

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature
English 204, Modern Approaches to Literature, SP 2022

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Office Hours:	M 6:45-7.30 pm & by appointment (online)
Class Days/Time:	M 4.00-6.45 pm
Classroom:	Canvas/Zoom

Messaging

You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU, CANVAS (and other communication systems as indicated by the instructor).

Course Description

The field of Literary Theory & Criticism is a vast and complex multilingual, interdisciplinary field that cuts across disciplines like philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics, political science, history, and biology, and encompasses many different literary traditions with long, diverse histories across the world. This course, however, focuses primarily on contemporary Western theory and criticism, though relevant connections to non-western traditions will be signaled to situate Western theory in a global historical context and raise questions about epistemic justice. Our goal will be to understand influential schools of Western Theory/Criticism such as New Criticism, Structuralism, Deconstruction, New Historicism, Marxism, Feminism, Postcolonialism, Ecocriticism etc., and engage with fundamental questions about language, literature, reading, and writing. While this is an extremely intensive course that will challenge you to engage with a great deal of complex material, it will also be exhilarating as it will give you a deeper understanding of literary study and equip you with the tools you will need as a professional in the field. Patience and Perseverance are critical to success!

Graduate Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.

2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
3. Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.
5. Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.
6. Students preparing for teaching careers will receive the appropriate instruction.
7. Students will be prepared for further graduate study.

Course Student Learning Objectives

- a. Demonstrate familiarity with materials and methods of literary research
- b. Demonstrate familiarity with major theorists/critics/texts associated with major schools
- c. Understand and use the key concepts and terms associated with major schools of literary criticism.
- d. Apply different critical theories to analyze various literary texts and cultural/artistic products.
- e. Communicate ideas/analysis in cogent, critical language, both orally and in writing.

One Unit Course Credit Enhancement:

Because this is a 4-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of twelve hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments.

Because this is a 4-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of twelve hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. This course will have integrated into the syllabus the following 1-unit enhancement: Higher Level Critical Thinking. With guidance and feedback from the instructor, students will apply four different literary theories to the same primary text. This scaffolded assignment will integrate students' abilities to read closely, integrate knowledge of literary theory and criticism, write effectively, and read a literary text in the context of culture and history.

Required Texts

1. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* Ed. Vincent Leitch (N)
2. Shakespeare. *The Tempest: A Case Study*. Ed. Gerald Graff. St. Martins. (T)
3. Conrad. *Heart of Darkness: A Case Study*. Ed Ross C. Murfin. St Martins. (H)

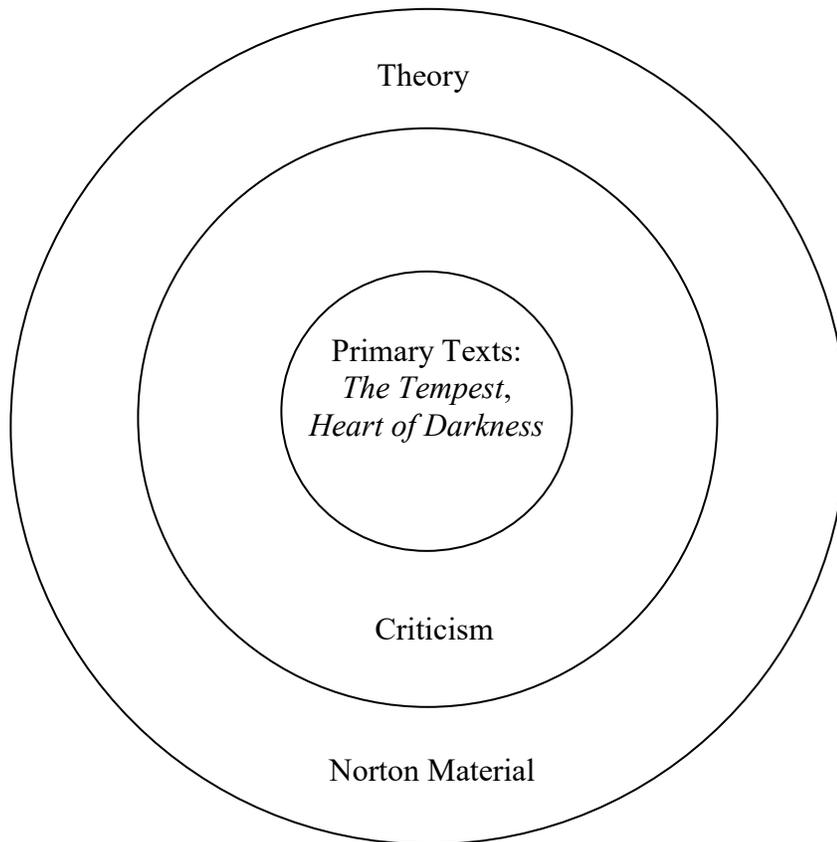
Recommended Texts:

1. Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today*. New York & London: Garland. (simple user-friendly intro)

2. Murfin and Ray: *The Bedford Glossary of Literary Terms*

Course Organization

Course materials are organized into three categories that may be visualized in the form of three concentric circles.



