factory-recycled paper or even paper that has already been used on one side. This is not only permissible but admirable. Just draw a line diagonally through material printed or written on the “wrong” side and make sure your pages are stapled in order as you would for any assignment. Your grade will NOT suffer if you use recycled or previously used paper.

No folders needed. Please DO NOT use any plastic cover sheets for your assignments. They have an annoying tendency to flap shut while one is trying to read and mark them, and using plastic contributes to waste, chemical pollution and the generation of carbon. Just a simple staple or clamp in the upper left-hand corner of the assignment is perfect. Please staple or clamp your work before handing it in. I do not normally carry a stapler with me nor is there likely to be one in the classroom.

Submission of assignments. Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on their respective due dates, and they must be physically handed to the instructor. At this point, I cannot accept electronic submissions (which is too bad as it would save paper and trees) because they are just too hard on the eyes. If you absolutely cannot hand me your work in class, then do not shove your professional work under my (or anyone else's) office door. It can and does get trampled and muddied, lost under the mat, put under the wrong professor's door, discarded, etc. Instead, if you must, 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 outside regular business hours via the wooden Essay Drop Box just outside the English Department office. Assignments are date-stamped by the office staff at about 4:00 so if you have a strict deadline you should submit your work before 4:00. If you hand your work directly to me, you avoid all these complexities.

Graduate Course Grading System:

Grades are calculated according to the 4 point scale used in the *Graduate Calendar*:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-g-1.html>

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding
A	4.00	Excellent-superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.70	Very good performance
B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass for students in Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted towards Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	

Please note: A B- is considered a minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

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.

In the case of Instructors using numerical marks in the grading of term work, the departmental conversion chart applies.

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

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-5.html>

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/graduate>. 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>

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: maboyn@ucalgary.ca.

Find The English Pages research guide here:

https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject_id=52619

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:



Academic regulations and schedules:

Consult the Department of English's graduate website for courses, departmental deadlines, and other related program information at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/node/245>. Consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar for university and faculty regulations, dates, deadline, fees, and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar is <http://grad.ucalgary.ca>.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact the Graduate Office at 403 220 5484 or visit us in Social Sciences Tower 1148 in the first instance.

For program planning and advice, contact the Graduate Program Administrator at enggrad@ucalgary.ca to make an appointment with Dr. Suzette Mayr, Graduate Program Director.

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>.

Student Accommodations:

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with

Disabilities <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

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/>

Contact for the Graduate Student Association: <http://gsa.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). 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.