

Dr. Mostafa Jalal
San José State University
Class: English 30-02
Course Number: 49701
Fall Semester 2022
Dudley Moorhead Hall 356
TR 3:00-4:15pm

Department of English and Comparative
Literature
Office: Faculty Office Building 224
Office Hours: TR 12:00-1:00pm, and by
appointment
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English 30
Literature and the Environment: *A Beautiful World*

Course Description:

Knowledge is power. And it seems the more we know and learn about our environment, the more complex it becomes. But before we start our conversation about the many factors and complications of our environment, let's first begin with the environment. What comes to mind when we think of our environment? Is it our natural surrounding—whether our immediate area and region or our larger planet and astronomical space? Is it our intellectual realm? Is it our physical dwelling? Is it both? What about the importance of nature in our philosophical ideals and theories? As we ponder these questions, it also becomes clear that the environment—as complex as it is—is also quite simply beautiful. In this course, let's explore these ideas and notions together—the intricacies and nuances that make our environment and world *beautiful*. By voyaging through canonical and non-canonical texts by Emerson, Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Carson, Dickinson, Whitman, Frost and others, we will aim to discover a deeper understanding of our natural environment and what makes it uniquely, quintessentially, and incredibly spectacular.



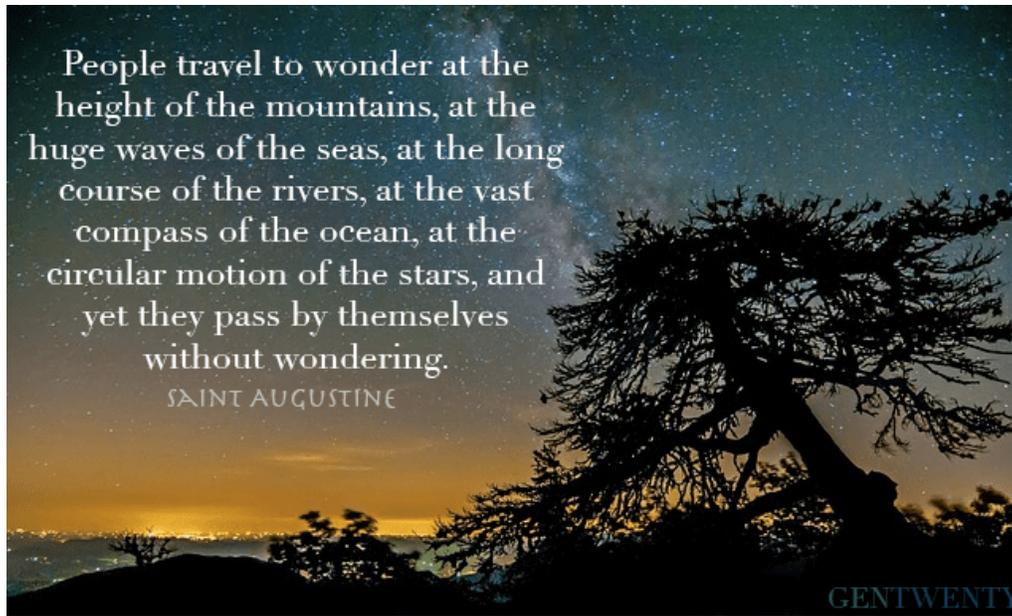
Alfred Bierstadt, "Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California"



Course Catalog Description:

English 30 Explores the ways in which writers and literary texts engage environmental issues and represent the natural world and humanity's place in it, paying close attention to issues of ecology, the landscape, conservation, sustainability, and human intervention/interference. Possible areas of inquiry include nature writing, ecofeminism, ecocriticism, environmental justice, postcolonial environments, and the Anthropocene.





Faculty Web Page and Canvas Messaging:

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for checking the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates.

