

RWS-6328 CRN 20145 / RWS 5328 CRN 16345
Special Topics in RWS
Rhetoric, Ecology, and Transnational Literacies

Course meetings: Thursdays 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm, Hudspeth Hall 313

Instructor Information

Dr. Soyeon Lee (she/her/hers)

Office: Hudspeth Hall Room 309

E-mail: slee15@utep.edu (expect a response within 24-48 hours M-F)

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Schedule an appointment: <https://calendly.com/slee15>

Zoom link: <https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/8309009811>

COVID-19 Precautions

Please stay home if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

Course Description

In an age in which the rise of environmental disruptions is seen as new normal, scholars and professionals are turning to rhetoric, writing, and communication design to address ecological matters and the ensuing social inequalities. Although our main focus is scholarship in rhetoric and composition and technical and professional communication (TPC), the course also includes reading materials from other disciplines that deal with ecological matters, such as philosophy, biology, environmental humanities, anthropology, and technological studies.

Considering that ecological matters take global and local lenses, the course uses intersectional approaches that specifically regard rhetoric and writing and TPC as transnational and translocal disciplines. While recent scholarship in rhet/comp and TPC explicitly addresses ecological approaches and social/environmental issues such as climate change at the global level (Schell et al., 2020), we still engage little research studies and pedagogical approaches in ecological matters. What kind of rhetorical practices do people in material environments? How, for whom, and under what conditions are people engaged with rhetorical practices in ecological relationships with material and technological environments? What nonhuman, posthuman, inhuman factors are entangled with these practices? How can we reconceptualize ecologies or ecological approaches in rhet/comp and TPC for social justice and the public good?

To answer these questions, you will aim to design your own research project through readings and activities in this course. Your research project should use scholarly sources from the course readings and could be related to potential agendas as follows: the politics of literacies and rhetorics that govern the distribution of resources such as water, land, and air; the literate or rhetorcial practices of humans within the environment(s) and on a living planet, the social and material practices of literacy and technical

communication that govern ecological matters such as disaster management, food security, care, environmental justice, and medical and health-related discourses.

Students completing RWS 5328 should be able to do the following:

1. Engage current issues in ecological frameworks and transnational/translocal approaches
2. Develop research questions and methodologies that address ecological issues and social/environmental injustice
3. Identify various social, cultural, and institutional factors environmental rhetorics and literacies
4. Practice a variety of approaches to researching social and ecological matters and theorizing key frameworks that guide rhetoric and composition and professional and technical communication
5. Articulate the value of their own pedagogical practices of teaching rhetoric and composition and TPC through ecological approaches

Course Materials

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. (2021). *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*.

Goggin, Peter. (2016). *Environmental rhetoric and ecologies of place*.

Haraway, Dona. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*.

Serres, Michel. (1995). *The Natural Contract*.

*Other required readings for this class will be available electronically through Blackboard.

Assignments

Reading Responses

You will respond to the week's readings by writing a 350-400 response. Your responses will be submitted two times during the first part of the semester. The response is encouraged to synthesize at least two of the texts you read for the week and make one of the following rhetorical structures:

- build on the ideas in the reading to present an argument or pose a question
- identify a conflict or debate that emerges from the texts
- connect the ideas in the reading to an application (pedagogy, professional and technical communication contexts, your potential research agendas, etc.)

You will upload your response by Wednesday midnight to the "Reading Response" discussion board on Blackboard to share your reading response. We will engage with your response during class time. Please include your last name, RR1 or RR2 in the title of your reading response.

Course Facilitation (*visual aids needed)

To facilitate our course discussion, I will ask you to present an overview of your summary response and provide a visual aid (15-20 minutes) at the beginning of the course meeting. Then, lead a 30- or 40-minute class discussion based on your reading. In your facilitation, you may include short in-class writing sessions in your course facilitation section, draw our attention to specific keywords or themes, and assign us to discuss with 2 or 3 specific discussion questions.

For your course discussion leading, you will provide a visual aid. Your handout will be a copy of the document or PowerPoint that includes a summary of your response: your name and email; your analysis through the readings; contextualized quotations from the week and previous week's readings; a list of 2-3 discussion questions you'd like to suggest.

Concept Paper

To put reading materials into conversation, you will sign up to write a 4-5 page, double-spaced concept paper that you will present to the class based on the readings assigned for the week for which you sign up. In this paper, you will select a specific concept that emerges from the reading materials and support your argument about the affordance and limitations of your selected concept. Your concept paper can follow the suggested move:

1. In relation to the reading, you will explain what key concept you are interested in for scholarly or professional agendas (These agendas can be related to your potential research project in this course or your key concept can be independent from your research project). Make sure to incorporate 3-5 scholarly sources from the week's readings (or combined with the previous weeks' readings). Briefly analyze the concept and describe the use of the concept in the disciplines.
2. Respond to questions as follows: what does the concept do? How is it used in the disciplines, and what are the consequences of this use? If the concept can be distinguished from other similar concepts, how can you explain those differences? What kind of theoretical and methodological work does it make possible? What contributions does this concept make?
3. If your chosen concept is a reconceptualization of a previous use, what problems can you see, if any? What risks might this concept entail? If this concept and its use were to become consolidated, what might be excluded and disregarded? What limitations can you envision in the use of this concept?
4. Then, conclude your paper by explaining how you might use this concept in your own research or professional practice. What kind of purpose would you set up by using this concept in your own work?
5. You will share an overview of your concept paper for 10 minutes by reading aloud your paper, and we will have a 10-minute discussion session around your concept paper.

