

English 252: Introduction to Literary Studies
“Dark Ecology”: Race, Gender and the Environment

Hunter College, Spring 2017

Section: 13

Prerequisite: English 220

Schedule: Mon. & Weds. 4:10-5:25pm

Classroom: C102 North

Professor: Kaitlin Mondello

Office: 1238 HW (West, 12th floor)

Office Hours: Before or after class by appointment

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Course Description: This discussion-based and writing-intensive course prepares students to be English majors by introducing them to the conventions and methods of literary study. This course covers a range of authors, works, genres, and time periods emphasizing various modes of critical and theoretical analysis, methods of research, and historical context. The course has three primary units, each of which focuses on reading, analyzing and researching texts in a particular genre of literature: short stories, novel, plays and poetry. Special attention is paid to research methods and learning a range of critical approaches to literary texts. After reading our longer texts, we will examine a range of short scholarly and theoretical texts. In addition to learning the aesthetic qualities of literary texts, we will discuss the role that literature plays in larger cultural, social and political dialogues through the themes of the course. Requirements include participation, short essays, and a final research paper.

Course Theme: Readings and class discussions will focus on literary representations of the environment in literature with an emphasis on racialized and gendered depictions of “nature,” as well as of human and non-human characters who are associated with “nature” in various ways. We will consider in what ways “nature” is a conceptual construction designed to other the nonhuman and to valorize or demonize those associated with either its perceived purity or savagery. We will examine this fundamental paradox of “nature” as both savior and enemy for humanity.

Learning Outcomes/Goals:

1. Display a working knowledge of terms and concepts used in the analysis of literary genres.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how literary works relate to their immediate historical context and to the traditions from which they emerge.
3. Be able to undertake the close reading of a literary work, with particular emphasis on the relationship between parts and wholes and between form and meaning.
4. Be able to construct a literary argument using secondary sources (using discipline-specific databases and archives) in MLA style.
5. Engage in reflection on the critical assumptions that inform our own and others’ interpretations of literary works.

Required Texts (3): These texts are not at the Hunter bookstore. Please purchase them elsewhere or online. Try to purchase the same editions that are listed below if possible: different editions often have varied pagination and lack needed supplementary essays. Prices are subject to change (often much cheaper to buy used).

1. *The Last Man* (novel) by Mary Shelley, 1827 (Wordsworth Classics, 2004) \$4.99 new (by Feb. 15)
2. *The Tempest* (play) by William Shakespeare, 1611 (Bedford/St. Martin’s “Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism” 1st ed. (2000) \$4.00 new or 2nd ed. (2008) \$15.00 new) (by Mar. 20)
3. *Prospero’s Daughter* (novel) by Elizabeth Nunez (Ballantine Books, 2006) \$16.00 new (by Apr. 3)

All other readings (short stories, poems and articles) will be available as links/.pdfs on Blackboard and/or hard copies will be provided to you.

Grading & Assignments

Category	Approximate % of Final grade
Participation & In-class Work	10%
Blogs/Course Website	10%
Essay Components	10%
Close Reading Short Essay	20%
Critical/Historical Short Essay	20%
Research Essay	30%
Creative Project (Extra Credit)	up to 1%
Total	100%

This grading system is subject to change. All grades will be posted on Blackboard. Grades follow the traditional scale below.

A+	100 – 97	C	76 – 74
A	96 – 94	C-	73 – 70
A -	93 – 90	D+	69 – 67
B+	89 – 87	D	66 – 64
B	86 – 84	D-	63 – 60
B -	83 – 80	F	59 and below
C+	79 – 77		

Final Grades: Please note that Hunter's grading system for final grades differs from the above. Your final grade in the course is based on the following scale:

<http://registrar.hunter.cuny.edu/subpages/gradingsystem.shtml>.

Rubrics: All essays are graded based on rubrics that will be provided in advance of the assignment.

