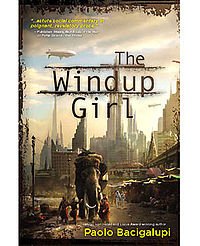
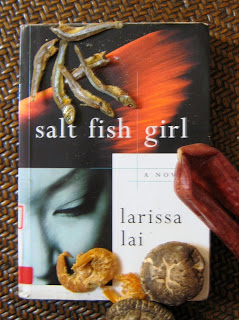
[Nov. 12. This is a draft. The syllabus will be completed once I receive the desk copies of the books!]

**English 6370.001 Environmental Literature:**

**Science Fiction and Posthumanism in the Anthropocene**

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**Dr. Stacy Alaimo Professor of English**

<http://www.uta.edu/english/alaimo/> **Distinguished Teaching Professor**

**Office number:** Carlisle 411

**Office telephone number:** None. The English Department: 817 272 2692.

**Office hours, Thursdays 5-6 and by appointment.**

**Email Address:** [alaimo@uta.edu](mailto:alaimo@uta.edu) Email is best.

**Course Description:** The course begins with a strange, forgotten, German SF novel from 1913, but most of the course will focus on recent science fiction that embodies themes, theories, and problematics pertaining to environmentalism, sustainability, posthumanism, and the anthropocene. The readings will challenge us to rethink the category of “nature” within a world where everything has been transformed by human practices. The readings will also challenge us to reconceptualize “human” life within biopolitical, posthumanist, new materialist, and other frames. What happens to human identity, desire, ethics, and politics when the “human” merges with nonhuman animals, technologies, aliens, and the material world? And what sorts of methodologies should the humanities develop to become more relevant to our posthumanist anthropocene era?

**Required Texts:** *Lesabéndio: An Asteroid Novel***,** Paul Scheerbart;

Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*, Kiji Johnson, *At the Mouth of the River of Bees;* Atwood, *Oryx and Crake;* Joan Slonczewski, *A Door into Ocean*; Peter Watts, *Starfish;* Larissa Lai, *Salt Fish Girl;* Geoff Ryman, *The Child Garden: A Low Comedy;* Cary Wolfe, *Beyond the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame.*

We will also readessays by Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, Stefan Helmreich, Bruno Latour, Eva Hayward, Claire Colebrook, Stacy Alaimo, Sheryl Vint, Robert Proctor, and Paul Alberts, which will be available on our Blackboard site, and other essays in Claire Colebrook’s edited “Living Book,” *Extinction* [*http://www.livingbooksaboutlife.org/books/Extinction#The\_Anthropocene*](http://www.livingbooksaboutlife.org/books/Extinction#The_Anthropocene). We will also discuss *Avatar* and at least one other film the students will select.

# Course Requirements

Participation, two presentations: 15%

Weekly papers: 25%

Seminar paper (including presentation of seminar paper): 60%

You must complete all the required work in order to obtain credit for the course.

Eight short response papers (3 double-spaced typed, stapled pages) will be required. These will be due at the beginning of class each week (starting with week two) and will be handed in again, gathered together in a folder, at the final class period. These papers are not meant to be fully fleshed out arguments or analyses. Instead, these papers should analyze and interpret the texts for the week, compare them to other readings in the course, remark upon the most significant ideas, evaluate the merits and limitations of particular arguments and theoretical frameworks, and raise significant and provocative questions. The response papers will receive immediate comments but not grades; these papers will be graded in a portfolio manner, along with your presentation and participation, at the end of the course. (If the papers are C, D, or F papers, they will receive those grades, however.)

Two 15-minute presentations, which you will sign up for, will also be required. (A written version of your presentation can be handed in as that week’s required paper.)

One 20-page seminar paper and an oral presentation of an abstract of that paper will be due the final class period. These papers should demonstrate an understanding and engagement with theoretical issues we have discussed in the course. The paper must include a one-page abstract.

Ph.D. students will also be required to attach a final page explaining how they would revise the paper for publication and listing five journals to which they would submit the paper. They should also list conferences and panel topics that would be a good fit for this paper. (Ideally, the paper will be presented at a conference and then be revised for publication.)

Mechanics: All papers must be “typed,” stapled, and have a significant title. Please do NOT use plastic folders or paperclips for your paper—a staple is sufficient. All papers are due at the very beginning of the class. I never accept faxed papers or emailed papers. Be sure to keep an extra copy of your paper. Please Note: plagiarism is a serious offense and will be punished to the full extent.

