



Drought, floods, mega-storms, raging fires: environmental disasters are happening everywhere these days with even more devastation projected in the future as climate change advances. In the face of these enormous and frightening problems, what can books do? This section of ENGL 205 examines how writers and other artists respond to environmental change. We'll explore how art can inspire positive change, drawing on poetry, fiction, visual art, and film.

Our readings will span several centuries, tracing the arc of what scientists refer to as the "Anthropocene": the current geological epoch in which human activities have massively altered the planet's ecosystems. Along the way, we'll discuss questions such as:

- What inspires people to support environmental causes?
- Is there such a thing as "green" literature—and what defines it?
- What can literature show us about nature that science can't show us?
- Can literature model "sustainability"?
- What kinds of stories, characters, and writing styles promote ethical action? Do some genres or styles actually alienate readers from environmental causes?

This course fulfills part of the ER/S requirement in the core curriculum. It also counts as an elective for LAND, ECOS, SUST, and Peace Studies.

#### **Instructor Contact Information & Office Hours:**

Dr. Lisa Ottum		
Office: Hinkle Hall 230	Phone: (513) 745-3656	Email: ottuml@xavier.edu
Office Hours:	W 3:00-4:00; F 3:00-4:00	by appointment other days/times

#### **Required Texts**

Please obtain printed copies of the following novels:

*The Year of the Flood*  
by Margaret Atwood  
(ISBN: 978-0307455475) \$12.99 new; from  
\$0.40 used

*Odds Against Tomorrow: A Novel*  
by Nathaniel Rich  
(ISBN: 978-1250043641) \$14.57 new; from  
\$1.50 used

## Course Assignments / Point Distribution

Course grades will be calculated out of 1000 points using a standard grading scale (ie. 80-82 = B-; 83-86 = B; 87-89 = B+). Scores that fall below two percentages will be rounded up at the 5th decimal and above (i.e. 82.5= 83).

Informal In-class Work / Informal Pre-class Work	100 points
Assignment #1: Defining Green Art	100 points
Assignment #2: Journal Article Annotation	100 points
Your contribution to our course digital anthology	300 points
Final Exam	300 points
In-class Professionalism & Participation	100 points

You'll receive a detailed set of instructions for how to successfully complete each of these assignments; we'll also review in class for the final exam. If at any point you have questions about your grade, email or see me.

## COURSE POLICIES & OTHER INFO.

### Your Computing-Related Responsibilities

- Check our Canvas site regularly for announcements and updates
- Check your Xavier email regularly and keep your account safely within your allotted quota
- Save all work for ENGL 205, including your final exam, on XU or cloud-based storage
- Submit your written work electronically via Canvas
- Print course reading assignments (see above)

### Attendance & Participation

Because this course is mostly discussion-based, you should plan to attend class regularly. There's no automatic penalty for missing class; however, missing a substantial number of class meetings will adversely affect your participation score and may impact your Informal In-Class / Informal Pre-Class Work score.

Guidelines for what will count as A, B, C, and D-level participation and professionalism can be found on Canvas. Read these guidelines within the first week of class; contact me if you have questions.

### Devices in Class

Please silence and stow your phone during class. Except on days when we're working on writing in class, laptops and tablets will be permitted only in the designated laptop seating area (details TBA in class).

## **Paper Formatting & Submission**

You'll submit your work for this class electronically. Plan to compose in Microsoft Word, which you can download for free from Xavier. See the course assignment sheets for details on formatting your work.

Penalties for late work will vary, depending upon circumstances. Generally, late assignments will lose 10 points for each 24-hr period that they're late. I will always grade on-time work promptly; however, I may be significantly delayed in returning late work.

## **Office Hours**

I encourage you to visit me during my office hours, during which we can discuss course concepts, brainstorm ideas for your projects, or talk about other academic concerns. If your course or work schedule conflicts with my drop-in office hours (see above) and you'd like to talk one-on-one, see me in class or email me and we'll arrange a time to meet.

## **Academic Honesty**

All work submitted for this course must be your own and written exclusively for this section of ENGL 205. Plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of others' words or ideas, is considered a serious offense by Xavier. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the assignment concerned and may result in a failing grade for the course. If at any point you have questions about plagiarism, see me.

## **Accommodation Information: A Statement from the Learning Assistance Center**

Anyone who feels he/she may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability (e.g.: sensory, learning, psychological, medical, mobility) should contact me to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs as soon as possible. I rely on the Disability Services Office for assistance in verifying your eligibility for academic accommodations related to your disability. If you have not previously contacted the LAC, I encourage you to do so at 513-745-3280 on the Fifth Floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Room 514 or e-mail Cassandra Jones at jonesc20@xavier.edu, to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

## **Tentative Schedule**

[So that our schedule can be responsive to your interests and needs, it's housed online: click here to access the tentative schedule of readings and assignments.](#)