

The Humanimal

(Writing about Today and Tomorrow's Environmental Crises)

ENC 1145: Topics for Composition

Spring 2021

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Class: T (8:30-10:25) / R (9:35-10:25)
Office Hours: T/R (10:30-11:30)

“My world’s on fire, how about yours?”
“All Star,” Smash Mouth

The Course

While the global pandemic justifiably dominated the world’s attention throughout the past several months, an equally distressing reality has been pushed back out of the spotlight: 2020 was a(nother) very bad year for the planet. The past several months alone saw a record-breaking number of destructive oceanic storms thrash the country’s southern states while much of the American West went up in flames. Beyond national borders, deadly heat waves ravaged Europe, mirrored by increasingly unstable wet and dry seasons plaguing the Middle East, India, and Asia. As the encroaching disasters of climate change become more visible and unavoidable, questions of justice, accountability, and futurity are pushed to the forefront of our domestic and global political debates.

In addition to exploring these intersecting catastrophes, this course will centrally consider these questions: What does it mean to be “human” in an era of escalating ecological crisis? What does it mean to be an “animal?” Through what forces and structures are some considered more human—or more animal—than others? How do developments in science and technology blur the boundary between human and non-human? How can we talk about ethics or justice when it comes to our treatment of our environment, of animals, and of other (human) beings? And, as such, might the intensifying impacts of climate change demand that we re-think what it means to be human immediately?

The Goals

Our work in this class will make you a better writer, certainly, but it will also allow you to both consider and deepen your understanding of the many significant environmental conflicts of the present *as well as* how these crises are depicted, communicated to, and received by an audience. In an era where the truth may be stranger (and more terrifying?) than fiction, how can—how *should*—the realities facing the planet be presented to those living on it.

The Outcomes

If pursued with appropriate energy, attention, and commitment, you will have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking by the end of this course:

- *Content:* Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within environmental studies, environmental criticism, and literary scholarship at large.
- *Communication:* Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate for the topic of environmental conflicts. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- *Critical Thinking:* Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives and by using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

The Materials Needed

- *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood (2003)
- *Eating Animals* by Jonathan Safran Foer (2009)
- *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming* by David Wallace Wells (2018)
- *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha (2007)
- A curious mind

The Covid-19 Preamble

I am aware of the fact that COVID-19 continues to impact our daily lives and remains an incredibly real threat, despite promising news of a vaccine distribution. You should observe all university-recommended protocols for health and safety throughout this semester. That being said, if you are experiencing any hardships because of the pandemic—or anything related to it—please contact me as soon as possible so that I can make any necessary arrangements contingent on your circumstances. We're in (as everyone says) unprecedented times, and my goal is to be as flexible and understanding as possible given the circumstances.

What can you expect of me? I will bring my full self to this course from Week 1 until final grades are submitted. I take my commitment to teaching seriously—this is my dream job!—and you can be sure that I will continually reflect on how our work together is going and what changes and modifications might be helpful along the way.

What do I expect of you? Signing up for this course assumes you care—in some part, at least—about the issues and concerns facing the planet. As such, I expect you to engage willingly and fully with the material by coming to class prepared, while being respectful and active participants even in a remote learning environment. During class periods, I'm asking you to have your computer's cameras on, your attention fixed on our work together, and your minds open.

Communication & Office Hours

By far, the best way to get ahold of me is via e-mail. I'll reply to any questions or concerns within 24 hours (scout's honor!). Likewise, it is absolutely critical that you actively monitor *your* email inbox and our course website for changes or information from me throughout the semester. I'll be holding regular, yet virtual office hours this fall during the hour immediately after our class periods on Tuesday and Thursday—however, I am also extremely flexible to “meet” outside of these set times. Just let me know when you'd like to talk, and we'll make it happen.

Attendance

For obvious reasons, **you are required to be present for class every day that we have a synchronous session.** This is a composition and discussion-based course; much of what we do is geared toward a workshop format and cannot be tailored to you individually, should you miss. Our time together is precious! As such, here is the attendance policy for this semester:

- **Missing more than 3 class periods will lower your grade**, and excessive absences (the equivalent of two weeks) will result in you being required to drop this course.
 - For example, if your absences are 4-5, your grade will be lowered by two increments for each of those absences. (A B+ becomes a B-, a C becomes a D+, etc.)
- The policy of the department at large is that **if a student misses more than 6 periods during a semester, they will fail the entire course.**
 - The only exemptions from this policy are those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, or religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events or holidays must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed.

- If there is a medical condition that causes you to miss a prolonged series of class periods, you must speak to the Disability Resources Center at the beginning of the semester to officially request an accommodation. I will work with the DRC to arrive at an accommodation that allows you to be successful without altering the rigor and basic requirements of the class.
- Regardless of reason, if you miss a class, it is still **your** responsibility to e-mail me and find out what occurred and what is expected for next time. I will respond within 24 hours (promise!) and get you the materials necessary for the next class period. Additionally, if something is due at the class period you miss, it's your responsibility to e-mail me the assignment (**on time**) if you want to receive credit for it. This course moves quickly, and I'll do my part to keep you on pace if you fall behind—just stay in touch.

