

A detailed painting of a forest landscape. In the foreground, there are large, dark green ferns. The middle ground is filled with tall, slender trees, some with bare branches and others with dense foliage. The background is shrouded in a thick, white mist or smoke, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The overall color palette is dominated by greens, browns, and whites.

Welcome to ENGL133

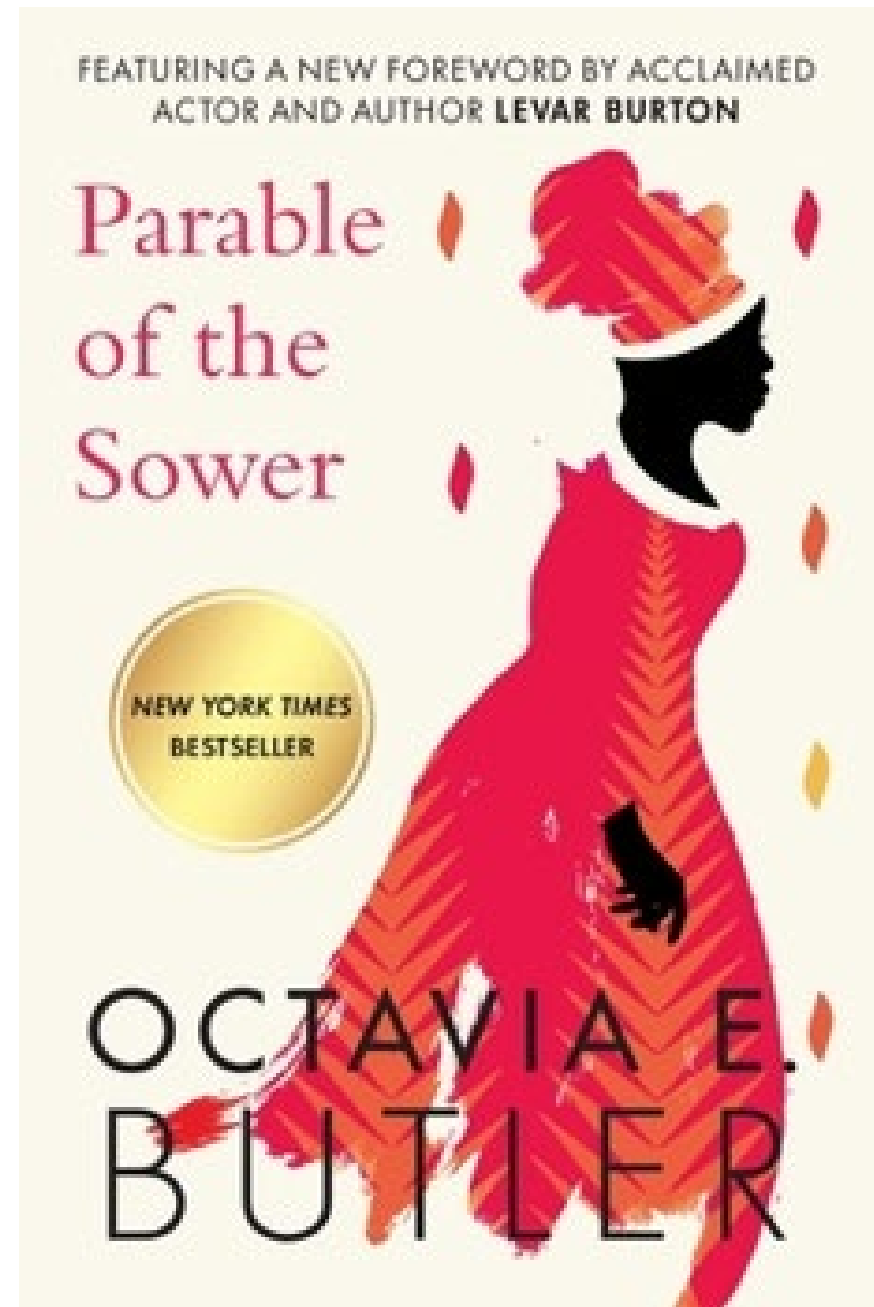
Imagining Nature



Palisades Fire, January 2025



Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*, 1993.



“February 1, 2025.

There’s a fire today...again. This time it’s big. It’s burning a lot of houses. People are running for their lives.”

-Octavia Butler, *The Parable of the Sower* (1993)



Octavia TRIED TO TELL US

A photograph of a dense forest. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a bright, hazy area in the upper center. The trees are mostly dark green and brown, with some bare branches visible on the left. The overall mood is serene and natural.

