

**San José State University**  
**English and Comparative Literature**  
**English 30: Literature and the Environment**  
**Fall 2019**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Daniel Lanza Rivers
<b>Office Hours:</b>	M/W: 3:05-4:05 PM (or by Appt.) Clark Hall: 420C
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<b>Class:</b>	M/W: 9-10:15 AM @ BBC 130
<b>GE Category:</b>	C2

**Course Description:**

Literature and the Environment 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, conservation, sustainability, interdependence, extractive economics, and environmental ethics. Throughout the semester, we will examine how world-shaping forces such as colonialism, industrialization, migration, and consumer culture have influenced humans' relationships with (and understandings of) life on earth. Though this class will be global and intercultural in scope, our readings will place a particular emphasis on the political ecology of California, including topics such as wilderness conservation, biodiversity, drought and water use, environmental justice, agriculture in the central valley, and other-than-human life.

**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; and
- 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 free-writes and essay quizzes, 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, Assignments, and Grading Breakdown:**

These assignments are intended to span the spectrum of engagement to include: participating actively in class discussions, reflecting on and analyzing assigned readings, mastering foundational concepts, composing an intertextual analysis essay, researching a related topic and sharing that research within a group presentation that demonstrates intellectual curiosity and rigorous engagement.

### **Classroom Participation and Preparation (20%):**

This grade includes coming prepared (with a hard copy of the readings that is annotated), engaging in curious and respectful dialogue with your classmates, and completing in-class writing activities. Participation activities cannot be made up in the case of absences, but the final participation score will be lowered to reflect 2 excused absences from these activities.

### **Professionalism (5%):**

As a space of professional **and** intellectual development, the classroom environment is affected by the conduct of all members. This grade will be a qualitative, end of term evaluation of your professionalism during this course. This category includes: focused attention, appropriate use of technology, respectful communication, and treating our texts and topics with the seriousness they require.

### **Reading Quizzes (10%):**

Most days of class will begin with a quiz on the day's reading/s. These short assignments will be the primary way that you will demonstrate that you have come prepared for class. In some occasions, open-book quizzes will be allowed for hard copy/printed material only. Readings quizzes can only be made up if student offers at least 24 hours' notice before their absence. Final reading quiz score will be lowered to reflect two penalty-free days of missing the quiz.

### **Weekly Reader Reports (20%):**

Throughout the semester you will be asked to complete formal readers' reports on Canvas. Each report should follow the instructions posted online, and it should demonstrate that you have completed a thorough and nuanced analysis of the assigned reading. These reports will be graded on 10-point system.

### **Imagined Landscapes, Living Environments Essay (10%):**

This synthesis essay will be the capstone assignment for the first unit asks you to place 2 course texts in conversation with one another, and with 1 external source. **The final draft is due at 11:59PM on Thursday 10/10.**

### **Leading Class Discussion (15%):**

Students will team up in groups of 2-3 to support the class' discussion of one text of their choosing. Each group will be expected to offer a 7-10 minute presentation that frames the day's reading assignment by offering relevant historical, ecological, and/or literary context. A 2-3 page summary of the group's research will be due to Canvas by 11:59PM on their assigned presentation day. This summary should include an overview of external research, including key takeaways, quotes and scenes for discussion, and an annotated bibliography of at least 2 external sources per student. Group participants will be graded collectively on organization, creativity/innovation, depth of research, and professional execution.

### **Final Project: Ecology and the Literary Imagination (20%)**

This final synthesis paper asks you to analyze one of our class texts using scholarly research on literature and the environment. A 1 -page proposal for this paper is due on Monday 11/25. A printed copy of your rough draft is due in class on Monday 12/9. **Your final draft is due by the end of the day (11:59PM) on Friday 12/13. All papers will be checked for plagiarism/originality with Turnitin. Because of this, papers that are not submitted though Canvas will not be accepted for credit.**

### **Grading Breakdown:**

Category	Total Points Possible	Percentage of Total Grade
Classroom Participation	2pts/day	20%
Professionalism	5pts/semester	5%
Reading Quizzes	10pts each	10%
Readers Reports	80pts	20%
Imagined Landscapes, Living Environments Paper	10 pts	10%
Class Facilitation and Reflection	10 pts	15%
Literature and Ecology Project	20 pts	20%

### **Administrative Policies:**

#### **Workload Expectations:**

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](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

#### **Late Work & Makeup Work:**

Every student is allowed one two-day extension once per semester on written work, but the student must give 24 hours' notice that they are using their extension. All late work (including late makeup work) will have its final grade reduced by 10% for each day it is late. *No assignments will be accepted more than a week out from their adjusted due date.*

## E-Mail Communication:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (known as FERPA) requires careful protection of your rights and academic record. To protect your right to privacy, all of our communication will happen using our SJSU e-mail accounts. Please be sure to check your SJSU e-mail account regularly for updates about readings and changes to the course schedule.

## Classroom Protocol

In order to have curious and respectful discussions of the relationships among humans' entanglements with living environments, our classroom will need to function as an open forum where our knowledge, feelings, and experiences are part of the discussion, and where differences of perspective on consciousness, power, ethical responsibility, and meaning should fuel instead of hinder our conversations. This means that we will need to work together to privilege questions over declarations, and where we will try to leave our assumptions and generalizations at the door.

