

ENGLISH 221 –
English Literature in the Anthropocene
SYLLABUS – 2015 WINTER TERM 1

Dr. Judith Paltin
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Course meets: TR 2-3 pm in BRKX 2365

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**Office hours: TR from 1-1:50
and by appointment**

Course rationale: We are tasked, in this course, to survey British/Anglophone literature from the 18th century to the present, to practice literary research methods, and to prepare the ground for more specialized critical studies in literature and affiliated disciplines. These are complex goals. I believe the course will have more coherence and efficacy if we approach the readings through a focused study: here, the idea of the anthropocene. We will not be too strict about this, but will use it as an example of how more specialized approaches to literature typically function, and to generate intellectual energy when a more general approach isn't as interesting.

Course Description:

This course examines English literary writing across several centuries as it slowly becomes aware of the idea of the anthropocene: that human activities have so woven change into the planet that they are marked in the geological epic, and that the scope and scale of environmental change is a dominating concern for our species as it is for all others. We will trace literary evolutions in what Lawrence Buell calls our environmental imagination, and arrange our study under categories such as environmental justice, biopower, and new materialisms. How shall we use the world? What happens when human empire reaches its limit? How should we take account of the lives and interests of animals and plants? How does the planet, through an evolving poetics, begin to write back to industrialization and the forces of extinction?

Nevertheless, in keeping with the introductory survey nature of the course, we will also use some amount of our time to study narrative, poetic and dramatic matters, critical/cultural theory, and some history, in order to prepare you for more advanced study in the English major, or to work critically and analytically with verbal texts in any field.

Texts

The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Volumes D, E, F (packaged together), 9th edition.
Additional materials may be made available in class and via Connect.

You may use other collections or sources for the assigned texts; many are well-anthologized. However, **you will always need the day's assigned texts available to you in class**, and if you are using a different edition than the one ordered, you must know the text well enough to locate passages without the help of page references. I have selected an anthology package carefully, because (for an anthology) it seems competitively priced and convenient (you only need carry one volume at a time).

Requirements and Marking

Requirements consist of two essays including several stages of submission, a midterm and final examination, class attendance and active participation in a varied set of activities during class meetings, such as group discussions or collaborative research exercises. For your essay submissions, please turn in both a hard copy **and an electronic copy uploaded to our course website on Connect**. The electronic copy will be used to demonstrate you submitted the assignment on time.

In your writing, please pay special attention to the writing rubric given with the assignment prompt, which will help to guide you to the highest marks possible.

Planning ahead is important to your academic success. Therefore, except in the case of dire emergency, your paper's mark will go down a full grade (A becomes B) each 24-hour period your paper submission is late. All papers must be submitted by December 8 for credit, without exception. Course incompletes are given for serious medical reasons only.

- 10% Participation
- 15% Midterm examination
- 20% Analytical essay (15%), with peer review exercise (5%)
- 25% Critical essay, with précis and personal conference
- 30% Final examination

This course adheres to the university's strict policies against plagiarism. *If you represent the words, productions or ideas of anyone else as your own, you become subject to the disciplinary processes of the university concerning plagiarism, and may fail the course or be expelled from the university.* If you have any questions about what counts as plagiarism, please ask me before you submit your assignment.

Anyone who may qualify is gently encouraged to contact the Access and Diversity Office, 1203 Brock Hall (tele: 604.822.5844), for academic accommodations and support.

CLASS READING SCHEDULE:

Sep 8 – IMAGINE UBC: No class.

Sep 10 – [Materials projected in class.]

Anna Letitia Barbault: "The Mouse's Petition." Suggested reading: "The Tragedy of the Commons," with a selection of responses, available on Connect.

Sep 15 – William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*: "The Chimney Sweeper." "The Divine Image." *Songs of Experience*: "Introduction." "Earth's Answer." "The Garden of Love." "London." "And did those feet" (p. 161).

Sep 17 – William Wordsworth: "The Tables Turned." "A slumber did my spirit seal." "Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802." "The World Is Too Much with Us." *The 1805 Prelude*: Vision on Mount Snowden (Book 13; pp. 398-401). Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "The Aeolian Harp." "Kubla Khan."

Sep 22 – Percy Bysshe Shelley: "Ozymandias." "Ode to the West Wind." John Keats. "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." "Ode to a Nightingale." "Ode on Melancholy." Your choice: another Keats poem. You will have the opportunity to discuss it on your midterm exam.

Sep 24 – John Clare: "The Nightingale's Nest." "Pastoral Poesy." "[Mouse's Nest]." "I Am."

Sep 29 – Thomas Carlyle: "Captains of Industry." John Henry Newman: From *The Idea of a University*, pp. 1078-1084 (Discourse 5, 7). John Stuart Mill: "The Subjection of Women."

Oct 6 – Elizabeth Barrett Browning: "To George Sand: A Desire." "To George Sand: A Recognition." "When our two souls stand up erect and strong." Robert Browning: "Fra Lippo Lippi." "Caliban upon Setebos."

Oct 8 – Leonard Huxley: "The Huxley-Wilberforce Debate at Oxford." Charles Dickens: From *Hard Times* "Coketown." Annie Besant: "The 'White Slavery' of London Match Workers." T.N. Mukharji: "A Visit to Europe: The Indian and Colonial Exhibition."

Oct 13 – John Ruskin: "The Slave Ship." "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" [on Connect]. Matthew Arnold: "Dover Beach." Walter Pater: "La Gioconda." Gerard Manley Hopkins: "The Windhover." "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection."

Oct 15 – **Midterm examination**

Oct 20 – Oscar Wilde: "Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*." George Bernard Shaw: "Mrs. Warren's Profession."

Oct 22 – Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*.

Oct 27 – Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*.

Oct 29 – WWI Poets. Siegfried Sassoon: ""The Rear-Guard." "Glory of Women." Isaac Rosenberg: "Break of Day in the Trenches." Wilfred Owen: "Dulce et Decorum Est." "Disabled."

Nov 3 – **full draft of Paper #1 due at 2:00 pm in class and on Connect. Paper clinic. This class is required, or must be made up by exchanging papers on Connect.**

Nov 5 – Final (revised) draft of **Paper #1 due at 2:00 pm in class and on Connect.** Modernist manifestos: "Imagisme" and "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste." BLAST: "Long Live the Vortex!"

Nov 10 – William Butler Yeats: "When You Are Old." "The Song of Wandering Aengus." "Who Goes with Fergus?" "September 1913." "The Second Coming." "Sailing to Byzantium." "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop."

Nov 12 – James Joyce, "The Dead."

Nov 17 – T.S. Eliot: "The Waste Land." "The Hollow Men."

Nov 19 – D.H. Lawrence: "Snake." W.H. Auden: "As I Walked Out One Evening." "In Praise of Limestone." Dylan Thomas: "The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower."

Nov 24 – Stevie Smith: "Our Bog is Dood." "Pretty." Philip Larkin: "MCMXIV." "Talking in Bed." "This Be the Verse." "Aubade."

Nov 26 – Seamus Heaney: "Undine." "Punishment." "Casualty." "Requiem for the Croppies." "Clearances."

Dec 1 – **Paper #2 due at 2:00 pm in class and on Connect.** Eavan Boland: "The Dolls Museum in Dublin." "The Lost Land." Paul Muldoon: "Anseo." "Meeting the British." From "7, Middagh Street: Wystan."

Dec 3 – Kiran Desai, "The Sermon in the Guava Tree."

Exam period Dec. 8-22— **final examination, TBA**