

HUMA 4228A.06 NATURE IN NARRATIVE

Classes Mondays 11:30 – 2:30

COURSE DIRECTOR: Jody Berland
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Office Hours: Mondays 3-4, Wednesdays 3-4

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores narratives of nature in scientific, literary and popular texts of the modern period. It discusses the rhetorical techniques employed by scientists as an instrument of reasoning and for persuading others of their theories, and the countering rhetorical strategies developed by critics of scientific reasoning. It examines how modern science has contributed to the narrative construction of nature outside of science and conversely how literary styles inform the style of scientific writing. It carries these themes into studies of the narratives of landscape, depictions of animals and animal-human relations, and the contemporary politics of science.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Evaluation:

Presentation	-	-	-	-	-	-	15%
Participation	-	-	-	-	-	-	15 %
Short Paper (November 22)	-	-	-	-	-	-	15%
Research Paper/Project:	-	-	-	-	-	-	50%
Topic, Outline, Bibliography	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
Presentation on Paper	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
Draft of Paper (March 21)	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
Final Paper (April 18)	-	-	-	-	-	-	20%

COURSE READINGS:

The following required texts and the 4228 coursebook are available at York University Bookstore. All required texts are available at the Reserve Desk in Scott Library. A few additional readings are available as photocopies at the Reserve Desk. These readings will form the basis of the discussions at the beginning of each class, and must be completed prior to that class.

Books required

Bernard de Fontenelle: *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*. University of California Press 1990.

Darwin: Norton Critical Edition, Third Edition, ed. Philip Appleman

Faust: A Tragedy : (Norton Critical Editions, Paperback) by [Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe](#), [Cyrus Hamlin](#) (Editor), [Walter W. Arndt](#) (Translator)

Selected Poetry of William Wordsworth (Modern Library Classics) (Paperback) by [William Wordsworth](#), [Mark Van Doren](#) (Editor), [David Bromwich](#) (Introduction)

Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003.

Connie Willis, *Bellwether*. Bantam 1997.

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Seal 2003 pbk (McLelland and Stewart)

Reserve list:

Cynthia Chris, *Watching Wildlife*

Ludmilla Jordanova (ed) *Languages of Nature: Critical Essays on Science and Literature*.

Mary Midgley, *The Essential Mary Midgley*

Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature*

Michael Pollan, *Second Nature*

George Robertson, Melinda Mash, L Tickner, J Bird, B Curtis and T Putnam (eds) *FutureNatural: Nature / Science / Culture*. London and NY: Routledge 1996.

Friedrich W. Sixel, *Nature in Our Culture: A Study in the Anthropology and the Sociology of Knowing*.

Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature*

Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie (ed), *The Canadian Anthology of Indigenous Writing in English*.

Class schedule

Sept. 11. Introduction: Raymond Williams, “Nature”

Science and Knowledge of the Universe

Sept 18. De Fontenelle, *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*

Londa Schiebinger, “Noble Networks” in *The Mind has no Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989, 37-65, 286-29 (coursekit).

Sept 25 Patrick Moore, “Galileo, the Experimenter” and “Telescopes and the Sky,” in Patrick Moore, *Watchers of the Stars: The Scientific Revolution*. Milan: Putnam’s Sons, 1974.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang v: “The Experiment as Mediator of Object and Subject” in *Nature in Our Culture: A Study in the Anthropology and the Sociology of Knowing*.

Friedrich W. Sixel, University Press of America, 2001, pp 194-207.

James Barry Jr, “The New Authority of Technical Intervention: From ‘Natural History’ to ‘Experimental Nature’” in *Measures of Science: Theological and Technological Impulses in Early Modern Thought*. Evanston, Il: Northwestern University Press, 1996, pp 99-115, 195-197 (all in coursekit).

October 2 No class

Oct 9 no class

Oct 16 Charles Darwin, excerpts

Oct 23 Darwin (continued)

Oct 30 Darwin (continued)

Nov 6. Goethe, *Faust: A Tragedy* (Act 1)

Nov 13 Faust: A Tragedy (continued)

The Nature of Landscape

November 20 Wordsworth, Selected Poems

Aldous Huxley, “Wordsworth in the Tropics”

Nov 27 Alexander Wilson, “The View from the Road” in *The Culture of Nature*.

Toronto: BTL 1991, pp 19—51

Jody Berland, “Lightening and Landscape, Fire and Flame: Tourism and Nature in Banff, Alta”

Nov 29 (Wed), Michael Pollan, “Weeds are Us” in *Second Nature: A Gardener’s Education*. London: Bloomsbury, 1991 (1997), pp 106-126.

Dec 4 Rob Shields, “Niagara Falls: Honeymoon Capital of the World” in *Places at the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*. London: Routledge, 1991, 117-161.
Tanien (Daniel) Ashine, “We Have Been Pushed to the Edge of a Cliff” in *Story Earth: Native Voices on the Environment*, San Francisco: Mercury House, 1993, p 14-18.
Film: Niagara Falls

CHRISTMAS

The Animal Question

January 8 Kathleen Kete, “Animal Protection in Nineteenth-Century Paris: The Case of Pets” in *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 1994 pp 5-21.
Mary Midgley, “Animals and the Problem of Evil,” in *The Essential Mary Midgley*, ed. David Midgley. London and NY: Routledge 2005

Film: Day of the Dolphin (1972)

Jan 15 John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?”
Cynthia Chris,. “The Quest for Nature on the Small Screen” in *Watching Wildlife* pp 45 – 78.

Jan 22 Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*

Jan 29 Barry Lopez, “Coyote and Rattlesnake” in *Desert Notes: Reflections in the Eye of a Raven*. NY: Avon Books, 1976, 49-54.
Thomas King, “The One About Coyote Going West,” pp 196-204;
Jordan Wheeler, “A Mountain Legend,” pp 511-516; and kateri akiwenzie-damm “kegedonce”, pp 517-518, in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, ed. Daniel David Moses & Terry Goldie, Don Mills: Oxford UP 2005.
Film: Bowie/Suzuki, The Berger return.

Culture, Nature and Politics

February 5
Connie Willis, *Bellwether*. Bantam 1997.

Feb 12 Reading week

Feb 19 Andrew Ross, "The Future is a Risky Business" in *FutureNatural*, ed. George Robertson, Melinda Mash, L Tickner, J Bird, B Curtis and T Putnam, London and NY: Routledge 1996.

Feb 26 Les Levidow, "Simulating mother nature, industrializing agriculture" in George Robertson, Melinda Mash, L Tickner, J Bird, B Curtis and T Putnam (eds), *FutureNatural*. London and NY, Routledge 1996, 55-71.

Mary Douglas, "'Risk and Blame", Ch 1. *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory*, 3-21. London: Routledge 1992.

Wayne Grady, "Who Owns a Mouse," in *Bringing Back the Dodo: Lessons in Natural and Unnatural History*, Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 2006, pp 127-140.

March 5. Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*

March 12 Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*

March 19 Presentations

March 26 Presentations

April 2 Presentations

Reserve list:

Cynthia Chris, *Watching Wildlife*

Ludmilla Jordanova (ed) *Languages of Nature: Critical Essays on Science and Literature*.

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Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature*

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Classes

Sept 11

Sept 18

Sept 25