Attendance/Lateness: All of our time in class is designed to help prepare you for the graded assignments. Because of this, there is a strong correlation between attendance/participation and success in this course: the more you attend and participate, the better prepared you will be. **You may miss up 1 class period during the semester for any reason (health, family, travel, etc.) with no penalty.** Any additional absences, however, **decrease your final grade in the class.** Six or more unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the course. Absences can only be excused with official documentation, such as a doctor's note. You should let me know in advance when you will miss class and the reason via e-mail. If you are absent, you should consult a classmate (not me) for the material covered in class. You may, however, ask me how to make-up any in-class work that you miss. Frequent (late more than three times) and/or excessive lateness (more than 15 minutes late) **will be counted as absences** that will negatively impact your final grade and can cause you to fail the class.

Participation: In order to participate in and benefit from the class discussion, you not only need to be present, but also prepared. This means that you need to have done the assigned reading prior to class and show evidence of this by voicing your thoughts and opinions, as well as actively listening. You should come prepared to every class with a specific passage and question that you want to discuss. **You must have our readings in front of you** either in hard copy or on an e-reader/laptop (NOT a cell phone) for every class period. Failure to have your readings prepared for class will decrease your participation grade. Likewise, being off-task—such as chatting, doing work for another class, or other activities that take your attention away from our class—will decrease your participation grade. Please note that your participation grade is based on both the *quantity* and *quality* of your participation.

In-Class Work: This includes all in-class writing assignments, as well as individual and group work that you will be asked to share with the class and/or that I will collect. This may include periodic reading quizzes. This is an important part of your participation in the course and your participation grade.

Blogs/Course Website: We will sign up for short blog posts (3) throughout the semester. The blog posts are intended to be informal and reflective on the texts and questions of the course. The website is designed to showcase the work of the course and to share your own work with a broader public. The blog posts will serve as a jumping off point for class discussion. You will be asked to add content to the course website (on WordPress) periodically in class with advance notice to bring a laptop or e-reader.

Essays (3): Assignment sheets (with prompts) will be distributed well in advance of the due date. You have the option to develop your own prompt provided that you discuss it with me for approval well in advance of the paper's due date.

Short Essay 1 - Close Reading: This is a short essay (approx. 3-4 pages, 900-word minimum) in which you choose one poem or short story to close read. Choose a particular scene/moment/set of lines from the text and argue for why it is pivotal, central or representative of the text as a whole. You may bring in other scenes that relate to the one chosen in your essay as long as they support your thesis. Because this is a short essay, focus on making a specific argument about the text using significant close reading of a few well-chosen passages.

Short Essay 2 - Critical/Historical: This is a short essay (approx. 3-4 pages, 900-word minimum) in which you will use at least two secondary sources to establish the historical context for a given text and/or frame one critical conversation/debate about your given text. For the historical option, you must show how outside historical information deepens a particular understanding of the text. For the critical option, you may choose to emphasize two critics who are in conflict with one another on the same issue and advocate for one methodology over the other, or choose two critics who agree and advocate for their specific approach to the text. In both cases, the goal is to show how analysis of a text requires various forms of context (in this case either historical or critical). This essay does NOT involve close reading of the primary text; instead, you will offer analysis of secondary sources to show how they can enhance the primary text.

Research Essay (Final Paper): This essay builds on the skills from your other work in this class: it combines the skills of close reading and contextual analysis from the previous shorter essays. You may choose either (not both) of the short essays to expand into the final paper if you prefer, but you cannot use your previous essay verbatim. It should be approx. **10-12 pages (3000-word minimum)**. Your final paper may be on any of the texts from our class. This paper should have a minimum of 5 scholarly secondary sources.

Essay Components: This includes the scaffolded steps toward your essays: rough drafts (3) and peer reviews (3), 3 source summaries, a research proposal and outline, library workshop, and an annotated bibliography.

