

LITT 4610 Fall 2013

Senior Seminar—American Survival Narratives

MW 3:35pm-5:25pm, F111

Instructor: Dr. Kristin J. Jacobson (aka Dr. J)

Office phone: (609) 626-5581

Email: Please use our Blackboard email

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 1:30pm-3pm & by appointment

Office Location: F243

Mailbox: Arts and Humanities, K150

Course Description: Students will close read, analyze, and discuss several novels as well as nonfiction texts, including literary and cultural criticism. They will complete an original, researched scholarly essay engaging the seminar's topic (approximately 25 pages) and two presentations. A shorter paper (approximately 8-10 pages) and an annotated bibliography will provide the theoretical and scholarly foundations for the larger final paper. The course focuses on contemporary American survival narratives (fiction and nonfiction) and environmental approaches to literature (ecocriticism). The course surveys a range of novels and nonfiction books to explore how the theme of survival threads through American literary history and American understandings of the natural environment and current environmental crisis. Students may miss no more than 2 classes without penalty.

This course has two essential goals:

- *Develop skills in expressing oneself orally and in writing*
 - All the written and oral presentation assignments give students practice in these skills.
- *Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view*
 - Our class discussions will prepare you to perform this skill in your formal written and oral presentation work.

Accommodation for Students with Special Needs: The Richard Stockton College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with documented disabilities who seek accommodations should make their request by contacting the Learning Access Program located in J204 or by calling 609-652-4988. In order to make sure that there is enough time to arrange accommodations, submit the paperwork to the instructor by the end of the second week of the semester or as early as possible to arrange services in this class. Retroactive accommodations will not be granted.

Concerned that you have a disability that will affect your learning in this class, but don't know where to start? Contact Robert Ross, Carol Quinn, or Fran Bottone in the Learning Access Program (J204; 609-652-4988) to learn about your options and the available resources for having your disability assessed. Additional information on the program may be obtained from Stockton website: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=61&pageID=5>

Academic Honesty: Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and risk failing the course. Other sanctions may also apply and all cases will be reported to Academic Affairs. You are responsible for knowing this college policy: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=14&pageID=62>. Contact your instructor if you have questions.

Required Texts:

- ***Through the Arc of the Rain Forest.*** Karen Tei Yamashita
- ***Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place.*** Terry Tempest Williams
- ***Into Thin Air.*** Jon Krakauer
- ***Pym.*** Mat Johnson
- ***Friend of the Earth.*** T.C. Boyle
- ***Flight Behavior.*** Barbara Kingsolver
- ***Ecocriticism.*** Greg Garrard
- **Blackboard:** Electronic Readings and all course materials are available in Blackboard. If you have questions about using Blackboard, consult a lab assistant or your instructor.

Recommended Texts:

- **MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Edition**
 - ***Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms***
 - ***Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice***. Charles Bressler
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Email Policy:

1. Use Blackboard email for all course-related correspondence.
2. I usually check email each day in the morning. Please plan your email questions accordingly and, while I often respond immediately, allow a twenty-four hour time frame for my reply.
3. Always try to visit my office hours with specific questions about course material. If you were absent, contact a classmate with questions about missed material and then visit office hours or schedule an appointment if you still have questions.
4. Visit instructor office hours or schedule an appointment to discuss grades. This includes final grades. Grades should be discussed in person during office hours or other arranged meetings. No grades will be discussed via email.

Office Hours: Think of my office as an extension of the classroom and use my office hours to discuss any aspect of the reading and material covered during class: come chat with me about your class projects, writing, questions about the reading, lecture or discussion, ideas you wish to develop, reading and interpretive strategies you'd like to try, and so on. Students who visit office hours tend to perform better.