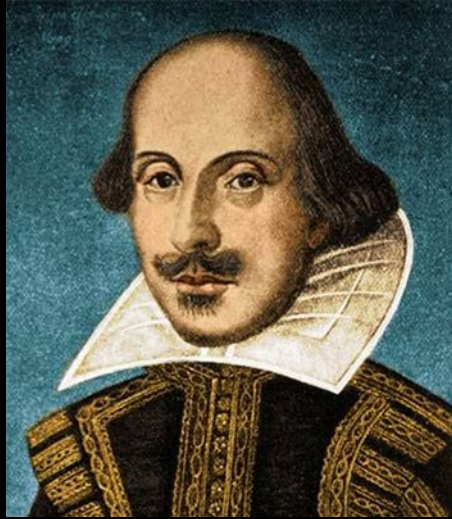
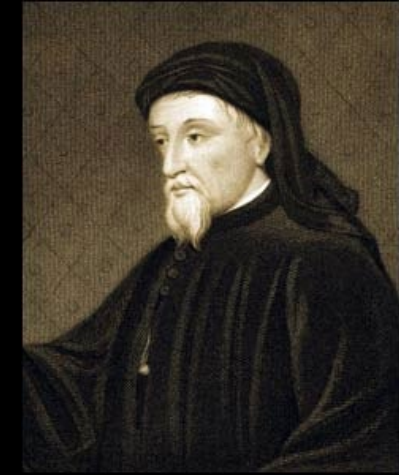
What is this course?

Who are we?

Dr. Kellie Robertson

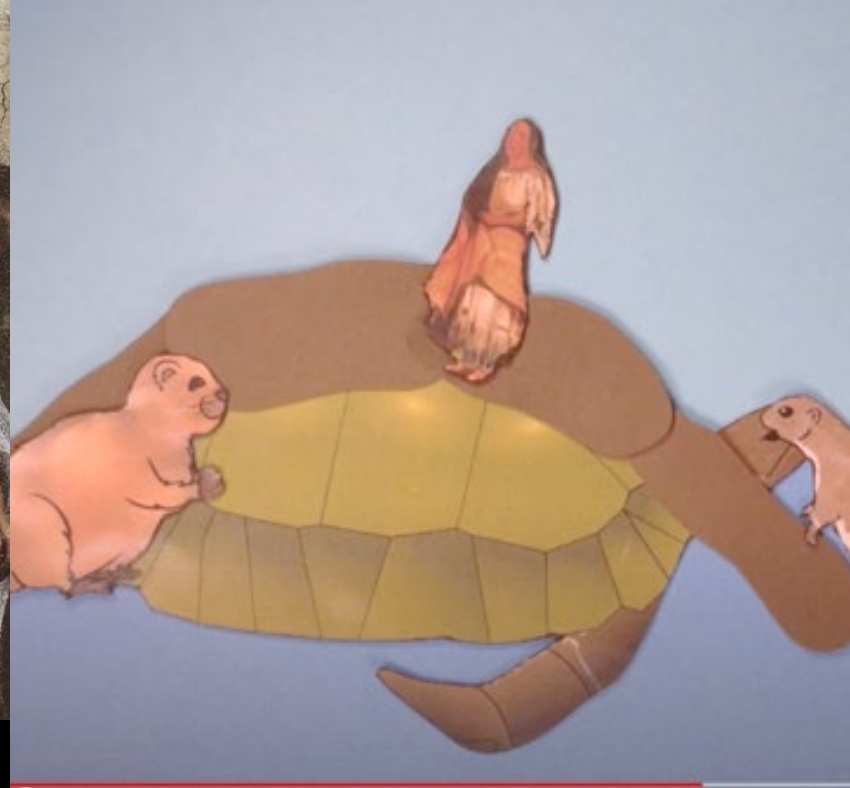
Teaching Assistants:

- Sections 1 and 2 (Fridays 11 am and 12 noon): Niyanta Sangal
- Sections 3 and 4 (Fridays 1 and 2 pm): Fernando Duran

