



**LIT 3400: Interdisciplinary Topics in Literature – Climate Fiction**

**Professor Terry Harpold**

**Fall 2017, Section 21DB**

**Time: MWF, per. 4 (10:40–11:30 AM)**

**Location: Turlington Hall (TUR) 2322**

office hours: M, 4–6 PM & by appt. (TUR 4105)

email: [tharpold@ufl.edu](mailto:tharpold@ufl.edu)

home page for Terry Harpold: <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/tharpold/>

e-Learning (Canvas) site for LIT 3400 (*registered students only*): <http://elearning.ufl.edu>

### **Course Description**

As we move into an era of greater climate instability, climate science will shape how we imagine the collective futures of humans and other living creatures of the Earth. In this course we will investigate a vital contribution of the humanities to our understanding of the significance of climate change. We will read a wide range of climate-related texts, mostly from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and mostly in the emerging genre of *climate fiction*: stories that are grounded in realities of global climate crisis, mass extinction, climate-induced migration, and economic collapse: a world in which former habits of mind and body are incompatible with situations on the ground, in the air, and under the water. The diverse authors whose works we will study show that creating new habits is difficult and perilous; it is easier to find fear, cynicism, and despair – none of which responses, it is clear, is up to the challenges of the real futures that approach us.

Much of what we will read is, implicitly and explicitly, an indictment of the blind hubris, cruel appetite, and reckless improvidence that have pushed us all toward terrible ends. This course proposes that the literary imagination of climate, haunted by the losses and negations of crisis, may also point in the direction of a new *ethic* of climate that embraces critical reflection, shared responsibility, and hopeful resolve.

Graded writing requirements for this course include a flash fiction exercise, a take-home midterm exam, and a take-home final exam.

## Required Texts to Purchase

These texts are available at the UF Bookstore and from online vendors. Used and electronic editions (iBook, Kindle, etc.) are permissible – indeed they are encouraged<sup>1</sup> – so long as the version of the text you read is *otherwise identical to the editions noted below*. I encourage you whenever possible to buy from independent booksellers. If you choose to buy your texts online, I recommend sources such as Abebooks.com and Alibris.com that serve independent booksellers.

Ballard, J.G. *The Drought*. Liveright, 2012. Orig. pub. 1962. ISBN 9780871404015. 240 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

———. *The Drowned World*. Liveright, 2013. Orig. pub. 1962. ISBN 9780871403629. 208 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide: A Novel*. Mariner Books, 2006. Orig. pub. 2004. ISBN 9780618711666. 352 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Itäranta, Emmi. *Memory of Water. A Novel*. Harper Voyager, 2014. ISBN 9780062326157. 272 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Martin, Mark, ed. *I'm with the Bears. Short Stories from a Damaged Planet*. Verso, 2011. ISBN 978-1844677443. 208 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions. We will read selected stories from this collection.*

Scranton, Roy. *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization*. City Lights Books, 2015. ISBN 9780872866690. 144 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Squarzoni, Philippe. *Climate Changed: A Personal Journey through the Science*. Trans. Ivanka Hahnenberger. Abrams, 2014. Orig. pub. 2012. ISBN 9781419712555. 480 pp. (print, graphic nonfiction). *Also available in iBook, Kindle, and comiXology editions.*

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*. Introduction and annotations by Bill McKibben. Beacon Press, 2017. Orig. pub. 1854. ISBN 9780807098134. 344 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions. **Note: this edition is required.***

Turner, George. *The Sea and Summer*. Gollancz, 2013. Orig. pub. 1987. ISBN 9780575118690. 384 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

---

<sup>1</sup> See my “Policy on environmentally unsustainable activity in the classroom,” below.

VanderMeer, Jeff. *Borne: A Novel*. MCD, 2017. ISBN 978-0374115241. 336 pp. (print). Also available in iBook and Kindle editions. **Note: the print edition of this book is only available in hardcover.**

Watkins, Claire Vaye. *Gold Fame Citrus*. Riverhead Books, 2015. ISBN 9781594634246. 352 pp. (print). Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.