Proposal Abstract for Research Project

Early in the semester, you are to submit a 1-page, single-spaced project proposal abstract (not including the references) for a research project you'd like to complete for potential publication, MA thesis, PhD exam, or dissertation. Your research project will target a research article project on a subject related to the course or any other professional projects you pursue.

Formal Proposal for Research Project

At the end of the course, you will submit a 10-page, double-spaced research project proposal (not including the references). Your formal proposal for research project should include the following: purpose of the project; guiding research question(s); theoretical and methodological framework; literature review on the scholarly area(s) of rhet/comp and technical communication studies to which you plan to contribute; the exigency for and value of your project; your plan/methods/timeline for completing the project, and References. You will share part of your formal proposal for your research project and workshop with others in class before you complete your formal proposal in full length.

Research Project Presentation (*visual aids needed)

You will deliver a presentation on your proposed research project. Your presentation should be supplemented by a visual aid and will be a 6-8 minute presentation followed by a brief discussion session.

Assignments	Points (% of Grade)
Attendance, Participation, Workshopping, & Professionalism	10 pts
Reading Responses	10 pts
Course Facilitation	10 pts
Concept Paper	20 pts
Proposal Abstract for Research Project	10 pts
Formal Proposal for Research Project	30 pts
Research Project Presentation	10 pts
Total	100 pts = 100%

**All assignments will use APA style.*

Course Schedule

A current version of the syllabus and course schedule will always be available on Blackboard. Any modifications to the syllabus or to the course schedule, which is subject to change, will be announced in writing and in class meetings. Please refer to a separate copy of the Course Schedule document posted on Blackboard.

General Course and University Policies

Attendance, Participation, & Professionalism

I expect you to come ready to ask questions and discuss ideas. Our class sessions rely on your participation and engagement including arriving on time and staying for the full class, coming prepared (complete reading and assignments before class; bring reading materials and your notes for discussion), and participate actively in discussion and class activities. If you need to miss class, let me know via email or in person ahead of time via email. In case you miss class, I ask you to be still responsible for the work or presentation materials due that day. University policy allows two kinds of absences: university-recognized activities and observances of Religious Holy Day. Please refer to [UTEP's Attendance & Grading](#) policies.

Respect the views of others. Maintain and promote a civil environment for learning. If your behavior seems distracting/harmful toward others, I will ask you to leave. Submit your work on time (as indicated on the course schedule). Late work will result in a point deduction. I reserve the right to not provide a grade to late work. Communicate your progress with me. If you have questions regarding any lesson, let me know. If you are unable to meet due dates, work with me to set up plans.

Make-up work for time missed from the course activities will be allowed if you have a university excused absence or health-related issues. If you miss a deadline due to an emergency or illness, or if you have a

university-approved excuse ahead of time, you must notify me as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Note that if you will miss the major assignment deadline, I expect you to contact me immediately of your emergency situation in order to make arrangement.

Communication

I will have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours will be held on my office on Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. or Zoom. If you'd like to meet me virtually, please use the link to my calendar at <https://calendly.com/slee15> and sign up for a time slot. Please email me if you'd like to make an appointment for some other times.

Academic Integrity Statement & Professionalism

As a scholar and member of intellectual communities, you will abide by the standards of academic honesty and responsibility. According to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution at UTEP, academic integrity is a “commitment to fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.” To achieve the learning goal by exchanging ideas and making scholarly conversations, all UTEP members have the responsibility to respect these values and execute ethical behaviors and independent thought that are essential.

Any violations of academic integrity and honesty will be reported in a written form and referred to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#). All work submitted must be original. Students who plagiarize or self-plagiarize (i.e., students who submit works that were submitted to other courses) or who fabricate (deliberate create false information on a reference page) or who collude (lend work to another person to submit as their own) will receive a zero grade for the assignment and for the professionalism grade, and if academic integrity is further breached in other assignments, students automatically get an F grade and may not be able to continue the coursework and/or UTEP coursework. Please refer to the UTEP [Academic Integrity](#) webpages and [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#)

Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence

UTEP is committed to providing an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. If I become aware that an incident of sexual misconduct has occurred, as an instructor I am required by law to report it to UTEP Title IX Coordinators. Faculty and staff at UTEP are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available sources are the following:

- Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/>
- On Call Crisis services: Please refer to our [Crisis & Emergency](#) page to learn what is considered a mental health crisis.
- Our Miners Talk: Crisis Line will also remain in operation for after-hours services. After hours, please call 915.747.5302.

ADA Statement

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/> or call the CASS at 915-747-5148 or email them at cass@utep.edu