Course Description

This course introduces students to an environment-centered approach in literary and cultural studies through the study of a selection of poems, fictions, plays, and critical literary essays by African and Caribbean writers. It brings cultural and environmental studies into interdisciplinary dialogue about nature, conservation, and development in Africa and the Caribbean. The course also explores the contributions of postcolonial studies to eco-criticism and the narratives of environmental justice in developing countries.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion, students will understand the literary approaches to writing and thinking about the environment; the conceptual framework for the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment; and the intersectional ties of ideas among geographers, anthropologists, historians, literary scholars, and writers.

Texts


_____ Other Selected Poems.

Instruction:

This Topic in Africana Studies course encourages participatory learning and continuous non-cumulative assessment. Grades will be based upon many activities, in and out of classroom. Students are required
to complete all assigned readings before class. Lectures are designed to complement the assigned readings in order to illuminate the major questions associated with each topic. Class attendance will be taken in every class meeting, and it is the responsibility of each student to sign the attendance sheet. The questions for oral presentations, examinations, and paper writings will be based upon the assigned readings and lectures (including internet resources, slides and videos shown or used during lectures).
Mark your calendar: Please note that the due dates for the required assignments are not evenly spaced. Therefore, adjust your schedule in order to avoid falling behind. There will be no extension for the submission of assignments without a prior notice and approval of the instructor. A late submission of paper may accrue significant deduction of points.

The success of the course ultimately depends on both the students’ and the instructor’s efforts. Students’ understanding of the materials and participation in class are very important. Students will receive constructive criticism of their work from the instructor. They will take these criticisms as a way of improving their understanding of all the course content, writing, and/or diligence. Students should always ask questions when they do not understand the readings and lectures. They should make efforts to see the instructor during office hours.

Penalties for plagiarism and cheating:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else’s ideas or/and writings (including internet materials), and passing them off as your own. The penalty may include failing grade for the affected paper or the whole course, or/and being subjected to other University disciplinary actions. If students are in doubt regarding what plagiarism is all about, they need to consult the instructor immediately. One *mojo* for plagiarism is to correctly cite the sources of the materials that you use in your paper, including quotations and paraphrases. Students should note that most cases of plagiarism occur because students are in a hurry to meet the deadline after neglecting the assignment until the last minute. To avoid being haunted by the ghost of plagiarism, students need to plan ahead, and give themselves an ample time to complete their assignments, and consult with the instructor if they have questions.

REQUIREMENTS: ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND POINTS:

(See below samples for courses I taught in the Departments of Languages & Culture and Africana Studies)

**Grading scheme for essays:** Each essay will be assessed using the following criteria:

- **A** = Intelligent, innovative, and well organized essay that reflects critical analysis of text, sophisticated argument, and informed response to the question.
- **C** = Very good essay, well organized, mostly correct in fact, grammatically accurate, and strong critical analysis.
- **C** = Essay demonstrates a basic understanding of the assignment, omits aspects of the question, contains some textual errors, and/or is weak in critical analysis.
**Course Title:** Topics in Africana Studies: Environmental Literature in Africa and the Caribbean

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**Section Number:** 001  
**CRN Number:** 10987

D = Essay demonstrates a minimally acceptable effort; poorly organized and contains factual errors, weak interpretations, and/or many textual infelicities.  
F = Essay does not respond to the assigned question, lacks the minimum acceptable effort, understanding, contains unjustifiable errors.

*A plagiarized essay will automatically score F, in addition to other sanctions.*

**Work and Grading:**

2 exams on eco-critical literary theory and texts on ecology: 30%  
Participation in class: critical summary of readings (written and oral) & class attendance: 20%  
1 oral presentation and 2 written topic papers: 30%  
1 final 10-page research paper with bibliography / works cited: 20%

Exams and presentation:

Exams include essay questions on theory and testing on factual information and glossary.  
Presentations: Each student will be responsible for 1 presentation. The presentation has an oral and written component. Students will present a factual article or a theoretical document on the topic being studied in class at the time (topics based on personal experience in ecology in the US, Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa are also acceptable, but must be scholarly). The presentation will include 3 parts: 1) summary; 2) analysis (Explain how the material or the theoretical document fits in with what we have studied in class; 3) answering questions.

