

English 363, Nature Literature
Spring 2020
Michael Steffes
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Office Hours: M, W, F 12:00-1:00, and by appointment

In Nature Literature we will read, discuss, and write about a wide variety of literary texts that foreground nature, including some that will provide historical depth or cross-cultural perspectives. A recurring issue will be what Gary Snyder calls "inhabitation," that is, living in deep and serious harmony with a specific landscape. The assignments for this course fulfill the university's requirements for GEP credit in Humanities because students will learn to "read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition" and they will also learn to "investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs, or values held by persons in situations other than their own."

Text rental books: Keegan & McKusick, *Literature and Nature*; Snyder, *The Gary Snyder Reader*; Torrance, *Encompassing Nature*.

Paperbacks to purchase: Cather, *Song of the Lark* (Vintage Classics); Kingsnorth, *Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist and Other Essays* (Graywolf Press); Silko, *Ceremony* (Penguin, intro McMurtry).

Requirements: 2 papers (4-5 pages, 20% of course grade; 7-8 pages, 30%, (late papers will receive reduced grades); a midterm exam (10%); a final exam (30%); quizzes, informal writing in class, active participation in discussion (10%); regular attendance (if you have more than 2 unexcused absences, I will lower your course grade one step for each additional absence; for example, if you have an A-average, but have unexcused absences, your course grade will be B+).

Students should familiarize themselves with the university's policies about plagiarism.

As a courtesy to others, all computers and other electronic devices must be out of sight and turned off during class meetings.

English Department policy does not allow recording classes without written permission of the instructor.

Week 1

Jan. 21: introduction

Jan. 23: Snyder, 257-262 ("Unnatural Writing"); Kingsnorth, 61-82 ("Confessions . . ."), 153-179 ("In the Black Chamber"), 225-233 ("Singing to the Forest")

Week 2

Jan. 28: Harrison (photocopy); Torrance, 272-304 (Homer, Hesiod, "Homeric Hymns")

Jan. 30: Torrance, 271-304, cont., 310-316 (Euripides), 460-476 (Virgil, Ovid)

Week 3

Feb. 4: Kingsnorth, 31-50 ("The Space Race of Over," "The Quants and the Poets"), 188-196 ("The Bay"); Torrance, 813-824 (Spenser), 841-845 (Jonson)

Feb. 6: Kingsnorth, 119-149 ("Dark Ecology"); Keegan, 64-71 (Herrick), 125-135 (Marvell)

Week 4

Feb. 11: Keegan, 445-456 (Wordsworth); Bate (photocopy)

Feb. 13: Keegan, 445-456, cont.

(over)

Week 5

Feb. 18: Keegan, 548-558 (Shelley)

Feb. 20: review

Week 6

Feb. 25: midterm exam

Feb. 27: *Song of the Lark*

Week 7

March 3 & 5: *Song of the Lark*, cont.

Week 8

March 10 & 12: *Song of the Lark*, cont.

March 12: 1st paper due

-----March 16-20, Spring Break-----

Week 9

March 24: Keegan, 1037-1044 (Momaday); Silko, *Ceremony*

March 26: *Ceremony*, cont.

Week 10

March 31 & April 2: *Ceremony*, cont.

Week 11

April 7 & 9: *Ceremony*, cont.

Week 12

April 14: Kingsnorth, 213-224 ("The Witness"), 234-253 ("Planting Trees in the Anthropocene")

April 16: Snyder, 3-68 (from *Earth House Hold*)

Week 13

April 21: Snyder, 405-422 (from *Myths and Texts*)

April 23: Snyder, 285-318 (from *The Great Clod Project*)

Week 14

April 28: Snyder, 519-526 (from *Cold Mountain Poems*)

April 30: Snyder, 165-237 (from *The Practice of the Wild*), 555-568 (from *No Nature*); 2nd paper due

Week 15

May 5: Kingsnorth, 257-284 ("Uncivilization")

May 7: review

Final Exam: Thursday, May 14, 8:00-10:00