



## Environmental Challenges in Literature and Film

ENGL202 [all sections]

Southwestern College Professional Studies

### COURSE SYLLABUS

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#### I. Course Catalog Description

How are books, movies, and other media telling us about the latest environmental challenges we face? What kind of communication has the most impact? From an in-depth look at the Deepwater Horizon disaster to visions of near-future fights for survival in science fiction, this course examines the use of environmental themes in storytelling and how creative narration in literature and film helps us understand and confront problems that are changing the world before our eyes. Prerequisite: ENGL102.

#### II. Required and Supplementary Instructional Materials

Gessner, D. (2012, July). *The tarball chronicles: A journey beyond the oiled pelican and into the heart of the Gulf oil spill*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

#### III. Course Delivery

There are two forms of course delivery Ground and Online:

Ground courses, or those that meet face-to-face on a weekly basis, also have an online component, which means some of the course content is delivered online. Southwestern College utilizes the Blackboard (Bb) learning management system.

Online courses typically contain a blend of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (not real-time) material. Depending on the course, you may be required at times to interact “live,” which might mean attending a scheduled Collaborate session. You may also be required to view or listen to a lecture or other video on a specific date and time. Of course, if there are circumstances that prohibit you from logging in to a scheduled synchronous activity, an alternate assignment will be provided. Please refer to the [Course at a Glance](#) section which will note any synchronous activities.

#### IV. Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that learners gain as the result of a particular learning experience. Southwestern College Professional Studies has learning outcomes specific to each course and each [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) program of study, as well as [institution-wide outcomes](#) related to the mission and vision of the college. Outcomes can help learners and instructors focus on the big picture of the learning experience and can help inform potential employers about a graduate’s knowledge and skills.

Upon successfully completing this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Identify environmental themes in creative narratives and draw critical connections between imaginative scenarios, real-life situations, and potential solutions to environmental problems.
2. Understand and assess the ethical issues involved in the global competition for limited resources and in preserving environmental integrity for future generations.
3. Demonstrate leadership skills by contributing specific examples of how their area of study relates to the environmental issues and narrative methods in question.
4. Communicate a clear understanding of the criteria for effective narratives in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, journalism, and film and explain how those modes of communication affect our understanding of environmental challenges.
5. Analyze and evaluate a specific environmental challenge relevant to their field of study or career development goals and produce their own creative narrative depicting that challenge.

At the end of the course, learners may vary in their ability to achieve these outcomes. You are more likely to achieve these outcomes only if you attend class and/or online activities as required by the syllabus, complete the requirements for all assignments to the best of your ability, participate actively in class activities and group work as directed, and study diligently for exams.

**V. Expectations**

Learners can expect the instructor to:

- Respond to e-mail and phone contact attempts promptly (if you do not receive a response after 48 hours please follow-up as a technology glitch may have occurred)
- Substantially participate in weekly discussions/lecture
- Employ impartial and consistent grading practices
- Provide assignment grades and feedback in one week or less

Instructors can expect the learner to:

- Review the syllabus in its entirety requesting clarification prior to beginning week 1 coursework
- Obtain access to the required course materials prior to the class start date or notify the instructor of any delay no later than Tuesday of week 1 of the course
- Submit course assignment questions with enough notice to receive and incorporate feedback prior to the assignment due date (see [course late policy](#))
- Possess basic skills in Microsoft Office, and have the ability to access Blackboard
- Include the [course ID](#) (Ex: CORE101) on all e-mail correspondence
- Check Blackboard course announcements often during the course
- Communicate with instructors and classmates in a professional and respectful manner
- Substantially participate in weekly discussion/lecture (it is strongly suggested that Bb posts be prepared in a word processing software application then checked for grammar errors prior to submission)
- Submit assignments via the appropriate avenue (e.g. discussion board, Bb assignment link, etc.)
- Adhere to the Southwestern College [Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Standards of Academic Integrity](#)
- Create and submit original work

**VI. Grading Scale and Criteria**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Quality Points</u>	<u>Course Scale</u>
A+	4.00	100%
A	4.00	94.0-99.9%
A-	3.67	90.0-93.9%
B+	3.33	87.0-89.9%
B	3.00	84.0-86.9%
B-	2.67	80.0-83.9%
C+	2.33	77.0-79.9%
C	2.00	74.0-76.9%
C-	1.67	70.0-73.9%
D+	1.33	67.0-69.9%
D	1.00	64.0-66.9%
D-	0.67	60.0-63.9%
F	0.00	< 60.0%

<u>Grade:</u>	<u>Criteria and Guidelines:</u>
A+	The grade of A+ is reserved for a perfect score (100%) of all work in a course.
A	Superior work: Superior performance that far exceeds the minimum expectations and demonstrates an excellent understanding of the concepts addressed in the course.
B	Above average work: Good performance that exceeds the minimum expectations and demonstrates a higher than average understanding of the concepts addressed in the course.
C	Average Work: Adequate performance that meets the minimal expectations and demonstrates a basic understanding of the concepts addressed in the course.
D	Minimally acceptable work for receiving credit: Below average performance that does not meet the minimum expectations and/or does not demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts addressed in the course.
F	Failure: Unacceptable performance (in a professional context, this means “you’re fired.”)
WF	Withdraw/Fail: A final grade of WF will be recorded for learners who either never access/attend or submit any assignments for courses.
WD, AW, I, S, W, WM	Please refer to the <a href="#">Grading System</a> section of the appropriate catalog.