Other required and recommended readings for the course will be made available in electronic formats via the WWW or via the course's electronic reserves (Ares, <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/>)

---

### **Course Calendar – UPDATED TO REFLECT HURRICANE IRMA CANCELLATIONS**

*Note: Readings marked “Ares” will be made available via the Canvas’s “Course Reserves” portal to UF’s Smathers Libraries.*

#### ***Climate Changed***

M, Aug 21	<i>Course introduction</i>
W, Aug 23	<i>Signature reading assignment description</i> <i>The Epic of Gilgamesh, Tablet XI, lines 1–203 (Ares, 8 pp.)</i> <i>Atwood, “Time Capsule Found on the Dead Planet” (2015, Ares, 2 pp.)</i>
F, Aug 25	<i>Signature reading assignment due</i> <i>Le Guin, “The New Atlantis” (1975, Ares, 28 pp.)</i>
M, Aug 28	<i>Squarzoni, <i>Climate Changed</i> (2012)</i>
W, Aug 30	<i>Squarzoni, <i>Climate Changed</i> (2012)</i>
F, Sept 1	<i>Squarzoni, <i>Climate Changed</i> (2012)</i>
M, Sept 4	<b>No class meeting (Labor Day holiday)</b>

### ***The Drowned World***

W, Sept 6	Ballard, <i>The Drowned World</i> (1962)
F, Sept 8	<b>No class meeting (Hurricane Irma cancellation)</b>
M, Sept 11	<b>No class meeting (Hurricane Irma cancellation)</b>
W, Sept 13	<b>No class meeting (Hurricane Irma cancellation)</b>
F, Sept 15	<b>No class meeting (Hurricane Irma cancellation)</b>
M, Sept 18	Ballard, <i>The Drowned World</i> (1962)
W, Sept 20	Ballard, <i>The Drowned World</i> (1962)
F, Sept 22	Wu Ming 1, "Arzèstula" (2009, in Martin, pp. 143–70)
M, Sept 25	Turner, <i>The Sea and Summer</i> (1989)
W, Sept 27	Turner, <i>The Sea and Summer</i> (1989)
F, Sept 29	Turner, <i>The Sea and Summer</i> (1989) <i>Midterm questions posted</i>
M–W, Oct 2–4	<b>No class meeting (Harpold is out of town)</b>
F, Oct 6	<b>No class meeting (UF Homecoming holiday)</b>

### ***The Burning World***

M, Oct 9	<i>Completed midterm due by Midnight (12 AM)</i> Ballard, <i>The Drought</i> (1962)
W, Oct 11	Ballard, <i>The Drought</i> (1962)
F, Oct 13	<b>No class meeting (Harpold is out of town)</b>

M, Oct 16 Ballard, *The Drought* (1962)  
Itäranta, *Memory of Water* (2014)

W, Oct 18 Itäranta, *Memory of Water* (2014)

F, Oct 20 Itäranta, *Memory of Water* (2014)

M, Oct 23 Watkins, *Gold Fame Citrus* (2016)

W, Oct 25 Watkins, *Gold Fame Citrus* (2016)

F, Oct 27 Watkins, *Gold Fame Citrus* (2016)

***A Proliferation of Small Worlds***

M, Oct 30 Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (2004)

W, Nov 1 Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (2004)

F, Nov 3 Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (2004)

M, Nov 6 Thoreau, *Walden* (1854), *selected chapters*: “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” “Sounds,” “Solitude”

W, Nov 8 Thoreau, *Walden* (1854), *selected chapters*: “The Ponds,” “The Pond in Winter,” “Spring”  
*Flash climate fiction assignment instructions*

F, Nov 10 **No class meeting (UF Veterans Day holiday)**  
*Recommended reading:*  
Galef, *Brevity: A Flash Fiction Handbook* (2016, Ares, 4 pp.)  
Swartwood, *Hint Fiction: An Anthology of Stories in 25 Words or Fewer* (2011, Ares, 13 pp.)

