

8:100 Literature and Culture of Seventeenth-Century England
Nature, Landscape, and Literary Green Worlds in Early Modern England
Spring 2009
Prof. Huston Diehl

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine seventeenth-century representations of the natural world and consider how men and women in the early modern era understood their relationship to and place in nature. Engaging a wide variety of texts, including pastoral literature, country-house poems, Shakespearean plays, discovery narratives, landscape paintings, and advice manuals for fisherman, hunters, farmers, and gardeners, students will be encouraged to explore the political, theological, social, and scientific beliefs that inform Renaissance ideas of nature and to compare them to their own, contemporary American beliefs. How did writers in a pre-industrial age view the relation between the city and the countryside, the vast wildernesses of the new world, rural labor, and the stewardship of the land? How does their writing reflect upon such early modern environmental crises as the deforestation of the land, fen drainage projects, urban smog, the plundering of the new world, and the enclosure acts, which removed grazing land from public use? What myths shaped and informed their view of the natural world? How did they understand the relation between nature and art, including their own poetic visions of nature? How did they imagine the interactions between the social and natural worlds and the boundaries between human and animal? What kind of order did they perceive in nature and what kind of order did they advocate imposing on nature? And to what extent do these pre-Romantic writers use nature to reflect on their own interior lives? In addition, the class will discuss whether the questions being raised today by ecocritics can be successfully applied to the literature of the early modern period.

TEXTS

The Sixteenth Century and Early Seventeenth Century. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. Vol. 1B of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Norton.

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. Ed. Juliet Dusinberre. Arden Shakespeare. 3rd Series.

Shakespeare, William. *The Winter's Tale*. Ed. Stephen Orgel. Oxford University Press.

Selected essays, available on line or in course pack.

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Calendar:

January 20 Introduction: Nature and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England

The Golden World: Pastoralism

22 Marlowe, "A Passionate Shepherd to his Love," p. 989
Raleigh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd," p. 879

27-29 Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act 1-3
Introduction in Arden edition, pp. 46-58; 90-113

February 3-5 Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act 4-5
Watson essay, *Shakespeare Survey* 56 (2003): 79-92 (online)

The New World: Discovery Narratives

10 Raleigh, "The Discovery of the Empire of Guiana," pp. 885-887
Amadas and Barlowe, "Voyage to Virginia," 897-901
Harriot, "Report on Virginia," pp. 901-906
Bacon, "Of the Plantation," pp. 1536-38
Sokol essay on Harriot, *Annals of Science* 51 (1994): 1-16 (online)

11 Drayton, "Ode: To the Virginia Voyage," p. 968
Marvell, "Bermudas," p. 1686

The Fallen World: Religious Views of nature

17 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 4, pp. 1874-95

19 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 8, pp. 1948-1961

24-26 Marvell, "The Garden," pp. 1698-1700
Vaughan, "Waterfall," p. 1628; "The Retreat," p. 1619
"The Cock Crowing," pp. 1625-26
Traherne, "Wonder," 1756,
"On Leaping Over the Moon," p.1757-59

The unaccommodated world: Nature And Custom

- March 3-5 Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Acts 1-3, pp. 1106-62
 Cantor essay, course pack
- 10-12 Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Acts 4-5, pp. 1163-95
- 14-22 SPRING BREAK

The Green World: Rural England

- 24-26 The Country-house Poem: Jonson, "To Penshurst," pp. 1399-1401
- 31-2 Folk Rituals: Herrick, "Corinna's Going A-Maying," pp. 648-49
 "The Hock-Cart" pp. 1650-51
 "The Argument of His Book," pp. 1644-45
- April 7 Sport: Cavendish, "The Hunting of the Hare," pp. 1760-62
 Marvell, "The Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her
 Fawn," pp. 1688-91
- 9 Class meeting to plan final projects
- 14-16 Labor: Marvell, the Mower Poems, pp. 1694-98
 Watson essay, course pack

The Marvelous World: Art and Nature

- 21-23 Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, Acts 1-3
 Introduction in Oxford edition, pp. 1-36
- 28-30 Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, Acts 4-5
 Introduction in Oxford edition, pp. 37-79
- May 5-7 Presentation of Final Projects

Assignments Due:

- Commonplace Book:** March 3
Research Assignment: April 2
Interpretive Essay: April 23
Final Project: May 5 or May 7

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ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Commonplace Book (20%)

During the first part of the semester, you will adopt the seventeenth-century practice of keeping a commonplace book in response to the assigned readings (see accompanying instructions). You will be expected to produce an entry before each class period (January 27-February 26) and may be called on to share your responses during class discussions. All entries will be collected in your commonplace book and turned into me on March 3. Due: March 3.

2. Research Contribution to Class Anthology (25%)

Each of you will choose a different topic to research for a digital class anthology we will put together on nature in the seventeenth century. As part of your contribution, you will compile a bibliography of relevant primary and secondary sources, write a brief introductory summary of your discoveries, and feature and discuss a selection from one primary source that illustrates your topic. Detailed instructions will follow. Due: April 2.

