**LIT 4434: Honors Literature and the Environment: New York City**

3 credits; Meeting Mondays 4:00-6:50pm; HC115

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**Required Texts**

[*The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology | Edition: 1*](https://www.facultyenlight.com/book-details/2833058) *Cheryll Glotfelty (Editor)*

[*The Colossus of New York*](https://www.facultyenlight.com/book-details/3764970)Colson Whitehead

*City of Glass* Paul Auster

[*Mysteries of Small Houses*](https://www.facultyenlight.com/book-details/3243650)Alice Notley

[*Selected Poems*](https://www.facultyenlight.com/book-details/3937716)Frank O’Hara

*Selected Poems* Ted Berrigan

Recommended: *Some Trees* John Ashbery

*New and Selected Poems*  Ron Padgett

If book can’t be found or bought, you’re responsible for finding out what poems you need to source from other places. Extra material will be posted on class blog, and where starred must be printed and brought to class. It is imperative that appropriate materials are brought to each class.

**Course Description**

*have you reckon’d the earth much?*

*-*Walt Whitman, “Leaves of Grass”

Literature and the Environment will interrogate the relationship of writing to the built, rural and inhabited environment. This interdisciplinary course will require students to maintain a double-focus: examining both the development of the environment and the development of a literary response to that environment. Centering on American environments, this course will encourage students to consider the ways in which everything thought, felt, spoken and written tends to bear an imprint of the environment from which it was thought, felt, written or spoken from. This eco-critical lens is intrinsic to the American pastoral tradition: One in which writers like Thoreau and Emerson encouraged the importance and value of—not only nature, but cabins. With this in mind, we will take the broad framework of “Literature and the Environment” and apply it more specifically to an inquiry that hovers on New York City, and the writing which that city has inspired. How is the built environment registered in novels, short stories and poetry of that city? To borrow Terry Gifford’s phrasing, in what ways does New York City literature engage in a “post-pastoral” tradition? How doe the *flaneur—*that urban street walker—continue a walk begun in 17th century American woods?  This course will encourage students to read both literature and its environment as an accompaniment to alongside this historical walk.

**Course Objective**

We will read a variety of genres deeply, applying environmental criticism as a lens through which to view the way these various forms engage with the environment from which they are written. As this is a seminar class, you will be assigned texts to read *in depth* before the class begins, and everyone will be encouraged to contribute freely throughout our weekly meetings. The course aims to solicit your scholarly, independent thinking about and around the texts at hand. Students will be encouraged to contribute to class blog, class discussion, and research peripheral texts to supplement their readings in writing final papers and midterm projects.

**Note of Honors Distinction:** *This course differs substantially from the non-Honors version. First, and most importantly, the course is an agreement between the student and instructor that they will work together collaboratively to ensure a significantly enriched learning experience in a manner consistent with other Honors-designated courses at FAU. This means the course will produce substantive work that reflects interdisciplinarity and connections among academic fields, research and direct access to sources of knowledge pertinent to the field, leadership, creative and critical thinking, and engagement with the world outside the university. Secondly, the writing component of the course will be much more demanding, and will prepare students for upper-division college writing and for work on the* ***Honors Thesis****.* Students will be exposed to vocabulary of a specifically theoretical nature, and will be expected to comprehend new concepts and to deploy these new terms in their own critical thinking and writing. In addition, we will begin professionalizing our own readings and analyses of these texts. Students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the history and the ongoing critical and scholarly conversation about these works, and will give in-class presentations about critical history and about the living scholars in the field as it now stands. Students will also engage with the theoretical tools used by today’s reading community to study literature. Finally, the course will develop critical attitudes and analytic skills that will teach the student to think for him-or-herself

Blog address : https://allthegreenery.wordpress.com

**Grading**

Class Participation (20%)

Midterm Project (20%)

Final Paper (30%)

Presentations (20%)

Online Commentary (10%) each student should comment on at least three poems to

not get a zero on this. Quality not quantity.

**Attendance**

Should you need to miss class due to health or personal reasons, please present written notice of this at least one hour *before* the class you’ll miss. Each student is permitted one unquestioned personal absence. Using your phone in class will constitute an absence. Each day missed thereafter takes 7 points off of your participation grade.

