SBC 321 Ecology and Evolution in American Literature

This course is a review of 19th- and 20th-century American writers who trace the evolution of the US with respect to ecological practices through various multicultural perspectives. Literature covered will include transcendentalist essays, utopian/dystopian novels, ecofeminist fiction, and journalism.

The course also examines current global environmental issues, and includes the viewing of critical contemporary environmental films and video.

Course Learning Objectives:

1) **WRT**: Students write critically about our class readings and film viewings. Students will write 6 two-three paged-typed short essays. In these short essays, they will analyze the class readings and film viewings. Students will share their short writing in class and discuss them at length with their peers. They will talk about ways to turn these ideas into more developed essays. Students also write 5-8 page typed research essays. These essays will come out of their shorter writings and more advanced outside research. Students work with the professor one-on-one to revise the research essay before submitting a final draft for a grade. All of the writing in this course helps develop their writing and critical thinking skills.

2) **HCA**: Through analytical, critical, and speculative means, SBC 321 examines the relationship of human and environmental history, thought, values and considers the
ways in which those ideas have shaped, and will shape, our global ecological communities. The course broadens understanding and fosters an appreciation of human global and environmental cultures, through analysis of gender, race, class, literature and film.

3) HFA+: Goes beyond HCA to foster a more in-depth understanding, and practice and analysis of human environmental thought and values in a global context. Students examine complex environmental literature (poetry, fiction, nonfiction), film and video as a lens through which they gain a deeper understanding of the relationship of human and ecological communities worldwide. SBC 203 is a prerequisite (HCA). The course is based on a critical analysis of cultural, social, political, environmental, gendered, racial concepts and their interconnections in literature, film and video. The class is conducted the “seminar” style, with students actively speaking, sharing ideas, and contributing to class discussion, both in written and oral participation. Students read theoretical essays on “ecocriticism,” “ecofeminism,” and “environmental justice” as well as literature (fiction, nonfiction, poetry). The course also includes analysis and writing about environmental film and video.

Course Requirements:

1) Attendance. Students are permitted four absences in total all semester--including those due to a documented illness and/or emergency (university sanctioned events are the exception). Five absences will result in the lowering of the final grade by 20%. Every absence thereafter will result in another lowering of the final grade by 3%.

2) Timely Arrival. Arriving late is disruptive and inconsiderate. Students will not be counted as present if they arrive more than twelve minutes late.

3) Participation. Your participation is a very important part of the course grade. Much of the course will be organized around class discussion and small group assignments. There will be frequent in-class writing assignments; verbal and written contributions to the class will make a big difference to the final grade. The in-class writing assignments may NOT be made up at a later date.

4) Reading Journal: Students will write reading responses—2-3 page typed journal entries about the class readings, due approximately every two weeks. These are reflective writings (not finished essays), but they will look closely at the language, imagery, structure and meaning of the
books/readings and film viewings. These must be posted on our class site on BB under SafeAssign, AND brought into class on the assigned due dates.

6) **A five-eight page typed research essay** - this paper will combine literary analysis with research on a related environmental topic that fits the subject matter. Students will submit a draft of their essay three weeks before the due date and meet with the professor at least once to talk about revisions that need to be made before submitting the final draft.

7) **Three short written exams.** These will test the students’ knowledge of the readings.

8) **Class Presentation:** 10 minute oral presentation on a key environmental issue such as: environmental justice, climate change, water rights, waste and consumption, hydro-fracking, nuclear waste, toxics and health, animal rights, food and agriculture.

9) The following activities are **strictly prohibited** in this classroom: text-messaging and any use of computers or cell phones. Cell phones and computers must be put away and **turned off completely** during the class session.

10) **Extra Credit options:** write about outside speakers and events that we attend. These will be graded by percentage and they will count as a single “journal” entry.

**DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS):**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities.asp.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

**Academic Integrity**

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person’s work as your own is always wrong. Academic dishonesty can range from simple breach of class or University guidelines, such as using a cell phone in an exam, to very serious cases which may result in expulsion. Any suspected instance of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate academic judiciary committee. It is the
responsibility of all students to make themselves familiar with the University's policies and procedures regarding academic integrity as well as any additional guidelines issued by instructors for specific classes. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary Web site at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT:
Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.

Important Note: We will use Blackboard actively throughout the semester. If you cannot access our class on Blackboard (and if you do not receive emails from me via Blackboard), go to the sinc site in the library basement and take care of this immediately.

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

All Journals/reflective essays: 20%
Final Research Essay 35%
Research Presentation: 10%
Three short exams on our class readings/viewings: 25%
Participation: 10%

Living Downstream  Sandra Steingraber
Refuge  Terry Tempest Williams
Body Toxic  Susanne Antonetta
Animal Dreams- Barbara Kingsolver
Fifth Sacred Thing  Starwhawk
About a Mountain  John D’Agata

Also: Essays, excerpts, poetry by Wendell Berry, Robert Bullard, Aldo Leopold, Alice Walker, Winona LaDuke, Karen Warren, Mary Oliver, Luci Topahonso, Henry David Thoreau.

Films to be watched: Living Downstream, Gasland II, Into Eternity, Chasing Ice.  (Films vary each semester.)
Reading Schedule (I will be adding in PDFs, and film viewings as well as writing assignments):

**Week One**

Watch *Living Downstream*

**Week Two**

Read *Living Downstream*. Thoreau, Berry, Mckibben.

**Week Three**

Living Downstream.

Living Downstream. Leopold.

**Week Four**

Finish *Living Downstream*. Start *Refuge*.

Essay 1 due. LD & Thoreau, Berry, McKibben, Leopold.

**Week Five**

*Refuge*.

In class test on LS and R.

Essay 2 due on R. Mary Oliver and Wendell Berry poetry.

**Week Six**

*Body Toxic*

**Week Seven**

*Body Toxic*

Essay 3 due. On BT.

**Week Eight**


**Week Nine**
Animal Dreams
Alice Walker & Luci Topahonso poetry and essays.
Essay 4 due on AD, & Walker, Topahonso.
In class test on BT and AD.

**Week Ten**
About A Mountain
Into Eternity.

**Week Eleven**
About A Mountain
Essay 5 due on AM and into Eternity.

**Week Twelve**

**Week Thirteen**
The Fifth Sacred Thing
Film: Chasing Ice.

**Week Fourteen**
Fifth Sacred Thing.

**Week Fifteen**
Fifth Sacred Thing (Finish). In Class-- Writing Test on AM and FST.
Essay 6 due on FST.
Student Presentations.
All Final Papers Due--final versions of everything.
All extra credit assignments due.