**VII. College Policies**

Students are expected to read and abide by the college policies as listed in the appropriate catalog:

- [Undergraduate Catalog](#): For learners who do not possess a bachelor’s degree, are pursuing an additional bachelor’s degree or for graduate learners who are enrolled in 100-400 level courses.
- [Graduate Catalog](#): For learners who have earned a bachelor’s degree and are pursuing a master’s degree or graduate level certificate or learners who are enrolled in 500+ level courses.

- [Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Policies for Dealing with Violations of Academic Integrity](#)
- [Incomplete Policy](#)
- [Withdraw Policy](#)

**VIII. Course Policies**

Students are expected to read and abide by the course policies located in the instructor-specific syllabus in the Blackboard course.

**IX. [Technology Requirements](#)**

**X. APA Citation**

Southwestern College Professional Studies utilizes the guidelines prescribed by the American Psychological Association (APA), sixth edition (2009) for formatting manuscripts and documenting various kinds of sources when submitting written work. APA resources are provided in the Online Writing Center (see [College Resources](#)).

**XI. SafeAssign®**

This instructor may use SafeAssign®, which is a system that allows for checking the originality of writing and proper APA citing. Your assignments may be run through this software.

**XII. Course Requirements:**

Requirements	Number of Assignments	Points Possible	Percent of Grade
Discussions	15	450	45%
Good Poems Blog Assignment	1	75	7.5%
Reader Response paper	1	200	20%
Film Review Blog Assignment	1	150	15%
Creative Writing Journal Assignment	1	125	12.5%
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>1000</b>	<b>100%</b>

**XIII. Course at a Glance:**

Unit	Reading & Preparation Activities	Graded Work Due
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the Syllabus (Faculty &amp; Course Info) and complete the request to receive permission to select the film you would like to review</li> <li>• Read <i>The Tarball Chronicles</i> (pp. 1-100)</li> <li>• Read “America – A Poem for July 4” by Katharine Lee Bates (attached), and listen to a recording of the famous song made from it by Samuel A. Ward, “America the Beautiful”</li> <li>• Read Henry David Thoreau, “Walking,” and browse the first half of “Economy” from Walden, up to the costs of his house and food, and “The Ponds” from Walden</li> <li>• Read Mary Hunter Austin, Chapter 1 “The Land of Little Rain” and Chapter 2 “Water Trails of the Ceriso,” (and see the illustrations) from <i>The Land of Little Rain</i></li> <li>• Read John Muir, “Mount Hoffman and Lake Tenaya,” Chapter 6 from <i>My First Summer in the Sierra</i></li> <li>• Read Rachel Carson, “Mattamuskeet, A National Wildlife Refuge” and part 1 of <i>Silent Spring</i></li> <li>• Browse related Carson material for discussion assignment:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “From Calm Leadership, Lasting Change”</li> <li>○ “How ‘Silent Spring’ Ignited the Environmental Movement”</li> <li>○ “Rachel Carson’s <i>Silent Spring</i>, A Book That Changed the World”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Watch Carolyn Mohr’s TED-Ed video “The Power of a Great Introduction”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions discussion</li> <li>• 1.1 Discussion</li> <li>• 1.2 Discussion</li> <li>• Film Selection discussion</li> </ul>

Unit	Reading & Preparation Activities	Graded Work Due
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Gessner’s The Tarball Chronicles (pp. 100–200).</li> <li>• Read Things to Look for in Poetry</li> <li>• Read Richard Blanco, "One Today" and watch the video of Blanco reading it during the 2013 Presidential Inauguration ceremony</li> <li>• Read John Ashbery, "At North Farm"</li> <li>• Read Wendell Berry, “The Peace of Wild Things”</li> <li>• Read Jorie Graham, the following poems from selected poetry from P L A C E (2012): “Sundown,” “Cagnes Sur Mer 1950,” “On the Virtue of the Dead Tree,” “Employment”</li> <li>• Read A.R. Ammons, "Dunes" and “Terrain”</li> <li>• Read Wallace Stevens, “The Idea of Order at Key West”</li> <li>• Read Michele Wolf, “The Great Tsunami”</li> <li>• Read all eight of the poets in Remembering Katrina: Peter Cooley, Brenda Marie Osbey, Martha Serpas, Alison Pelegrin, Nicole Cooley, Kay Murphy, Yusef, Komunyakaa, Brad Richard</li> <li>• Watch and listen to four-time Poetry Slam grand champion Patricia Smith read “34,” from Blood Dazzler (2008)</li> <li>• Watch the video overview of the 2007 staging of Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot outdoors in the Lower Ninth Ward and read the Times-Picayune piece about the performances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.1 Discussion</li> <li>• 2.2 Discussion</li> <li>• Good Poems blogassignment</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish Gessner’s The Tarball Chronicles.</li> <li>• Read Things to Look for in Fiction</li> <li>• Read Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias"</li> <li>• Read Ben Fountain, “Near-Extinct Birds of the Central Cordillera”</li> <li>• Read Jim Shepard, “The Netherlands Lives with Water”</li> <li>• Read excerpts from Margaret Atwood, Oryx &amp; Crake (pp. x-y) , and The Year of the Flood (pp. 1-10)</li> <li>• Listen to some of the God’s Gardeners hymns from The Year of the Flood</li> <li>• Read Suzanne Collins, excerpt from <i>The Hunger Games</i> (pp. 1–40)</li> <li>• Read Cormac McCarthy, excerpt from <i>The Road</i> (pp. 1–35)</li> <li>• Read “Fresh Hell” and “Climate Change in The Hunger Games” to support discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.1 Discussion</li> <li>• 3.2 Discussion</li> <li>• 3.3 Discussion</li> </ul>

