



Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani
Hyderabad Campus

Course Handout

Course No. : HSSF349
Course Title : Ecocriticism
Instructor-in-Charge : Tony Sebastian

1. Description of the course:

Ecocriticism has found its place in the Indian academy only in the last twenty years or so. The course is intended to familiarize the learners with ecocritical concepts and show them how these could be effective critical tools to understand our environment/place and our relationship with it. The course will also feature an introduction to environmental literature and ecological cinema, fields that have much in common with ecocriticism, and have also developed a strong presence in the Indian academy. Through an examination of key concepts and texts in the aforementioned fields, students will gain an introduction to the environmental humanities. The course gives a humanistic perspective to the study of ecology and of the environment, and will teach students how to examine cultural texts and films to think about and understand environmental issues.

2. Objectives of the course:

- a. To introduce the learners to one of the major postmodern critical trends.
- b. To familiarize the learners with some key ecocritical concepts.
- c. To equip the students to create ecocritical documents in literary, cinematic and other artistic forms.
- d. To train the learners in the application of the critical concepts to various cultural texts.

3. Text Books:

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
Alex, Rayson K and S. Susan Deborah. Eds. *Ecodocumentaries: Critical Essays*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Print.

4. Reference Books:

Glotfelty, Cheryll and Harold Fromm. Eds. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens and London: U of Georgia Press, 1996. Print.
Selvamony, Nirmal, Nirmaldasan, Rayson K. Alex. Eds. *Essays in Ecocriticism*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2007. Print.

5. Course Plan:

| Lecture No. | Learning Objectives | Topics to be covered | Reference Unit |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1-8 | Introduction – What is ecocriticism? | Definitions of Ecology; definitions of ecocriticism Film screening: <i>Forget Shorter Showers</i> | <i>Ecology: Principles and Applications</i> 2-5; <i>The Ecocriticism Reader</i> xviii – xx; <i>Essays in Ecocriticism</i> xi – xxiv |
| 9-22 | Overview: Nature / Culture | Nature-culture divide; nature-culture concurrence Analysis of texts—literary, cultural and cinematic. | Garrard Ch. 1-3 “Beginnings: Pollution”; “Positions” and “Pastoral” |
| 23-30 | Literary Ecocriticism | (texts to be announced in class) | TBA |
| 31-40 | Ecotheory | Wilderness Deep Ecology – Analysis of films (tba) | Garrard Ch. 6 “Wilderness” Excerpts from “The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects” – Arne Naess (from <i>Environmental Ethics: An Anthology</i>) |
| | | Postmodern Ecology: Critique of Deep Ecology | Postmodern Environmentalism: A Critique of Deep Ecology (From Bron Taylor’s book) |
| | | Discard Studies; Animal Ethics: Analysis of the film, <i>The Plastic Cow</i> , <i>E-Wasteland</i> | “Wasted Humans and Garbage Animals: Deadly Transcorporeality and Documentary Activism”- Chia-ju Chang |
| | | Environmentalism of the Poor – Analysis of the film <i>Like Dust We Rise</i> ; Neoliberal Natures Analysis of <i>Return of the River</i> - Environmental Politics and Activism | “Environmentalism of the Poor” – Joan Martinez-Alier |

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| | | Environmental Aesthetics | |
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6. Evaluation Schedule:

| Components | Durati on | Weighta ge (Total 100 marks) | Date | Nature of Component |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Assignment1 | Tba | 15 | Tba | Open book |
| Mid Semester Examination | 1.5 hours | 30 | 13/10 - 9.30 - 11.00AM | Closed book |
| Assignment2 | Tba | 15 | Tba | Open book |
| Comprehensiv e Examination | 2 hours | 40 | 18/12 FN | Closed book |

Chamber Consultation Hour: TBA.

Other Announcements: Will be updated on CMS

Make-up Policy: Make ups will be granted only for exceptionally deserving cases and *should be communicated at least 2 hours before the missed component along with sufficient evidence.*

Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy: Academic honesty and integrity are to be maintained by all the students throughout the semester and no type of academic dishonesty is acceptable.

Tony Sebastian
INSTRUCTOR-IN-CHARGE