

ENGL 262 / ENVI 262, MACALESTER COLLEGE, FALL 2020
MWF 11am-1pm [J Block]
Mode of Delivery: Zoom, Slack, Google Chat, and Email

READING NATURE IN THE GLOBAL NOVEL

Professor Amy E. Elkins, Macalester College



Artwork by Yinka Shonibare

PROFESSOR: AMY E. ELKINS
aelkins@macalester.edu
phone: 651.696.6515

OFFICE HOURS:
By Appointment (just ask!)
Old Main 206

Description

This course combines study of the contemporary global novel with considerations of the environment—an approach known as *ecocriticism* in literary studies. While you'll be introduced to ecocriticism and its intersecting theories of the environment, you will be encouraged to draw on your own interests and experiences with the natural world, in addition to trans-disciplinary approaches from natural history, biology, environmental studies, medicine, environmental psychology, and anthropology. In reading works by contemporary writers, our class will examine a range of responses to the politics of place and cross-cultural experiences of our changing planet. We will also examine how nature takes metaphorical shape in literature, working as a group to understand how fiction draws on the environment to express complex human emotions and interconnections with the non-human world.

This course satisfies the Internationalism General Education course requirement at Macalester and counts towards the Writers of Color requirement for the English major.

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Required Texts

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	<p>THROUGH THE ARC OF THE RAIN FOREST REQUIRED By YAMASHITA EDITION: 90 PUBLISHER: INGRAM PUB ISBN: 9780918273826</p>
	<p>HUNGRY TIDE REQUIRED By GHOSH EDITION: 05 PUBLISHER: HM ISBN: 9780618711666</p>
	<p>PEREGRINE REQUIRED By BAKER EDITION: 05 PUBLISHER: PENG RAND ISBN: 9781590171332</p>

Please purchase the assigned texts as physical books rather than e-books, and your other readings will be made available on Moodle. *I'd like to minimize our screen time in the coming months, so please print and procure the texts whenever possible (it's also easier to process information and annotate that way).*

If you are on or near campus during the pandemic, you may opt to take advantage of Macalester's print program for printing the .pdf files from Moodle:

New Print Service for Students: uniFLOW

Submitted by: Suzanne Durkacs, Information Technology Services (ITS)

ITS is rolling out uniFLOW, a new printing service for students. We are also leaving the WebPrint station in the Campus Center lower level in place until the new system is fully operational. You'll need to set up your uniFLOW account, associate it with your MacPass, and then pick up print jobs at the new color multifunction (printer/copier/scanner) located on the Campus Center second floor. We are working to add more printers in residence halls and other campus locations. uniFLOW account set-up instructions and print locations can be found on [ITS Print Services Information](#).

You may also want to purchase a copy of *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* by Amitav Ghosh (the assigned selected portion will be made available on Moodle, but you might prefer to have the whole book).

Also, please look into getting *The Peregrine* by J. A. Baker *narrated by David Attenborough* on audiobook (in addition to the book)—if you're not into the idea of audiobooks, the BBC has made a series of selected readings of Baker by Attenborough available online, so you may opt to give those a listen instead.

Finally, you should have a designated journal to write in for this course (it can be multimedia—feel free to get creative, paste in articles and images, etc.).

Note: I have customized everything about this course to fit the module format and to maximize your learning during the pandemic. While the context for academic writing and research has shifted, it's still really important! Over the years I've put together an **Academic Writing course packet**, which I usually have printed and bound for students. However, this module I'm uploading a slightly edited version of the course packet to Moodle that works better online so that you can consult it throughout the semester. You are not **required to print this out**, but I hope you will find it useful. *Please do not circulate the course packet beyond the class.*

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Course Particulars

Attendance: Attendance will be important not only for your learning, but also for our ability to build a community together and maintain a sense of connection and commitment to one another during this time of imposed physical distance. Your presence in class matters.

I recognize that there are unavoidable circumstances that sometimes make it impossible for you to attend class. Although I hope it isn't the case, such unavoidable circumstances may be more common during this module given that we are in the midst of a pandemic. Also, students with disabilities should discuss their accommodations with me early in the course to work out a plan that aligns with maintaining course expectations and learning goals.

