

Narrating Nature: An Ecocritical Reading of Latin American Literature

Spring 2025

Introduction: Basic Principles of Ecocriticism. Political Ecology in Latin America

Texts by Raymond Williams, Lawrence Buell and Enrique Leff.

- Jan. 28: Introduction. What is nature? "Nature" (1976) by Raymond Williams.
- Jan. 30: Basic Principles of Ecocriticism: "Ecocriticism: Some Emerging Trends" (2011) by Lawrence Buell. Political Ecology in Latin America: "Political Ecology: A Latin American Perspective" (2021) by Enrique Leff.

New World Natures

Texts by Christopher Columbus and from *Popol Vuh*.

- Feb. 4: "Letter of Columbus to Various Persons Describing the Results of his First Voyage and Written on the Return Journey" (1493) by Christopher Columbus.
- Feb. 6: Extracts from *Popol Vuh* (c.1554).

Civilization and Barbarism: Nature and Nation-States

Texts by Domingo F. Sarmiento and William H. Hudson.

- Feb. 11 and 13: "Physical Aspect of Argentine Republic, and the Ideas, Customs, and Characters It Engenders" (1845) by Domingo F. Sarmiento.
- Feb. 18 and 20: "How I became an Idler" and "Valley of the Black River" (1893) by William H. Hudson.

Nature as Commodity: Export Boom and Extractivism

Texts by Horacio Quiroga and José E. Rivera.

- Feb. 25: "Drifting" (1912) and "In the Middle of the Night" (1919) by Horacio Quiroga.
- Feb. 27: "The Dead Man" (1920) and "The Incense Tree Roof" (1922) by Horacio Quiroga.
- March 4 and 6: Extracts from *The Vortex* (1924) by José E. Rivera.

Review before the exam: The limits of the civilizing project

Text by Enrique Leff.

- March 11: "Space, Place and Time: The Local Construction of an Environmental Rationality" (2021) by Enrique Leff.

Exam

- March 13: First midterm exam.

The Role of Nature in Latin American Emancipatory Discourse

Texts by Pablo Neruda.

- March 18, 20, 25 and 27: Selected poems from *Canto general* (1950).

Alternative Ecology: Towards a Latin American Environmental Thought

Texts by Arturo Escobar and Fredy Chikangana.

- April 1 and 3: "Sentipensar with the Earth: Territorial Struggles and the Ontological Dimension of the Epistemologies of the South" (2020) by Arturo Escobar.
- April 8: "Mother Earth, Womb of Origin, and Language in the Quechua Yanakuna World" (2023) by Fredy Chikangana.
- April 10: "Grandmother in the Dream" and "Words and Children" (2023) by Fredy Chikangana.

Climate Change and Dystopian Worlds

Text by Samanta Schweblin.

- April 22, 24, 29 and May 6: *Fever Dream* (2014) by Samanta Schweblin.

Exam

- TBC