M, Nov 13 *Flash climate fiction assignments due (in-class discussion)*

W, Nov 15 *Flash climate fiction assignments due (in-class discussion)*

## ***After the Anthropocene***

F, Nov 17	Millet, "Zoogoing" (2008, in Martin, pp. 35–54)
M, Nov 20	Scranton, <i>Learning to Die in the Anthropocene</i> (2017)
W–F, Nov 22–24	<b>No class meeting (UF Thanksgiving holiday)</b>
M, Nov 27	VanderMeer, <i>Borne</i> (2017)
W, Nov 29	VanderMeer, <i>Borne</i> (2017)
F, Dec 1	VanderMeer, <i>Borne</i> (2017)
M, Dec 4	Rosy, <i>aîné</i> , "The Death of the Earth" (1910, <i>Ares</i> , 68 pp.)
W, Dec 6	<i>Final exam posted – course debriefing (no assigned reading)</i>
F, Dec 8	<i>Reading days (no class meeting)</i>
W, Dec 13	<i>Final exam due by 11:30 AM</i>

---

### **Evaluation of Performance, Attendance Requirements & Other Course Policies**

Your final grade in this course will be determined by the average of three assignments:

Signature reading exercise: 3% of final grade

Flash climate fiction creative exercise: 12% of final grade

Midterm exam: 35% of final grade

Final exam: 50% of final grade

***Signature reading exercise.*** This is a brief writing exercise that will help me and your classmates to understand your reading interests and habits; it's a good way to start off our conversations this semester and to identify shared interests in the class. I will explain the method of the exercise during the second class meeting. The exercise is due by the start of the third class meeting. Students who register for the course nearer to the end of drop/add will be able to make up this assignment during the second week of class. If you complete

this exercise and meet its (very) basic requirements, you will receive a grade of 100 on the assignment. In effect, the assignment is worth 3 free points toward your final grade.

**Flash climate fiction creative exercise.** This exercise is a practical application of a concept that is central to our readings and discussions this semester: the literary imagination can be brought to bear on the conceptual and ethical challenges of climate crisis in ways that scientific discourses of climate studies cannot. Creative, imaginative writing belongs in our collective toolkit for representing and responding to a world in climate transition.

You will be required to compose an original “flash fiction” – a text of 100 words or fewer – that represents some aspect of a climate changed world: a piece of the puzzle, a fragment in the kaleidoscope, a problem, a solution, a snapshot of worlds to come or those already upon us. You have complete control over the format and style of this work of fiction, whether it is narrative or non-narrative, description or conversation, etc. The only requirements are that it be original (your work), no longer than 100 words, and that you have clearly made an effort to use this format to engage with the emerging climate imaginary. This creative assignment is required; we will review every student’s flash fiction during two consecutive class meetings.

The grade for this exercise is calculated relative to the contributions of your midterm and final exams to your final grade. If that value is below 90 – in other words, if only the midterm and final exams were taken into account, your final grade would be below 90 – then your flash fiction exercise will receive a grade of 90. Otherwise, it will receive a grade equal to the contributions of your midterm and final exams.

**The midterm & final exams.** Course exams will be cumulative to the dates on which each is given. Each exam will consist of short essay responses to detailed prompts that require you to reflect on texts we have read and to apply the historical and critical methods of the course to them. The midterm will consist of three prompts, to which you must reply to two. The final will consist of four prompts, to which you must respond to three.

The midterm and final exams are open-book, take-home exams. In each case, the exam prompts will be posted on the course e-Learning (Canvas) site at the end of a class meeting and your completed exam must be uploaded to the site no later than the beginning of the class meeting one week later.

*There are no other graded assignments in this course. There are no extra-credit assignments.*

**Course reading load.** This course includes a substantial reading load but not an onerous one. Our discussions of most of the longer works will begin on a Monday, so that you will have the weekend to get a head start on that week’s reading. The pace of our discussions

will vary according to the complexity of texts read and the need to focus on selected portions of the texts. You should always aim to have completed your reading of a text by the last class period in which it is discussed.

You should think of the course as chiefly an introduction to broad literary and ethical problems raised by the genre of climate fiction, not a comprehensive, detail-driven investigation of its multiple subgenres. Your ability to write clearly and cogently on the assignments will of course matter in the grades you receive, but the course does not require outside research or extensive writing. If you read the texts we discuss, pay attention during and contribute to the class meetings, and apply yourself to the written assignments, you should do well.

**Grading scheme and graded assignments.** The evaluation method in this course is consistent with UF's policies on grading (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

Grades are calculated on a numeric scale, as below:

A	90–100	A–	87–89		
B+	84–86	B	80–83	B–	77–79
C+	74–76	C	70–73	C–	67–69
D+	64–66	D	60–63	D–	57–59

A grade of 56 or below is a failing grade (E). A minimum final grade of C is required for General Education Credit.

