

Literature and the Natural World

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Frederic Edwin Church. "Cotopaxi." 1855. Detroit Institute of Arts

Texts

Abbey, Edward. *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006.
ISBN-10: 0061129763
\$12.72 Paperback

Hogan, Linda. *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World*. New York: WW Norton, 2007.
ISBN-10: 0393322475 Paperback
\$12.20

Lopez, Barry. *Resistance*. New York: Vintage, 2005.

~~Humboldt, Alexander. *Views of Nature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.
ISBN-10: 0226923185
\$40.50 Hardcover (Now out of print; The instructor will provide texts)~~

Reisner, Marc. *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water*. New York: Penguin, 1993

Thoreau, Henry David. *The Maine Woods*. New York: Penguin Books, 1988.
ISBN-10: 0140170138 Paperback
\$12.15

Poetry Selections will be linked from online sources

Course Description

This course is a survey of Environmental Literature. I try to begin with a theoretical perspective with the Native American writer, Linda Hogan. Then we move into the literature of environmental ethics and opposition to the development of natural resources. Edward Abbey offers a roadmap for civil disobedience. Marc Reisner outline the water crisis in the West by covering the history

and consequences of the urbanization and industrialization of the Western landscape. And Barry Lopez offers stories and memoirs that make a jeremiad against the destruction of nature. Finally we will turn to Thoreau's Romantic sublime "Ktaadn" from his *Maine Woods* trilogy. We have three general foci: rivers, water, and political resistance. I plan to take the class to Texas Tech on April 16-18 for the Sowell Conference, where you can present drafts of your papers.

Objectives for 5304

Students will be able to

1. Develop an awareness of the literary tradition of American Transcendentalism.
2. Apply the transcendentalist thought to solve problems related to education, race, class, sexism, and the environment.
3. Use literature as a means of critically understanding our society.
4. Apply techniques of literary research and criticism to write about writing.
5. Use theoretical concepts in early American literature as a lens for interpretation.

Graduate Program in English Learning Outcomes

ENGLISH (GRADUATE)

Graduate students will be able to

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of major authors, literary works in different genres, and definitive literary movements in British and American literature
2. Explicate literary works representative of two periods or genres in British literature and two periods or genres in American literature
3. Employ methodology and terminology used in creative writing or linguistics
4. Conduct substantial research to support original interpretations of literary works, provide original applications of literary or linguistic theories, or present literature reviews of authors or genres that have inspired creative writing projects

DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

Class Participation

The class participation grade will be determined by

- a. Participation in sustainability events
- b. Attendance
- c. Participation in classroom discussion and problem solving.

- d. The help you give to others in conferencing and editing.

Attendance: Two absences are permitted during the semester. One letter grade (5 points) will be subtracted from the Class Attendance percentage for each additional absence. **More than nine (6) unexcused absences will result in the student being dropped from the course with a failing grade.** Absences resulting from required school activities, direct personal emergencies, or health issues will be excused--but you must notify the instructor within one week of the absence and make up any class work in a timely manner.

Projects

I. Discussion Posts on Blackboard (300 points)

I will expect a total of 10 posts through the semester. The due dates for each blog post is on the calendar on the syllabus. The length of each post should be from 300-500 words, which could be one to three paragraphs. Although summarizing is one step in analysis, focus on raising questions, interpreting, and responding critically. To develop your ideas use quotes. Another good strategy is to consider the reading through reference to other literature you know: inter-textual reading. I would like our posts to function like a conversation in which we respond to each other's ideas as well. When other projects are due, no blog post will be due.

II. Short 6-page Interpretation through "Close Reading." (200 points)

Close reading means that one concentrates on the formal aspects of a piece of literature as a work of art and avoids the influence of scholarly criticism. I think doing "reader response" criticism, and asking yourself how you subjectively respond to the text will also work for this paper. If close reading from New Criticism focuses on form, reader response theory focuses on the meaning of a text. This paper can be a first draft of your final term paper, which will have to cite scholarly criticism. You can also write about a completely different subject for your term paper. Since you are interpreting a text "closely," it's very important that you use quotes and inquire deeply into their form and underlying arguments.

III. Précis on One Piece of Criticism (200 points)

A précis is a summary and outline of a text. Please read one scholarly recent article, which you find yourself through the library databases (MLA), and write a critical abstract followed by an outline of the main ideas in the article with quotes from the author. This should help inform the class about current scholarship in transcendentalism and provide background for your own term paper. Post your précis as a discussion board post.

IV. Term Paper (300 points)

The term paper can focus on one aspect of one work of literature or compare two works of literature. Send a brief statement of purpose to me a month before the paper is due (3.31)

Peer Feedback and Editing.

