

**ENGLISH 131: Studies in Postcolonial Literature:  
Globalization and Postcolonial Literatures: Writing the Environment**

M/W 2-3:50pm  
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Haines A44  
Dept of English/Winter Qtr 2013  
Office Hrs: 3:50-4:50pm Monday & Wednesday  
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How does the study of world literatures help us to understand the globalization process? Globalization is often associated with recent social and economic shifts, but many scholars argue that its structures derive from the history of colonialism. Turning to the natural world seems to provide a model to dismantle colonial and national boundaries and to speak in terms of shared planetary concerns such as global warming. Or does it? To examine these relations between globalization, empire, and ecology, we will turn to postcolonial writers in English from Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands and examine how they inscribe threats to the world environment. We will draw from diverse genres such as short stories, film, and the novel. Topics to be considered include indigenous and diasporic relationships to the land, plantation agriculture, gardening, nuclear militarization, oil drilling, and human and environmental sustainability.

Required Texts

Julia Alvarez *A Cafecito Story*  
Mayra Montero *In the Palm of Darkness*  
Amitav Ghosh *The Hungry Tide*  
Helon Habila *Oil on Water*  
Kiana Davenport *House of Many Gods*  
Keri Hulme *Stonefish*

Required Films (OID Media Library/Video Furnace)

*Noho Hewa: The Wrongful Occupation of Hawai'i*  
*Bitter Cane*  
*Poison Fire* ([www.poisonfire.org](http://www.poisonfire.org))  
*There Once was an Island*

Requirements

20% Class participation, including attendance at *Global Ecologies* Conference, March 8-9  
10% Quizzes, online discussion, discussant

Discussant: Post your discussion questions to the "forum" site of that week (1x per week) the night before class.  
70% 3 four-page essays due Jan 30, Feb 22, March 15\*

\*You may substitute one of your essay assignments for a 20-minute class presentation which will entail a close reading of the primary text, discussion questions, and posting a detailed outline to the website before class.

Policies

Classroom Etiquette: This will be taught as a discussion course, so insightful and respectful comments focused on the primary texts are required. You must have the primary text in hand during class. As per the regulations of the Office of the Dean of Students, cell phones must be off at all times and web browsing must be restricted to class content or you will be asked to leave the room. If you are using any electronic device to take notes you must sit in the front rows of the classroom.

Attendance is critical to your grade. If you miss a class you should submit a paragraph to the website summarizing the reading for that day. Coming late to class 3x will be recorded as one absence, and three absences will result in a 10 point drop in your final grade.

Discussant: The night before class (before midnight) you will post your comments on the reading (or film) to the "forum" section of that week on the course website (1x a week). In class I will call on different students to present your ideas. Your comments and discussion questions might connect this reading to other topics we have discussed in class, focus in on a passage, examine a character, or connect the text to the broader themes of the course.

Writing Support Please make an appointment to discuss your assignments during Office Hours, and/or visit the College Tutorials, 228 Covell Commons (206-1491).

Late Essays: Late essays will not be accepted. If you are having trouble keeping up with the work in class, do make an appointment during office hours.

Format: All work submitted for this class must be uploaded to the course website and proofread, spell-checked, double-spaced, page numbered, and in 12" font or it will be returned to you without a grade. Bibliographies are not necessary. You should use ample textual evidence to back up your ideas—all quotations should be followed by author and page #.

Plagiarism: is passing someone else's work as your own. This includes web pages and paraphrases of someone else's work without documenting your sources. Please see "Student Guide to Academic Integrity" (<http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/conduct.htm>). All suspected cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean of Students and may affect your status as a major in the department and your permanent record.

Extra Credit There are more environmental films held in the OI Media Lab than we can cover in class. For extra credit you might view one of the films or attend a related event and post a 1-2 paragraph response to the course website. All extra credit work must be handed in by March 13<sup>th</sup> at noon. While everyone is encouraged to submit extra credit work, you should always make class readings and assignments your top priority.

## Syllabus

### Week 1: Introduction & Key Concepts

January 7: Introductions

January 9: *Post-Colonial Studies Key Concepts* : Decolonization, Ecological Imperialism, Environmentalism, Globalization, Glocalization, Modernity, Post-colonialism (see CCLE website)

### Week 2: Agriculture & Sustainability

January 14: Alvarez, *A Cafecito Story*

January 16: Alvarez, *A Cafecito Story*

### Week 3: Extinctions

January 21: *Holiday—no class*

January 23: Montero *In the Palm of Darkness* (entire book)

**Extra credit: Thursday, January 17, 2013: Fowler Museum Auditorium 7:30 pm**  
***The Walking Dead: Zombies in Haitian Vodou and Contemporary Popular Culture***  
**Speakers: Max Brooks, Anna Creagh, Patrick Polk**

### Week 4: Globalization in Haiti

January 28: Montero *In the Palm of Darkness* (cont'd)

January 30: Film screening: Arcelin "*Bitter Cane*" (75 mins)

**Essay 1 Due (at 2pm sharp)**

### Week 5: Knowledge and Conservation

February 4: Ghosh *The Hungry Tide* (entire book)

February 6: Ghosh *The Hungry Tide* (part 2: The Flood)

### Week 6: Conservation & Petrofiction

February 11: Ghosh *The Hungry Tide*; *Key Concepts*: Frontier, Liminality, Place

February 13 Habila *Oil on Water* (Part I)

Week 7: Petrofiction

February 18: *Holiday-- no class* [Watch "Poison fire" (28 mins) [www.poisonfire.org](http://www.poisonfire.org) ]

February 20 Habila *Oil on Water* (Part II); *Key Concepts: Neo-Colonial and Neo-Liberal Poison Fire* discussion.

**Feb 22: Essay 2 due (at midnight)**

Week 8: Nuclearization

February 25: Kiana Davenport *House of Many Gods* (entire book)

February 27: Davenport *House of Many Gods* (Part 3-4)

Week 9: Militarism and Apocalypse

March 4: Davenport *House of Many Gods*

Film: *Noho Hewa: The Wrongful Occupation of Hawai`i* (see before class)

Recommended: Noa Helela – "GMO ED" [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK\\_xMQjw54](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK_xMQjw54)

March 6: Keri Hulme *Stonefish*: "Floating Words"; "Pluperfect Paua"; "Some Foods..."

Tsing Mushrooms: <http://tsingmushrooms.blogspot.com/>

**March 8-9 Global Ecologies: Nature/Narrative/Neoliberalism Conference, Royce 314**

You must attend at least one panel during this conference and submit a one-paragraph commentary about the panel to our course website. Do plan to see Vandana Shiva, our keynote speaker, Friday, March 8 at 6pm in Broad 2160E

Week 10: Climate Change

March 11: Hulme *Stonefish* (con't) "Getting It;" "Storehouse for the Hungry Ghosts," "Hinekaro"

<http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/hinekaro-goes-on-a-picnic-and-blows-up-another-obelisk-1995>

March 13: *There Was Once was an Island* (see before class) & Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner "Tell Them"

<http://jkijiner.wordpress.com/2011/04/13/tell-them/>

**March 19: Essay 3 due (5pm)**