



Faculty of Arts
School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures

GERM 451.4
Cross-Cultural Explorations (The Meanings of Nature)
Winter 2019

COURSE OUTLINE

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: Martin Wagner

OFFICE LOCATION: CHD 421

OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Friday, 10-11 am

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 403-220-5398

E-MAIL: martin.wagner@ucalgary.ca

DESCRIPTION How does the understanding of nature vary across different historical periods and cultures? How is the current climate debate shaped by these various notions of nature? In answering these questions, this course draws on guest lectures from a range of programs in the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures. The course will be taught in English.

OBJECTIVES

- Students gain familiarity with important topics and questions of the environmental humanities.
- Students gain an understanding of the ways in which environmental questions are addressed in a range of different cultural and disciplinary contexts.
- Students will be encouraged to analyze the formal patterns of discussions about our relation to the environment.
- Students will improve their ability to analyze theoretically demanding texts.
- Students improve their ability to form their own research questions, and to present their work to their peers in oral and written form.
- Students learn to communicate precise and productive feedback to their peers.

OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to explain important questions and ideas in the environmental humanities.
- Students will be able to detect the formal and narrative patterns underlying the various discussions of nature past and present.
- Students will have concrete strategies at their disposal to parse complex theoretical texts.
- Students will know how to situate their research in relation to existing scholarship.
- Students will be able to draw on clear guidelines to give an effective oral presentation.
- Students will be able to draw on specific criteria to give feedback on strengths and weaknesses in research papers by their peers.

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES

- Statement of intent for final paper: 5 %
- Commented literature list: 15 %
- Draft of final paper: 10 %
- Final paper (3,000 words): 25%
- Response to a paper by another student: 10%
- Presentation: 10%
- Quizzes: 10 %
- Preparation and participation: 15%



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GRADING SCALE

A+ (97-100 %), **A** (92-96%), **A-** (86-91)
B+ (81-85%), **B** (76-80%), **B-** (71-75)
C+ (67-70%), **C** (62-66%), **C-** (58-61%)
D+ (54-57%), **D** (50-53%), **F** (0-49 %)

REQUIRED TEXTS

- David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0393329995
- Richard W. Bulliet, *Cotton, Climate, and Camels in Early Islamic Iran: A Moment in World History*. Columbia University Press, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0231148375
- Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. University of Chicago Press, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0226526812

(All other required readings are either available online through the library or will be made available on D2L.)

COURSE NOTES

Course Expectations:

- **Statement of intent for final paper (250 words):** Early on in the semester, students write a brief statement, indicating which topic they wish to work on in their research project. This statement should offer a rationale for this choice and speculate about important questions and hypotheses that will guide the research project.
- **Commented literature list:** Students prepare a commented literature list with relevant literature for their research project. The list should contain at least five academic articles or books. Students are asked to provide for at least three titles short explanations (of about 250 words each) in which they summarize the content of the respective text and explain the text's relevance for their research project.
- **Draft of final paper (3000 words):** Students will write a draft of the final paper and receive feedback by the instructor (and another student) before writing the final version of the paper. The draft will be graded based only on formalities (length of paper; inclusion of title, literature list, introduction [with thesis statement], and conclusion).
- **Feedback to draft (at least 300 words):** Students offer feedback to one paper from another student in the class. They comment respectfully on the way the paper succeeds in the following categories. Be precise in your criticisms: what exactly is missing, and how could the paper be improved?
 - o Does the paper have a clear and specific thesis statement? Is the paper clearly situated in relation to existing scholarship? Is it clear what the relevance of the paper could be?
 - o Does the paper have a clear structure and argument development (including an introduction and conclusion, and clear transitions between paragraphs)?
 - o Does the paper engage with possible counterarguments?
 - o Does the paper prove its arguments through clear references to primary and secondary sources? Does the paper display awareness of nuances in the cited texts?
 - o Is the paper formally satisfactory (style and grammatical accuracy, inclusion of a title, consistent citation system)?



