Instructor: Prof. Katarzyna Nowak-McNeice

B.A. Seminar: “The Non-human Turn: non-anthropocentric representations in contemporary literature.”

The most recent turn in philosophy and literary criticism is the turn away from anthropocentrism (i.e., the supremacy and centrality of humans): in this class students will be invited to read some critical texts pertaining to the turn and analyze literary texts (poems, short stories, fragments of novels) which focus on the nonhumans: plants and animals. The starting point for our discussions will be the assumption that the division between humans and nature, and the resulting centrality of the human, must be abolished; the literary production that can be linked with such a need for abolishing anthropocentrism in literature, criticism, and philosophy will be presented and discussed, and these analyses will form the basis for the B.A. theses written in the course of the seminar. Among the authors discussed you will find: Louise Glück, Joy Harjo, Denise Levertov, Mary Oliver, Adrienne Rich (selected poems), Richard Powers (*The Overstory*), Arundhati Roy (*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*).

The suggested topics for the B.A. theses include: “Representations of nonhuman animals in contemporary American poetry”; “Plants’ agency in contemporary American fiction”; “Ecocritical perspective in American poetry”; “Making Interspecies Kin: examples from contemporary literature”.

Tentative course bibliography:

Fisher-Wirth, Ann and Laura-Gray Street, eds. *The Ecopoetry Anthology.*

Gruen, Lori, and Fiona Probyn-Rapsey. *Animaladies.*

Maiti, Krishanu, ed. *Posthumanist Perspectives on Literary and Cultural Animals*. Springer Nature, 2022.

Marder, Michael. *Plant Thinking*

Murphy, Patrick. *Ecocritical Explorations*

Nagel, Thomas. *Mortal Questions.*

Nayar, Pramod K. *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory.*

Ryan, John Charles. *Plants in Contemporary Poetry*

Tsing, Anna Lowenthaupt. *The Mushroom at the End of the World*.

Wirth, Jason M. *Mountains, Rivers, and the Great Earth*