Course Goals:

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO):

Reading and discussing assigned texts will focus on enduring human concerns, and allow students to

- A. Examine significant works of the human intellect and imagination
- B. Understand the historical and cultural contexts in which such specific texts were created
- C. Recognize the accomplishments of women and diverse cultures reflected in such texts

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

GELO 1. Recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns: This course will examine how writers have used fiction, poetry, theater, essays, and film to make sense of their relationships with the landscapes and ecological networks they inhabit. Along with examining the political life of U.S. nature writing, this class will ask how literature has both contributed to and challenged popular thinking that locates "nature" as something separate from the daily realities of modern life.

GELO 2: Respond to such works by writing research-based critical analyses and personal responses: The class' first textual analysis paper and seminar facilitation based papers will use research-based critical analyses. The term's final project, as well as various in-class assignments such as reflections, will assess students' personal responses to the texts.

GELO 3: Write clearly and effectively (writing will be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness): Students will hone their writing through weekly responses, sustained analysis papers, and a final project.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO):

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to do the following:

1. Analyze significant works of literature that both represents and responds to humanity's relationship to nature.
2. Understand the varied and diverse historical/cultural contexts in which specific texts were created
3. Recognize the accomplishments and issues related to women and diverse cultures as reflected in the assigned texts.

Departmental Learning Objectives ("E" in syllabus)

English 30 serves four of the five learning objectives of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, by having students demonstrate the ability to do the following:

E 1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of "close reading" or close analysis in both the study of literature and the study of film;

E 3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;

E 4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;

E 5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Course Requirements and Assignments:

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Class Participation:

We will complete daily work in class that goes toward your participation grade; you will not be able to complete these assignments if you do not come to class. I expect you to attend class daily and come on time. Absences and lateness will affect your grade because you will be missing class material and/or in-class activities. In addition, class participation does not simply mean that you are physically present in class. You must have all class materials, contribute to discussions, actively listen to your peers, and take notes as necessary.

Required Texts and Resources:

- A. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature and Selected Essays*. (ISBN: 978-0142437629).
- B. Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*. (ISBN: 978-0393930900).
- C. Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. (ISBN: 978-0618249060).
- D. Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There*. (ISBN: 978-0197500262).
- E. PDFs and Links (You may print them if your prefer).
- F. Access to the Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- G. Printing and viewing resources for course readings, videos, assignments, and other material that are posted on Canvas.



Reading Details:

In this class, we will be reading a series of creative, critical and complex texts. *They may often be challenging, so you should be prepared to read them more than once if necessary to fully understand their concepts.* Please be prepared to come to class with questions and comments to contribute to our discussion. Reading assignments are due on the day they appear on the course calendar and schedule. Please be responsible and do the readings beforehand.



Writing Assignments:

Each of the three essays will be examples of polished, revised versions that have been peer- and instructor-reviewed. Essays should have a clear and concise thesis, a well-organized paragraph structure, and proper formatting.

- A. Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages): Please consider the larger theme of this course. What first comes to mind when you think of the term “environment” and about our place within it? How do you find it fits into the historical context of our era? Which authors or texts highlight these notions for you? In which ideas are you most interested?
- B. Mini-Ethnography (Essay #1, 3-4 pages): Please visit any natural space of your choice—the beach, a park, hiking trail, garden, mountain, lake, etc. and provide a coherent, meaningful reflection and analysis of the environment and location.
- C. Literature Review Paper (Essay #2, 8-10 pages): Consider a full piece of literature—a book of any genre—that captures a unique view of nature, and provide a full, thoughtful review detailing how matters, including the environment, are represented, its significance to our discourse, and how it furthers or challenges your formulated notions of our topic.
- D. Final Paper (Essay #3, 10-12 pages): For this final assignment, please compose a thoughtful and thoroughly researched essay that details your views and perspectives on a particular notion or idea about nature and our environment. Have we encountered similar views in our class readings? Have we read texts that challenge these views? Find and discuss these concepts in your essay with supporting evidence from scholarly sources.
- E. Reading Response Questions and Film Reflection.
- F. In-class peer-review and critique of essays for revision.
- G. In-class activities and writing assignments.

