

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2017-2018 C LIT 497 A1: Special Topics:**

***World Literature and the Environment***

***(Fall Term)***

Instructor: *Odile Cisneros*

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<https://www.ualberta.ca/arts/about/people-collection/odile-cisneros>

Time: *W 1:00 PM-3:50 PM*

Place: *T 1-104*

Office Hours: *MF 1:00 PM-2:30 PM*

*and by appointment*

Course Website:

*eClass under C LIT 497*

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**Course Prerequisite:** None

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes       No, not needed, no such projects approved

**Community Service Learning** component

Required     Optional     N/A

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material available**

Exam registry – Students’ Union

<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>

See explanations below

Document distributed in class

Other: Details provided by instructor in class

NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

From the Garden of Eden to pastoral scenes in Greek and Latin poetry, from solitary walks through Romantic forests to modern wastelands, literature since Antiquity has depicted the natural environment and the interactions of humans with more-than-human nature. More often than not, though, nature has been silently relegated to the background. In contemporary times, the environmental movement brought those landscapes to the foreground in self-conscious forms of writing that chart our relationship with, and responsibilities to, the environment. From East to West and from ancient times to our days, in this course we will read a wide selection of World Literature through an “ecocritical” lens to bring into focus received ideas about nature vs. culture, human vs. animal, and animate vs. inanimate nature. We will seek to understand how the literary imagination can shape our views and actions towards life on the planet. *This course counts toward the [Certificate in International Learning \(CIL\)](#).*

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

**At the end of this course, successful students should be able to:**

- Define world literature, environmental humanities, ecocriticism, and green studies.
- Describe theoretical concepts and approaches in ecocriticism, and develop appropriate vocabulary to explore them.
- List and briefly discuss world literature texts from antiquity to the present that portray nature and human/nature relationships.
- Note continuities and breakthroughs in these portrayals, and their connection to historical and geographical context.
- Discuss the assumptions behind Western and non-Western approaches to humans and nature and how they shape our interactions with the environment.
- Describe how the literary imagination can uniquely inform ecological thinking and environmental attitudes.
- Perform a reading of a literary or visual text from an ecocritical perspective.

## **Texts:**

*C LIT 497 Selected Readings* (electronic course pack available on eClass)

Supplementary materials will be distributed through eClass as specified in “Supplementary Class Schedule” and more materials, including films, may be placed on reserve.

## **Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

Active class participation (of which attendance only 5%)	10%
3 short reaction papers (2-3 pp) on readings/viewings (each 7%)	21%
Joint presentation on a mutually agreed on topic	15%
Midterm exam, Wed. Oct. 18,	24%
Final paper (10-15 pp) due: Wed., Dec. 13., at 2 pm in Arts 218-C	30%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

Since this course is primarily based on the discussion of texts and films, students are required to attend class properly prepared, having done the readings and/or viewing/listening specified on the Class Schedule. Unless otherwise indicated, the readings are to be found on eClass. Other recommended books may be placed on Reserve at Rutherford Library. In addition to readings on eClass and recommended books, supplementary course materials will be posted on eClass or may be placed on reserve at the Rutherford Library Reserve Desk.

Attendance and active participation in class discussion will determine 10% of the grade.

Students will hand in 3 short reaction papers (2-3 pp) on the date of their choice based on readings/viewing scheduled for that week. These are your own reflections on the assigned readings for the course. They should demonstrate you have read and understood the ideas in the reading/viewing and that you engage critically with them.

A joint presentation on an assigned topic will be required of students and scheduled by the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

One midterm exam will be given on Wed., Oct. 18, based on material from the first half the semester.

A research paper based on a topic chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor will be due on Wed., Dec. 13 at 2 pm. The final paper topic must be approved in writing by the instructor through submission of an abstract by the student at a date TBA. The mechanics of the paper should conform to the MLA or Chicago Manual of Style format.

Details of assignments will also be discussed in the course of the semester and detailed instructions will be posted on eClass.

### **Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

### ***Academic Integrity:***

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.governance.ualberta.ca](http://www.governance.ualberta.ca)) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

### ***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that directs discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

### ***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Student Conduct & Accountability Office](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating”

that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the "attendance and participation" component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**In this course**, attendance and participation will count for 20% of the grade. Please see "Grade Distribution" and "Explanatory Notes on Assignments" above.

***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in one class-day after the stated deadline without penalty, with a 1%-per-class-day penalty assessed for each subsequent class-day of lateness.

***Student Accessibility Services:***

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381).

***Grading:***

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

**“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”**

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<b>Excellent.</b> A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	<b>A+</b>	4.0	<b>97-100</b>
	<b>A</b>	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	<b>A-</b>	3.7	<b>90-92</b>
<b>Good.</b> B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	<b>B+</b>	3.3	<b>87-89</b>
	<b>B</b>	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	<b>B-</b>	2.7	<b>80-82</b>
<b>Satisfactory.</b> C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	<b>C+</b>	2.3	<b>77-79</b>
	<b>C</b>	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	<b>C-</b>	1.7	<b>70-72</b>
<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	<b>D+</b>	1.3	<b>65-69</b>
	<b>D</b>	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	<b>F</b>	0.0	<b>0-59</b>