

Introduction to the Environmental Humanities

ENGL 230-010

MWF 1:50-2:45 pm · Memorial Hall Room 113

Professor Mary Bowden

makbowde@udel.edu

Office: Memorial Hall 115

Student hours: Fridays, 3:00-4:30 pm

Course description

What role does literature play in allowing us to appreciate the complex beauty of the natural world? How can art help us to both understand and feel the impacts of a changing climate? Our exploration of humanity's ethical and artistic connections to local and global environments offers reflection on our relationship to animals, plants, and the places we call home. We'll read and respond to work reflecting a diverse range of perspectives influenced by race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.

In this course, you will:

- Explore a diverse array of environmental perspectives, and articulate your own
- Develop strategies for observing the natural world
- Analyze how literary authors portray the natural environment
- Research a significant environmental problem currently facing our world and recommend a solution

Required texts

Rachel Carson, *Under the Sea-Wind* (Penguin, ISBN: 978-0-14-310496-4)

Waubgeshig Rice, *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (ECW Press, ISBN: 978-1-77041-400-6)

Elizabeth Rush, *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore* (Milkweed Editions, ISBN: 978-1-57131-381-2)

C. Pam Zhang, *How Much of These Hills is Gold* (Riverhead Books, ISBN: 978-0525537212)

*All other texts will be either hyperlinked on the syllabus or available on Canvas.

Assignments

Reflections (150 points)

Environmental Worldview Reflection (2-3 pages, 50 points)

Environmental Site Reflection (2-3 pages, 50 points)

Literature Reflection (2-3 pages, 50 points)

Final Paper/Project (250 points)

Problem and Solution Paper/Project Proposal (1-2 pages, 25 points)

Problem and Solution Paper/Project (4-5 page paper or project and 2 page reflection paper, 225 points)

Attendance and participation (100 points)

I warmly encourage your participation in our class discussions. This class will be structured to encourage many different kinds of participation; this means that during the typical class, we'll discuss in pairs and small groups as well as all together. Your participation grade will be holistic and cumulative, barring any deductions for attendance (see below). This is the rubric I'll be using to evaluate your participation:

A: your participation is enthusiastic and consistent. You clearly do the reading regularly, and you offer thoughts in all the different forms of discussion.

B: your participation is well-informed, but perhaps less consistent than those receiving an A for participation. You may sometimes be disengaged during discussions.

C: you participate some days, but not on many others. It seems to me that you don't regularly do the reading. You do not discuss much, if at all, with your partner or group.

I expect you to make the effort to attend every class, if possible, and if you have perfect attendance, I will add a 10% bonus to your participation grade at the end of the semester. However, I recognize that sometimes circumstances arise that make it difficult to attend class.

For this reason, you may be absent from this class **three times with no penalty to your grade**. For every absence after the third absence, I will deduct 10% from your final participation grade in this course. If extraordinary circumstances necessitate you being absent more than three times, please communicate with me promptly about making up classwork to avoid this penalty. (Note: even if your fourth, fifth, or further absences are excused, I still require you to make up the classwork so that you can stay on track.)

Assignment	Point value
Environmental Worldview Reflection	50
Environmental Site Reflection	50
Literature Reflection	50
Problem and Solution Paper/Project Proposal	25
Problem and Solution Paper/Project	225
Participation and Attendance	100
Total	500

Grades

The grades I assign to your work are a measure of how successfully you have completed a task. Grades are not a measure of your worth as a person or your potential as a student; they are also not a reward for the effort you have made. If you have any questions about your grades after having carefully considered my comments on your work, please ask me. In this course, we follow the standard University of Delaware grading rubric:

Grade	%	What it Means
A A-	94.50 and over 89.50 to 94.49	Excellent work. Addresses the requirements of the assignment in a compelling and insightful way. Manifests consistent attention to detail in both the ideas presented and the writing that conveys them. Almost entirely error-free.
B+ B B-	86.50 to 89.49 82.50 to 86.49 79.50 to 82.49	Good work. Clearly and engagingly addresses the requirements, issues, and major ideas of the assignment. Writing is not only readable but also rewarding, attuned to the needs and interest of the reader. Punctuation, spelling, source citation, and other mechanical matters are largely error-free.
C+ C C-	76.50 to 79.49 72.50 to 76.49 69.50 to 72.49	Fair work. Meets all the basic requirements of the assignment. Clearly addresses the main issues and ideas the assignment articulates. Writing is readable overall. Any lapses in correctness and style tend not to affect the reader's comprehension.
D+ D D-	66.50 to 69.49 62.50 to 66.49 59.50 to 62.49	Poor work. Barely meets the most basic requirements of the assignment. Frequent lapses in style, correctness, and mechanics impact readability and indicate a lack of careful proofreading.
F	Below 59.49	Failing work. Fails to meet the most basic requirements of the assignments. Fails to address important issues or ideas that are central to the assignment. Fails to demonstrate attention to style, correctness, and mechanics.