Class Grades:

- A. Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages): 10%
- B. Mini-Ethnography (Essay #1, 3-4 pages): 15%
- C. Literature Review Paper (Essay #2, 8-10 pages): 25%
- D. Final Paper (Essay #3, 10-12 pages): 35%
- E. Reading Response Questions and Film Reflection: 5%
- F. In-class peer-review, activities and assignments: 5%
- G. Participation: 5%

93-100% = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
83-86 = B	63-66 = D
80-82 = B-	60-62 = D-
77-79 = C+	0-59% = F

Attendance:

Come to class—you know that. Roll will be taken at the beginning of class, every class. If you arrive after roll has been called, it is your responsibility to notify me. It is a good idea to make friends and exchange contact information with one or more of your classmates to confer about that day's lessons. You should also contact me to review details of the class lecture. University policy F69-24: "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit for all members of the class." *Our class meets twice a week, and each class is important. Students may have up to three unexcused absences. Any absences beyond may affect your overall grade in this class. If a student misses a significant number of classes, they may be asked to repeat the course, even if they have earned high grades on assignments.*

Participation Reminder:

Participation is key to classroom success. I encourage you to interact, ask questions, provide insightful comments and contribute to the overall classroom discussion. *While attendance is mandatory, just attending doesn't automatically accrue participation points. A participation grade is unique to your attendance record.* Please be courteous and respectful of others while in the classroom and practice proper classroom etiquette and refrain from using mobile devices and laptops during lectures and discussions for other activities. You may use these devices for certain in-class activities when appropriate.

Conferences:

In lieu of regular class meetings on days when individual conferences are scheduled, we will instead prepare to meet one-on-one to discuss your current performance and grades in private. These meetings serve two primary goals: to critique a paper draft and to evaluate your overall progress as a writer. As with your attendance, these conferences are also mandatory. Please schedule a conference when dates and times are announced in class. All conferences will be online via Zoom and an online sign-up sheet will be available for you, too.

Canvas and Technology:

If you have not already done so, please visit SJSU's Canvas software. Here you will be able to find a special site devoted exclusively to our course. On this site, you will find files containing this syllabus and other class handouts as they become available. Additionally, we will regularly use the Discussion Board. You will also be able to communicate with fellow classmates, providing insight, answers or compounding questions when necessary. I will keep track of your participation and may use some of the material, including any linked texts, you and your classmates post as a starting place for in-class discussions.

Late Policy:

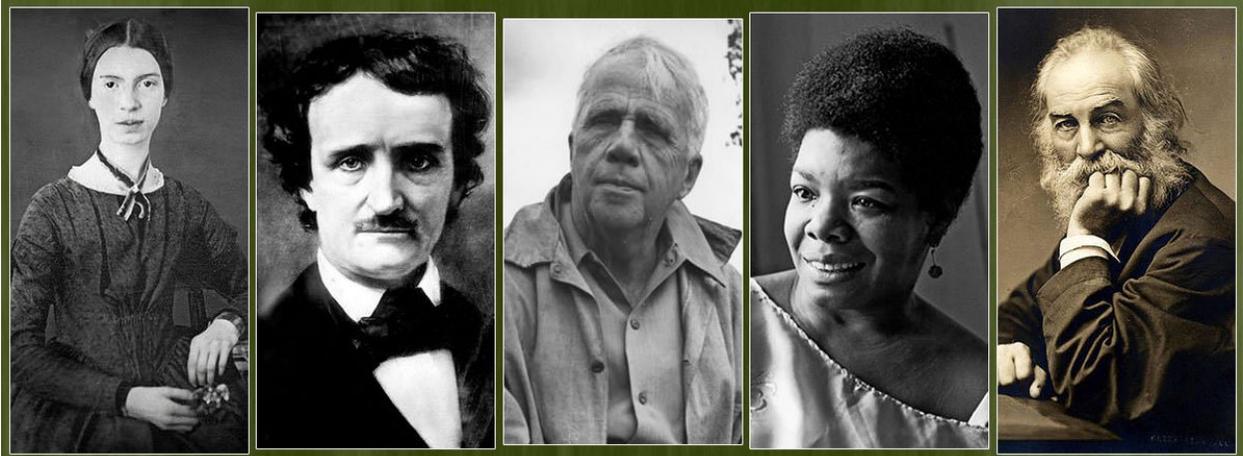
Assignments are due at the beginning of the class for which they are due. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