Creative Project (extra credit)

Choose any text that we have read in our class and respond to it creatively. You can create a picture, write creatively in a genre of your choice, develop a soundtrack, use digital or multimedia art, record a performance, write a found poem from our readings, relate to a contemporary issue in the news, etc. A brief write-up (150-300 words) should accompany your creative work explaining the connections that you made between the text and your own work. You are required to post your work to the course blog and present it on the last day of class to receive full extra credit. You may do up to 3 of these.

There will be other opportunities for extra credit, such as attending writing workshops and cultural events.

[...]

Schedule

Please review our schedule carefully so that you can plan accordingly. Please note that assignments are listed on the date assigned (NOT the date due): **all assignments listed are due NEXT class**. This schedule is subject to change at any time and will be posted on Blackboard. I will upload revised versions if needed and let you know when this is done.

Unit 1: Close Reading

Week 1

Mon. Jan. 30

In-class Activities: Introductions, Syllabus, Poem & Writing Exercise

Due NEXT class: Buy *The Last Man* (to have by Feb. 15); Read “[Literature and Environment](http://environment.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Buell_Heise_Thorner_ARER_2011_Lit_and_Envr.pdf)” (link) http://environment.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Buell_Heise_Thorner_ARER_2011_Lit_and_Envr.pdf (Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour. 2011. 36:417–40)

Weds. Feb. 1

In-class Activities: Sign-ups, Group work on “Literature and Environment,” with poems

Due NEXT class: Read Rappaccini’s Daughter (pdf on Blackboard)

Week 2

Mon. Feb. 6

In-class Activities: Discussion of short story, Introduction to Close Reading & Short Essay, “Writing about Stories” and “Writing about Poems”

Due NEXT class: Read “[Young Goodman Brown](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/512/512-h/512-h.htm#goodman)” (Project Gutenberg link) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/512/512-h/512-h.htm#goodman>

Weds. Feb. 8

In-class Activities: Discussion of short story & preparing for Short Essay 1, close reading exercise

Due NEXT class: Close Reading Short Essay Rough Draft for in-class peer review

Week 3

Mon. Feb. 13 NO CLASS (Lincoln’s Birthday)

Weds. Feb. 15

In-class Activities: **Peer Review of Close Reading Short Essay Rough Draft**, Intro. to *The Last Man*

Due NEXT class: Read Volume I of *The Last Man* (novel) (p. 1-131), Finish Close Reading Short Essay

Unit II: Critical and Historical Context

Week 4

Mon. Feb. 20 NO CLASS (President’s Day) - **Close Reading Short Essay DUE** by email by midnight

Weds. Feb. 22

In-class Activities: Discussion of *The Last Man Vol. I*

Due NEXT class: Read Vol. II of *The Last Man* Chaps. 1-6 (pgs. 134-204)

Week 5

Mon. Feb. 27

In-class Activities: Discussion of *The Last Man Vol. II*

Due NEXT class: Read Vol. II of *The Last Man* Chpts. 7-9 (pgs. 204-250)

Weds. Mar. 1

In-class Activities: Discussion of *The Last Man Vol. II*

Due NEXT class: Read Vol. III of *The Last Man* Chpts. 1-6 (pgs. 250-325)

Week 6

Mon. Mar. 6

In-class Activities: Discussion of *The Last Man Vol. III*

Due NEXT class: Finish *The Last Man: Vol. III* Chpts. 7-10 (pgs. 325-375)

Weds. Mar. 8

In-class Activities: Discussion of *The Last Man Vol. III*, Reading and summarizing literary criticism

Due NEXT class: Read 1 of the critical articles on Blackboard about *The Last Man* and prepare a summary for class (Source Summary 1)

Week 7

Mon. Mar. 13 – Source Summary 1 due

In-class Activities: Group work on critical articles on *The Last Man*, Preparing for Critical/Historical Short Essay 2, Using library databases, MLA citation review

Due NEXT class: Read one of the sources on historical context for *The Last Man* and prepare a summary for class (Source Summary 2)