Attendance Policy: You are allowed **two** absences no questions asked. However, please be in close touch with me (via email—either in advance or as soon as possible) about any absences beyond the second. If I do not hear from you in a timely manner, additional absences will result in a 1/3 letter grade reduction for each absence (a B will become a B-, a C+ will drop to a C, etc.).

Participation: Participation is distinct from attendance and is also an essential part of this course. In-class discussions (via Zoom), on-line discussion forums (via Slack), ungraded writing responses to prompts, or mini-reports (where everyone shares something or says what they think), emailing with me or chatting during office hours, etc. will be factored into your participation grade. Engaging with the (real and virtual, synchronous and asynchronous) learning spaces — including by helping to create an environment where all of us can learn and think well about one another — will also be factored into participation.

Netiquette: The Macalester College Classroom Recording (MCCR) policy sets forth community expectations regarding the recording (whether audio, video, or streaming) of class lectures, discussions, office hours, and other course-related activity. As an academic community, we value the free exchange of ideas and the privacy of community members. We are also committed to providing appropriate accommodations to students who require recorded lectures as an academic adjustment for documented disabilities. The MCCR policy balances the legitimate uses of classroom recording, the intellectual property of the faculty, and the privacy of individual students and faculty. The entire policy can be found here, <https://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/>.

In other words, please do not record anything without prior and appropriate permission, and I will let you know if I record a class session.

You may want to familiarize yourself with some principles of internet etiquette (netiquette), especially since increased virtual learning, interviewing, and community organizing will probably be more common now. You know a lot of this already: mute yourself if you're not speaking, try to assemble a comfortable workspace and the tools you need to learn and communicate in a virtual environment, etc.

I will never require you to put on your video, but please upload a photograph of yourself to your Zoom profile. That said, I would really like to see you! I miss being in the room with students so much, and being able to pick up on each other's body language and social cues strikes me as even more important in the challenging context of virtual learning and collaboration. **Our “campfire chats” on Slack will be totally text-based, and many of the virtual-face-to-face sessions will be half an hour, so I have done my best to reduce the inevitable screen-fatigue.**

Campus Policies and Resources

Honor Code: Students are expected to adhere to the principles of intellectual honesty outlined in the Macalester Academic Integrity guidelines and will be held responsible for any and all breaches of this agreement. Plagiarism is a grave academic offense, and one that I take very seriously. If you are ever tempted to copy something from the internet or are facing problems completing an assignment, please opt to talk with me rather than plagiarize. Examples of behavior that violates this policy, as well as the process and

sanctions involved, can be found on the Academic Programs website:

<http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>.

MAX Center: The MAX Center is Macalester's academic resource center. I encourage you to take full advantage of any and all of the excellent resources they provide there, as they are committed to supporting all students to succeed at Macalester.

Visit <http://www.macalester.edu/max/writing/> for more information and to make appointments.

Library: Working to integrate the disciplinary literature into your research can be a complex process. Consulting with the research and instruction librarians for the discipline(s) in which you are studying will save you time and help you discover better, more scholarly sources. You can make an appointment using the Ask Us page on the library website, which can be accessed at <https://www.macalester.edu/library/askus/>, or email your librarian(s) directly.

International Student Programs: If you are an international student and/or working with English as your second language, I encourage you to take advantage of the helpful resources that Macalester makes available at the International Student Programs Office. For more information, visit <http://www.macalester.edu/isp/>.

Disability Services: I am committed to ensuring access to course content for all students, including those with disabilities. If you have a disability, please meet with me early in the semester to discuss your accommodation plan. If you have not yet obtained a plan or are unsure if you have a disability that requires accommodation, please contact Disability Services: disabilityservices@macalester.edu, or call 651-696-6974.

Title IX and Mental Health: Macalester is committed to providing a safe and open learning and living environment for all students, staff, and faculty. If you (or someone you know) has experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone, and that help and support are available.

Please be aware that as a faculty member, I am a *non-confidential resource*, although I will keep anything you disclose to me *private*. This means that if I become aware of incidents or allegations of sexual misconduct, I am required to share the matter with the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinators. This College policy is intended to ensure that you receive the resources and support you need.

Even as you might be away from campus, or your needs change, resources are available for you if you need support related to sexual and/or relationship abuse.