If you do not complete an assignment, you will receive a grade of 0. If you feel that you've been unfairly graded on an assignment, you may make a case in writing for a better grade. I will consider no grade changes without this written rationale.

You may make up a missed exam only if you have a written medical excuse from a doctor, a signed letter from a judge or law enforcement officer (if you are called for jury duty or to testify in court, for example), or if a death or serious illness or injury occurs in your family. You should contact me as soon as possible when you anticipate a delay in submission of graded work.

**Attendance & lateness.** The texts and concepts we will review are complex and challenging. You cannot reasonably expect to master them if you do not keep up with required reading assignments and come to class prepared and on time. I do not give reading quizzes, as I expect you to adhere to the calendar of assigned readings. Course



lectures will often include discussion of materials not among the assigned readings. For these reasons, your presence in class is essential and is required. **I take attendance. After four missed classes, I reserve the right to lower your final course grade by five points for each additional class period that you miss.** I treat excused and unexcused absences alike in this regard. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences and to make sure that you complete all required work. If you must miss class, make sure that you turn in any assignments due for that day, and that you are ready if another assignment is due on the day you return to class. In the event of a prolonged illness or other emergency you should notify me as soon as possible so that we may make provisions to insure that you do not fall behind.

Lateness is disruptive to others in the classroom, and is strongly discouraged. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, this will be considered an absence.

If you have special classroom access, seating, or other needs because of disability, do not hesitate to bring those to my attention so that I may make appropriate accommodations. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the UF Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) by providing appropriate documentation.

If you are unable to attend any part of a class meeting or work on a course assignment because these coincide with the timing of religious observances, you must notify me of this conflict well in advance, so that we may make appropriate adjustments to relevant assignment deadlines.

***Use of computers and other electronic devices in class.*** You may use personal computers and other electronic devices in class for purposes related to class discussion and collaboration. Casual WWW browsing, emailing, chatting, texting, etc., unrelated to classroom activities will not be tolerated. In the event of a violation of this policy, I reserve the right to prohibit your individual use of all electronic devices in class. Apart from those times when I have approved their use in advance, cell phones, pagers, and similar communication devices may not be used during class meetings, and must be set to silent ring at the start of class.

***Course evaluation.*** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be notified of specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

**Policy on academic honesty.** The University community's policies and methods regarding academic honesty, your obligations to me and mine to you with regard to academic honesty, are clearly spelled out in the UF Student Honor Code, which is available online at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this course. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or oral information in the preparation of graded assignments submitted for this course.
- Substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals.
- False claims of performance or work submitted by a student for requirements of this course.

I am obliged to act on any suspected act of academic misconduct. This may include a reduced or failing grade for the course as a whole or other disciplinary proceedings, as per the recommendation of the Dean of Students. If you have any concern that you may not have made appropriate use of the work of others in your research or writing for this course, please confer with me before you submit the assignment. You should retain all graded materials that you receive from me until you receive your final course grade.

**Emergency services.** **U Matter, We Care** serves as the umbrella program for UF's caring culture and provides students in distress with support and coordination of a wide variety of appropriate resources. Contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) seven days a week for assistance if you are in distress. Call 352-392-1575 for a crisis counselor overnight and during weekends.

Note also these support services:

- The University Counseling Center – 301 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>
- Student Health Care Center – 352-392-1171
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union – 352-392-1601
- Center for Sexual Assault/Abuse Recovery and Education (CARE), Student Health Care Center – 352-392-1161
- University Police Department – 352-392-1111 (non-emergency); *call 9-1-1 for emergencies*

**Policy on environmentally unsustainable activity in the classroom.** I will distribute all course materials via paper-sparing digital media. I encourage you to purchase e-book editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts, and to

return those to circulation if you choose not to keep them at the end of the course. (Donating your unwanted books to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale is a good way to get them into other readers' hands and to help raise a bit of cash for our county's fine public libraries.) If you do elect to keep your books, share them with others after the course is over. And a final appeal to your common sense: bring food and/or beverages to the classroom only in durable, reusable containers. Please, no food or beverages in single-use containers.