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ENGLISH 4345.001

Topics in Critical Theory: Animals, Environment, Justice



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Distinguished Teaching Professor

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<https://mentis.uta.edu/explore/profile/stacy-alaimo>

Fall 2018

T/R 11:00-12:20, TH 01

English Dept. phone: 817 272 2692

Description of Course Content:

This class introduces students to new and rapidly expanding fields of theory in the humanities: animal studies, environmental theory, and environmental justice theory. These fields question fundamental conceptual maps of Western culture such as the binary between animals and humans, nature and culture. They also insist that environmental concerns should be at the forefront of English studies, the arts, humanities, and social sciences. We will discuss the ethical and political dimensions of the human treatment of animals and the environment as well as the ways in which the environment is also a social justice concern for different groups of human beings. Since this is a theory class the emphasis will be on understanding, analyzing, comparing, extending, critiquing, and applying the texts. We will practice *thinking with* these arguments, concepts, and theories.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Students should demonstrate an understanding of the texts, theories, arguments, concepts, and questions in the course. This understanding should be an active, analytical, and creative practice of thinking with the texts.
- 2) Students should be able to formulate original, illuminating comparisons, analyses, applications, and interpretations of the texts, in class discussions, papers, and exams.
- 3) Students should be able to express their ideas in clear, logical, organized, concise, and persuasive ways, in both written and oral forms.
- 4) Students should be able to conduct research and incorporate that research into a coherent seminar paper that develops and supports an original thesis.
- 5) Students should make valuable and consistent contributions to class discussions and give clear, substantial presentations.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials. [Please note that you will need paper copies of the books for class discussions and for the three exams.]

- Joni Adamson, William Gleason, *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, NYU Press, ISBN-13: 978-0814760833
- *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings*, Berg publishers/Bloomsbury ISBN-13: 978-1845204709
- Various essays and articles that you will need to print out; consider printing one of the expenses of the class.
- Access to the internet, a printer, and a stapler.

Descriptions of major assignments and examinations:

First Exam: 15%

Second Exam: 15%

Third Exam: 20%

Assignment on WordPress: 15%

Research Paper: 20%

Participation (including group presentation): 15%

[Students must complete all assignments and requirements in order to pass the class]

Exams: There will be three exams, and no final. The exams will contain some short-answer and identification questions, but most of the points will be from essay questions. Bring greenbooks and pens for the exam.

Writing Assignments and Group Presentation. The first “paper” will be published on WordPress and you will be required to comment on other people’s papers on that site. The second paper will be a research paper that leads into small group presentations at the end of the semester. All papers must be “typed,” stapled, and have a significant title. Please do NOT use plastic folders for your paper—a staple is sufficient. Please take advantage of the Writing Center! (See below.)

Please Note: plagiarism is a serious offense and will be punished to the full extent, according to university procedures. You must always give people credit for their intellectual property by citing them properly—this includes ideas and language. The paper must be submitted electronically through Blackboard’s SafeAssign and you will be required to do an online plagiarism tutorial (see paper assignment handout).

Grading: The final grade will be calculated by adding up all the grades, in accordance with their weight (percentages), using a scale from A+ to F, then translating that into UTA grades of ABCDF.

**COMING TO CLASS:
ON TIME, PREPARED, WITH THE BOOK OR TEXT, AND PARTICIPATING**

Punctuality: Please come to class ON TIME. It disrupts the professor and the other students when students come in late.

Preparing for and attending class: Your active, informed participation is crucial for your own ability to learn and for the success of the course. The class is primarily a discussion class in which the students themselves create much of the content and determine the quality of the class. Carefully prepare for each class period by doing the reading in a rigorous and inquisitive manner. Keeping your own journal or notebook would be very helpful. Every day that you come to class you should have something valuable to say. You will learn more, enjoy the course more, and perform better on your written work if you actively participate in class. Attending class means that your mind is actually in class with us. You need to be mentally --not just physically--here. So if you are sleeping, checking email, looking at websites, texting, or otherwise not paying attention, etc., you may be asked to leave. Those behaviors not only signify that you are not really in class with us but they also detract from the ability of the other students to learn. Also, you need to bring the appropriate texts and materials to class. This is crucial for English classes. **I will not grade on attendance per se, but attendance will affect the participation grade. And if you miss class you will miss the lectures and discussions that happen that day. [Attendance is absolutely required, however, for each of the three exams, for the library session on Wordpress, for the planning session on the small group presentations, and for the two days of small group presentations.]**

