**The WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

**Virtual Campus**

**School of Humanities and Leadership**

**Wayland Baptist University Mission Statement:** Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, and service to God and humankind.

Course Name**: ENGL 3302- Modern American Literature “Uncanny Natures: New American Gothic”**

**Term and Year: Summer 2025**

Full Name of Instructor**: Dr. Dorothy Maria O’Connell**

**Office Phone and Email:** [maria.o’connell@wbu.edu](mailto:maria.oconnell@wbu.edu) **806-291-1102 Text: 806-224-8234**

**Office Hours, Building, and Location: I will be available all day on Tues/Thursday for Blackboard Chat or by email or phone (please make an appointment if you will be calling)**

Class Meeting Time and Location:

**Catalog Description:** American fiction, poetry, and drama of the 20th Century (NB: I will be looking at writing from the 21st Century as well).

* Required Textbook and Resources: Provided as Automatic Ebooks or online (will provide links when needed)***.***
  + **Butler, Octavia. *Parable of the Sower,* ISBN-9780446675505**
  + **Dick, Philip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep.* ISBN-9780345404473**
  + **Jones, Stephen Graham *The Angel of Indian Lake* ISBN-9781668011669**
  + **Lovecraft, H.P. “Supernatural Horror in Literature.” Electronic online.**
  + **VanDeMeer, Jeff. *Annihilation.* ISBN-9780374104092**
  + **Other readings will be included from online sources.**

**Optional Materials:** You will need good internet access and the ability to participate in discussion board threads and to turn in written work in a timely manner. You must have software that allows you to save materials as .doc or .docx formats and some form of storage. You will be responsible for making sure that you have saved all works in progress and other materials.

**Course Outcome Competencies**: Course Overview:

This course is structured to examine 20th (and 21st) Century Literature. In this particular course, we will examine the role of nature in weird fiction and how American concepts of nature and religion intertwine to provide an eerie or weird effect in literature. In this course we will look at how nature shapes human imagination and identity. Nature is striking back in some ways. Your discussions and your writing will examine the ways that nature can be both a source of hope and sustenance and a malignant force.

**The more the student puts into the course, the higher his or her outcome competencies will be.**

**Attendance Requirements**: The course will take place entirely online. You must have a functional Blackboard account and be able to access the WBU library website, as well as articles and other material provided through proprietary databases available via the WBU library website. You also must have an active WBU email address. Your WBU email address is the usual way that I will contact you. You are strongly encouraged to visit the Blackboard login page and test your browser for Blackboard compatibility, as well as take the Blackboard Tutorial if you are not familiar with how the service works. If you have problems with Blackboard or your WBU email, please use the WBU Support Contacts available on the Blackboard login page

**Disability Statement**: “In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university.  The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291- 3765.  Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.”

**Plagiarism and Conduct Statement**

**Writing is a collaborative art. Working out ideas for your paper with an instructor, writing tutor, classmate, family member, or friend is encouraged not only for this class, but also for other classes that involve writing. Discussion and collaborative brainstorming are good. However, passing off another's *writing or ideas* as your own is plagiarism. It is unethical, it constitutes Academic Dishonesty (cheating), and it is sufficient grounds both for failure of a course and suspension from the university.**

**Common examples of plagiarism or academic dishonesty include the following:**

* **Copying any amount of text directly from an internet website, book, or other document without appropriate citation and synthesis into one’s own discussion.**
* **Paraphrasing the ideas presented in any source or oral discussion without *appropriate citation*.**
* **Using the evidence and conclusions of any source as the controlling framework for one’s own paper.**
* **Recycling work from a previous or current course, whether your own work or another student’s work.**
* **Purchasing or otherwise downloading a paper from an internet website.**

**In some writing assignments, you will be expected to incorporate scholarly sources into your document. ALL OF THE FOLLOWING must be met to constitute *appropriate citation* of any source:**

* **Including MLA, Chicago, or APA parenthetical or note-style citation format as required by the instructor.**
* **Placing borrowed text directly from another source within “quotation marks.”**
* **Introducing clearly another author’s voice into the document by means of a signal phrase (an introduction of that author).**
* **Offering, in short, a clear distinction between one’s own voice or ideas and those of any outside authors brought into the discussion.**

**Wayland Baptist University observes a ZERO TOLERANCE policy regarding Academic Dishonesty.**

* **Any suspected instance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will first be evaluated by the instructor and discussed individually with the student.**
* **If the instructor determines that a student’s actions constitute Academic Dishonesty, the case will be filed with the school dean (as determined by course prefix) and reported to**

