

EN267: Essay 2 questions, 2017-18

Essays of 5,000 words are due on **Tuesday, 1 May 2018** (Week 2 of Term 3). As before, the following topics are intended to offer only suggested directions for your own thinking and research; feel free to develop your own topic in consultation with me beforehand, and note that the first set of essay questions continues to be available for this essay.

1. Critically review the response to Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything* and develop a thesis concerning the 'environment' emerging around its reception. (Note that in the course of this review you may engage with any aspect of the work itself.)
2. Is Amitav Ghosh right to argue that world literature has failed to meet the challenge of the Anthropocene? Discuss, with examples.
3. Fast disasters vs. slow violence: choose as a case study a particular environmental crisis and examine the journalistic, literary and cultural responses to it. What are the implications of punctual vs. gradualist understandings of ecological damage in current environmental discourse?
4. Caribbean ecopoetics: write a comparative essay on the imbrication of language (including language politics) and ecology in any two texts by Caribbean writers.
5. The weather of world-ecology, I: analyse literary evocations of 'the weather' – including particular meteorological phenomena such as rain, snow, drought, frost, fog, etc. – from the standpoint of political and/or historical ecology.
6. Radical walking: Discuss the C20 poetics and politics of walking as a form of eco-praxis. Examples might include: André Breton and the surrealists, Guy Debord and the situationists, the Ramblers Association, Michel de Certeau, W. G. Sebald, Richard Long, Iain Sinclair, Rebecca Solnit.
7. Interdisciplinary ecocriticism: write an ecocritical study of two works in different media and/or genres, e.g. literature and film, poetry and visual art, fiction and music.
8. Petrocultures: write a comparative analysis of the material and symbolic presence of oil in any two works of world literature.
9. Field trip: write an essay on the ecological significance of the setting, design, history and rhetoric in the presentational form of an energy plant, sewage treatment facility or other resource processing site.
10. Slum ecologies: analyse the dynamics of representing 'city nature' within the context of a C21 'planet of slums' (Davis).
11. Amalfitano's textbook: explore the material and discursive aspects of ecology and environmental production in Bolaño's *2666*.
12. The weather of world-ecology, II: discuss the ecological dimension of 'ambient' and/or procedural writing as a function of any of the following: language, mediation, data, work, time.

13. Write an essay on the 'co-constitutive' role of social media in the production of the (worldwide) web of life. How might we read online platforms such as Twitter and Facebook as world-ecological?

14. Discuss the modes, strategies and efficacy of selected forms of contemporary environmental activism. Works to consult might include *Direct Action Manual*, *Green is the New Red*, *Cyberprotest: Environmental Activism Online*, *Environmentalism: A Global History*, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *The Ecological Hoofprint*, along with *This Changes Everything*. Organisations to consider might include Greenpeace, 350.org, EarthFirst!, Friends of the Earth, Earth Liberation Front, People & Planet, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In what ways do these or other groups attempt to link theory (or mission) and practice (or tactics/strategies)?

15. Future natures: write an essay on dystopian (or utopian) projections of the *oikeios* after the age of the four 'cheaps' (Moore): resources, energy, food and labour.