## Participation/Attendance

Your active, informed participation is crucial to the success of the course. Carefully prepare for each class period by doing the reading in a rigorous and inquisitive manner. Every day that you come to class you should have something valuable to say. I will grade on actual participation, rather than on mere attendance. However, if you miss class two or more times, I will lower your course grade and if you miss more than that you will fail the course.

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**Official UTA Policies:**

**Americans With Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels.  Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.   Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364.

**Academic Integrity:** It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.   
"Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2) [NOTE FROM DR. ALAIMO: PLAGIARISM IS INEXCUSABLE AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL; I WILL CERTAINLY PUNISH PLAGIARISM TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.]

**Support Services Available:** The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

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**Minimal standards for classroom etiquette:**

1. **TURN OFF** all pagers, beepers, cell phones and other electronic devices! You may not have these devices turned on while in class. You may not text message or read email or engage in any other electronic activities during class. The only exception is if you choose to access the course readings electronically.

2. Arrive to class **ON TIME**. It is distracting to both the professor and the students to have someone come in late. If you come in late, you will be marked absent.

3. Arrive to class **PREPARED** to discuss the texts and materials in an informed manner. You are expected to make a substantial contribution to every class..

4. Treat your classmates with **RESPECT**. Learn to disagree without being disagreeable. We will often discuss controversial, volatile topics, so everyone needs to learn how to disagree with someone’s views, beliefs, or perspectives while maintaining a sense of civility.

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I would strongly recommend that all graduate students read Calvin Thomas’ “Moments of Productive Bafflement, or Defamiliarizing Graduate Studies in English” in *Pedagogy*, 5. 1 (2005).

RESOURCES:

Center for Postnatural History: <http://www.postnatural.org/>

**SYLLABUS**

[IN PROGRESS. A COMPLETED SYLLABUS WILL BE POSTED LATER.]

Week One. January 16th.

*Lesabéndio: An Asteroid Novel***,** Paul Scheerbart

<http://50watts.com/Illustrations-for-An-Asteroid-Novel>

**Posthumanist Theory**

Week Two. January 23rd.

Cary Wolfe, *Beyond the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*;

Alaimo, “Sustainable This, Sustainable That: New Materialisms, Posthumanism and Unknown Futures,” “Genetics, Material Agency, and the Evolution of Posthuman Environmental Ethics in Science Fiction;” and “Thinking as the Stuff of the World.”

**Theories of the Anthropocene**

Week Three. January 30th.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses;” Paul Alberts, “Responsibility Towards Life in the Early Anthropocene;” Paul Robbins and Sarah A. Moore, “Ecological Anxiety Disorder: Diagnosing the Politics of the Anthropocene;” Jamie Lorimer, “Multinatural Geographies for the Anthropocene;” Proctor, “Saving Nature in the Anthropocene;” Kate Rigby, “Writing in the Anthropocene: Idle Chatter or Ecoprophetic Witness?”; Watch: Cary Wolfe and Claire Colebrook: “Is the Anthropocene a Doomsday Device”? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLTCzth8H1M>. Selected essays from Claire Colebrook’s edited “Living Book,” *Extinction* [*http://www.livingbooksaboutlife.org/books/Extinction#The\_Anthropocene*](http://www.livingbooksaboutlife.org/books/Extinction#The_Anthropocene).

Week Four. February 6

Week Five. February 13

Week Six. February 20

Week Seven. February 27

Week Eight. March 6

Week Nine. March 13: No class: Spring Break

Week Ten. March 20

Week Eleven. March 27

Week Twelve. April 3

Week Thirteen. April 10

Week Fourteen. April 17

Week Fifteen. April 24. Discuss *Avatar* and one other film that the class selects.

Week Sixteen. May 1: Conclusions.

Please do course evaluations on your own since they are now electronic. You should receive an email from UTA prompting you to do evaluations.

**Presentation of Seminar Papers**

**Seminar Papers Due.** Please hand in a copy of your paper, stapled, in an envelope with all your graded weekly papers. [Remember to include all commented-upon weekly papers as well, in a folder.]

PRESENTATION SIGN UP SHEET

*BE SURE TO MARK DOWN, ON YOUR OWN SYLLABUS, WHAT YOU HAVE SIGNED UP FOR*

Please sign up for two different 15-minute presentations, on two different weeks. Please stay within the 15-minute limit when presenting.