
	Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
	Doctoral School of Languages and Literatures 
	A Sense of an Ending: Contemporary North American speculative and ecofiction
	prof. UAM dr hab. Paulina Ambroży
Sciences/ discipline	Humanities / Literary Studies
Type of classes	seminar
Language of instruction	English
The number of hours + form of passing classes	20 hours / credit of a grade
Purposes of classes	<p>Drawing on the current methodologies and criticism of speculative realism, posthuman and new materialist philosophy, object oriented ontology and ecocriticism, the seminar will examine North American writers' engagement with the most urgent issues of the self-conscious Anthropocene, such as the climate change, biotechnological advancement, the impact of artificial intelligence and the crisis of the human-centered onto-epistemologies.</p> <p>The aims of the seminar include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To convey knowledge about the main trends and themes in contemporary North American speculative, climate and science fiction • To discuss the historical, sociopolitical, technological, environmental, philosophical and aesthetic contexts informing contemporary North American speculative writing • To convey knowledge related to relevant research methodologies, theories and critical approaches • To develop skills of effective application of interdisciplinary methodologies and theories in an analysis of literary texts • To develop skills of critical thinking and academic discussion with the use of advanced research tools and specialized terminology, • To develop academic presentation skills and research-based team work

<p>Learning contents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: Aims and requirements. The genres of sf, eco/cli-fi and speculative fiction: An overview of the field and selected theoretical terminology. Introductory texts: <u>Theorizing with literature: H. P. Lovecraft “The Colour Out of Space”; Ursula K. Le Guin “Vaster Than Empires and More Slow” – to be read for the first meeting.</u> • Object Oriented Ontology, Ecophenomenology, and the Question of Memory: Jeff Vandermeer <i>Annihilation</i>. • The Posthuman Animals: Philip K. Dick <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> • Post-Apocalyptic Trauma and the American Southern Ecogothic: Cormack McCarthy <i>The Road</i> • The Post-Apocalyptic Kunstlerroman and archive fever: David Markson <i>Wittgenstein’s Mistress</i> • Cli-fi dystopia and <i>Homo Faber</i>: Margaret Atwood <i>Oryx and Crake</i>. • Cli-fi, social justice, and afrofutures: Octavia Butler <i>The Parable of the Sower</i> • Seminar debate
<p>Entry requirements</p>	<p>Advanced English; the students will be required to read the assigned fiction and theoretical texts in English; actively participate in seminar discussions and prepare presentations in formal English</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Learning outcomes</p>	
<p>In terms of knowledge: A person who has completed classes knows and understands:</p> <p>the achievements of world science in the discipline in which the education takes place, as well as the paradigms and directions of development of this discipline, in a way that enables their creative and innovative development and their verification within the framework of research projects undertaken [E_W01];</p> <p>at an advanced level research methodology appropriate for the discipline of science in which education takes place, which allows for proper selection of research theories and tools and their effective application and modification within the framework of own research [E_W02]</p> <p>fundamental dilemmas of contemporary civilization and the role of science, especially in the field of education, in solving them. [E_W08]</p>	<p>Verification methods:</p> <p>Three verification methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Graded active participation in seminar discussions 50%; the graded components will include the quality of the contributions 2. Graded seminar debate based on the assigned material 30% - the graded components will include – the cooperation within the team; the persuasive and argumentative skills of the team; the value and relevance of the content; the quality and style of the questions and refutations

	<p>3. Graded individual tasks related to the discussed theories and methods (20%)</p>
<p>In terms of skills: A person who has completed classes is able to:</p> <p>use knowledge from various disciplines of science to creatively identify, formulate and innovatively solve complex research problems or perform advanced research tasks. In particular, he/she is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — define the objectives and the subject of scientific research, — formulate research hypotheses, — develop research methods, techniques and tools and apply them creatively and effectively, <p>draw conclusions on the basis of scientific evidence [E_U01];</p> <p>effectively retrieve information related to scientific activity from various sources, including from sources in foreign languages, and to properly select, critically analyse and interpret this information; furthermore, he/she is able to assess its relevance for scientific development [E_U02];</p> <p>establish and implement scientific cooperation in research teams, including international ones [E_U07];</p> <p>transfer the results of scientific activity to the socio-economic sphere in cooperation with institutions from the social and economic environment [E_U08]</p>	
<p>In terms of social competences: A person who has completed classes is prepared to:</p> <p>critical evaluation of the work in the field of the scientific discipline within which the education is provided and its own contribution to the development of this discipline [E_K01];</p> <p>fulfilling social obligations as a researcher; initiating actions in favour of the public interest, <i>inter alia</i>, through appropriate dissemination of scientific achievements in society. Furthermore, he/she is ready to take actions leading to the development of civil society based on knowledge [E_K03];</p> <p>thinking and acting in an entrepreneurial way, creating new ideas and searching - in cooperation with people from other disciplines - for innovative solutions, as well as taking up challenges and intellectual risk in the scientific and public spheres and taking responsibility for the consequences of their decisions [E_K04];</p> <p>continuous improvement of professional competence and</p>	

personal development, in particular by tracking and analyzing the latest developments in the represented scientific discipline [E_K05]

Literature

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- Abram, David, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. New York: Pantheon, 1996.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- ———. *The State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- ———. *What Is an Apparatus?* Translated by David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
- Bogost, Ian *Alien Phenomenology*. 2012. University of Minnesota Press.
- Buell, Lawrence. *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The Climate of History: Four Theses." *Critical Inquiry* 35.2 (Winter 2009): 197–222.
- Dannenberg, Hillary P. *Coincidence and Counterfactuality: Plotting Time and Space in Narrative Fiction*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- Derrida Jacques. *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Nass. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Graham Harman, "Object-Oriented Philosophy," in *Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures* (Ripley: Zero Books, 2010), 93–104.
- Heise, Ursula K. "Comparative Literature and the Environmental Humanities." *State of the Discipline Report*. American Comparative Literature Association, 2014. Web.
- Heise, Ursula. K. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
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- ———. "Globality, Difference, and the International Turn in Ecocriticism." *PMLA* 128.3 (May 2013): 636–642.
- ———. "The Invention of Eco-Futures." *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment* 3.2 (Autumn 2012): 1–10.
- ———. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 2008.

- Timothy Morton, "Hyperobjects and the End of Common Sense," <http://www.contemporarycondition.blogspot.com/2010/03/hyperobjects-and-end-of-common-sense.html>
- Morton, Timothy. *Ecology without Nature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007)
———. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the*
- Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (London: Continuum, 2009).
- Plumwood, Val, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).