If you would like to contact the Title IX office, Macalester's Title IX Coordinator is available and can assist you with supportive measures and referrals:

- Phone: 651-696-6258 Email: titleixordinator@macalester.edu
- Incident Report Form: [Macalester Incident Report](#)

If you would like to talk to someone who would not have to share what you tell them with the Title IX office, *confidential* support resources through Macalester are also available to you:

- **Free, Urgent, Phone Counseling (Press 2) is available to Macalester students anywhere in the world, 24/7/365.** Speak to a licensed mental health counselor 24 hours a day by calling Hamre Center at 651-696-6275, then press or say option 2 when prompted.
- To make an appointment with one of our counselors or medical providers, call 651-696-6275 or email health@macalester.edu
- To contact support through the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, call 651-696-6298 or email religiouslife@macalester.edu

Local and national resources are also available:

- [Ramsey County SOS Sexual Violence Services](#) offers confidential phone support at 651-266-1000 or you can use the [SOS Contact Form](#) (SOS is currently not offering face to face meetings)
- RAINN is a national resource with both confidential phone support and live chat: Find out more about [RAINN](#)
- Futures Without Violence offers a COVID-19 specific page with a robust range of resources, including identity-specific options such as Trans Lifeline and the DeafHotline. FWV also offers resources on safety plans, check out [FWV's COVID-19](#) page.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522

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COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1

Wednesday, Sept. 2

Meeting format: Zoom

First day of class!

Introductions: *Share an Object*

Please join our Slack Channel Chat Room (link will be emailed)

Check your email for your Supervision group assignment.

Friday, Sept. 4

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions**Reading:** "Literature and Environment" by Lawrence Buell, Ursula K. Heise, and Karen Thornber (pdf)

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: *Based on your reading, what is the most compelling branch of ecocritical thought? Why?*

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Week 2

Monday, Sept. 7

NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Wednesday, Sept. 9

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions**Reading:** *The Hungry Tide* pp. 3-145

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: *The ecosystem of the Sundarbans—including its distinct waterways—is a metaphor for what?*

Friday, Sept. 11

Meeting format: Campfire Chat (Slack)

Reading: *The Hungry Tide* pp. 149-231

Prompt: *Read adrienne maree brown on “Fractals” (pdf): How is The Hungry Tide like a fractal?*

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Week 3

Monday, Sept. 14

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions

Reading: *The Hungry Tide* pp. 232-333

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: *How does the book handle the tension between ethics and ecology? Is there a price for conservation?*

Wednesday, Sept. 16

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions

Reading: *The Great Derangement* pp. 3-54 (pdf)

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: *How is storytelling connected to climate change?*

[Thursday Sept. 17] DUE: Supervision Report #1 by 10PM via email

Friday, Sept. 18

Meeting format: Campfire Chat (Slack)**Reading:** *The Great Derangement* pp. 54-84 (pdf)**Prompt:** *Did reading The Great Derangement change your understanding of The Hungry Tide? How so?*

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Week 4

Monday, Sept. 21

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions**Reading:** *Through the Arc of the Rainforest* pp. 3-70

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: *Read Jane Bennett's "Vibrant Matter" (pdf): How might public responses to environmental problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of (nonhuman) bodies?*

Wednesday, Sept. 23

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions**Reading:** *Through the Arc of the Rainforest* pp. 73-

102

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: *How is the natural world a stage for life and death?*

Friday, Sept. 25

Meeting format: Campfire Chat (Slack)

Reading: *Through the Arc of the Rainforest* pp. 106-138

Prompt: *What is the relationship between form/genre and content in this novel?*

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Week 5

Monday, Sept. 28

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions

Reading: *Through the Arc of the Rainforest* pp. 141-end

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: *On Wednesday, you will get to meet Yamashita and discuss her work. What do you want to talk about?*

Wednesday, Sept. 30

Meeting format: Zoom (as a group 11AM)

* **Special Visit** with Karen Tei Yamashita *

Friday, Oct. 2

Class Hike, together (...sort of)

Prompt: *Rebecca Solnit writes, "Many people nowadays live in a series of interiors...disconnected from each other. On foot everything stays connected, for while walking one occupies the spaces between those interiors in the same way one occupies those interiors. One lives in the whole world rather than in interiors built up against it." What did you connect to? On your walk, what metaphors did you discover?*

[Sunday Oct. 4]

DUE: Hike Response Paper or Video by 10PM

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Week 6

Monday, Oct. 5

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions**Reading:** *The Peregrine* pp. 9-102

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: Listen to David Attenborough read selections from *The Peregrine*. Do you see nature documentaries as being helpful or harmful to the causes of environmental justice?

