

Monica Manolescu, *From Nature to Environment in American Literature*

This course focuses on ecopoetics and American literature with a focus on fiction (Richard Powers's novel *The Overstory*) and nonfiction (chapters 1-5 of Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*). We will study primarily 20th century and contemporary American literature, but also some important 19th century texts by Thoreau and Emerson. Relevant references to American landscape painting and Land Art will be introduced. The class will familiarize students with ecocriticism and suggest questions such as: How is the experience of nature and the environment translated into literary representation? How is environmental perception affected by anthropocentrism and by cultural and ideological frameworks? How does literature convey our evolving understanding of "nature" and the "wilderness"? What is the role of literature in our current discussions of extinction, global warming and the Anthropocene?

Students are required to read Richard Powers's novel *The Overstory* and chapters 1-5 of Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* before the beginning of class. Critical texts will be distributed in class.

Compulsory reading before the beginning of class

Chapters 1-5 of Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2007).

Powers, Richard, *The Overstory*, Norton, 2018.

The objectives of the class are:

- To familiarize the students with the environmental imagination in American literature from the 19th century to the present, with connections to art history.
- To provide the ecocritical apparatus needed for the analysis of the literary texts under scrutiny.
- To help the students develop coherent and articulated analyses and arguments.

Secondary sources

ARSIC, Branka and KUIKEN, Vesna (eds.), *Dispersion. Thoreau and Vegetal Thought*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.

BOULD, Mark, *The Anthropocene Unconscious. Climate Catastrophe Culture*, Verso, 2022.

BRADDOCK, Alan C. and KUSSEROW, Karl, *Nature's Nation. American Art and Environment*, Yale University Press, 2018.

BUELL, Lawrence, *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, Wiley, 2009.

MEILLON, Bénédicte, *Ecopoetics of Reenchantment. Liminal Realism and Poetic Echoes of the Earth*, Lexington Books, 2022.