Course Requirements: In this course, expect to:

- (1) **Attend class:** you are allotted 2 absences without penalty for fatigue, illness, cocktail flu, personal reasons, malfunctioning alarm clocks, doctor's appointments, etc. (Note I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences. If you miss two days and then get the flu and miss another day, you will lose 25 points for the third absence.) **Students entering class after the instructor records attendance, who leave before class ends, or who disappear for a substantial part of any class will be considered absent.** For each absence after your first two, your final grade **will be reduced 25 points per additional absence**, down to and including "F." Regular, spirited class attendance is a crucial component to passing this course. I will not give incompletes at the end of the semester unless arrangements are made well in advance and you have the appropriate reasons outlined by College policy;
- (2) **Attend class meetings prepared:** this means bring the appropriate text and DO THE READING WITH GUSTO; I expect class to be highly participatory, with everyone contributing comments, questions, and insights based on the assigned readings and interpreted through prior and emerging knowledge and experience. I will generally lead discussion at the beginning of the semester and will gradually turn over responsibility to students as the semester progresses;
- (3) **Participate in large and small group discussions and assignments:** Unless otherwise indicated, there will be a reading assignment for every class. Expect to devote a minimum of ten hours per week completing the reading, research, and writing. **ALL students** are expected to do the assigned reading for every class, prior to class, as preparation for class discussions. We will be very text-based in our approach to this material, and you should bring your book to every class;
- (4) **Complete all assignments:** Passing the course requires timely completion of ALL assignments, long and short, in-class and out-of-class. No late/incomplete assignments will be accepted after the last day of class;
- (5) **Unplug:** Silence cell phones, cease text messaging, and do not surf the web or check email during class. An inability to unplug will negatively impact your final grade: **You will lose five points every time your phone disrupts class, I tell you to cease text messaging, and/or am required to ask you to cease other inappropriate uses of technology or inappropriate behavior during class.** All disruptive behavior (e.g., sleeping in class, inappropriate language directed at students/instructor, perpetual lateness, etc.) constitutes grounds for grade reduction and/or dismissal from class.

Grades

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| • Teaching Presentation with Visual Aid (15-20 mins) | 100 |
| • Research Paper Proposal | 100 |
| • Theory/Literature Review Paper (8-10 pages) | 100 |
| • Final Research Presentation with Visual Aid (15 mins) | 100 |
| • Annotated Bibliography | 100 |
| • Class Participation | 100 |
| • Final Research Paper (20-25 pages) | 400 |

Total	1000
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Grading Scale

100-95: A	89.9-87: B+	79.9-77: C+	69.9-67: D+
94.9-90: A-	86.9-83: B	76.9-73: C	66.9-63: D
	82.9-80: B-	72.9-70: C-	62.9-60: D-
			59.9 & below: F

Assignments

Teaching Presentation w/ Visual Aid (15-20 minutes, 100 points): The purpose of these presentations is to introduce your classmates to the scholarship written about or related to the assigned reading. Each presenter will summarize and analyze one peer-reviewed journal article or book chapter; all assigned articles/book chapters are available in Blackboard. All students read the article in preparation for the presentation.

The presentations should cover the following:

- Brief description of the source (date of publication, author, peer reviewed source)
- Summary statement of the author's argument and evidence:
 - What does s/he argue? What is the essay's thesis?
 - How does s/he support this argument? Provide a brief overview of what evidence supports the argument and how it is arranged.
- What is the author's methodology or critical lens?
 - Does it, for example, employ: feminism, Marxism, cultural studies, new criticism, psychoanalysis, critical race studies, queer theory, or some other lens? Briefly state how you identified the author's critical lens/methodology.
- What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the author's argument? How does the author's argument apply to the day's assigned reading?
- The presentation must use some type of visual aide (for example, a PowerPoint presentation, video clip, and/or handout).

Research Paper Proposal (100 points): This formal proposal will outline the question your Final Research Paper will address. It will also begin to map your plan of action. See Final Research Paper Assignment Description for more information about each stage in the draft process.

Literature Review/Theory Paper (100 points): This typed 8-10 page paper serves as a shorter version of your Final Research Paper or the first (perhaps second) section of the final paper. It will outline your critical lens or theoretical approach and/or review the previous scholarship conducted on this topic. See Final Research Paper Assignment Description for more information about each stage in the draft process.

Annotated Bibliography (20 Sources, 100 points): Select 20 scholarly sources related to your topic. Include a 1-2 sentence summary of the peer-reviewed article or book chapter and a one-sentence assessment of how it fits or does not fit into your final paper. See Final Research Paper Assignment Description for more information about each stage in the draft process.

Research Presentation (100 points): A presentations of the final research paper/project. See Final Research Paper Assignment Description for more information about each stage in the draft process.