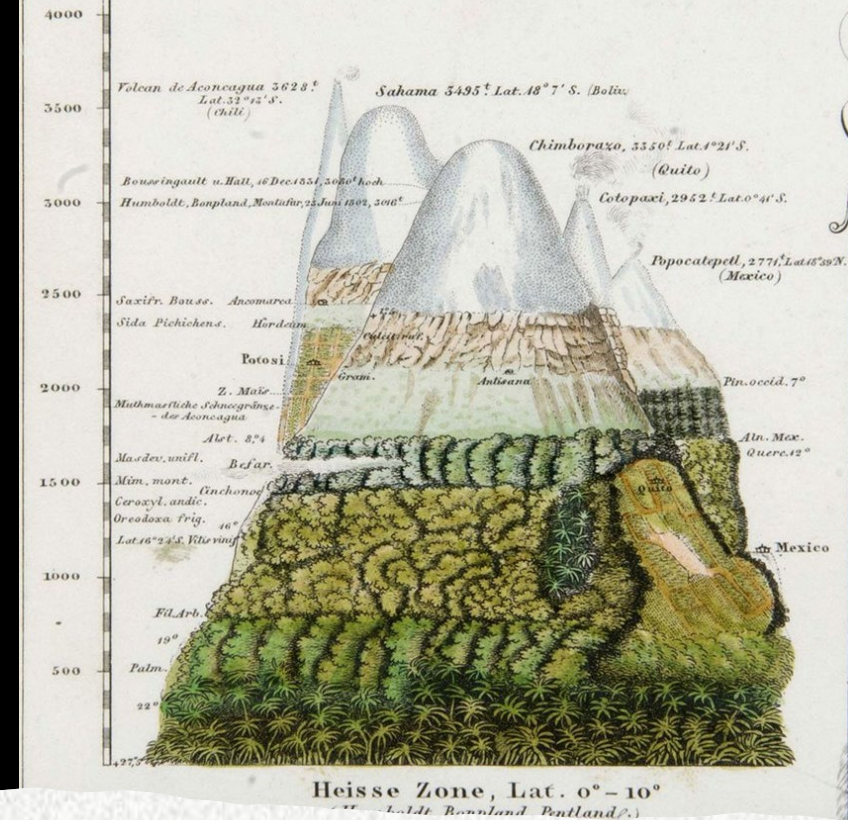
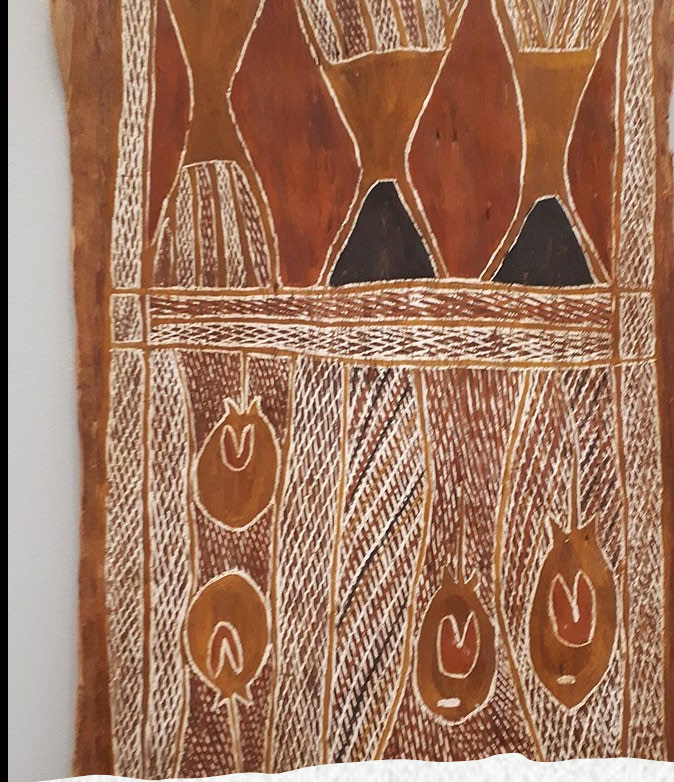


What's the point? So what?

The long history of environmental writing in the
Euro-American context from -0 to 2025



What counts as environmental literature? As ecocriticism?



How do we talk meaningfully about representations of nature in a comparative context? What kinds of ecological knowledges are produced and how are they valued?



Most importantly: Who gets to speak for nature? Who doesn't get to speak?

A photograph of a dense forest. In the foreground, there are large, green ferns. The middle ground is filled with tall, thin trees, some with bare branches and others with green leaves. A path or clearing leads into the distance, where the trees are more densely packed. The lighting is soft, suggesting a misty or overcast day.

What will you be asked to do? What will we read?

<https://umd.instructure.com/courses/1379432>

UMD Land Acknowledgement

Every community owes its existence and strength to the generations before them, around the world, who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy into making the history that led to this moment.

Truth and acknowledgement are critical in building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference.

So, we acknowledge the truth that is often buried: We are on the ancestral lands of the Piscataway People, who are the ancestral stewards of this sacred land. It is their historical responsibility to advocate for the four-legged, the winged, those that crawl and those that swim. They remind us that clean air and pristine waterways are essential to all life.

This Land Acknowledgement is a vocal reminder for each of us as two-leggeds to ensure our physical environment is in better condition than what we inherited, for the health and prosperity of future generations.

UMD Indigenous Futures Lab (<https://wgss.umd.edu/ifl>)

Keep America Beautiful PSA (Earth Day 1971)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0sxxwGlTLWw>



The so-called “Crying Indian” ad was released in 1971 for the Keep America Beautiful campaign.

- Who created it?
- Who speaks for Nature?
- What’s the message behind the message?
- What happened to the ad?

The Stereotype of the Ecological Indian

- Europeans created the “noble vs ignoble Indian” images from the 15th c.
- the Crying Indian ad plays on the noble savage idea transmuted into the “ecological Indian”

“But what does it mean to say that Indians are ecologists or conservationists? Because they are the most consistent attributes of the image of the Ecological Indian, the concepts should be defined with care. Embedded in them are certain cultural premises about the meanings of humanity, nature, animate, inanimate, system, balance, and harmony, and their suitability for indigenous American Indian thought or behavior should not be taken as a given.”

-Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (22)

“Request”

we would like it if you wrote us poems. we would like it if you wrote us long life sentences. we would like it if you broke sentences and gave us more life than you or we were told could be contained. we would like it if you remained. we would like it if you showed up every day. we would like it if you drank water. we would love it if you would turn off your phone. we would sincerely appreciate it if you stopped pretending to be alone.

-Alexis Pauline Gumbs, from *Dub: Finding Ceremony* (2020)