Major Assignments and Course Grade Categories

Your final course grade is composed of the following major assignment categories, which will be detailed at length as they arise in the class.

Critical Response Paper 1	12.5% (750 words)
Critical Response Paper 2	12.5% (750 words)
Annotated Bibliography	10% (1,000 words / 5 Sources)
Term Paper	25% (2,500 words)
Everyday Life Project	20% (1,000 words plus an additional component)
Course Engagement	10%
Minor Assignments	10%

Grading and Evaluation

Earning A's and B's at this level requires strong, consistent effort. Your assignments will include specific evaluation criteria, and I will provide detailed feedback on your work that illuminates progress, achievement, and areas for revision. In the past, students who have received A's put significant time and effort into this course right from the start, and simply kept at it. Be realistic in your expectations about grades; start assignments early and work steadily to avoid last-minute rushing.

As noted earlier, the writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the minimum requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit: 6,000 out of the total 24,000. To satisfy this requirement, *every* project's word count must be fulfilled in your assignment's final copy. Submitted assignments that fail to reach the minimum word count will receive a score of zero.

A	The qualities of a B project, plus imagination, originality, and engaging expression. The work exhibits depth of thought, command of language, and a keen eye for communicating through the selected medium.
B	A sufficient, thorough execution of the assignment's objectives. The work demonstrates coherent organization, ample supporting details, and a clear expression of ideas.
C	A satisfactory fulfillment of the assignment's objectives, with baseline organization and style. A "C" means your work met the demands of the assignment in a minimally acceptable way.
D	The presence of a significant defect in context, substance, organization, style, or delivery in a lackluster paper; the project demonstrates an inadequate treatment of the assignment.
F	Inadequate coverage of essential points; uncertain or misguided purpose; poor organization; ineffective and inconsistent expression; significant defects in standard usage.

Note: you must pass this course with a “C” or better to satisfy the **General Education** requirement for Composition and to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit. **A grade of “C-” will not confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition Requirement.**

I would like to be impressed by the complexity of your thinking. Please try.

If at any point you’re curious about your grade in the course or would like more detailed feedback on completed assignments or works in progress—just ask! I’m fully committed to helping you succeed this semester and welcome the opportunity to help you improve in whatever ways I can.

Assignment Notes

All papers will be submitted as a MS Word (.doc) documents on Canvas. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.

For some of our larger assignments, there will be benchmarks along the way to aid you in your progress (for example: topic proposals, introduction/thesis drafts, peer review, etc.). If at any time you’re unprepared for these benchmarks or miss their deadline, the overall letter grade will drop for the assignment by roughly 1/3 (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.).

Regarding late work: I understand that “things” happen, and you might forget to submit or have a major assignment at hand on the day it is due. Here’s my policy: if the paper/project is submitted within an hour after the class period ends (which, I think, should give you enough time to quickly submit your work), I will only take off 1/3 of a letter grade. After that, however, major assignments will be penalized one letter grade (e.g., from B to C) for each day they are late.

Course Engagement

“Participation” is a fairly loaded term, and so I steer away from it. Rather, this course’s success will largely depend on how fully you engage with the material, with each other, and with me. Specifically, your engagement counts toward 10% of your overall course grade and is measured in a variety of ways: informal discussions during our scheduled class period, formal discussion activities, reading response prompts, and other opportunities where you are able to demonstrate the effort you’ve put forth in this course. It’s not necessarily “talking in class” (although that helps!). Rather, I’m looking for active involvement in our course; showing up to class prepared and contributing in small group and whole group discussions and activities—that’s “participation,” to me.

Academic Honesty & Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the UF Student Honor Code. Detecting it is often fairly easy—all of your major assignments are sent into a copyright analysis system—and once found, violations are automatically reported to the Academic Dean. UF’s Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it as follows:

- “A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to 1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing. 2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student’s own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the student’s own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the faculty to whom it is submitted. 3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.”

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Conduct & Honor Code, which can be found at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>.

Understanding what falls under the category of plagiarism and academic dishonesty will help prevent you from committing these acts inadvertently—and will also strengthen your own writing. If you have any questions about using work other than your own in a paper, **see me** before you turn in an assignment. “I didn’t know!” is not an excuse, and will not be counted as one, so **ask**.

Diversity Affirmation

The University of Florida does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Effective learning environments value and support diversity, and free, open discussion is a hallmark of a functioning democratic society. It’s my goal to cultivate a comfortable, lively “classroom” (even in the bizarre world of virtual learning) where we can all exchange ideas freely.

Please keep in mind that the individuals in this course come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we discuss and write about engage in controversial topics and opinions. A myriad of student backgrounds combined with provocative texts *require* that you demonstrate respect for ideas that might differ from your own. College is a time to broaden your perspectives, challenge your ideas, and consider the viewpoints and opinions of those you haven’t engaged with before. View this as an opportunity for growth—and embrace it.