## English Department Grading Standards:

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi:

- In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.
- The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the 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.

In written assignments for English 30, this scale is based on the following criteria:

- A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight that teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.
- B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.
- C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.
- D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.
- F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

## University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

## Assigned Reading:

Required books are available at the campus bookstore, and used copies should be widely available online as well. Be sure you obtain copies of each reading well in advance of the class in which they are due. Bringing a physical copy of your text to class is the minimum standard for participation, and will count toward both your participation and professionalism grades.

## **Texts to Purchase or Rent:**

John Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*  
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*  
Ruth Ozeki, *My Year of Meats*  
Cherrie Moraga, *Heroes and Saints & Other Plays*  
Mary Oliver, *What Do We Know?*

## Course Schedule

*The schedule is subject to change with fair notice (as emailed from the instructor and announced in class at least one week ahead).*

### **Course Schedule**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
0	Wed 8/21	<b>Welcome to the Course</b> Review Syllabus in Class & Sign Up for Facilitation Days
1	Mon 8/26	<b>The Trouble With Nature</b> Reading Due: John Muir, "Through the Foothills With a Flock of Sheep" & Donald Worster, "John Muir & the Modern Passion for Nature"
1	Wed 8/28	Kevin Michael Deluca, "Trains in the Wilderness" (Excerpt) Watch excerpt, <i>PBS National Parks: "Yosemite"</i> <b>Week 1 Reader Report Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
2	Mon 9/2	<b>Campus Closed</b>
2	Wed 9/4	<b>The Land Doesn't Stretch: Drought &amp; Landscape in <i>To a God Unknown</i></b> Reading Due: John Steinbeck, <i>To a God Unknown</i> (to p. 69)
3	Mon 9/9	Reading Due: Steinbeck, <i>To a God Unknown</i> (to pg. 140)
3	Wed 9/11	Reading Due: Steinbeck, <i>To a God Unknown</i> (to pg. 186/ Finish) <b>Week 3 Reader Report Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
4	Mon 9/16	<b>Landscape, Empire, and Memory</b> Reading Due: Lauret Savoy, "Madeline Traces"
4	Wed 9/18	Reading Due: Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> (to p. 50)
5	Mon 9/23	Reading Due: Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> (to p. 128)
5	Wed 9/25	Reading Due: Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> (to p. 163) <b>Week 5 Reader Report Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
6	Mon 9/30	Reading Due: Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> (finish)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
6	Wed 10/2	<b>Human Ecologies In Deep Time and Myth</b> Reading Due: Roy Scranton, "Human Ecologies" Assignment Due: Timeline of Human Ecologies
7	Mon 10/7	In-Class Viewing: <i>Princess Mononoke</i> (1997)
7	Wed 10/8	In-Class Viewing: <i>Princess Mononoke</i> (finish) <b>Imagined Landscapes, Living Environments Paper Due to Canvas by 11:59PM on Thursday 10/10</b>
8	Mon 10/14	<b>Wilderness Ethics and the Politics of Nature</b> Reading Due: John McPhee, "A Mountain" (to p. 43)
8	Wed 10/16	Reading Due: John McPhee, "A Mountain" (finish) <b>Week 8 Reader Report Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
9	Mon 10/21	Reading Due: Eli Clare, "The Mountain" <b>[Consider getting a jump start on Ozeki, My Year of Meats]</b>
9	Wed 10/23	Reading Due: Eli Clare, "Clearcuts" <b>Week 9 Reader Report Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
10	Mon 10/28	<b>Television, Humor, and Food Ecologies in My Year of Meats</b> Reading Due: Ruth Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> (to p. 83)
10	Wed 10/30	Reading Due: Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> (to p. 143)
11	Mon 11/4	Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> (to p. 241) <b>Week 11 Reader Report Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
11	Wed 11/6	Reading Due: Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> (to p. 284).
12	Mon 11/11	<b>No Class: Campus Closed for Veteran's Day</b>
12	Wed 11/13	Reading Due: Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> (finish) <b>Week 12 Reader Report Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
13	Mon 11/18	<b>"This Place is Strange": Latinx Environmentalisms in Heroes &amp; Saints</b> Reading Due: Cherrie Moraga, <i>Heroes and Saints</i> (finish Act 1)
13	Wed 11/21	Reading Due: Cherrie Moraga, <i>Heroes and Saints</i> (finish) <b>Week 13 Reader Report Due to Canvas by 11:59PM</b>
14	Mon 11/25	<b>Writing Everyday Environments</b> Assignment Due: Final Project Proposal In-Class Activity: Writing SJSU's Landscapes
14	Wed 11/27	<b>No Class: Campus Closed For Thanksgiving</b>
15	Mon 12/2	Reading Due: Mary Oliver, <i>What Do We Know?</i> (to p. 34)
15	Wed 12/4	Reading Due: Mary Oliver, <i>What Do We Know?</i> (finish)
16	Mon 12/9	Assignment Due: Rough Draft In Class Workshop
<b>Final Exam</b>	Fri 12/13	Ecology and the Literary Imagination Paper Due by 11:59PM