Class Participation (100 points): Class participation—both *verbal* contributions and silent *active listening* to your peers and instructor—is a required element of the course. You may also post messages to our Blackboard discussion board and/or visit instructor office hours as part of your overall class participation. Students who miss a class are encouraged to post a response to the missed day's reading prior to the next class period. Frequently leaving class, the inability to take part in discussion, tardiness, leaving class early, sleeping, text messaging, and other disruptive behavior lowers your class participation grade and, when not corrected, may be grounds for dismissal from the class. Coming to class with questions and passages to discuss raises your class participation.

Final Research Paper (20-25 pages, 400 points): The capstone project of this class and your Literature degree. This project will represent your best work. See Final Research Paper Assignment Description for more information about each stage in the draft process.

Late Assignment and Revision Policy:

I understand that life is full of surprises and sometimes those surprises influence your coursework and your ability to complete assignments. As a community of learners, we also recognize that we have a responsibility to the group, to our instructor, and to ourselves. We understand that every action has a consequence—even when circumstance may limit our power to act. To balance individual and community needs, we have the following guidelines for late assignments.

Written Assignments: *Papers are due at the beginning of class.* Late papers will be docked 5 percentage points per day late. So, if a B (85%) paper due on Monday at 3:35pm is passed in on Tuesday at 8:30am, the recorded grade would be B- (80). If it is passed in on Wednesday, the paper would earn a 75. And so on and so forth.

Paper Extensions: Any student who asks the instructor **prior to** the due date may receive a 2-day extension from the due date listed on the syllabus. After two days the late paper penalty will go into effect. No exceptions. *Due to the College's grade submission deadline for graduating seniors, no graduating senior may receive an extension for the final paper.*

Of course, the extension policy will only help students who have drafted a paper and follow the expected practice of backing up documents. Back up all your files and you will be a much happier and successful individual. You may not be happy when your computer explodes or disk crashes, but at least you will not be despondent. I also strongly encourage all students to keep a personal copy of every assignment and to keep all returned assignments with my feedback until the end of the term. **No assignments will be accepted after the last class meeting.**

Paper Revisions: This course is based on the principle that revisions take place **before** the instructor evaluates a paper for a grade. To this end, consider dropping in during office hours or other arranged meetings to discuss your papers in advance of due dates. Drop in at any stage of the writing process: from your initial brainstorming to nailing down those final brass tacks. I will happily read and comment on thesis statements (usually between 1-3 sentences) via Blackboard email. If you want me to read longer drafts, drop by my office hours or schedule an appointment. Additionally, I encourage you to use your peer resources during the draft and revision process, including Stockton's Writing Center: <http://inraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=70&pageID=2>.

Syllabus—LITT 4610—Fall 2013¹

Unit 1—Selecting and Researching A Topic and Critical Approach

Week 1 Task: Become familiar with course policies, assignments, themes and questions

Sept 4: Introduction to course, assignments, students and instructor. Sign up for Teaching Presentation in Blackboard.

Week 2 Task: Develop background knowledge in ecocriticism and the theme of survival

Sept 9: *Ecocriticism*, chapter 1 “Beginnings: pollution” (1-17); Kate Rigby “Ecocriticism” (BB); **Presentation 1:** Wood “What is Sustainability Studies”

Sept 11: *Ecocriticism*, chapter 2 “Positions” (18-36); Loretta Johnson “Greening the Library” (BB) **Presentation 2:** Bealer, “Reading Out Loud” (BB)

Week 3 Task: Develop background knowledge on critical approaches to literature

Sept 16: *Ecocriticism*, chapter 3 “Pastoral” (37-65); *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* (Parts 1-3; 1-102) **Presentation 3:** Bahng, “Extrapolating Transnational Arcs” (BB)

Sept 18: *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* (Parts 4-6; 103-212) **Presentation 4:** Simal, “The Junkyard in the Jungle” (BB); **Presentation 5:** Heise, “Local Rock and Global Plastic” (BB)

Week 4 Task: Brainstorm topic ideas and approaches; Conduct initial MLA searches

Sept 23: *Ecocriticism*, chapter 4 “Wilderness” (66-92); *Into Thin Air* (Introduction-Chapter 9) **Presentation 6:** Gordon, “Means and Motives” (BB)

