LOGISTICS

Class Meetings:

TTH, 2:00-3:15pm, Honors Center 163. Course website on Canvas. The university, absurdly, requires that this syllabus indicate that you ought to wait for me 10 minutes, in case I’m late, before leaving class.

Instructor Information:

Professor Matt Hooley

Email: mhooley@clemson.edu (please be sure not to use g.clemson in the address!)

Phone (which I do not use): 864-656-3151

Office: Strode 317 (during Fall Term 2021, all office hours will be conducted over Zoom. Please email me to set up a time that works for both of us.)

COVID Stuff: First, it is my very strong preference that everyone in the class would choose to be vaccinated; something I have done myself, having informed myself about the virus currently ravaging humans all across the world and about the ironclad immunological protocols and structures that make basic vaccines of all kinds, including those for COVID, safe. This, as I said, is my preference, but it is not allowed to be a policy for the course or for the university, whose political autonomy is curtailed by the state government. Accordingly, no student’s grade will be affected by the decisions they make about the COVID vaccine. Unfortunately, because we cannot be sure that all members of the Clemson community choose to protect themselves, their loved ones, others at Clemson, or the family and friends of those with whom they interact at Clemson, we all need to take additional measures to slow the spread of this virus. For now, at least, this means that it is also my preference that we wear masks in our classroom—something I truly wish were not the case. Again, I am not allowed to make a course policy about this, and so any student’s choice about wearing a mask will not impact their grade. If, after we have more information about how the virus is spreading this fall and about each other, we want to revise our class’s norms around wearing a mask, we can definitely do so.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OUTCOMES

In 2020, for the second year in a row, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists set “the Doomsday clock” to 100 seconds from midnight: closer than humanity has ever been to “total annihilation” since the group started tracking major threats to human life in 1947. While anxiety about the end of the world is arguably an ancient phenomenon (evident, for instance, in Christian apocalypticism) it is also one that became a matter of everyday life during the Cold War, and one that has taken new urgency and currency as the threats posed by climate change, nuclear war, and now global pandemic continue to intensify. This course examines the recent histories of apocalyptic thinking, paying particular attention to the growing anxiety around eco-apocalypse as it builds on and intersects with mid-20th century framework “nuclear modernity.” The course situates anxiety about eco-apocalypse (including emergent discourses of climate anxiety and climate grief) as both a reasonable and problematically universalizing phenomenon that erases experiences of world-ending destruction that Indigenous and other racialized people have, in many cases, already endured and lived through. To that end, the second half the course asks: how do we live with and after the end of the world? Here, the course centers texts, discussions, and class visits by academics and Indigenous cultural producers who are immersed in the work of rebuilding human and environmental worlds in the aftermath of apocalypse.

COURSE TEXTS

Many of the readings we’ll do together this term will be available to you via Canvas. Three texts, however, are so essential to our work this term, that I’ll ask you to acquire them. Information about each is below. These texts are available at our campus bookstore and are also available (often more cheaply) via online stores like bookshop.org. If you want to buy the books online, please do so ASAP so that they arrive in plenty of time for you to read them at the allotted time (see course calendar). While it is your responsibility to make sure you have the books in time to read them for the assigned class meetings, I understand that some students might have financial difficulty buying these books. In some cases, it is possible that students will solve that problem by downloading them, one way or another. However, I also want to extend my help in helping you access these books, if you are not in a financial position to acquire them yourself. Please just send me an email and we’ll figure something out, so that you can participate in the course.

1. Roy Scranton, *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization,* City Lights Press: 2015, 0872866696
2. Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, Princeton University Press: 2017, 0691178321
3. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*, Penguin: 2006 Edition, 0143104918

ASSIGNMENTS

Everyday Things (25% of final grade)

I’ll calculate your participation by adding together three scores, every class session: preparation for class (5pts), in-class writing (5pts), active learning and listening (5pts). Every day that we have a class meeting there are 15 total points possible. If you come to class having read all of the assigned reading, awake, and ready with ideas to share, that’s 5 points. Every day we’ll have an in-class writing and I’ll grade that writing out of 5 points. Finally, as long as you are interested, generous, supportive, active, and engaged during class, you’ll receive another five points. Over the course the term there are 420 possible participation points. I’m happy to share with you how you’re doing with your participation and to brainstorm ways to improve. On days there is no assigned reading or, for instance, when we’re doing an exam and so there’s no in-class writing, you’ll automatically receive points for those activities.