Participation. The participation grade will be determined by a holistic assessment of the quality and quantity of each student's contributions to the class discussions, including the quality of their presentations. Participation grades may range from A+ to F. Please note that participation WILL most likely affect your final grade! Please see the boxes below for a list of some of the things that affect your participation grade.

THINGS THAT RAISE PARTICIPATION GRADE

- Come to class on a regular basis, missing very few, if any, classes.
- Come to class on time, with the book or other required reading for that class period.
- Come having read the texts carefully, bringing ideas, interpretations and questions.
- Participate in class discussions, small group work, etc. in a knowledgeable, engaged, and productive way. Listen to other students.
- Be civil and thoughtful and respectful.
- Make the most of your education!

THINGS THAT LOWER PARTICIPATION GRADE

- Missing classes. Coming in late.
- Failing to bring the book or other to class/ not having read the book or other texts.
- Not really being present in class, because one is sleeping or electronic devices.
- Not participating while in class.
- "Participating" with comments that are irrelevant, unproductive, uninformed by the reading or lectures, rude, or disrespectful.
- Students who are not prepared for class, who are sleeping, who are not respectful or who are on electronic devices will be asked to leave in order that the educational experience of other students will not suffer.

RESOURCES

Communication with the Professor: Please be sure to check your UTA email and Blackboard for announcements. The best way to contact me is through email: alaimo@uta.edu. I do not have a phone in my office but you can leave a message with the English Department if you'd like. But email is best. Please do not contact me through Facebook regarding anything having to do with this class. I do not accept emailed or faxed papers. If you would like to discuss the class you are welcome to meet with me during my office hours or schedule an appointment.

Office Hours: Feel free to talk with me during my office hours: T/TH: 2:00-3:00 and by appointment. Note: although I will usually be in my office during those times I may have to attend meetings, graduate student defenses, etc. Please email me to confirm that I will be in my office or to arrange an appointment at another time. My office is 411 Carlisle.

The Writing Center (411LIBR): The Writing Center offers **FREE** tutoring in 15-, 30-, 45-, and 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Register and make appointments online at <https://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services

Librarians. UTA Librarians offer help with research. Diane Shepelwich is the librarian for both English and Environmental and Sustainability Studies: dianec@uta.edu. Gretchen Trkay is the librarian who will teach the class to use Wordpress: gtrkay@uta.edu

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OFFICIAL INFORMATION THAT UTA REQUIRES FACULTY TO INCLUDE ON ALL SYLLABI FOLLOWS, VERBATIM, WITHOUT QUOTATION MARKS [With comments by Dr. Alaimo in red]:

Official Information about Attendance at UTA: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. [See Dr. Alaimo's actual policy above.] However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.**

Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/ao/fao/>).

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: **The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** <http://www.uta.edu/disability/> or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives. [CAPS is located at 303 Ransom Hall—please learn where that is in case you or someone you know needs emergency assistance. More emergency numbers are here: <https://www.uta.edu/caps/emergency/index.php>.]

Non-Discrimination Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Michelle Willbanks, Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-4585 or titleix@uta.edu*

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UTA courses are expected to adhere to the UTA Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>. Faculty are encouraged to discuss plagiarism and share the following library tutorials <http://libguides.uta.edu/copyright/plagiarism> and <http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/>

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding

financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/> [SINCE OPEN CARRYING OF HANDGUNS IS NOT ALLOWED, I WILL CALL THE POLICE IF I SEE A GUN, DR. ALAIMO]

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. For the nearest exit in Trimble SEE http://www.uta.edu/campus-ops/ehs/fire/Evac_Maps_All/Evac_TH/Evac_TH_B01.pdf
When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities. [Please notify me if you have a disability that would require assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation. Dr. Alaimo]

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](#), [major-based learning centers](#), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](#), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](#). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/studentssuccess/success-programs/programs/resource-hotline.php>

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **FREE tutoring** to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. Students can drop in, or check the schedule of available peer tutors at www.uta.edu/IDEAS, or call (817) 272-6593.

