Stony Brook University
Sustainability Studies Program
SBC 330: The Literature of Extreme Events
This course satisfies the DEC category G
This course satisfies the SBC categories WRTD, HCA, HFA+
Course Instructor: Jesse Curran
Office Hours: Tu/Th. 9:50-11:30
Jessica.curran@stonybrook.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
A course that examines the depiction of extreme events (both natural and human-related) in
literature, journalism, art, and film, with special emphasis paid to the extended political and social
issues that are raised by the events in question.

Course Pre/co-requisites
SBC 203 or EGL 204

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

WRTD: Extensive writing and revision takes place in this course; there are three full critical essays
with major revision, and multiple response papers.

HCA and HFA+:
In this course, students exercise very advanced skills in literary and cultural analysis, critical
thinking, and analytical writing. Through reading and analyzing literature, media, art, history, etc.
students are challenged to apply critical frameworks to intelligently shape sophisticated
interpretations that are relevant to contemporary political, historical, environmental, and social
issues. Through both formal and informal writing assignments, students will develop their analytical
writing skills; careful attention will be paid to the process of thinking globally, philosophically, and
ideologically about environmental disaster and the cost of human and ecological trauma. Students
will also work collaboratively in presentation groups, exercising skills in speaking, leadership, and
group work. Intensive critical and analytical thinking goes on in this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Description and schedule of Required Readings and/or Assignments.

Course Texts
Rebecca Solnit, A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster.
Gretel Ehrlich. Facing the Wave: A Journey in the Wake of the Tsunami
Carolyn Forche. Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness
Leslie Marmon Silko. Almanac of the Dead
Jesamyn Ward, Salvage the Bones

Mid-Term Exam
The mid-term exam is designed to reward students who keep up with the reading and attend class regularly throughout the semester. It will primarily consist of identifications, short answers, and a short essay. If you come to all class sessions and complete the readings, you should have no issue doing well on the exam. There will be no make-up exams.

Papers
You will be required to write two literary analysis papers this semester (five pages typed). Formal assignment sheets will accompany each assignment and you will have ample time to draft and revise this work and one longer paper (8 pages typed).

*All papers must be written in 12-point Times New Roman font, be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Failure to adhere to these guidelines (as well as poorly proof-read writing) will result in a lowered letter grade (from B+ to B, etc.). I do not accept emailed papers. It is your responsibility to have a clean, printed copy of your paper ready to hand in on the day it is due (this means printing it the night before to make sure there are no last-minute issues).

Reader Response Journals
On sessions indicated in the course schedule, students will be responsible for submitting informal reader responses (2 pages typed). These responses need not have the formal structure of a thesis-driven essay, but rather should use the day’s reading as a platform to make connections, ask questions, and generate discussion. The strongest responses will quote directly from the reading assignment, commenting on and analyzing the text’s language in order to frame the response.

Presentation/Presentation Response Paper
Early in the semester students will be assigned presentation groups. Each group will be responsible for coordinating the class discussion on its designated day. Each student in the group will be responsible for submitting a two page written reflective response paper on their presentation within a week after the presentation. The paper should address the specific material covered in the session; what was done to prepare for the presentation; and should reflect upon the actual experience. What did you learn? What was challenging? What was productive?

Class Participation
You should come to class prepared to talk about the reading for that day (with your books, etc.). Each class session will be a mixture of informal lecture and discussion; thus, your own questions and comments are essential to the success of the course. Participation involves attentive, respectful, and engaged presence. I am looking for consistent and thoughtful responses to our reading assignments. I am also looking for your sustained effort in making the classroom environment a place of sincere and respectful intellectual discourse. It goes without saying that arriving late, doing other work, and dozing off will adversely influence your participation; I notice these things. Once again, you must want to be here to do well. Coming to office hours and emailing me also works to demonstrate participation. If discussion is lagging, expect quizzes or in-class writing assignments, etc.

Attendance and Make Up Policy
In close relation to your participation performance is your attendance; attendance and full participation are required. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the course. After 6 absences, you will receive an F. Active participation will strengthen your grade. Please email me beforehand if you have a pressing personal issue that forces you to miss class.
GRADING:

2 Revised Papers (4-5 pages) 20%
Final Paper (8 pages) 20%
Presentation/Presentation Response Paper 15%
Participation/Quizzes 10%
Midterm Exam 15%
Reader's Responses 20%

Indicate alphanumeric breakdown of grades or explicit description of the grading technique (i.e., description of the “curve,” or A= 95-100, A- = 90-95, or whatever the instructor defines)

MEETING SCHEDULE
List each class meeting and assignments and topics for each. Include Exam Schedule and assignment due dates

CLASS PROTOCOL
I realize that many of you rely on digital texts these days. However, there should be absolutely no phones out in class and if you are using a Kindle or Laptop, you should only have the page open to our reading assignment. We are small group and I can tell if you are doing some other work or are checking football scores, facebook, your email, etc. I may or may not call you out on this, but know that I notice and such distractions will adversely influence your participation grade.

CLASS RESOURCES (examples below)
Library resources
Blackboard
Writing Center
Career Center
Others (see link) http://stonybrook.edu/aadvising/tut.html

The University Senate Undergraduate and Graduate Councils have authorized that the following required statements appear in all teaching syllabi (graduate and undergraduate courses) on the Stony Brook Campus. See also http://www.stonybrook.edu/provost/facultyinfo/Syllabus%20Statement.doc

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) STATEMENT (must be the following language)
If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

[In addition, this statement on emergency evacuation is often included, but not required:
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 ]

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT (must be the following language as approved by the undergrad council):

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. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

**CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (must be the following language as approved by the undergrad council):**
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, or inhibits students' ability to learn.

Week One


Week Two


Week Three


Week Four


Week Five

Gretel Erlich. *Facing the Wave: A Journey in the Wake of the Tsunami*

Week Six

Gretel Erlich. *Facing the Wave: A Journey in the Wake of the Tsunami*

Week Seven

Carolyn Forche. *Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness*

Week Eight

Carolyn Forche. *Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness*
Week Nine
Susan Griffin ed. Transforming Terror

Week Ten
Susan Griffin ed. Transforming Terror.

Week Eleven
Leslie Marmon Silko. *Almanac of the Dead*

Week Twelve
Leslie Marmon Silko. *Almanac of the Dead*

*Week Thirteen*
Leslie Marmon Silko. *Almanac of the Dead*

*Week Fourteen*
Jesmyn Ward, *Salvage the Bones*

*Week Fifteen*
Jesmyn Ward, *Salvage the Bones*