

English (ENGL) 460

The Ecological Imagination (Revision 1)

Delivery Mode: [Individualized study online](#)

Credits: 3

Area of Study: Humanities

Prerequisite: [ENGL 211](#) and [ENGL 212](#) or equivalent first-year English courses. It is recommended that students also take at least one intermediate literature course before taking this course.

Faculty: [Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences](#)

[English Studies Home Page](#)

ENGL 460 has a [Challenge for Credit](#) option.

Overview

English 460 investigates the links between literature, culture, and the environment, asking students to consider the role of cultural and literary analysis in the face of climate crisis and ecological complexity. Drawing from scholarly work in the environmental humanities as well as close readings of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, students will investigate how literature can illuminate, question, and reshape our relationships with the environment. Students will consider topics such as climate justice, wilderness, birds, metaphor, technology, the limitations of language and imagination, environmental racism and inequities, Indigenous representations of the environment, decolonization, the Anthropocene, pandemics, hope, grief, and visions of the future.

By the end of the course students will have given up on language, listened through the ears in their feet, learned how to train a falcon but decided not to, taken up language again, and considered the reasons for and against boarding a spaceship to another star. In addition to writing traditional analytical essays, students will have the option to develop work in other formats such as videos, podcasts, conference-style presentations, comic books, or other forms that combine analytical argumentation and textual evidence with elegance of expression. Students will have the chance to step outside the proverbial classroom and interact with their environment in new ways and will also develop self-reflections on their work to evaluate their

own learning. Ultimately, students will develop original assessments of the role of the human imagination in responding to the environmental concerns of our time.

English 460 is a three-credit senior level course authored by Dr. Paul Huebener.

Outline

- Unit 1: Climate and the Imagination
- Unit 2: *Gun Island*
- Unit 3: Encountering the Earth
- Unit 4: *H is for Hawk*
- Unit 5: *The Sasquatch at Home*
- Unit 6: The Anthropocene and its Erasures
- Unit 7: *Aurora*

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Evaluate the concerns at stake within the field of the environmental humanities
- Assess the role of literature and imaginative representation in responding to ecological complexity, including scrutiny of whose voices are heard or silenced
- Apply the skills of close reading and secondary research in order to assess the ways in which the assigned texts approach cultural assumptions and concepts associated with the environment
- Analyze the ways in which relevant literary concepts such as theme, metaphor, irony, point of view, form, genre, and others operate within specific texts
- Create thoughtful, articulate, original critical analyses of the assigned texts and concepts (and of your own activities), surprising yourself and your instructor with new insights

Evaluation

To receive credit for English 460, you must submit all four assignments and obtain a minimum grade of 50% on each assignment. The weighting of the course assignments is as follows:

Assignment 1: Two Short Analytical Essays after Unit 2

20%

Assignment 2: Analytical Essay or Alternative-Medium Assignment after Unit 3	25%
Assignment 3: Analytical Essay or Alternative-Medium Assignment after Unit 5	25%
Assignment 4: Analytical Essay or Alternative-Medium Assignment after Unit 7	30%
Total	100%

English 460 does not have a final exam.

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#).

Course Materials

Textbooks

- Ghosh, Amitav. *Gun Island*. Picador, 2019.
- Macdonald, Helen. *H is for Hawk*. Penguin Canada, 2016.
- Robinson, Eden. *The Sasquatch at Home: Traditional Protocols & Modern Storytelling*. University of Alberta Press, 2011.
- Robinson, Kim Stanley. *Aurora*. Orbit, 2015.

Other Materials

All other course materials, including a Study Guide, additional selected readings, a writing guide, and detailed course information, can be found online.

Challenge for Credit Course Overview

The Challenge for Credit process allows students to demonstrate that they have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, and intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university level course.

Full information for the [Challenge for Credit](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

- Undergraduate [Challenge for Credit Policy](#)

- Undergraduate [Challenge for Credit Procedures](#)
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Challenge Evaluation

To [receive credit](#) for the ENGL 460 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least 50% on each essay. Note that the challenge option requires more writing in total than the standard registration, and it expects students to demonstrate mastery of the course concepts, but it does not include access to the Study Guide lessons, the online readings, or any teaching support.

Activity	Weighting
Research Essay 1	50%
Research Essay 2	50%
Total	100%

Undergraduate Challenge for Credit Course Registration Form

- [Challenge for Credit Form](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized-study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 1, xxx xx, 2021.