Course policies

Class roster

If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to let me know your gender pronouns.

Late assignments

All assignments should be submitted on time on the day they are due; assignments submitted late may be subject to a late penalty. Please feel free to reach out to me to arrange an extension if necessary.

Students with disabilities

I want all students to have the best possible chance to succeed. If you believe you may need an accommodation based on a disability, you should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) as soon as possible. DSS is located at 240 Academy Street, Alison Hall, Suite 130. Phone: 302-831-4643. Fax: 302-831-3261. Website: www.udel.edu/DSS. Email: dssoffice@udel.edu.

Classroom Technology

I expect your attention in class to be focused on our discussion. To avoid tempting distractions, I ask you to put away your phone before class begins. If I see you using technology inappropriately in our class, I will warn you once, and then count you absent for the day if the improper use of technology continues (this will count towards your total absences for the semester). You should be present mentally as well as physically.

Extra writing help

The Writing Center offers essential guidance on all kinds of writing projects. You may make an appointment by visiting the [Writing Center's Web Site](#) or by calling (302) 831-1168.

Academic integrity

Please familiarize yourself with UD policies regarding academic dishonesty. To falsify the results of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another, to cheat on an assignment, to re-submit the same assignment for different classes, or to allow or assist another to commit these acts corrupts the educational process. Students are expected to do their own work and neither give nor receive unauthorized assistance. Complete details of the university's academic integrity policies and procedures can be found at sites.udel.edu/studentconduct/sgup/ or at the Office of Student Conduct, 218 Hullihen Hall, (302) 831-2117. E-mail: student-conduct@udel.edu

In this class, students are not allowed to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT or Dall-E 2) on assignments. Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others (with the exception of peer review), including automated tools.

Campus resources

Your success in this class is important to me. We all need accommodations of different kinds because we all learn differently. The UD and Newark community offer a range of assistance to new and returning students. Resources range from health and wellness, counseling, study tips, and career guidance. In this class, you should always feel supported. If you need any assistance finding any resources, I am happy to help you!

[UD's Center for Counseling and Student Development](#)

[UD's Allies Support Program](#)

[UD's Health Center](#)

[UD's Police](#)

[UD's Office for Academic Enrichment \(OAE\)](#)

[UD's Center for Black Culture](#)

Sexual misconduct and Title IX

If, at any time during this course, I happen to be made aware that a student may have been the victim of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking), I am obligated by federal law to inform the university's Title IX Coordinator. The university needs to know information about such incidents not only to offer appropriate resources, but also to ensure a safe campus environment. The Title IX Coordinator will decide if the incident should be examined further. If such a situation is disclosed to me in class, in a paper assignment, or in student hours, I promise to protect your privacy—I will not disclose the incident to anyone but the Title IX Coordinator.

For more information on Sexual Misconduct policies, where to get help, and details on reporting information, please refer to <https://sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/>. At UD, we provide 24-hour crisis assistance and victim advocacy and counseling. To contact the UD Helpline 24/7/365, call: 302-831-1001.

Harassment and discrimination

The University of Delaware works to promote an academic and work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. As a member of the community, your rights and responsibilities are reflected in the non-discrimination and sexual misconduct policies. Please familiarize yourself with these policies at www.udel.edu/oei. You can report any concerns to the University's Office of Equity & Inclusion, at 305 Hulihan Hall, (302) 831-8063 or you can report anonymously through UD Police (302) 831-2222 or the EthicsPoint Compliance Hotline at www1.udel.edu/compliance. You can also report any violation of UD policy on harassment, discrimination, or abuse of any person at this site: sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/how-to-report/

Meeting with me

Student hours are an opportunity for you to discuss any aspect of your progress in the course; if you can't make my student hours, please feel free to email me or speak to me after class to set up an appointment. If you do email me, about an appointment or some other aspect of the course, expect a response within 24 hours. In general, I will only discuss drafts and grades in a meeting, rather than over email; additionally, I require a waiting period of 24 hours after an assignment is returned before I will discuss its grade with you. This provides you with an opportunity to read and think about my comments before coming to talk about them with me.

One final note: FERPA, or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, stipulates that students at public universities are granted certain privacy rights with respect to their grades and performance in class. As a result, I am unable to discuss your performance in our class with anyone but you.

Course schedule

All readings are **due** on the date listed.

Assignments due are in **bold**; assignments assigned are in *italics*.