Wednesday, Oct. 7

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions**Reading:** *The Peregrine* pp. 102-151

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: How might we understand *The Peregrine* as a global novel?

Friday, Oct. 9

Meeting format: Campfire Chat (Slack)**Reading:** *The Peregrine* 151-end

Prompt: What does the falcon see?

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Week 7

Monday, Oct. 12

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions**Reading:** “What the Tapster Saw” by Ben Okri (pdf)

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: Read adrienne maree brown on “Interdependence and Decentralization” (pdf): How is power defined in this story?

Wednesday, Oct. 14

Meeting format: Campfire Chat (Slack)**Reading:** “The Beholder” by Ali Smith (pdf) -and- “Green, Mud, Gold” by Sara Baume (pdf)

Prompt: Is reading about nature transformative?

[Thursday Oct. 15]

DUE: Supervision Report #2 by 10PM via email

Friday, Oct. 16

Meeting format: Zoom Supervisions

Supervision A: 11-11:30

Supervision B: 11:30-noon

Supervision C: noon-12:30

Supervision D: 12:30-1

Prompt: Final Project Brainstorming Session

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Week 8

Monday, Oct. 19

LAST DAY OF CLASS –You Did It!!

Meeting format: Virtual Office Hours

Wednesday, Oct. 21 **STUDY DAY – No Class**

Thursday, Oct. 22 Zoomposium – Final Presentations!
Meeting format: Zoom (as a group 11AM-1PM)

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What is a Supervision? It's a small-group learning environment driven by student inquiry. If you were a student at Cambridge, you would attend Supervisions (the same thing happens at Oxford, but they are called Tutorials), and this ancient learning model has a lot of advantages! When I studied abroad in undergraduate, I got so much out of my Tutorials, and I'd like to model that experience in our course this module.

How to prepare for your Supervision? I've asked you to keep a reading journal for this class, and you will draw on its contents for your Supervisions (and use it as the basis for your Reports, too). I've also attached a Prompt to each class session—think of this as a suggestion, something to springboard your thinking, not a limitation in any sense. Each person in the Supervision group will share their ideas with an initial comment or two, which will then turn into a conversation. I will be there to guide discussion and prompt deeper thinking but Supervisions are student-driven. YOUR inquiries drive the Supervision.

...Ergh? If this sounds a bit intimidating, do not worry! We're going to form a close-knit learning group right away, and you will soon see that it's not about a "right" answer but about generous engagement with your peers and a willingness to share ideas. You may also want to write out and read your responses to the texts or to various issues that you see unfolding in our readings. In a Supervision, it is completely okay to read a written response out loud. You'll want to read in a *clear and lively* way so that your learning community can follow and connect to your ideas, but that is a totally great way to go.

To Review: Most of our meetings will be in small group Supervisions. This requires a mix of real-time-virtual-learning as a group (synchronous) and independent (asynchronous) course work. Think of it this way:

PREP
CONNECT
REFLECT

Prep for your Supervision by doing the reading, journaling about the prompt, doing any research you need to prepare, and writing out brief comments you might want to share

with your learning group. Prep may also involve reviewing the Academic Writing Course Packet (pdf on Moodle) or watching any media I email, post, or link to.

Connect with your peers in the Supervision by listening closely to their ideas, engaging their interests, and making connections between your ideas, the texts, cultural concepts, theories, environmental issues, etc.

Reflect on what you learn in each Supervision in your course journal. How are your ideas evolving? What are the most compelling discussion topics? Reflection can also be a creative process, so use whatever expressive resources you like (collage, drawing, poetry, manifesto, personal essay, etc.)

Grading Percentages:

Supervision Report #1	20%
Supervision Report #2	20%
Hike Response	20%
Zoomposium Final	20%
Participation	20%