Zine (15% of final grade)

In lieu of a more traditional midterm exam, we will make zines that reflect on key ideas and questions pertaining to the cultural histories of apocalyptic thinking and on the ways those ideas are relevant in the present. We’ll learn more about what zines are during a session on September 21st and you’ll have a chance to work in the Clemson Libraries Makerspace on September 28th to draft your zine. Like all students, you can continue to use the Makerspace to complete your zine by the deadline of October 5th. I’ll evaluate your zines individually, but would like to share them with each other and with people in the Clemson community. To that end, we’ll also feature your zines on the library shelf that we make together as a final project.

Take Home Exams (15% each of final grade)

Two times during the term, I’ll distribute a prompt and instructions for you to complete a take home essay. I’ll distribute this via Canvas well before the date of the take home essay and we’ll have time in class to answer questions that you have. You should take the time of class session itself (plus another hour or so) to complete the essay and return it to me via Canvas. The goal of these essays is two-fold. First, they will be chances to practice specific skills of cultural criticism: argument making, evidence gathering, and close reading. Second, they will give you the chance to synthesize ideas relevant to specific units in the class. Each of these units is organized around a set of questions that are suggested above in the course overview (and that we’ll add to, together). Your take home essays are the place you have to test out answers to these questions. Your take home essays need only be between 2-4 pages long, and there will be specific guidelines for how to complete each successfully.

Library Shelf Project (30% of final grade)

Most final essays or projects are individual: they supposedly demonstrate individual learning (or individual internalization of a discipline) and they produce individual assessments of learning. I’d like to shift our focus away from individual achievement and evaluation to a more collective framework, and so instead of writing a final essay for this class, we will make a library shelf, together, which will display readings and other media that we choose. The goal of the shelf will be to create a resource for students, staff, and faculty to learn about issues and ideas relevant to the environment and to the cultural histories of apocalyptic and more-than-apocalyptic thinking. Most of the work for this project will be completed at the end of the term, but it will be essential that we are building a collective list of possible texts, media, and objects to include on the shelf throughout the term. We will devise the evaluative rubric for this project together on November 16th.

CALENDAR OF READINGS AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Unit 1: The History of the End

8/19 Diaz, “Apocalypse” [canvas]

8/24 Cronon, “The Wilderness” [canvas]

8/26 Masco, to 68 (not 6-16) [canvas]

8/31 Masco, to 123 [canvas]

9/2 Masco, to 177 [canvas]

9/7 Masco, to 231 [canvas]

9/9 Masco, to 283 [canvas]

9/14 Scranton,to 65

9/16 Scranton, to end

9/21 **Kristin George Bagdanov Zine Class**; Zine video and examples [canvas]

Unit 2: After the End of the World

9/23 Tsing, vi-52

9/28 **Zine Work Session (Adobe Studio)**

9/30 **Zine Works Session (Adobe Studio)**

10/5 **Zines Due**; Tsing, 57-84

10/7 Tsing, 85-135

10/14 Tsing, 136-226

10/19 Tsing, 227- end

10/21 **Take Home Exam (No Class Meeting)**

10/26 Silko, 1-40; Voyles, “Preface” [canvas]

11/2 Silko, 41-80; Voyles, “Introduction,” 1-11 [canvas]

11/4 Silko, 81-120; Voyles, “Introduction,” 12-26 [canvas]

11/9 Silko, 121-160; Voyles, “Monsters,” 151-165 [canvas]

11/11 Silko,161-200; Voyles, “Monsters,” 165-184 [canvas]

11/16 Silko, 201-end

11/18 **David Treuer Class Visit**, Treuer, “National Parks” [canvas]

11/23 **Take Home Exam (No Class Meeting)**

11/30 **Final Project Work Session**

12/2 **Final Project Work Session**

12/10 **Final Project Due, 5pm**

COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Respect and Support for Each Other

It’s only possible for us to achieve our goals for this term if we are able to rely on each other to think, talk, and write together. Therefore, it’s a requirement for this class that we prioritize treating each other with respect, compassion, and support. This means far more than simply not being disengaged or hateful. It means actively giving energy to care for and about the other people in class.