Course Schedule

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. –Dr. Alaimo

- 1), 2) etc. = These numbers correspond to the chapter numbers in *The Animals Reader*. The number that follows the author(s) name is the page number. (Please note that most of these essays are actually excerpts.)
- [KW] = Essay can be found in *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, no page numbers given because the essays are organized alphabetically in the *Keywords* book
- [PDF]= PDF of the essay available on the class Blackboard site

Introductions

Week One. August 23

Thursday: What is nature? What are animals? How have animals and nature been portrayed, imagined, interpreted and theorized in Western traditions? What relations are there if any, between social justice and nature? How can we understand animals and nature in these two poems? Wallace Stevens, “13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,” and Craig Santos Perez, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Glacier.”

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/thirteen-ways-looking-blackbird>

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/thirteen-ways-looking-glacier-after-wallace-stevens>

Part I: Animals

Week Two. August 28 and 30

Tuesday:

1) Aristotle, p. 3, *The History of Animals*; 8) Michel de Montaigne, p. 57, *An Apology for Raymond Sebond*; 9) René Descartes, p. 59, *From the Letters of 1646 and 1649*; 2) Jeremy Bentham, p.8, *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (all essays can be found in *The Animals Reader*).

Thursday:

17) Plutarch, p. 154, *The Eating of Flesh* 3) Marjorie Spiegel, *In Defense of Slavery*; 6) Martha Nussbaum, p. 30, *The Moral Status of Animals*.

Week Three. September 4 & 6.

Tuesday:

31) Coral Lansbury, p. 307, *The Brown Dog Riots of 1907*; 23) Evans, Kalitch and Forsyth, p. 209, *Dogfighting: Symbolic Expression and Validation of Masculinity*

Thursday:

11) Marc Bekoff, 72, Wild Justice and Fair Play; 12) Masson and McCarthy, 91 Grief, Sadness and the Bones of Elephants; van Schaik, et. al, p. 104, "Orangutan Cultures and the Evolution of Material Culture."

Week Four. September 11 & 13

Tuesday:

26) John Berger, 251, Why Look at Animals; Derrida, "The Animal that Therefore I am" [PDF].

Thursday: No class.

Week Five. September 18 & 20

Tuesday: 16) Yi Fu Tuan, p. 141, Animal Pets: Cruelty and Affection; 35) Donna Haraway, p. 362, Cyborgs to Companion Species.

Thursday: **First Exam**

Part II: Environments

Week Six. September 25 & 27

Tuesday:

Noel Castree, "Nature" [KW]; Seidler and Bawa, "Ecology" [KW]; Joan Martinez-Alier, "Environmentalism(s)" [KW]; Hava Tirosh-Samuels, "Ethics" [KW].

Thursday:

Sarah Whatmore, "Hybrid Geographies: Rethinking the 'Human'" [AR]; Greg Garrard, "Ecocriticism" [KW]; Stacy Alaimo, "Material Memoirs," chapter from *Bodily Natures* [PDF];

Week Seven. October 2 & 4

Tuesday:

Andrew Ross, "Climate Change" [KW], "Anthropocene," Zalasiewicz, Williams, Waters [KW]; Rob Nixon, "The Anthropocene: The Promise and Pitfalls of an Epochal Idea" [PDF]; Donna J. Haraway, "Anthropocene, etc: Making Kin" [PDF]; Watch "Pumzi" by [Wanuri Kihiu](#) (20 min, 2009) here: <http://girlsinfilm.net/post/afrofuturism-imagines-water-wars>

Thursday:

Quentin Wheeler, "Species," [KW]; Andy Dobson, "Biodiversity," [KW]; Heise, "Extinction" [KW]; Maja and Reuben Fowkes, "Rewilding" [PDF]; Heise, "Multispecies Fictions for the Anthropocene" [PDF]. Recommended film: *Racing Extinction* (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgiQldsySrM>