The innermost circle represents the two primary texts -- Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; these two canonical texts, which emerge historically at the beginning and height of English colonialism, have attracted a significant amount of criticism from a variety of perspectives and are widely taught/studied. The next circle represents the critical essays that analyze and interpret the primary texts from a variety of theoretical approaches. The outermost circle represents philosophical essays by major theorists. You will be reading the two primary texts (*Tempest* & *HoD*) mostly on your own. Typically, I will lecture on the theory of the day during the first half of every class, dealing with materials from the outermost circle (Norton readings). In the second half of the class, which will focus on criticism (middle circle), you will be asked to bring one-page reader responses to discuss the readings.

Assignments and Grading Policy

1. **Application:** You will write four 500 word/2-page essays or "applications" using one of the texts from this list:

Maurice Sendak: [Where the Wild Things Are](#)

Robert Frost: [Mending Wall](#)

Sharon Olds: [The death of Marilyn Monroe](#)

James Joyce: [Araby](#)

Toni Bambara: [The Lesson](#)

Sidney Harris: [Hey baby cartoon](#)

*You may not write applications on either *The Tempest* or *Heart of Darkness*.* When a theory is too complex to be applied within the specified limit, a clear summary of the kind of argument you would develop in a longer essay is acceptable. **You are encouraged work with the same text for all four applications.** Apply only those theoretical approaches we have finished discussing in class. Applications must be submitted on Canvas on the dates indicated in the schedule; you may be asked to share these applications in class from time to time. Grading criteria: Demonstrated ability to apply a particular theory or approach to an artistic work; insightfulness of analysis; clarity of expression. (PLO 3)

1. **Reader Response Portfolio:** For each essay in criticism on *The Tempest* and *Heart of Darkness* discussed in class you will prepare a typed one-page bullet pointed response consisting of (i) a summary of the thesis, (ii) a summary of two key supporting ideas (iii) a brief example/illustration from the essay to show how a particular theory is being applied, and (iv) an explicit link to one or more theoretical readings in the form of a quote or reference. You will bring these to class to share during discussions. You may make notes/revisions on these during/after class, and submit them in Canvas every week on the date indicated in the schedule. [Note: there are 25 RRs in all; you must submit a minimum of 20 to earn the full score for this category]. Use the same format as the sample provided on canvas. Grading criteria: Demonstrated engagement with material; accuracy of summary; aptness of example and link to theory. (PLO 3)
2. **Quiz:** You will take two quizzes on the dates indicated in the schedule. These will involve providing definitions of key terms/concepts as well as commenting on excerpted passages of literary criticism. The questions are meant to assess both your understanding of the course material and your ability to integrate and apply the concepts and methods we study. Grading criteria: accurate definition, precise explanation, suitable examples. (PLO 4)
3. **Reflective Essay:** As a culminating exercise, you will draw on your RRs and write a short reflective essay (1500-2000 words) on the theory/approach you found most compelling/useful. Your essay must (i) clearly explain key concepts/methods as developed by major theorists and applied by leading critics, and (ii) offer your own critical analysis/commentary/assessment of the theory. The essay must reference at least 3 significant theorists and 2 critics. Grading criteria: accurate definition and clear explanation of key concepts, strong use of relevant theorists and critics to explain and illustrate, astute analysis/commentary (PLO 1)

Grading:

Applications	400 (4x100)
Reader Responses	100 (20x5)

Quizzes
Reflective Essay

300 (2x150)
200

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>960 to 1000</i>	<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>930 to 959</i>	<i>93 to 95%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>900 to 929</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>860 to 899</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>830 to 859</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>800 to 829</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>760 to 799</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>730 to 759</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>700 to 729</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>660 to 699</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>630 to 659</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>600 to 629</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

The following statements have been adopted by the English department:

1. In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.
2. Grading Policy: The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Courses graded according to the A,B,C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for No Credit, shall replace D or F. In A,B,C, No Credit courses NC shall also substitute for W (Withdrawal) because neither NC nor W affects students' grade point average.

Classroom Protocol

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions are extremely important. Please arrive on time and stay for the entire class. You are responsible for all materials assigned, presented and discussed. You are encouraged to take notes in class, but you should have studied the materials before class begins. Poor attendance/participation will have negative effects on your final grade.

Since most classes will be based on group discussions, presentations and workshops it is crucial for you to keep up with the readings and take an active as well as thoughtful role in all classroom activities. Your questions, comments, insights, and interpretations are valuable no matter how outlandish they may seem. So do speak up!