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- **Final paper (3000 words):** As the culmination of their research throughout the semester, students write a final paper. The paper will be assessed based on the following criteria: construction of argument (strong thesis statement, clear argument development, consideration of counterarguments), productive and nuanced work with primary and secondary sources, clarity of writing.
- **Quizzes:** Two quizzes over the course of the semester test students' knowledge and understanding of the assigned readings.
- **Presentation (10 minutes):** In their presentation, students showcase their final paper to the class. Students will prepare a PowerPoint Presentation or a handout for the group. Grades will be based on the clarity of the presentation (what is the thesis, how is the thesis argued for, and why does the paper matter?), the presentation materials (slides or handout), as well as on the student's ability to respond to questions and comments.
- **Preparation and participation:** Students are expected to participate in class discussions and to come to class with questions and comments related to the assigned readings. To receive a perfect grade, students must make 15 substantial contributions over the course of the semester (in the form of questions, comments etc.). Students may choose, alternatively, to submit five short reflective statements (c. 250 words each) about individual class meetings. These statements have to be emailed to the instructor no later than 48 hours after the meeting on which they comment.

All written assignments have to be uploaded to D2L. The exception to this are the optional written assignments to satisfy the expectation for class participation (see above). Please use Word documents for all written assignments.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1. **Plagiarism** is a serious offence, the penalty for which is an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. Plagiarism exists when:

- a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);
- b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;
- c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or
- d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted."

Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

2. **Cheating** at tests or examinations includes but is not limited to dishonest or attempted dishonest conduct such as speaking to other candidates or communicating with them under any circumstances whatsoever; bringing into the examination room any textbook, notebook, memorandum, other written material or mechanical or electronic device not authorized by the examiner; writing an examination or part of it, or consulting any person or materials outside the confines of the examination room without permission to do so, or leaving answer papers exposed to view, or persistent attempts to read other students' examination papers.

3. **Other academic misconduct** includes, but is not limited to, tampering or attempts to tamper with examination scripts, class work, grades and/or class records; failure to abide by directions by an instructor regarding the individuality of work handed in; the acquisition, attempted acquisition, possession, and/or



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distribution of examination materials or information not authorized by the instructor; the impersonation of another student in an examination or other class assignment; the falsification or fabrication of clinical or laboratory reports; the non-authorized tape recording of lectures.

4. Any student who voluntarily and consciously aids another student in the commission of one of these offences is also guilty of academic misconduct.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION ASSEMBLY POINTS

Craigie Hall: Professional Faculties food court (alternate: Education Block food court)

Education Block and Tower: Scurfield Hall atrium (alternate: Professional Faculties food court)

Kinesiology: north courtyard, MacEwan Student Centre (alternate: University Theatres lobby)

For the complete list of assembly points please consult <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

FACULTY OF ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING AND STUDENT INFORMATION RESOURCES

Have a question, but not sure where to start?

The Arts Students' Centre is the overall headquarters for undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Arts. The key objective of this office is to connect students with whatever academic assistance they may require.

In addition to housing the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programs and Student Affairs) and the Associate Dean (Teaching, Learning & Student Engagement), the Arts Students' Centre is the specific home to:

- Program advising
- Co-op Education Program
- Arts and Science Honours Academy
- Student Help Desk

Location: Social Sciences Room 102

Phone: 403-220-3580

Email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca

Website: arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Block.

Contacts for the Students' Union Representative for the Faculty of Arts: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT

Graded assignments will be retained by the Department for three months and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Final examinations will be kept for one calendar year and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Said material is exclusively available to the student and to the department staff requiring to examine it.

Please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy> for complete information on the disclosure of personal records.



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INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Devices such as laptops, palmtops and smartbooks are allowed provided that they are used exclusively for instructional purposes and do not cause disruption to the instructor and to fellow students. Cellular telephones, blackberries and other mobile communication tools are not permitted and must be switched off.

SAFEWALK

To request a Safewalk escort anywhere on campus, 24 hours a day and seven days a week, please call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help Phones.

Web: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>

STUDENT UNION INFORMATION

Representatives and contact details: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/home/contact.html>

Student Ombudsman: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Writing skills should cross all disciplines. Students are expected to do a substantial amount of writing in their courses and, where appropriate, instructors can and should use writing and the grading thereof as a factor in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Centre in the Effective Writing Office (<http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca/>) can be utilized by all undergraduate and graduate students who feel they require further assistance.