Week Eight. October 9 & 11

Tuesday:

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Drown" [PDF]; Rebecca R. Scott, "Love" [PDF]; Tess Shewry, "Hope" [PDF]; Rosi Braidotti, "Ethics of Joy" [PDF]

Thursday:

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance" [PDF]; Nelson, Melissa, "Getting Dirty: The Eco-Eroticism of Women in Indigenous Oral Literature" [PDF]

Week Nine. October 16 & 18

Tuesday: **Second Exam**

Thursday: Meet in UTA Central Library, 315 A, with Gretchen Trkay for session to learn WordPress for first essay assignment.

Part III. Environmental Justice and Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Week Ten. October 23 & 25

Tuesday:

Principles of Environmental Justice [PDF]; Principles of Climate Justice [PDF]Giovanna Di Chiro, "Environmental Justice" [KW]; Julian Agyman, "Sustainability" [KW]
Kyle Powys Whyte, "Indigeneity" [KW]; Watch before class: "Four Indigenous Communities One Goal: Environmental Justice,"

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/video/shorts/four-indigenous-communities-one-goal-environmental-justice/> and Van Jones, on plastic and environmental justice:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WMgNIU_vxQ&vl=en

Thursday:

WordPress Assignment Due. Comments due by Monday.

BEFORE CLASS, listen to Woody Guthrie, "This Land is Your Land":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxiMrvDbq3s>

Read before class, Carolyn Finney, "This Land is Your Land" [PDF].

IN CLASS: Listen, watch, and discuss in class: Joshua Johnson's 1A: Get Out: Nurturing a Bond Between Black People and Nature" <https://the1a.org/shows/2017-12-18/get-out->

[nurturing-a-bond-between-black-people-and-nature](#) and the videos “Bird Watching While Black” and Black Folk Don’t: Camp.”

Week Eleven. October 30 & November 1

Tuesday:

Cherríe Moraga, “Heroes and Saints,” Priscilla Solis Ybarra, Chapter 5, “Ecology and Chicano/a Cultural Nationalism,” and conclusion from *Writing the Good Life: Mexican American Literature and the Environment*

Thursday:

Case study: essays on Hurricane Katrina, available online, by Julie Sze, Neill Smith, and Scott Frickel: <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Frickel/>
<http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Smith/>
<http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Sze/>

Week Twelve. November 6 & 8

Tuesday:

Kyle Powys Whyte, “Food, Sovereignty, Justice, and Indigenous Peoples,” [PDF]; Enrique Salmón, “Kincentric Ecology: Perceptions of the Human-Nature Relationship;” [PDF]; Robin Wall Kimmerer, “Weaving Traditional Ecological Knowledge into Biological Education: A Call to Action” [PDF].

Thursday:

Rob Nixon, chapter from *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* [PDF]; Julietta Singh, chapter from *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* [PDF]

Week Thirteen. November 13 & 15

Tuesday:

Greta Gaard “Ecofeminism” [KW] and Carol Adams, “The Sexual Politics of Meat’ [AR]; Aph Ko & Syl Ko, chapter from *Aphro-ism* [PDF] (See also, A. Breeze Harper, Sistah Vegan; Laura Wright, *The Vegan Studies Project* and more of Carol Adams’ work.)

Thursday:

Catriona Sandilands, “Queer Ecology” [KW], Wendy Harcourt, “Place,” [KW]; Sunuara Taylor, chapter from *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* [PDF] (See also, Eli Clare’s books and the edited collection, *Disability Studies and the Environmental Humanities: Toward an Eco-Crip Theory.*”

Conclusions: Third Exam, Research Papers and Group Presentations

Week Fourteen. November 20 & 22

Tuesday: **Third Exam**

Thursday: Thanksgiving break!

Week Fifteen. November 27 & 29

Tuesday: Research papers due at beginning of class.

Plan small group presentations.

Thursday: Group Presentation

Week Sixteen. December 4

Tuesday: Group Presentations

Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381