

COURSE UNIT DESCRIPTION

| Course unit title | Research field, branch, code | Faculty | Department, Institute |
|--|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Ecocritical studies of literature in English | Philology, Linguistics, H004 | Philology | English Philology |

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| Study cycle | 3 rd (doctoral) |
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| Mode of delivery | ECTS credits | Type of the course unit | Language of instruction |
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| Contact (lectures, workshops, tutorials) | 8 | | |
| Individual or in a group | | | |

Annotation of the course content

The aim of the module is to give doctoral students an opportunity to expand their intellectual competences regarding the ways in which cultural texts and practices convey human entanglements in the environment and the aesthetic imagination may create premises for metamorphosis in both thought and world.

The module's theoretical frames derive from the field of environmental humanities, with an emphasis on material ecocriticism, which direct their hermeneutic activity to the study of the (aesthetic, ecological, ideological, etc.) implications of the encounters between discourse and the environment in various domains of cultural production. In this module, the object of study is English-speaking literature. Students are expected to study all the texts suggested in the syllabus. Depending on their PhD project, the students choose a literary text, which they analyse in a research paper (15-20 pages) in light of the theoretical texts offered in the syllabus. Students are expected to present their research papers to the exam board and answer questions raised during the discussion. The language of the research paper is expected to be English.

Discourse and the experience of matter: Michel Serres' eco-phenomenology. Life as intermingling/enmeshment. Body and world. Matrix, mater, metaphor, metamorphosis. The natural contract. Ethics and metaphysics. Jane Bennet's political ecology. Things as social actants. The human-thing assemblage. The vitality of matter. Christine Marran's aesthetics of toxicity. Immersion and ontological vulnerability. Biotrope. Ethnic environmentalism. Obligate storytelling.

The matter of ecocriticism: Serenella Iovino in Serpil Oppermann's "material ecocriticism". Life as semiosis. "Storied matter" and narrative agency. Human and nonhuman actants. Material-semiotic assemblages. Timothy Clark's model of ecocritical scales. Ecological violence and environmental awareness. The hermeneutics of the Anthropocene: Capitalocene, Chthulucene, Plantacionocene. Rosanne Kennedy's "multidirectional eco-memory". Environmental humanities in the Anthropocene: Lawrence Buell, Ursula K. Heise, Karen Thornber, Thomas Vermeulen, Dipesh Chakrabarty.

Aesthetic forms, genres, tropes: Literature and the issue of anthropocentrism: body/animal/plant – sign – (bio)trope. Seamus Heaney’s poems “The Tollund Man”, “The Grauballe Man”/Elizabeth Bishop’s poems “Moose”, “Fish”/Les Murray’s poems “Eagle Pair”, “Lyre Bird”. Genre and environmental awareness: pastoral, utopia, dystopia, speculative prose, satire, comedy, tragedy. Jennifer Wenzel’s *The Disposition of Nature*. Joseph Meeker’s “The Comedy of Survival”. Cli-fi satire or posthuman comedy?: Richard Flanagan’s novel *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams*. Climate change and affect: biophilia, ecophobia, solastagia. Richard Powers’ novel *Bewilderment*. The ecological sublime in Algernon Blackwood’s novella “The Willows”.

Reading

Albrecht, Glenn. *Earth Emotions. New Words for a New World*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Bennett, Jane. 2010. *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Blackwood, Algernon. 2002. “The Willows.” In *Ancient Sorceries and Other Weird Stories*. London: Penguin Books. Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11438>

Buell, Lawrence, Ursula K. Heise, and Karen Thornber. 2011. *Literature and Environment. The Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, no. 36. 417-40. Available at: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-environ-111109-144855>

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2009. “The Climate of History: Four Theses.” *Critical Inquiry*, 35/2. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/596640#metadata_info_tab_contents

Clark, Timothy. 2015. *Ecocriticism on the Edge. The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London: Bloomsbury.

Estok, Simon. 2020. *The Ecophobia Hypothesis*. London and New York: Routledge.

Flanagan, Richard. 2021. *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Glotfelty, Cheryl and Harold Fromm (eds.) 1996. *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press.

Hitt, Christopher. 1999. “Toward an Ecological Sublime.” *New Literary History*, Vol. 30, No. 3. Available at: <https://pdfslide.net/documents/toward-an-ecological-sublime.html?page=1>

Iovino, Serenella and Serpil Oppermann (eds.) 2014. “Introduction”. In *Material Ecocriticism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Kennedy, Rosanne. “Multidirectional Eco-Memory in an Era of Extinction: Colonial Whaling and Indigenous Dispossession in Kim Scott’s *That Deadman Dance*.” Eds. Ursula K. Heise, Jon Christensen, and Michelle Niemann. *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*. Routledge, 2017. 268-277.

Marran, Christine L. 2017. *Ecology Without Culture. Aesthetics for a Toxic World*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

McGurl, Mark. 2012. “The Posthuman Comedy.” *Critical Inquiry*, 38. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/664550#metadata_info_tab_contents

Meeker, Joseph. 1972. “The Comedy of Survival”. *The North American Review*, 257, 2. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25117329#metadata_info_tab_contents

Moore, Jason W. 2016. “The Rise of Cheap Nature.” In *Anthropocene or Capitalocene*. Oakland: PM Press.

Powers, Richard. 2021. *Bewilderment*. London: Hutchinson Heinemann.

Serres, Michel. 2011. *The Natural Contract*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Wenzel, Jennifer. 2020. “Introduction.” In *The Disposition of Nature*. New York: Fordham University Press.

| Lecturer | Degree | Main works published in the research field during the last five years |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Rūta Šlapkauskaitė | Doctor of the Humanities | Šlapkauskaitė, R. 2022. "An Ecology of the Hewn in Susan Vreeland's <i>The Forest Lover</i> ." In <i>The Northern Forest</i> edited by Sara Bédard-Goulet and Daniel Chartier. Tartu and Montréal: University of Tartu Press and Imaginaire Nord. |
| | | Šlapkauskaitė, R. 2021. "The He(A)rt of the Witness: Remembering Australian Prisoners of War in Richard Flanagan's <i>The Narrow Road to the Deep North</i> ". In <i>Anglica: An International Journal of English Studies</i> , 30/3, pages 141-161. |
| | | Šlapkauskaitė, R. 2020. "Imperial S(K)in: The Orthography of the Wake in Esi Edugyan's <i>Washington Black</i> . <i>Studia Anglica Posnaniensia</i> (55), pages 465-494. |
| | | Šlapkauskaitė, R. 2020. "Precariousness, kinship, and care: Becoming human in Claire Cameron's <i>The Last Neanderthal</i> ". <i>The Journal of Commonwealth Literature</i> , pages 1-15. |
| | | Šlapkauskaitė, R. 2019. "An Arc of Itinerant Tropes: Beyond Kin and Kind in Andre Alexis' <i>Fifteen Dogs</i> . Eds. Maria and Martin Loschnigg, <i>The Anglo-Canadian Novel in the Twenty-first Century: Interpretations</i> . Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter. |
| | | Šlapkauskaitė, R. 2014. Intermedial Translation: The Gyration Gaze in David Dabydeen's <i>Turner</i> . In <i>European Journal of English Studies</i> , Volume: 18, Issue: 03. |
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Approved by decision of Doctoral Committee (date, record No) January 13, 2023. Protocol No. (7.17 E) 15600-KT-16.

Chair of Committee Prof. Dr Meilutė Ramonienė