3. Critical Essay (25%)

Drawing on the research material from our class anthology, you will write a critical paper of approximately 8 pages that focuses on one of the assigned texts. Detailed instructions will follow. Due: April 23.

4. Class Participation (20%)

You will be expected to attend class on a regular basis and to actively engage in class discussions. Please use the class period to develop your understanding of the readings: ask questions, examine different interpretations, argue with your classmates and with me, pursue a particular line of inquiry, share your insights and discoveries, and listen to the way others frame questions and analyze the plays. Your grade will be based on the quality and consistency of your contributions to our discussions as well as the level of your preparation for class.

5. Final Presentation (10%)

Working in groups, you will give a final presentation in which you reflect upon the issues and texts we have been examining in this course. You may be as imaginative, playful, and adventurous as you wish in order to engage your classmates in this retrospective activity. For example, you could stage a debate about the applicability of ecocriticism to early modern literature; perform a relevant scene from one of the Shakespeare plays we have read; put together and narrate a slide show of seventeenth-century landscape art; re-enact May Day or other folk rituals; produce a short video about the legacy of early modern concepts of nature; or present a poetry reading, juxtaposing seventeenth-century and contemporary poetry about nature, among many other possibilities. Scheduled for class on either May 5th or May 7th.

Please Note: More than 3 unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade.

General Information

Address and Phone:

Prof. Huston Diehl
362 EPB
Phone: 335-0442
Email: huston-diehl@uiowa.edu

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-3:30
By appointment

College Policies and Procedures

Students With Disabilities

Instructors will make reasonable accommodations for students with physical, mental or learning disabilities. Students with disabilities that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should visit their instructor during his or her office hours so that appropriate arrangements may be made. It is the student's responsibility to contact Student Disability Services, 3100 Burge Hall (335-1462), and obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request form (SAAR). This form specifies what course accommodations are judged reasonable for a given student. An instructor who cannot provide the accommodations specified, or has concerns about the accommodations, must contact the Student Disability Services counselor who signed the request form within 48 hours of receiving the form from the student.

Academic Policies

This course is given by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This means that class policies on matters such as requirements, grading, and sanctions for academic dishonesty are governed by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students wishing to add or drop this course after the official deadline must receive approval of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Details of the University policy of cross enrollments may be found at http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/policy_undergrads_outside.shtml. Students should also assume, unless they are told otherwise, that all courses taken in the English Department employ plus-minus grading.

Departmental/Collegiate Complaint Procedures

A student who has a complaint against any member of the college's teaching staff is responsible for following the procedures described in the Student Academic Handbook, which is available on the web site of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml/. The student should first attempt to resolve the issue with the faculty member or the teaching assistant involved. Lacking a satisfactory outcome, the student can turn to the Associate Chair of Undergraduate Programs, Douglas Trevor (douglas-trevor@uiowa.edu, 335-0472). If a satisfactory resolution remains unmet, the student may contact the English Department Chair, Jonathan Wilcox (jonathan-wilcox@uiowa.edu, 335-0454). If the complaint concerns a teaching assistant, the student should contact the supervising faculty member first, then speak to the chair of undergraduate programs, and lastly approach the departmental chair. After these options have been exhausted, the student may turn to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and submit a written complaint to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, 120 Schaeffer Hall (335-2633). Please note: in complaints involving the assignment of grades, it is college policy that grades cannot be changed without the permission of the department concerned.

Plagiarism And Cheating

You are expected to be honest and honorable in your fulfillment of assignments and in test-taking situations. Plagiarism and cheating are serious forms of academic misconduct. Examples of them

are given in the Student Academic Handbook:

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook//ix.shtml. The English Department works with individual instructors to detect plagiarism and cheating and to ensure that appropriately serious punishments are applied. An instructor who suspects a student of plagiarism or cheating must inform the student (in writing) as soon as possible after the incident has been observed or discovered. Instructors who detect cheating or plagiarism may decide, in consultation with the departmental chair, to reduce the student's grade on the assignment or the course, even to assign an F. In either case, the instructor will write an account of the chronology of the plagiarism or cheating incident for the departmental chair, who will send an endorsement of the written report of the case to the Associate Dean for academic programs. A copy of the report will be sent to the student, who has the right to request a hearing within the Department and/or within the College.

Homework Expectation

For each semester hour of credit that an English Department course carries, students should expect to spend approximately two hours per week outside of class preparing for class sessions. That is, in a three-credit-hour course, instructors design course assignments on the assumption that students will spend six hours per week in out-of-class preparation.

Classroom Etiquette

Please turn off your cell phones and put them away while the class is in session.

No text-messaging during class.

Unless there is a genuine emergency, you should not leave the room during the class.

If for any reason you have to leave before the class is over, please get my permission.

If you need to miss class because of sickness or an emergency, please let me know (preferably before class, but afterwards if necessary) so that I may excuse you.