Academic Honesty

Clemson University has an Academic Integrity Policy that applies to this course. It defines a violation as: 1. Giving, receiving, or using unauthorized aid on any academic work; 2. Plagiarism, which includes the intentional or unintentional copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one’s own efforts; 3. Attempts to copy, edit, or delete computer files that belong to another person or use of Computer Center account numbers that belong to another person without the permission of the file owner, account owner, or file number owner. All academic work submitted for grading contains an implicit pledge that no unauthorized aid has been received. D. It is the responsibility of every member of the Clemson University community to enforce the Academic Integrity Policy.

Attendance

Three times during the term, you may contact me at least 24 hours before class, and let me know that you will not be able to make it to class. I’ll send you a prompt for your in-class writing and you’ll be responsible for sending it back to me. I’ll grade the writing as I normally do, and you won’t lose any additional points for that day (i.e. it’s still possible to get 15 participation points for these days). If you don’t let me know in advance that you’ll be absent, you can still do the in-class writing, up to two days late, for those five points for writing (but you’ll lose the 10 points for being in class and participating). If you are absent more than six times during the term, it won’t be possible for you to pass the class. These are the policies I use under normal conditions. It is also true that this term and the ongoing threat of COVID present abnormal academic conditions, and so it’s possible that matters of attendance will have to be reconceived, in which case I’ll let you know.

Other Stuff

If the university is closed because of inclement weather (or any other reason), all students will receive full participation points for that day and any additional assignments due that day will be pushed to the next class date. If I am late to class, you are to wait 10 minutes before assuming that something unforeseen has prevented me from teaching class that day. Your feedback to the second take home essay will include your midterm grade.

Accessibility

University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries or conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let me know, and make an appointment to meet with a staff member in Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling 864-656-6848, by emailing studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu, or by visiting Suite 239 in the Academic Success Center building. Appointments are strongly encouraged – drop-ins will be seen if at all possible, but there could be a significant wait due to scheduled appointments. Students who receive Academic Access Letters are strongly encouraged to request, obtain and present these to their professors as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to follow this process each semester. You can access further information here: http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/ccampus-services/ssds.

Title IX

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran’s status, genetic information or protected activity in employment, educational program s and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy is located at www.clemson.edu/campus-life/ campus-services/access/title-ix. Mr. Jerry Knighton is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator. He also is the Director of Access and Equity. His office is located at 110 Holtzendorff Hall, 864.656.3184 (voice) or 864.656.00899 (TTDD).

Resources

Bookstore: https://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/book-store/

Library: https://libraries.clemson.edu/

Writing Center: https://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/writing/

Student Health Services: https://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/student-health/

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the main campus of Clemson University occupies the traditional and ancestral land of the Cherokee People. Clemson’s main campus is built on land seized through US military and diplomatic incursions culminating in the Treaty of Dewitt’s Corner in 1777. This is also land on which people enslaved by the Pickens, Clemson, and Calhoun families lived and worked, and that was transformed into the campus of Clemson University through convict labor. We make this acknowledgement to remember the histories of violence that anticipate our gathering here, to recognize Indigenous and Black claims to life and land, and to recenter those claims as we commit to better ways of caring for each other and for this land. Along with this acknowledgement, we ask: what responsibilities and commitments can we make to foster more honest and generative relations with this land and with each other? Can we, wherever we go, acknowledge Indigenous claims to the land we occupy? Can learning about the lifeways and lifeworlds of the original and rightful caretakers of the land we occupy guide our own changing relation with the places we are and the communities that belong to those places? How can we share our learning with others?