University Policies:

The following link contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, student success resources, etc. <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>.

Special Notes:

I know this is an incredibly delicate moment. We are still amidst a global health pandemic with Covid-19, and it is important that we remain adaptable and vigilant as we maneuver through this. Please be courteous and wear masks when indoors and remain as safe as possible. If you do get sick or are exposed, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can set up an alternate schedule. If there are any other personal matters with which I can help, such as mental health and your well-being, please feel comfortable to speak to me in private. I am here for you all.





Course Calendar and Schedule:

This is a tentative schedule for this semester. Reading and writing assignments can and likely will change to better suit the needs of our class discussions. Please be sure to attend class regularly and visit our course information on Canvas to note any changes to the syllabus.

**In order to preserve course flexibility, only major assignment dates appear in the calendar below. A more detailed assignment calendar may be provided as the semester progresses, and these calendar dates may be adjusted. Additionally, if and when schedule permits, we will try to visit the university's Writing Center and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.*

***In the schedule below, I have detailed a suggested and advanced reading schedule for you. It is very ambitious. I encourage you to read at this accelerated pace and dive deeply into these texts and ideas. Because they are indeed deep, we will focus on a selection of them and read at a much more expanded pace within the classroom, discussing major points along the way. This does not mean we are not intellectually covering all of these works and ideas comprehensively within the scope of this course; you and I can discuss any text in robust detail during office hours and conferences. Furthermore, as you do read ahead, if there is a text you would like us to focus upon in class, please let me know and I will make sure we do just that.*

Week 1:

Welcome to class
Introduction of course & syllabus
Introduce Favorite Work of Literature assignment

Week 2:

Review and present on Favorite Work of Literature
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Entering the conversation and understanding the context of nature and our environment
Film reflection: *Select any film or documentary which focuses upon nature, and write a brief reflection*
Read and discuss: Selections by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Week 3:

Introduce Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Week 4:

Begin draft work and peer critique of Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Week 5:

Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection due
Introduce Mini-Ethnography Paper
In-class activity
Begin draft work: Mini-Ethnography Paper
Read and discuss: Selections by Henry David Thoreau

Week 6:

Continue draft work and peer critique draft of Mini-Ethnography Paper
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Henry David Thoreau

Week 7:

Continue draft work and peer critique draft of Mini-Ethnography Paper
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Henry David Thoreau

Week 8:

Mini-Ethnography Papers due
Introduce Literature Review Paper
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold

Week 9:

Draft work: Literature Review Papers
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold

Week 10:

Begin conferences
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Emily Dickinson

Week 11:

In-class assignment
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Emily Dickinson

Week 12:

Literature Review Paper due
Introduce Final Paper
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Walt Whitman

Week 13:

Draft work: Final Critical Paper
Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Walt Whitman

Week 14:

Thanksgiving Week
Thursday, 24 November: Academic Holiday

Week 15:

Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Draft work and peer critique draft of Final Paper
Read and discuss: Selections by Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, and Richard Wilbur

Week 16:

Discuss ideas of nature and environment
Read and discuss: Selections by Robert Frost and Mary Oliver
Review Learning Objectives: Now what can we do with what we have learned?
Wrap-up of course

Week 17:

Finals Week
Final Paper due via email

****Classes for the Fall 2022 semester end on Tuesday, 6 December 2022.***