

HL 0301
Environmental Sustainability in Literature

A critical approach which began in the late 1980s, ecocriticism (or green studies as it is referred to in the UK) is slowly emerging as an alternative method to reading literary works. In this course, we will be introduced to the nuances in the different approaches to environmental sustainability in literary works so as to arrive at a better understanding of ecocriticism as a literary approach. From Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* to J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, we can practice ecocriticism as a method of reading and evaluate the relationship between nature and text. More importantly, we can begin to apply this method of reading to contemporary Southeast Asian literature so as to expand the scope of ecocriticism to literature outside of the American or English canon.

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Course Outline

S/N	Topic	Lecture Hours
1	Introduction to Environmental Sustainability in Literature	3
2	Ecocriticism: Reading Henry David Thoreau's <i>Walden, Or, Life in the Woods</i> .	3
3	Ecocriticism: Reading Henry David Thoreau's <i>Walden, Or, Life in the Woods</i> .	3
4	Ecocriticism in Children's Literature: Reading Rudyard Kipling's <i>The Jungle Book</i> .	3
5	Green Studies: Re-reading Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i> and <i>King Lear</i>	3
6	Nature as Character in Tolkien's <i>The Hobbit</i> .	3
7	Nature as Character in Tolkien's <i>The Hobbit</i> .	3
8	Recess Week	
9	Applying Ecocriticism to Contemporary Southeast Asian Literature: The River as Witness in Merlinda Bobis' <i>Fish-Hair Woman</i> .	3
10	Applying Ecocriticism to Contemporary Southeast Asian Literature: The River as Witness in Merlinda Bobis' <i>Fish-Hair Woman</i> .	3
11	Applying Ecocriticism to Contemporary Southeast Asian Literature: Trauma and Landscape in Vaddey Ratner's <i>In the Shadow of the Banyan</i> .	3
12	Applying Ecocriticism to Contemporary Southeast Asian Literature: Trauma and Landscape in Vaddey Ratner's <i>In the Shadow of the Banyan</i> .	3
13	Summary and Review	3

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate through essay writing

- A general understanding of environmental sustainability in literary works
- A critical reading of thematic concerns of environmental conservation such as literature's response to the changing landscape

Student Assessment

Student will be assessed by:

- 1) 20% Short in-class written assignments
- 2) 30% Essay Assignment
- 3) 50% Final Examination

Short in-class Written Assignments (20%)

Students will be required to complete 2 writing exercises (200 word long each) in class. Writing exercises should reflect students' original opinions about the use of ecocriticism as an alternative method of reading.

Essay Assignment (30%): This 1800 – 2000 word essay must provide a cogent argument about the relationship between literature and the natural environment in any two texts studied in the course. Students must use at least 2 secondary sources. Students will submit a hard copy – and also submit a softcopy through turn-it-in – in NTU-Learn.

Final Examination (50%)

Textbooks/References

Primary Reading

Barry, Peter. "Ecocriticism." *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009. 239-61. Print.

Bobis, Merlinda C. *Fish Hair Woman*. North Melbourne, Vic.: Spinifex, 2012. Print.

Kipling, Rudyard. *The Jungle Book*. London: Harper Collins, 2010. Print.
ISBN: 9780007350858

Ratner, Vaddey. *In the Shadow of the Banyan*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012. Print.
ISBN: 9781849837606

Shakespeare, William. *Four Tragedies*. London; New York: Penguin Books, 1994.
ISBN: 9780140434583

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden, Or, Life in the Woods*. New Edition. New York: Dover Publications, 1995. Print.
ISBN: 9780486284958

Tolkien, J. R.R. *The Hobbit*. London: Harper Collins, 2011. Print.
ISBN: 9780261103344

Secondary Reading

Bennett, Jane. *Thoreau's Nature: Ethics, Politics, and the Wild*. New ed. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995.

Curry, Patrick. "Defending Middle-Earth." *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. Ed. Laurence Coupe. London: Routledge, 2000. pp. 282–87.

Delmas, Catherine, and André Dodeman. *Re/membering Place*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

Dickerson, Matthew, and Jonathan Evans. *Ents, elves, and Eriador: the Environmental Vision of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011.

Egan, Gabriel. *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism*. London; New York: Routledge, 2006.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012.
Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Keegan, Bridget, and James C. McKusick. *Literature and Nature: Four Centuries of Nature Writing*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, c2001.

Myerson, Joel. *The Cambridge Companion to Henry David Thoreau*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

O'Briain, Helen Conrad, and Gerard Hynes, eds. *Tolkien: the Forest and the City*. Dublin: Four Courts, 2013.

Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*. New York: A.A. Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1996, c1995.

Scott, Charlotte. *Shakespeare's Nature: From Cultivation to Culture*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2014.