

English 399W
Representing the Environment:
Literature and Ecocriticism
Fall 2007/Spring 2008 English Honors Seminar
Section 1T3A, Tues. 1:40-4:30 PH 104 Code # 0064
Section E6W3A, Wed. 6:30-9:20 PH 304 Code #0066

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Office Hours: T. 12:30-1:20;
W. 5:30-6:20 or by appt.



“Clearing Winter Storm” by Ansel Adams



“Undergrowth” by Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison

In the spring seminar, you will revise and polish your Honors Essays; prepare for the Honors Exam; and design, organize, and stage the English Honors Conference in May. We will spend class time worshipping each stage of revision. We will also spend class time—and blog space—preparing for the Honors Exam (including the essay and identification sections). Most reading will be tied directly to course projects or the exam.

Some blog work will continue (see below); also, we will incorporate occasional ecocritical discussions and activities to keep the work of last semester fresh.

Texts*:

The Norton Anthology of English Literature, vols. 1 and 2, 8th edition, ed. Stephen Greenblatt.
The Norton Anthology of American Literature, vols. A-E, 7th edition, ed. Nina Baym.

*These are the texts I have ordered at the bookstore. But you may substitute equivalent anthologies for them (not the shorter one-volume types, but full, usually 2-volume ones) as long as they are relatively recent. You should show them to me to make sure they contain what you'll need. Unless you want to build your own libraries, you also may want to borrow these anthologies from libraries or friends, as they're expensive to buy. Also, we will only be using them intensively for about 6 weeks of the course.

Fall Requirements

Honors Essay Revisions	10%
Honors Essay Peer Responses	5%
Class Participation	25%
Honors Essay Study Guides	25%
Every Other Week Ecocritical Blogs	20%
Class Presentations	15%

Blogs

This semester, you will be doing two sorts of activities on your blogs. (**Note:** each of you has a new blog site created for you. The old one has been kept up, but please use the new one for this semester).

1. I shall divide your classes each into two groups, Group A and Group B. Every other week throughout most of the semester (see course schedule below), you and your group will post something on your blog that comes from your review for the honors exam: we'll call these our ecocritical blogs. For each posting, I want you to single out one text you have encountered in your review of American and English literature that has, you believe, some element of eco-critical significance that is particularly interesting. (This means you would be most often writing about a feature of the text, not the whole texts.) Describe this feature of the text and discuss what you see its ecocritical significance to be. (**NB:** In looking for ecocritical significances, remember that ecocriticism now concerns two sorts of inquiry: inquiry into the representation of nature in literature (the primary concern of the first generation of ecocritics), and inquiry into the environmental-social relationships implicit and/or explicit in all texts, no matter how far removed they are from overt representation or consideration of nature. These two concerns also parallel the development of the environmental movement. The first wave, after environmentalism became a mass movement and Earth Day celebrations began (1970), focused on nature and its protection. The second wave (from roughly the mid-1980s to the present) focused on many different aspects of human society as the source and also the site of an expanded/expanding list of social-environmental problems.)
2. In the categories section of your blog, you will post your Honors Essay Study Guides.

Attendance, Participation, Deadlines

Note that class participation is a quarter of your grade. Absences will adversely affect this part of your performance and therefore grade.

Also, all of our work is time-sensitive. Missed deadlines for all activities will affect grades.

Essay Guidelines and Academic Integrity

Your honors essay should be between 4,000-5,000 words (approximately 15-20 pages) in length; if an ambitious topic requires longer treatment, however, doing so will be fine. Please use a 12-point font and 1" margins. Include page numbers, a title, and a Works Cited list. Use MLA style. (For MLA style go to Purdue University's Online Writing Lab guidelines at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>).

A student's/scholar's work should be his or her own. But their ideas should also engage the ideas of other thinkers and writers. Communication gives ideas meaning and creates a community of thinkers. This is where citation and plagiarism can become tricky. Plagiarism is, of course, a serious issue. It is important that you establish your own point of view, make it clear which ideas are yours and which come from your sources, and respond to your sources critically. Be sure to cite all sources appropriately, using MLA style. If you have any questions, please ask me.

SPRING SEMESTER CALENDAR

TUESDAY 1/29 / WEDNESDAY 1/30

(Tuesday class only) Talk about Octavia Butler. (Both classes): Hand out Honors Essay drafts to writing group members and me; sign up for in-class conferences with me for following week; organize blog groups; sign up for Honors Study Guides; begin preparation for Honors Essay question on poetry.

