

**Instructor: Ella Soper-Jones**

**Course number: ENG259H5F**

**Course title: Literature and the Environment**

**Course Description:** This course offers a survey of literature from the Renaissance period to the present that takes its concern the ethics and aesthetics of representing “nature” (landscape, human / non-human animals, and the environment). The course will begin with a study of Cormac McCarthy’s widely acclaimed and profoundly moving *The Road*, a novel about the plight of a father and son eking out a spare existence in the wake of an environmental apocalypse. From this perspective, we will ask, “How did we get here?” and “From here, where do we go?” We will then consider a more chronologically ordered selection of works including country-house poems dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Romantic and Victorian poetry, American Transcendentalism, wild animal stories, the “deep terror” tradition in Canadian literature, and more contemporary works of environmental justice and eco-activism. We will study a variety of genres: poetry, novels, works of creative non-fiction, scientific and philosophical treatises, and short stories as well as popular media—ads, comics, and film. This course will also offer a primer on ecocritical theory: we will pose some vital questions about the study and practice of ecocriticism: “What is ecocriticism, and why might it matter?” “What might it mean to ‘practice’ ecocriticism?” and “Is anybody listening?”

**Required Reading:** Coursepack (available through the UTM Duplicating Centre); Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (Vintage); Fred Bodsworth, *Last of the Curlews* (McClelland & Stewart); Indra Sinha, *Animal’s People* (Simon & Schuster); Derrick Jensen and Stephanie McMillan, *As the World Burns: 50 Things You Can Do to Stay in Denial* (Seven Stories Press).

**Film:** Edward Burtynsky, *Manufactured Landscapes*

**First Three Texts/Authors to be Studied:** McCarthy, *The Road*; Coursepack; Bodsworth, *Last of the Curlews*

**Method of Instruction:** Lecture / discussion

**Method of Evaluation:** Article-review blog (15%); place-based creative writing exercise (15%); research essay (30%); final exam (30%); participation (10%).