**Participation:** Graded according to the following

1) Presence on time, in class, fully there (no phones; no naps)

2) Preparedness bringing necessary material to class; a form of presence

3) Contributions thinking deeply about things on your own and sharing those thoughts—even if in the nuanced and relatively safe question form with the class. Being part of seminar. Again, presence.

Being prepared and present yields 5 participation points per class.

**Note on Participation**

Class is for learning in, so please avoid activities that will interfere with the learning process (yours and that of your classmates). These activities include using technology (no laptops, no ipads, no phones), eating, packing up your things before the lecturer has announced class is over, speaking while others are speaking, raising your hand while others are speaking,

**Project**

Your midterm project will be both creative and academic in nature. You’ll be asked to utilize our virtual learning environment to create an intertextual (and hyptertextual) map and analysis of the development of New York centric literature. We will discuss this more in class. For now it’s important to remember that you’ll turn in a 250 word written summary alongside the posting of this project. If you rather write a traditional paper, the paper should be comparative, cite at least three pieces of criticism, and be 2000 words in length. The total wordcount for the webproject will be 3000 words.

**Essay**: Your final essay should engage deeply in the nuances of the primary texts assigned, while also suggesting an awareness of literary, historical and critical contexts. This “awareness” is performed by citing at least two critical essays (not given in class) within your essays. The goal of these essays is to present a structured coherent and persuasive argument. Arguments are made persuasive through sound logic, supportive evidence, and solid writing with thoughtful (and not perfunctory) transitions. Cite examples and engage with texts, and criticism.

Some Don’ts: Do not use the word “I.” Your argument is about the truth therein, and not

about you.

Do not generalize.

Resist the urge to summarize narratives. Instead dive into the nuances of the

textual evidence.

Do not use incorrect formatting style. Purdue’s “owl” website is good source on

this. https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/

Please use 12 point serif font, double space with one inch margins.

Do not turn your papers in late.

Each late paper (1 minute past due date = late) will be penalized 10 points per day.

**Presentations**

Each student will present once. Your presentation should attend to that biographical and historical situation of the week’s text, address two “interesting” details within the work, and note two critical arguments about that work. A detail is “interesting” if it sparked a response in you—agreement, disagreement, confusion, interest, curiosity—these are all responses. Spend time talking about why you felt the way you did, and what other details in text confirm or problematize that feeling. Each presentation should conclude with three discussion questions posed to the class. Please bring a bullet point handout with you to class—one for yourself and one for the professor. You are welcome to bring in handouts, though they are by no means required. You are required, though, to read this paragraph before your presentation (and before asking what your presentation should entail). If you ask a question about the structure of your presentation that is answered within this paragraph this will count as “not paying attention” and your presentation will be penalized 5 points.

**Online Commentary**

Each student should comment on at least two blog posts. In blog commentary, a less formal voice is welcome.

**Disability policy statement**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) -- in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Jupiter, SR 119 (561-799-8585) – and follow all OSD procedures. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) -- in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Jupiter, SR 119 (561-799-8585) – and follow all OSD procedures.

<http://www.osd.fau.edu/Rights.htm>

**Students enrolled in this course agree to abide by the** [**Honors College Honor Code**](http://www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/students/honorcode.html) and the [**FAU Code of Academic Integrity**](http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf)**:** please review these documents.

***Schedule\****

**Part 1: New York Poetry**

1. *January 5* Introduction; Presentation Sign-up
2. *January 12* The First Generation New York School: Frank O’Hara & John Ashbery
3. *January 19* Martin Luther King Day
4. *January 26* The Beatniks
5. *February 2* The Second Generation NYS: Ted Berrigan
6. *February 9* Alice Notley & Anne Waldman
7. *February 16* Ron Padgett & Kenneth Koch
8. *February 23* Ecocrit Reflection Week (readings from Buell): MIDTERM DUE 2/25

**Part 2: New York Short Stories**

*March 2: Spring Break*

1. *March 9* Short Stories (Blog) *Note: Print and bring to class*
2. *March 16* Short Stories (Blog)
3. *March 23* Ecocrit Reflection (in Reader)

**Part 3: New York Fiction**

12. *March 30* Paul Auster

13. *April 6* Paul Auster & Ecocrit Reflection

**Part 4: New York’s Creative Non Fiction**

14. *April 13* Colson Whitehead

15. *April 20* Goodbye to All That (Joan Didion & Patti Smith) & Ecocrit Reflection

\*Subject to change