Part I: Environmental Perspectives

Week 1: Environmental worldviews, August 30-September 1

W: Introduction to the course and each other

In-class reading: Aldo Leopold, "Thinking Like a Mountain"

F: Environmental worldviews #1: bell hooks, "Earthbound: On Solid Ground" and "Touching the Earth"; Jack London, "To Build a Fire"

Assign Environmental Worldview Reflection

Week 2: Environmental worldviews, September 4-8

M: Labor Day: no class

W: Environmental worldviews #2: Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Skywoman Falling" and "Learning the Grammar of Animacy"

F: Environmental worldviews #3: Richard Louv, "Climbing the Tree of Health" and "Nature-Deficit Disorder and the Restorative Environment"

Week 3: Humans and the environment, September 11-15

M: Environmental worldviews #4: J. Drew Lanham, "Me: An Introduction," "The Home Place," "The Bluebird of Enlightenment," "Birding While Black"

W: Environmental worldviews #5: McKay Jenkins, "Human Impact on the Land in Delaware: A History" from *The Delaware Naturalist Handbook*

Assign Environmental Site Reflection

F: Tour of the UD Botanic Gardens

Environmental Worldview Reflection due at 11.59 pm (turn in on Canvas)

Week 4: Humans and the environment, September 18-22

M: C. Pam Zhang, *How Much of These Hills is Gold*, pp. 1-51

W: Zhang, *How Much*, pp. 53-99

F: Zhang, *How Much*, pp. 101-153

Week 5: Humans and the environment, September 25-29

M: Zhang, *How Much*, pp. 155-201 (stop at the break between sections)

W: Zhang, *How Much*, pp. 201-255

F: Zhang, *How Much*, pp. 257-290

Week 6: The nonhuman environment, October 2-6

M: Zhang, *How Much*, pp. 291-320

W: James H. Wandersee and Elisabeth E. Schussler, "Preventing Plant Blindness"
Self- and group- eco-tour of the North and South Greens

F: Rachel Carson, *Under the Sea-Wind*, Foreword and Chapters 1-3 (pp. 3-49)

Week 7: The nonhuman environment, October 9-13

M: Carson, *Under the Sea-Wind*, Chapters 4-9 (pp. 50-96)

W: Carson, *Under the Sea-Wind*, Chapters 10-13 (pp. 97-139)

F: Carson, *Under the Sea-Wind*, Chapters 14-15 (pp. 140-162)

Environmental Site Reflection due at 11:59 pm (turn in on Canvas)

Part II: The Environment and Us: Problems and Solutions

Week 8: Environmental utopia and apocalypse, October 16-20

M: Clare Winger Harris, "The Miracle of the Lily"; and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, "[Sultana's Dream](#)"
Literature Reflection assigned

W: "[Wendigo](#)", Buffy Sainte-Marie, "[The Priests of the Golden Bull](#)" (lyrics [here](#))

F: Waubgeshig Rice, *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Chapters One-Seven (pp. 1-48)

Week 9: Environmental apocalypse, October 23-27

M: Rice, *Moon*, Chapters Eight-Fifteen (pp. 49-96)

W: Rice, *Moon*, Chapters Sixteen-Twenty-One (pp. 97-141)

F: Rice, *Moon*, Chapters Twenty-Two-Twenty-Six (pp. 145-182)

Week 10: Environmental apocalypse, October 30-November 3

M: Rice, *Moon*, Chapters Twenty-Seven-Epilogue (pp. 183-213)

W: Terry Bisson, "Bears Discover Fire"; Dani McClain, "Homing Instinct"

F: Literature Reflection peer review

Literature Reflection due at 11:59 pm (turn in on Canvas)

Week 11: Problems and solutions, November 6-10

M: In-class viewing: "The Big Oyster" (Wild Hope series)

Problem and Solution Paper/Project Proposal assigned

Problem and Solution Paper/Project assigned

W: Elizabeth Rush, *Rising*, pp. 1-45

F: Rush, *Rising*, pp. 47-97

Week 12: Problems and solutions, November 13-17

M: Rush, *Rising*, pp. 101-135

In-class research orientation and workshop

W: Rush, *Rising*, pp. 137-180

F: No class: research and writing day

Problem and Solution Paper/Project Proposal due at 11:59 pm (turn in on Canvas)

Week 13: November 20-24

No class: Thanksgiving break

Week 14: Problems and solutions, November 27-December 1

M: Rush, *Rising*, pp. 185-210

W: Rush, *Rising*, pp. 213-264

F: Elizabeth Kolbert, "The Sixth Extinction" and "Welcome to the Anthropocene"

Week 15: Problems and solutions, December 4-8

M: Doug Tallamy, "A New Approach to Conservation," "The Importance of Connectivity," "Shrinking the Lawn," and "Homegrown National Park"

W: Naomi Klein, "Blockadia: the New Climate Warriors"

W: Selections from *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement* ("Taking a Stand at Standing Rock," "In the Beginning," "This Fight Has Become My Life," "They Took Our Footprint Out of the Ground")

Week 16: December 11

M: Last day of class

Final Paper/Project due at 11:59 pm on Friday, December 15 (turn in on Canvas or via email)