

EN4267 Literature and Ecology

Instructors

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Description

Literary Studies has prided itself on constantly being in flux in the postmodern era as a sign that it responds to ideological and social changes. The most pressing contemporary issue that affects all of humanity is the global environmental crisis. In keeping with its revisionist energies, one important field of literary study that has opened up over the past two decades is ecocriticism, which explores the connections between literature and the environment. Ecocriticism critiques anthropocentrism and offers a radical reevaluation of human relationship with the non-human 'other'.

Learning Outcomes

As a 4000-level module, the course introduces a rapidly-developing field in literary studies and fills an important curricular gap. It introduces ecocritical theory and its various affiliations, such as

Postcolonial ecologies

Ecofeminism

Littoral literatures

Animal studies

and others, through the study of literary texts ranging from the 'canonical' to the peripheral, precisely to highlight and challenge such binaries that are a legacy of humanism. The critical divide that pivots around the human versus the non-human will be examined in order to arrive at a conceptual understanding of ecocriticism as ideology, philosophy and ethical practice.

As a module that aims to impart and also sharpen conceptual resources, it will familiarize students with foundational theoretical works in the field of ecocriticism. The learning outcomes will be especially useful to Honours level, and, potentially, graduate students, who interested in pursuing environmental humanities or any subset of it ranging from Ecocriticism and World Literature; Zoomorphism; and the import of these on Literary Studies.

Syllabus

The course will introduce students to the dynamic field of ecocriticism with its various sub-fields. The topics that will be covered during the semester are listed below in order:

Week 1 – General Introduction to Ecocriticism

Week 2 – Deep & Shallow Ecologies

Week 3 – First & Second Wave Ecocriticism

Week 4 – Tropes in Ecocriticism

Week 5 – Postcolonial Ecocriticism

Week 6 – Ecofeminism [Mid-Term Assessment]

Term Break

Week 7 – Ecojustice

Week 8 – Animal Studies/Zoomorphism

Week 9 – Consultation for Term Paper.

Week 10 – Plants and Trees - Arboreal Representations/Submission of Term Paper Proposals

Week 11 – Posthumanism/Material Ecocriticism.

Week 12 – Ecocriticism in Asia

Week 13 – Concluding Session/Submission of Term Paper

PRIMARY TEXTS:

1. SHORT STORIES:

- a. Shooting an Elephant – George Orwell
- b. Sunrise on the Veld – Doris Lessing
- c. Lake – Lily Yulianti Farid
- d. Salt – Mahasweta Devi
- e. Diary of an Interesting Year - Helen Simpson

2. NOVELS:

- f. The Lives of Animals – JM Coetzee
- g. The Word for World is Forest - Ursula K Le Guin

3. FILM:

- h. The Red Turtle - Animated Film