Disability Affirmation

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Those requesting accommodation should contact the Disability Resource Center, **001 Reid Hall**. That office will provide documentation to you, and then you provide this to me when requesting accommodation.

Writing Studio

Free appointments with writing tutors can be made up to twice a week for help on structural work on major assignments. See <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> to learn more.

Course Evaluations

You’ll have the opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. You will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email you receive from GatorEvals, in your Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

Physical and Mental Health Resources

For guidance during distressing situations, please contact U Matter We Care or the Dean of Students Office. They can help you navigate resources and academic procedures for personal, medical, and academic issues.

- U Matter We Care: <http://umatter.ufl.edu>, umatter@ufl.edu, (352) 294-2273
- Dean of Students: <https://dso.ufl.edu/>, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261
- Counseling Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/> 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575
- Field and Fork Pantry: <https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>, 564 Newell Drive, (352) 294-3601
- Student Health Care Center: <http://shcc.ufl.edu/>, multiple locations, (352) 392-1161

Course Schedule
ENC 1145: The Humanimal
Spring 2021

The calendar below is **subject to change** and does not necessarily list all readings and shorter assignments. Readings are to be completed **before the class period for which they are listed**, unless mentioned otherwise.

Week	Day	Topics/Readings/Assignments
1 (1/12 & 1/14)	Tuesday	Introduction to Course Initial Definitions
	Thursday	Groundwork Environmental Keywords: <i>Animal, Environment, Species, Anthropocene, Nature</i>
2 (1/19 & 1/21)	Tuesday	“The Trouble with Wilderness” (Cronon) “Planet of Weeds” (Quammen)
	Thursday	<i>The Uninhabitable Earth</i> pp. 3-40 Due: Everyday Life Project Proposal (email)
3 (1/26 & 1/28)	Tuesday	<i>The Uninhabitable Earth</i> pp. 43-93 “Miami-Dade is One Storm Away from a Housing Catastrophe” (Rodriguez, Lopez) Environmental Keywords: <i>Environmental Justice</i>
	Thursday	<i>The Uninhabitable Earth</i> pp. 94-154
4 (2/2 & 2/4)	Tuesday	<i>The Uninhabitable Earth</i> pp. 157-217
	Thursday	<i>The Uninhabitable Earth</i> pp. 218-265
5 (2/9 & 2/11)	Tuesday	“Are We the Cows of the Future?” (Leslie) “Bodily Natures” (Alaimo)
	Thursday	<i>Oryx and Crake</i> pp. 3-92
6 (2/16 & 2/18)	Tuesday	<i>Oryx and Crake</i> pp. 95-169
	Thursday	<i>Oryx and Crake</i> pp. 173-261
7 (2/23 & 2/25)	Tuesday	<i>Oryx and Crake</i> pp. 265-367
	Thursday	“It’s Game Over Forever”: Atwood’s Satiric Vision of a Bioengineered Posthuman Future in <i>Oryx and Crake</i> ” (Bouson) “ <i>Oryx and Crake</i> and the New Nostalgia for Meat” (Parry) Due: Critical Response Paper 1 (750 words)
8 (3/2 & 3/4)	Tuesday	“Mice into Wormholes: A Comment on the Nature of No Nature” (Haraway) Due: Everyday Life Project Check-In (email)
	Thursday	Film Viewing Options: <i>Interstellar</i> (2014, Nolan) <u>or</u> <i>A.I. Artificial Intelligence</i> (2001, Spielberg) <u>or</u> <i>Wall-E</i> (2008, Stanton)
9 (3/9 & 3/11)	Tuesday	Film Viewing & Article Consideration (TBD)
	Thursday	“Consider the Lobster” (Wallace) “ <i>Stuffed and Starved: Introduction</i> ” (Patel)

10 (3/16 & 3/18)	Tuesday	<i>Eating Animals</i> pp. 3-41
	Thursday	<i>Eating Animals</i> pp. 45-115
11 (3/23 & 3/25)	Tuesday	<i>Eating Animals</i> pp. 123-199
	Thursday	NO CLASS — RECHARGE DAY
12 (3/30 & 4/1)	Tuesday	<i>Eating Animals</i> pp. 205-267
	Thursday	<i>Animal's People</i> pp. 1-82
13 (4/6 & 4/8)	Tuesday	<i>Animal's People</i> pp. 83-160
	Thursday	<i>Animal's People</i> pp. 161-222
14 (4/13 & 4/15)	Tuesday	<i>Animal's People</i> pp. 223-304 "Introduction to <i>Slow Violence</i> " (Nixon)
	Thursday	<i>Animal's People</i> pp. 305-366 Due: Critical Response Paper 2 (750 words)
15 (4/20 & 4/22)	Tuesday	Term Paper Workshop Due: Bibliography (1,000 words / 5 sources)
	Thursday	NO CLASS — TERM PROJECT WORK
April 27 th	Term Paper Due (2,500 words)	
April 29 th	Everyday Life Project Due (1,000 plus additional component)	