I will give up to 25 points extra-credit to any student who carefully responds to and proofreads another student's "close reading" and term paper (up to 50 points total). The best means of proofreading is by using the review functions in Word. This allows you to "track changes" and make marginal "comments," then accept or reject the changes when you receive your paper from the proofreader. Email the proofread copy to the classmate, and cc the instructor in order to receive

extra-credit.

Projects	Due Date	%	Points
Posts to the Class Reading Blog (10 in number)	About once a week	30	300
Short 6-page "Close Reading"	3.7	20	200
Précis on One Piece of Criticism	3.28	10	100
Term Paper 10-15 pages in length	5.4	30	300
Class Participation		10	100
Total Points Available		100	1000

DEADLINES

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class on their due dates. All alternative arrangements must be approved before the relevant deadline. Late work without previous arrangement with me will only be accepted upon demonstration of extenuating circumstances.

Blackboard

If you confront technical issues which interfere with your ability to use Blackboard, contact the LTAC (Lobo Technology Assistance Center) at 432-837-8888 or <https://techassist.sulross.edu>

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Sul Ross State University provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such accommodation because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, as soon as possible please contact Counseling and Accessibility Services:

Mary Schwartze, M.Ed., LPC
 Accessibility Services Coordinator
 Counseling & Accessibility Services
 Ferguson Hall, Rm #112
 P.O. Box C-122
 Alpine, TX. 79832
mschwartz@sulross.edu

Writing Center and Academic Learning Center


The Writing Center is located in MAB 102 and the Academic Learning Center is located in FH 213. Tutors are available to help you with any problems you may have with an assignment. Take advantage of this service any time you need help. The tutors are there for you. You may contact the Writing Center at extension 8270 and email writing@sulross.edu

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Dishonest acts, such as plagiarism (using words or a specific author's ideas from another source without acknowledging the source) or collusion (having other people write parts of your paper for you), may result in an "F" on the assignment and may lead to a disciplinary hearing conducted through the office of the Dean of Students, which could result in suspension or expulsion from SRSU. If you have questions

about whether your use of other sources (such as books, websites, friends, or Writing Center tutors) is fair or not, please ask before turning in the work that you have a question about.

Course Calendar

Dates	Topics	Readings	Project Due Dates and Notes
Week One			
1.20	Environmental Theory	Linda Hogan <i>Dwellings</i>	
Week Two			
1.25/27	Native American Literature	Linda Hogan <i>Dwellings</i>	Post 1: Hogan
Week Three			
2.1/3		Linda Hogan <i>Dwellings</i>	Post 2: Hogan
Week Four			
2.8/11	4 poets	Robert Frost Robinson Jeffers Gary Snyder Mary Oliver Online texts	
Week Five			
2.15/17		Edward Abbey <i>The Monkey Wrench Gang</i>	Post 3: Poetry
Week Six			
2.22/24		Edward Abbey <i>The Monkey Wrench Gang</i>	Post 4: Abbey
Week Seven			
2.29/3.2		Edward Abbey <i>The Monkey Wrench Gang</i> & Marc Reisner <i>Cadillac Desert</i>	Post 5: Abbey Submit Proofreading of close reading by Sunday 3.6 for 25 pts EC
Week Eight <i>Midterm</i>			
3.7/9		Marc Reisner <i>Cadillac Desert</i>	Post 6: Reisner Due March 7 6-page Literary Analysis, a Close Reading of one of our texts.
Week Nine			
3.14/16	Spring Break		
Week Ten			

3.21/23		Marc Reisner <i>Cadillac Desert</i>	
Week Eleven			
3.28/30		Barry Lopez <i>Resistance</i>	Post 8: Reisner Due March 28 Précis of one scholarly article on one of our readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bibliographical reference • abstract • outline with quotes
Week Twelve			
4.4/6		Barry Lopez <i>Resistance</i>	April 8: Last day to withdraw from the 16 week course/term with grade of "W."
Week Thirteen			
4.11/13		Literature of Science and Exploration Humboldt Carson Aldo Leopold Rachel Carson	Post 9: Lopez
Sowell Conference: April 16-18 Student presentations of draft papers Publication in Archivation Exploration			
Week Fourteen			
4.18/20		Henry David Thoreau	Post 10: Thoreau
Week Fifteen			
4.25/27		Henry David Thoreau	Submit Proofreading of term paper by Sunday 5.1 for 25 pts EC
Week Sixteen			
5.2/4	Last class days	Henry David Thoreau	Due May 4 Term Paper 10-15 pages, grounded in theory and criticism
Week Seventeen			
Final Exam Date and time to be determined			