Conferencing: I encourage you to visit me in my office whenever you need to discuss something, whether it is an assignment or any other difficulty you may be having with the

structure and format of the class. I am completely open to criticism and suggestions because the only way I can fix things is if I know what is wrong.

Submitting work: All work must be turned exactly as and when indicated in the schedule. All readings are listed against dates they will be discussed in class; so when you come to class you should have already read the materials and be prepared to discuss them

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html) . [Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/) . Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

University Policies

Academic integrity

Students should know that the University's [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS

camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Learning Assistance Resource Center

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. [The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/).

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. [The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

Peer Mentor Center

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop –in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/> .

Course Number / Title, Semester, Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice made available via mysjsu.

All Theory Readings are in Norton Anthology, unless otherwise indicated.

Strongly Recommended: Read appropriate chapter from Tyson

T = Tempest Casebook

H = Heart of Darkness Casebook

C = Canvas

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/31	<p>Introduction to Course. Intro. to <i>The Tempest</i> & <i>H of D</i>. Review Sample RR</p> <p>Reading With/Against the Grain. Said: Contrapuntal Reading as method Krishnaswamy: World Literary Knowledges Western Classical & Romantic - Mimetic & Expressive theories.</p>
2	2/7	<p>Formalism 1 (Anglo-American): New Criticism. <u>Theory:</u> Eliot "Tradition and Individual Talent" Brooks "The Well-Wrought Urn" Amiran "Some Paradoxes of New Criticism" Cain "Problematizing Formalism"</p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> Brower "The Mirror of Analogy" (T) (Sample RR) Dowden "Light & Darkness in HoD" (C) (RR1)</p> <p><u>Workshop:</u> Writing Applications Review Sample Application</p> <p><u>Homework:</u> RR 1 Due 2/7 by 11:59 pm</p>
3	2/14	<p>Formalism 2 (European): Structuralism & Semiotics <u>Theory:</u> Saussure: From Course in General Linguistics: Introduction - From Chapter III. "The Object of Linguistics" Part One. General Principles - Chapter I. "Nature of the Linguistic Sign" Part Two. "Synchronic Linguistics" Barthes: Mythologies; Work to Text Johnson: Writing Frye: The Archetypes of Literature Russian Formalism Stylistics</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<p>Beyond Western Theory Krishnaswamy: How Europe Discovered Sanskrit Hogan: Cognitive theory of literature Buddhist philosophy of language</p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> (RR 2, 3) Frye "Shakespeare's The Tempest" (C) Watt: "Impressionism & Symbolism in HoD" (C)</p> <p><u>Homework:</u> RR 2, 3 Due 2/14 by 11:59 pm</p>
4	2/21	<p>Poststructuralism 1: Deconstruction <u>Theory:</u> Derrida: From "Of Grammatology" Translator's Preface Part I: Writing before the Letter 1. Exergue The Signifier and Truth The Written Being/The Being Written Paul de Man: <i>Allegories of Reading</i>: Chapter 1: "Semiology and Rhetoric" Barthes: The Death of the Author</p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> (RR 4, 5) Miko "The Tempest" (C) Miller "Heart of Darkness Revisited" (H)</p> <p><u>Homework</u> RR 4, 5 Due 2/21 by 11:59 pm Application #1 Due on 2/25 by 11:59 pm</p>
5	2/28	<p>Poststructuralism 2: New Historicism <u>Theory:</u> Foucault: "What is an Author?" "Discipline & Punish" (birth of the prison, carceral) "History of Sexuality" (intro, repressive hypothesis, incitement of discourse; part 4 of ch 2 on method) Biopower Greenblatt: From "Resonance and Wonder" Bakhtin: From Discourse in the Novel Gallagher: Marxism and the New Historicism</p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> (RR 6, 7, 8) Frank Kermode "Shakespeare's final plays" (T)</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Brown "This Thing of Darkness" (T) Barker & Hulme "Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish" (T) <u>Homework:</u> RR 6, 7, 8 Due 2/28 by 11:59 pm
6	3/7	Postcolonialism (Decolonial Criticism) <u>Theory:</u> Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks From The Fact of Blackness The Wretched of the Earth From On National Culture Said "Orientalism" (introduction), "Culture & Imperialism" (Jane Austen and empire); Bhabha "Mimicry and Man", "Sly Civility", "Signs Taken for Wonders" (C) Spivak: A Critique of Postcolonial Reason (From ch 3 History) Parry: Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse Decolonial theory <u>Criticism:</u> (RR 9, 10, 11) Loomba "The Postcolonial Tempest" Achebe "An Image of Africa" (C) Patrick Brantlinger "Heart of Darkness" (H) <u>Homework:</u> RR 9, 10, 11 Due 3/7 by 11:59 pm
7	3/14	Critical Race Theory /African-American Criticism <u>Theory</u> Du Bois: The Souls of Black Folk From Chapter 1. Of Our Spiritual Strivings Criteria of Negro Art Gates: Talking Black: Critical Signs of the Times Morrison: From Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature Afropessimism Pages 7-30 Afropessimism and the unlogic of blackness Review for Quiz 1 <u>Homework</u> Application #2 Due on 3/14 by @ 11:59 pm
8	3/21	Quiz #1 The Postmodern