Sept 25: *Into Thin Air* (Chapter 10-Epilogue) **Presentation 7:** Jacobson, “Desiring Natures” (BB)

Week 5 Task: Develop initial topic and approach; Hone MLA searches on topic

Sept 30: *Ecocriticism*, chapter 5 “Apocalypse” (93-116); *Friend of the Earth* (Prologue-The Sierra Nevada, August 1989; 1-142) **Presentation 8:** Newman, “Marxism and Ecocriticism” (BB)

Oct 2: Research Day. Dr. J will be available in her office for consultations.

Unit 2—Planning and Drafting Your Argument

Week 6 Task: Continue research; Submit final paper topic; Request interlibrary loan

Oct 7: *Friend of the Earth* (Santa Ynez, December 2025; 143-275) **Presentation 9:** Gaard, “Ecofeminism Revisited”; **Presentation 10:** Wolf-Meyer, “Apocalypse, Ideology, America” (BB)

Final Research Paper Topic Due

Oct 9: *Ecocriticism*, chapter 6 “Dwelling” (117-145); *Flight Behavior* (Chapters 1-6; 1-154) **Presentation 11:** Adamson & Slovic, “Guest Editors’ Introduction: The Shoulders We Stand On” (BB)

Week 7 Task: Revise topic based on instructor feedback and continue research

Oct 14: *Ecocriticism*, chapter 7 “Animals” (146-180); *Flight Behavior* (Chapters 7-10; 155-285) **Presentation 12:** Bender, “Darwin and Ecology” (BB)

Oct 16: *Flight Behavior* (Chapters 11-14; 286-433) **Presentation 13:** Tassel, “Ecofeminism and a New Agrarianism” (BB)

¹ Class Schedule subject to changes with notice. Readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due.

Week 8 Task: Polish proposal, continue research, and submit final proposal

Oct 21: Research Day. Dr. J will be available in her office for consultations.

Oct 23: Research Day. Dr. J will be available in her office for consultations. **Final Research Paper Proposal Due**

Week 9 Task: Begin draft of short literature review/theory paper; Draft bibliography

Oct 28: *Ecocriticism*, chapter 8 “Futures” (181-205); *Refuge* (Burrowing Owls-Long-Billed Curlews; 1-152)
Presentation 14: Chandler, “Whale Song from the Dessert” (BB)

Oct 30: *Refuge* (Western Tanager-The Clan of One-Breasted Women; 153-290) **Presentation 15:** Kircher, “Rethinking Dichotomies” (BB)

Week 10 Task: Draft and revise short literature review/theory paper

Nov 4: Research and Writing Day. Dr. J will be available in her office for consultations.

Nov 6: Peer Review of Short Theory Paper. **Draft of At Least 4 Pages Due.** Dr. J will be at a conference.

Unit 3—Revising and Polishing Your Argument

Week 11 Task: Review any remaining secondary sources; Revise final paper outline; Submit annotated bibliography

Nov 11: *Pym* (Chapters 1-12) **Presentation 16:** Easterlin, “Loving Ourselves Best of All” (BB)
Annotated Bibliography Due

Nov 13: *Pym* (Chapters 12-24) **Presentation 17:** Gerhardt, “The Greening of African-American Landscapes” (BB)

Week 12 Task: WRITE!

Nov 18: Writing Day. Dr. J will be available in her office for consultations.

Nov 20: Writing Day. Dr. J will be available in her office for consultations.
Due Short Literature Review/Theory Paper Due

Week 13 Task: Write, peer review, revise; Repeat as necessary; Draft research presentation

Nov 25: Dr. J will be available in her office for consultations.
Peer Review of a draft of your final paper no shorter than 15 typed pages.

Nov 27: No Classes after 3:35pm. Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 14 Task: Present, revise, polish: Submit Final Paper!

Dec 2: Writing and revision day. Dr. J will be available in her office for consultations.

Dec 4: Research Presentations. **Final Research Paper Due.**

Week 15 Task: Present, Listen, Learn, Respond

Dec 9: Research Presentations.

Dec 11: Research Presentations.