Please follow the following steps:

- 2-3 weeks before the presentation: clear topic and documents you will be using with your instructor.  
- 1 week before the presentation: Place video and audio documents on reserve at the library.  
- Class period before presentation: distribute written documents (articles, glossary) to class.  
- The day of presentation: distribute and go over a list of vocabulary that is needed to understand the document, and talk about the topic.  
- Class period after the presentation: revise your presentation based on oral feedback you have received from class and hand in a written version of your presentation.

**Absence policy:**

Class participation in this course is absolutely essential. After 2 unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered 3 points (on a 100 pt. scale) for each unexcused absence. Absences will be excused only when the student provides written confirmation of hospitalization, an infirmary visit, or a serious family crisis. If you are absent from class, you are responsible for contacting a classmate, finding out what we did in class, and preparing the assignment for the following class. Make-ups for exams will be given only...
for excused absences, and only if you contact me before the exam to explain the necessity of your absence and to set up an appointment for the make-up on the day you return to class. A missed exam will receive a grade of zero (0).

Policy on Academic Integrity:

The Department of Africana Studies complies with the UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity (see UNC Charlotte Catalog 275). It is your responsibility to know and observe the requirements of this code. Academic evaluations in this course include a judgment that your work is free from academic dishonesty of any type. Penalty for violation of the code ranges from zero credit on the work involving dishonesty to exclusion from UNC Charlotte. You are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty.

Student with Learning disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities who require accommodations in this class should access services as soon as possible through the UNC Charlotte Office of Disability Services in Fretwell Building, Room 230, phone 687-4355, web page www.uncc.edu/dability/staff.htm

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Syllabus Topics
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Aug 24 - 31: Introduction to AFRS 2050-001 (syllabus & policy);

Sept 2 - 14: *1) Ogaga okuyade: “Introduction: African Cultural Art Forms, Eco-activism, and (Eco)-logical Consciousness” in Eco-critical Literature

*Summary and comparative analysis of the two introductions: Critical paper writing assignment # 1


*Ecofeminism: Philosophical & Theoretical Perspectives: Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism, Parallels and politics by Val Plumwood in Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature

*Formation of class presentation groups and distribution of topics from:
## Syllabus Continued

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Environment at the Margins: Literary and Environmental Studies in Africa (Caminero-S & Myers)

Caribbean Literature and the environment: Between Nature and Culture (Deloughrey, Gosson, Handley)
The Beauty I have seen (T Ojaide)
The Delta Blues and Home Songs (T ojaide)
The Tale of the Harmattan (T Ojaide)
Eco-Critical Literature: Regreening African Landscapes (edited by Ogaga Okuyade)
The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology (edited by C Glotfelty & H Fromm)

**Sep 30-Oct 7:** “Nature and Social Responsibility in Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring and Tanure Ojaide’s The Tale of the Harmattan: Cross-Border Studies in Social Responsibility” (*Eco-critical Literature*, 139-61)

*Presentation # 1

**Oct 14-19:** The Tale of the Harmattan (T. Ojaide)  
The Delta Blues and Home Songs (T. Ojaide)

*Presentation # 2
*Presentation # 3

*Take-Home exam: Comparative analysis of texts: Critical paper writing assignment # 2

***Clearing Final Research Paper Topic with Instructor: Initiating draft work on the final research paper due on the Final Exam Day in class: 8-10 page final paper with bibliography or works cited on a separate sheet of paper attached


*Presentation # 4
*Presentation # 5

**Nov 2-9:** The Beauty I Have Seen (T. Ojaide)  
“Shaping the Environment: Sugar Plantation, or Life after Indentured Labor” in *Caribbean Lit*

*Presentation # 6
*Presentation # 7

**Nov 11-18:** “Through the Pleistocene”: Nature and Race in Theodore Roosevelt’s African Game Trails” by Roderick P. Neumann in *Environment at the Margins* (43-68)

*Presentation # 8
*Presentation # 9

**Nov 23-Dec 2:** Subjection and Resistance in the Transformation of Guyana’s Mytho-Colonial Landscape” by Shona N. Jackson in *Caribbean Literature* (86-96)
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The Beauty I have Seen (T. Ojaide)
The Tale of the Harmattan (T. Ojaide)
*Presentation # 10
*Presentation # 11

Dec 7-9: The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective” by Paula Gunn Allen in The Ecocriticism Reader (241-261.) Handouts

Final exam Day: Wednesday, December 16, 2:00pm-4:30 PM. Research Paper with bibliography/works cited due in class as the Final exam Paper. No exceptions!
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