

**ÇANKAYA UNIVERSITY**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**2024-2025 Academic Year – Spring Semester**

**ELL 434 Literature and Environment (303-04)**

**Course Syllabus (Elective)**

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| **Instructor:** Özge Üstündağ Güvenç, PhD.  **Course Hours:**  Monday 10.20-13.10 **Class:** RA 06  **Office Hours:** Tuesday 10.00-12.00  **Office:** R 107 **Phone**: 2331416  **e-mail:** [ozgeguvenc@cankaya.edu.tr](mailto:ozgeguvenc@cankaya.edu.tr) |

**Course Description**

The course explores a range of environmental issues, such as the place of the human within nature, ecofeminism and gender, engagements with European philosophy and the biological sciences, critical animal studies, posthumanism and climate change. It may look at the development of ecocriticism from its origins in studies of European pastoral literature up to contemporary literary academic approaches; or focus on current concerns such as environmental damage raised by pollution, wildlife extinction and urban development. Course material may include analytical texts by British, European, American thinkers, works reflecting environmental issues by such writers as Wordsworth, Dickens, Shelley, Carson, DeLillo, Ghosh, Atwood, Martel, Mootoo, and related films, such as Nuridsany and Pérennou’s *Microcosmos* or Werner Herzog’s *Grizzly Man*.

**Requirements**

As the course aims to build an awareness of the importance of environmental issues in literature, course activities will be based on analyzing literary texts, movies and theoretical works. Therefore, for each class, students are expected to:

1. Bring pen, pencil and paper to be able to take notes

2. Actively involve in class activities and discussions

3. Turn off their mobile phones during class

4. Attend all classes. (The students who do not attend the classes regularly may fail the course with NA grade and have to repeat the course. The absenteeism limit for this course is 9 hours.)

**Course Objectives**

To deepen the student’s consciousness and sense of responsibility for our planet and nature .

To discuss literary consequences of environmental damage raised by pollution, wildlife extinction and urban development

**\*\* Course materials will be provided by the instructor via web online system**

**Evaluation**

Please be warned that **plagiarism** of even one sentence can result in a lowering of your grade or a direct F on your assignment. Discrepancy between examples of the student’s writing, suspected plagiarism or unethical use of AI technology will be evaluated by the professor and the department academic board, and measures will be taken accordingly. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated.

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| **ASSESSMENT TOOL** | **QUANTITY** | **PERCENTAGE** |
| Midterm | 1 | 25 % |
| Final | 1 | 25 % |
| Presentation | 1 | 10 % |
| Project  (Photograph + Manifesto) | 1 | 15 % |
| Pair Work Reflection | 4 | 20 % |
| Reading/Watching Materials and Participating class discussions | 14 | 5 % |

**Discussion Questions**

1. What do you understand by the terms “nature” and “culture” and how are they interrelated?

2. What is involved in studying “literature” and “environment”?

3. How do our social, cultural and economic background shape our attitudes and actions towards nature?

4. What is the relationship between humans and the physical world and the nonhuman realm?

5. Why has nature had such a powerful impact on poets and novelists over the past 150 years?

6. Are you familiar with recent utopian and dystopian projections of the future?

7. How effective is this dystopian vision as a critique of current tendencies?

8. How did “nature” figure in the literature/film/TV that you experienced as a child and an adult? How important is your experience of nature in shaping attitudes towards the nonhuman world?

9. Where is the environment placed in the power hierarchy?

**Questions to consider when you read a text**

1. How are race, class and gender illustrated in the text, and how are they related to nature or the land? What parallels can be drawn between the sufferings and oppression of groups of people (women, Minorities, immigrants etc.) and treatment of the land?

2. How are the characters in a text portrayed in relationship with nature?

3. How are animals represented in the text and what is their relationship to humans?

4. How does the text demonstrate how the microcosm (humanity) affects the macrocosm (nature)?

5. How is nature empowered or oppressed in this text?

6. Is the text challenging its readers to environmental action and promoting changes in how we treat nature? Other classes? Races? Genders?

**Weekly Schedule**

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| **Weeks** | **Content** |
| **Week 1**  17-21 Feb. | **Introduction to the course** (Syllabus)  Literature and Environment  Environmental Humanities  **Introduction to Ecocriticism**  “Earth Song” Michael Jackson |
| **Week 2**  24-28 Feb. | *Into The Wild* (2007) |
| **Week 3**  3-7 March | **Introduction to Postcolonial Ecocriticism**  *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012)  *The True Cost* (2015)  **Pair Work Reflection 1** |
| **Week 4**  10-14 March | **Introduction to Material Ecocriticism/ Storied Matter**  “A Fable for Tomorrow” by Rachel Carson |
| **Week 5**  17-21 March | *E-Wasteland* (2012)  *An Object at Rest* (2015)  *Plastic Bag* (2010)  **Pair Work Reflection 2** |
| **Week 6**  24-28 March | **Introduction to Posthumanism**  *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1996) |
| **Week 7**  31 March-4 Apr. | **Ramadan Holiday** |
| **Week 8**  7-11 April | **MIDTERM EXAM** |
| **Week 9**  14-18 April | *End of an Era* (2012)  *The Lost Thing* (2010)  **Pair Work Reflection 3** |
| **Week 10**  21-25 April | **Introduction to Animal Studies**  “A Mother’s Tale” by James Agee |
| **Week 11**  28 Apr.-2 May | *White God* (2014)  **Pair Work Reflection 4** |
| **Week 12**  5-9 May | **Group 1- Presentations (10 min.)** (Assigned Topics) |
| **Week 13**  12-16 May | **Group 2 - Presentations (10 min.)** (Assigned Topics) |
| **Week 14**  19-23 May | **19 May**  **The Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day** |
| |  | | --- | | **Weeks 15-16**  26 May – 15 June | |  | | **FINAL EXAM** |

**I wish us all a great semester.**