TUESDAY 2/5 / WEDNESDAY 2/6

Workshop Honors Essay papers with writing groups; individual conferences with me.

TUESDAY 2/19 / WEDNESDAY 2/13 (NOTE: Tues. 2/12 is a holiday)

1) Read, from the xeroxes, the Prologue and Chapter 1 (on prosody) from Harvey Gross and Robert McDowell's *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry*; also read the following 10 pages from me, containing material on the honors exam poetry section, my response to Gross, McDowell and the honors exam, and a short glossary of poetic terminology for prosody and rhetorically-based poetic form. (Note: this glossary will serve as a list of types of poetic technique that you would draw on to answer the honors essay question).

2) Also, everyone must bring in a short poem (contemporary or traditional) of their choice in order to lead class discussion on it. The focus of the discussion will be the focus of the Honors Essay question formulation (see p. 1 of my Xeroxes). The discussion leader must have thought through how sound techniques (prosody) and other poetic techniques (rhetorically-based forms) reflect the meaning and spirit of their poem. The discussion leader must then, via questioning, ask students to formulate ideas about meaning and spirit of the poem and then explore, as fully as possible, how that it is reflected in diverse poetic techniques in the poem. **Please remember to post your poem on the blog under the category "Poetry Review"**.

3) Group A **must post** its first ecocritical blog by the time of the class.

TUESDAY 2/26 / WEDNESDAY 2/20

1) Read, from the Xeroxes, the short essay "Exams."

- 2) Presentations of poems from the previous class continue
- 3) Bring in final drafts of Honors Essay for writing group; workshopping for grammar, style, proofreading.
- 4) Group B **must post** its first ecocritical blog by the time of the class; discussion.
- 5) British Literature Study Guides **must be posted by Friday 6pm** in your blog under the “Honors Exam” category. Everyone **must read** them before the next class.

TUESDAY 3/04 / WEDNESDAY 2/27

- 1) Presentation/ discussion of British Literature Study Guides.
- 2) Practice with and discussion of sample honors exam #1.
- 3) Group A **must post** its second ecocritical blog by the time of the class.
- 4) American Literature Study Guides **must be posted by Friday 6pm** in your blog under the “Honors Exam” category. Everyone **must read** them before the next class.

HONORS ESSAY DUE FOR GRADING BY THE HONORS COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY, 3/05—THE LAST TIME TO HAND THEM IN WILL BE IN THE EVENING CLASS ON 3/05, POWDERMAKER HALL, ROOM 304, BY 9:15 PM.

TUESDAY 3/11 / WEDNESDAY 3/5

- 1) Discussion of American Literature Study Guides.
- 2) Practice with and discussion of sample honors exam #2.
- 3) Group B **must post** its second ecocritical blog by the time of the class.

TUESDAY 3/18 / WEDNESDAY 3/12

- 1) Everyone must come in with two quotations from the American literature and also the British literature period for which they are responsible for writing study guides: i.e. everyone must come in with four quotations. These must be typed up and Xeroxed so that everyone in the class will have a copy (they may be typed all on the same page). These quotations should emulate those you’ve seen in the sample honors exams. Presenters must have thought about how they would answer the honors question for each of them (i.e. “Identify the period of each. Justify your identification by showing how the passage’s style and theme typify its age. Whenever possible, identify also the author and the work cited”). Then lead the class in a discussion of each of these quotations.\
- 2) Group A **must post** its third ecocritical blog by the time of the class.

TUESDAY 3/25 / WEDNESDAY 3/19

- 1) Continued presentation and discussion of sample questions composed by class.
- 2) Airing of last minute questions and concerns about exam.

3) Group B **must post** its third ecocritical blog by the time of the class.

Wednesday 3/26 class doesn't meet; Monday classes that day meet instead.

HONORS EXAMINATION WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY 3/28. IT TYPICALLY RUNS FROM 9AM THROUGH 12:30. YOU MUST BE THERE.

Classes on 4/01 and 4/02; 4/08 and 4/09; and 4/15 and 4/16 will all be devoted to planning and work toward the conference. We will do final preparation and preliminarily rehearse in classes on 4/29 and 4/30. We'll have a full dress rehearsal involving both sections of the class on Tues., 5/06.

THE CONFERENCE WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY 5/07 AT AND AROUND FREE HOUR. AGAIN YOU MUST BE THERE!

Tuesday 5/13 / Wednesday 5/14

No class: you are officially through with the program and will hopefully all be enjoying your honors in the manner of your choosing.