

Carleton University
Fall 2024 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

**ENGL 3915A: Special Topics in Creative Writing
Writing About Climate Crisis**

Prerequisite(s): a grade of B+ or higher in one of: ENGL 2901, ENGL 2903, ENGL 2915; or departmental permission. If you do not meet the prerequisite, please submit a registration override. For more information on the portfolio submission process, please click [here](#).

Instructor: Professor Nadia Bozak
nadia.bozak@carleton.ca

***** This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change. A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. *****

Course Description:

This creative writing workshop explores creative and artistic ways of understanding, engaging with, and fostering solutions for the climate emergency our planet faces. Climate change impacts us all to varying degrees. Part of what this workshop aims to achieve is to facilitate discussion and understanding of some topics related to climate (colonialism, capitalism, technology, how social and racial equity are an inherent part of climate action). We'll also read compelling climate-themed texts by authors such as Octavia Butler and Vandana Singh while working on our creative pieces (and in a genre of your choice).

We are fortunate to be spending this semester in the Book Arts Lab, a space for students to explore the arts of bookbinding, papermaking, typesetting, and more. We will work collaboratively on a final project while developing our creative pieces. In the Winter 2023 iteration of this course, students produced a vibrant collaborative book featuring linocuts and typeset selections from the climate-themed poems and stories we workshoped over the semester. It was such an enriching project; students worked as a supportive and collegial team as they brought the project to fruition. Producing a book by hand as a group compels us all to slow down our creative practices and think about our words and actions in relation to the world. We experienced how such decelerated creative, social, and intellectual practice is also inherently ecological.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will emerge from this workshop with at least one polished contribution to a collaborative climate-themed project. Students will also gain an introduction to the book arts and learn basic skills in typesetting, papermaking, bookbinding, calligraphy, letterpress printing, and more. Students will also continue to refine their skills in offering constructive feedback on peers'

creative work, receiving feedback on their own, and closely reading and discussing published texts that engage with the climate crisis.

Most of our required weekly readings (a short story, selection of poems, book chapter) will be available digitally on Ares through the MacOdrum Library.

Course Requirements:

- 1) 5%: project description/rationale: Beginning in Week Two, students will circulate a description of their proposed contributions to a final collaborative project.
- 2) 15% Participation: Participation is based on attending workshops regularly, coming prepared to discuss assigned readings and weekly student manuscripts, respectfully using BAL resources, and overall engagement with the workshop.
- 3) 10% Reading Responses: Students will submit five journal-style responses to assigned readings. The responses can be creative but must demonstrate engagement with the reading material.

OR

- 10%: Event report/ presentation: Students will attend an event related to climate action (such as “Noons for Now” hosted by Carleton’s Climate Commons) and report to the group about the experience.
- 4) 20% Source text: This will be an initial manuscript in the shape of a micro-fiction story, essay, poem, or other short-form piece. During weeks 2-6, students will workshop the piece, polish it, and submit it for grading. Your contribution to the final project may be sourced from this piece, or you may produce something entirely new.
- 5) 40% Contribution to Final Project/ Lab Notes and Reflection Statement