Unit	Reading & Preparation Activities	Graded Work Due
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Things to Look for in Creative Nonfiction</li> <li>• Read Annie Dillard, "Seeing" from Pilgrim at Tinker Creek (pp. 16–36)</li> <li>• Read Doug Peacock, excerpt from Walking It Off: A Veteran's Chronicle of War and Wilderness (pp. 119–147)</li> <li>• Read Josh MacIvor-Andersen, "The Faith to Save Mountains" (attached)</li> <li>• Read Terry Tempest Williams, "This Land is Your Land: America's National Parks Versus Its Natural Resources"</li> <li>• Browse related Deepwater Horizon material to support paper and discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Elizabeth Kolbert, "Oil Shocks"</li> <li>○ NASA video and "Another striking image" photo of the oil spill</li> <li>○ Raffi Khatchadourian, "The Gulf War," on the Deepwater Horizon cleanup efforts</li> <li>○ New York Times article, "Rig Owner Will Settle With U.S. in Gulf Oil Spill"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read Bill McKibben, Preface from Eearth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet, read the update "350 Science," and watch the video of McKibben on the Colbert Report</li> <li>• Read Elizabeth Kolbert's 2005 award-winner, "The Climate of Man – Part I"</li> <li>• Read Keith Gessen's 2012 arctic ocean journey, " Polar Express"</li> <li>• Read Peter Hessler, "Underwater"</li> <li>• Read Evan Osnos, "Aftershocks"</li> <li>• Watch the Simone White/Hideyuki Katsumata music video "In the Water Where the City Ends"</li> <li>• Read Barbara Hurd, "Lime Sea Glass: Transformations" (pp. 48–57) and "Beached Icebergs: Erasable Truths" (pp. 65–67) from Walking the Wrack Line: On Tidal Shifts and What Remains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reader Response paper</li> <li>• 4.1 Discussion</li> <li>• 4.2 Discussion</li> <li>• 4.3 Discussion</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Things to Look for in Films</li> <li>• Choose a film to view and review from the Film Selection List</li> <li>• Carefully watch and take notes on the film you selected for review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film Review blog assignment</li> </ul>

Unit	Reading & Preparation Activities	Graded Work Due
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read David Gessner's blog</li> <li>• Read Eric Klinenberg, "Adaptation"</li> <li>• Elizabeth Kolbert, "Green Like Me"</li> <li>• Read Jeff Speck, "Walking, the Urban Advantage"</li> <li>• Read Michael Specter, "The Climate Fixers"</li> <li>• Read David Owen, "The Artificial Leaf"</li> <li>• Read Elizabeth Kolbert, "Recall of the Wild"</li> <li>• Read Bill McKibben, "Money ≠ Happiness. QED."</li> <li>• Watch the video of kinetic sculptor Theo Jansen's strandbeests walking the beach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Writing Journal assignment</li> <li>• 6.1 Discussion</li> <li>• 6.2 Discussion</li> <li>• 6.3 Discussion</li> </ul>

**XIV. College Resources**

[Advising](#)

[Self-Service](#)

[Withdraw Form](#)

[Blackboard Learn](#)

[SCPS Bookstore](#)

[Deets Library](#)

[Online Writing Center](#): View this brief [video tutorial](#) that explains how to enroll

**IT Support:** [Marilyn.clements@sckans.edu](mailto:Marilyn.clements@sckans.edu) or 888-684-5335 x.121

**XV. ADA Compliance Statement**

Southwestern College Professional Studies is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability that may impact your learning and for which you may need accommodations, please notify the Director of Learner Support and Academic Success, at 888.684.5335.

**XVI. Senior Capstone and Graduate Projects:**

The majority of the programs offered by Southwestern College Professional Studies conclude with a Senior Capstone or Graduate Project. During the Capstone or Project course students will be required to retrieve papers, assignments and projects that they created during their entire program of study. For this reason it is imperative that students design a method of storing program course work for use during their final class at Southwestern College Professional Studies.