Weds. Mar. 15 – Source Summary 2 due

In-class Activities: Group work on critical articles on *The Last Man*, Preparing for Short Essay 2

Due NEXT class: Read additional sources for Short Essay 2 (on Blackboard and/or through the databases), Rough Draft of Short Essay 2 for Peer Review

Week 8

Mon. Mar. 20

In-class Activities: **Rough Draft of Short Essay 2 for Peer Review**

Due NEXT class: Finish Short Essay 2, Read *The Tempest* Acts I & II (pgs. 1-50)

Unit III: Writing a Literary Research Paper

Weds. Mar. 22

In-class Activities: Discussion of *The Tempest* Act I, “Writing about Plays”

Due NEXT class: Read *The Tempest* Acts III, IV & V & Epilogue (pgs. 33-64), Finish revising Short Essay 2

Week 9

Mon. Mar. 27 – Critical/Historical Short Essay DUE by email by midnight

In-class Activities: Discussion of *The Tempest*

Due NEXT class: Read 1 of the critical articles about *The Tempest*: Brown or Loomba in the Bedford edition/on Blackboard) and prepare a summary for class (Source Summary 3)

Weds. Mar. 29 – Source Summary 3 due

In-class Activities: Group work on critical articles on *The Tempest*; Staging *the Tempest* with excerpts from *Hag-Seed* (novel, Margaret Atwood, 2016)

Due NEXT class: Read another critical article or primary source from “sources and contexts” in *The Tempest* (Bedford edition) and be prepared to discuss in class

Week 10**Mon. Apr. 3**

In-class Activities: Group work on critical articles on *The Tempest*, Preparing for the Research Project, Background on *Prospero's Daughter* (novel) (trigger warning)

Due NEXT class: Read *Prospero's Daughter* Chapt. 1-3

Weds. Apr. 5

In-class Activities:

Due NEXT class: Finish reading *Prospero's Daughter* (novel) over spring break

Week 11

Mon. Apr. 10 NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Weds. Apr. 12 NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Week 12

Mon. Apr. 17 NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Weds. Apr. 19

In-class Activities: Discussion of *Prospero's Daughter* (novel)

Due NEXT class: Read 1 of the critical articles on *Prospero's Daughter* and be prepared to discuss

Thurs. Apr. 20 (Classes follow a Monday Schedule)

In-class Activities: Discussion of *Prospero's Daughter* & critical articles

Due NEXT class: Read 1 of the selected critical/theoretical sources for the research project (pdf on Blackboard) and be prepared to discuss

Week 13**Mon. Apr. 24**

In-class Activities: Continued Discussion of *Prospero's Daughter* & sources; Starting the Research Project: Combining skills from the short essays, Generating topics (proposal)

Due NEXT class: Start working on your proposal

Weds. Apr. 26 – Library Workshop (meet in Library Computer Lab E404, 4th floor)

In-class Activities: Workshop on Library Research

Due NEXT class: Work on Annotated Bibliography

Week 14**Mon. May 1 – Proposal due**

In-class Activities: Assign Research Groups, group work for proposals and annotated bibliographies; Organizing the Essay, Integrating sources, Documentation and citation

Due NEXT class: Prepare outline for individual conferences, Finish annotated bibliography

Weds. May 3 - Individual Conferences (Outline due)

Week 15

Mon. May 8 - Individual Conferences (Outline due)

Weds. May 10 - Annotated Bibliography due

In-class Activities: Turning the outline into the essay, using the annotated bibliography

Due NEXT class: Partial rough draft of research essay (2 pages minimum)

Week 16**Mon. May 15 - Partial Rough Draft due**In-class Activities: Research Essay Partial Rough Draft Peer ReviewDue Next Class: Extra Credit**Weds. May 17** - Extra Credit Presentations / Last Day of Class**Research Paper due Weds. May 24 by midnight by e-mail**

Fri. May 19 NO CLASS (Reading Day) / May 22-26 Final Exams / May 26 End of Term