**the university executive vice president/provost, as per university policy. ALL CASES OF**

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL RE REPORTED.**

* **Per university policy as described in the Wayland Academic Catalog, second offenses**

**WILL RESULT IN SUSPENSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY.**

* **In this course, the first instance of Academic Dishonesty may also result in a zero on the assignment.**

**Grade Appeals**

**Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Executive Vice President/Provost to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly**

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria**:** Students will provide evidence of successful completion of the course outcome competencies by:

Semiweekly Responses to Study Prompts**: 30%**

1 Regarding “Responses to Study Prompts”: these are decidedly not “essays,” merely two pages of organized thought per prompt. Select one of the possible prompts for each week and submit your considered two-page response by Tuesday and Friday mid-night of each course week. There is no order in which to answer the prompts and you might cite freely but meaningfully—by extending or challenging ideas—from your colleagues. Borrowings, of course, require in-text acknowledgments, whether of word or idea.

Threaded Peer Reviews of Responses**: 20%**

2 Respond to any two of the posted responses from your colleagues—one from the Tuesday submissions and one from the Friday submissions. Each review should consist of a single, well-developed paragraph (you will touch on your peer’s argument, question, and critique). This must go beyond, “I agree” or “good job” to really engage your peers. Ask questions, bring up ideas, or explain WHY you agree/disagree. Submit your considered reviews by Wednesday and Saturday midnight of each course week.

Paper proposal**: 20%**

3.) Midterm detailed proposal for final paper: **2-3 pp** with a detailed plan for how you wish to approach a piece of 20th-21st-Century American literature. You may use other American texts, films, etc. to further illustrate your thinking. This proposal should include your basic sources and the methodology you will use to approach the various topics. This is a rumination; a chance to brainstorm arguments and show understanding. I will expect it to be in MLA format and fairly formal, but it can be fragmentary to some extent. I need to be able to evaluate your argument and themes and give you feedback on how to finalize your essay.

Final paper**: 30%**

4). Final paper: **5-8 pp** should be an extended argument about 20th-century American lit, using the ideas of Nature and the Gothic. You may use other American texts, films, etc. to further illustrate your thinking. I expect this to be a formal essay in MLA format. You may use outside sources as you see fit.

**Tentative Schedule**: **Subject to (slight) revision as necessary! This is basic overview and will evolve with time and discussion.**

# Nature and the Gothic in American Lit:

**Week 1**. **Oct 11-15: Reading“**[**Supernatural Horror in Literature**](http://www.hplovecraft.com/writings/texts/essays/shil.aspx)**” (online, click the title for link.) Focus on “The Weird Tradition in America” (Part VIII)**

**Discussion prompt 1: Introduce yourself and tell us what interested you about the course?**

**Discussion prompt: Choose one of these:**

1. **What makes a Gothic atmosphere? How could nature writing be Gothic?**
2. **How might the twentieth- or twenty-first-century Gothic tale differ from these concepts? What might take the place of haunted castles or misty moors?**
3. **Do the varied regions of the United States (or the Americas in general) change Gothic expectations? What elements of regional fiction would lend themselves to Lovecraft’s conception of spiritual horror?**

**Peer responses (You only have to respond to prompt 2 this week)**

**Week 2. Read and discuss *The Orchard Keeper***

**Two Peer Responses**

**Discussion Prompt 1: Choose one of these**

**a.) We start the book with Kenneth Rattner. What kind of man is he and how do you know?**

**b.) How does McCarthy change the narrator’s voice from the people in the novel? Why such an ornate and formal narrative voice?**

**c.) How does the Green Fly Inn end its life and why is Kenneth Rattner there? Is there some significance to them appearing together? Look for symbolism or think about how it might be telling us something.**

**Week 3. Continue *The Orchard Keeper***

**Peer responses**

**Week 4 Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?***

**Peer Response: (Due Saturday June 18)**

**Week 5: Read *The Parable of the Sower***

**Peer Response: (Due Saturday)**

**Week 6: Continue *Parable of the Sower***

**Paper proposal due!!**

**Peer Response: Due Saturday**

**Week 7: Class Wrap-Up*. Annihilation***

**Week 8: Final wrap-up. Available by email or chat to conference about the final paper. (5-8 page fully developed research essay)**

**Discussion Prompt: Answer BOTH of these. This is the only prompt this week.**

1. **What concepts do you take away from this class? Be as specific and clear as possible.**
2. **How do you think that American Climate Fiction especially in the 20th and 21st centuries, reflects and/or parodies changes in American society and expectations?**