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Lyotard “Defining the Postmodern” Jameson “Postmodernism & Consumer Society” bell hooks: Postmodern Blackness
9	4/4	<p>Marxism <u>Theory:</u> Marx: From Communist Manifesto, From Capital (Commodities, Working Day) Gramsci: “Formation of the Intellectuals” Williams: “Base and Superstructure” Althusser: Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses Eagleton: The Rise of English Parry: Edward Said and Third World Marxism</p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> RR 12,13 Poulard “Politics of Invisibility: Power and Ideology in The Tempest” (C) Thomas: "Preserving and keeping order" (H)</p> <p><u>Homework:</u> RR 12,13 Due 4/4 by 11:59 pm</p>
10	4/11	<p>Feminism <u>Theory:</u> de Beauvoir: “The Second Sex” (Myth and Reality) Cixous: “Laugh of the Medusa” Kristeva: Revolution in Poetic Language From Part 1. The Semiotic and the Symbolic Gilbert & Gubar: <i>The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination. From Ch. 2.</i> Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship Spivak: Three women’s texts Mohanty: Under Western Eyes</p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> (RR 14, 15, 16) Thompson "Miranda, Where's Your Sister?" (T) Loomba "Gender, race & renaissance drama" (T) Smith "Too Beautiful Altogether" (H)</p> <p><u>Homework:</u> RR 14, 15, 16 Due 4/11 @ 11:59 pm Application #3 Due on 4/15 @ 11:59 pm</p>
11	4/18	<p>Gender/Queer/Intersectional theory Butler: Gender Trouble (From Preface, From Ch 2) Halberstam: The Good the Bad and the Ugly</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<p>Sedgwick: <i>Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire</i> From Introduction: Epistemology of the Closet Anzaldúa: <i>Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i> Chapter 7. <i>La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness</i> Krishnaswamy: Effeminism: the economy of colonial desire (pages 15-52)</p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> (RR 17, 18) Miller: <i>Juno Descends</i> (C). Ruppel: <i>Male Intimacy in HoD</i> (C)</p> <p>Homework: RR 17, 18 Due 4/18 by 11:59 pm</p>
12	4/25	<p>Psychoanalytic Criticism <u>Theory:</u> Freud: “Interpretation of Dreams” (Materials and Sources of Dreams, Dream work), “The Uncanny”, “Fetishism” Jung: “On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry” (C) Lacan: “Mirror Stage”, “From Agency of the Letter”, “Signification of Phallus” Mulvey: <i>Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema</i></p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> (RR 19, 20, 21) Paris "The Tempest" (C) Karl: "Introduction to the Dance Macabre" (C) Taghizadeh: “Penetrating into the Dark” (C)</p> <p>Homework: RR 19, 20, 21 Due 4/25 by 11:59 pm</p>
13	5/2	<p>Reader-Response theory <u>Theory:</u> Iser: <i>Interaction between Text and Reader</i> Fish: <i>Interpreting the Variorum</i> Rosenblatt: <i>Evoking a Poem</i> Tompkins: <i>The Reader in History</i></p> <p><u>Criticism:</u> (RR 22, 23) Skilleas "Anachronistic Themes" (C) Rabinowitz "Reader Response, Reader Responsibility" (H)</p> <p>Homework RR 22, 23 Due 5/2 by 11:59 pm</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Application #4 Due on 5/6 by 11:59 pm
14	5/9	<p>Ecopoetics/ecocriticism</p> <p><u>Theory</u> Nixon: Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor The Anthropocene Alaimo: Introduction: Bodily Natures Cronin: "The Trouble With Wilderness: Or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature"</p> <p>Beyond Western Theory Classical Tamil Ecopoetics</p> <p><u>Criticism</u> (RR 24, 25) Gray: Command these elements to Silence McCarthy: A Choice of Nightmares: the ecology of HoD</p> <p>Review for Quiz 2</p> <p><u>Homework</u> RR 24 & 25 Due 5/9 by 11:59 pm</p>
15	5/16	<p>Quiz #2 4-5:30 on Canvas</p> <p>Conference on Reflective Essay</p>
16		Reflective Essay due on Canvas – 5/23 Mon @ 11:59 pm