

[Overview](#) [Course Info](#) [Schedule](#) [Readings](#) [Study Questions](#) [Assignments](#) [Resources](#)

English 227, Spring 2014 *Modern World Literature & Sustainability*

Course Description & Objectives

(Note to reviewers: for practical reasons, I am submitting this "syllabus" as a single document. It is actually composed of many separate web pages that make it more accessible and less cumbersome than it appears here. Moreover, the links on the pages will allow us to move back and forth regularly in class between the many interrelated pages--assignments, course objectives, program goals, etc.)

This section of Modern World Literature is a **Quest II** course, the next step in the **University Studies Program**, as you continue your journey toward obtaining a liberal education at the university. Early in the semester, we will have the opportunity to review the broader goals of the USP (described on the **Liberal Education / USP Learning Outcomes page**).

Quest II's goals as part of the USP are as follows:

- Reinforce the outcomes of Quest I, which we will do early on in class discussion and via a short essay;
- Introduce a second Signature Question, in our case, "How do people understand and create a **more sustainable world**?"
- Discuss texts and topics that will require us to develop our **Ethical Reasoning**, including:
 1. becoming aware of our own perspectives and the frames of reference we use to make ethical decisions;
 2. recognizing the complexity inherent in ethical decision-making;
 3. comparing and contrasting the ethical reasoning of divergent groups or individuals on issues central to the issues raised by the literature we will study;
 4. articulating that reasoning in both written and oral contexts.

Ethical Reasoning

A core component of Quest II, ethical reasoning, simply stated, considers questions about that which is good or right versus that which is bad or wrong. As one can see on the **Liberal Education page**, values and ethics impact the way in which we behave and interact in our personal, social, and professional lives--we reach conclusions and make decisions and choices based on what we think we *should* or *ought* to do. In this course, we will examine (via our readings) and enact (via our discussions and assignments) the reasoning that underpins those values: How do people, including ourselves, arrive at the values that they have? What assumptions and principles are involved? What are the consequences of people's ethical choices on others with whom they share the life on this planet, even on the planet itself?

Let's take a local, current example. We can probably all agree that economic prosperity is a "good." Resource development aids economic prosperity, as it makes resources available to society and provides employment in the process. Sounds good so far. But what happens when those values come into conflict with others, as is occurring in the debate about mining expansion in northern Wisconsin? Anyone who has spent any time in the region knows the value in retaining Wisconsin's wilderness and wildlife. So does the value of economic prosperity outweigh the value of the environment, or vice versa? As alluded to in the Quest II goals, the answer to such questions is much more complex than a brief news item might lead you to believe--the question I have just posed, in fact, is an oversimplification of the matter. This course aims, above all, to help you develop the ability to examine in a sophisticated way the ethical reasoning involved in such issues related to sustainability. In fact, we will not approach ethical reasoning as something separate from sustainability but rather as something inherent in the consideration of sustainability. This should become

evident as we begin to discuss and write about the works of world literature in this course.

Sustainability: How do people understand and create a more sustainable world?

Although we will soon consider different ways of defining sustainability, briefly, "Knowledge of sustainability and its applications is the ability to understand local and global earth systems; the qualities of ecological integrity and the means to restore and preserve it; and the interconnection of ecological integrity, social justice, and economic well-being" (from USP Learning Outcomes).

As you will see on the course schedule, we will spend much of the first few weeks discussing sustainability 1) as an area of study, including the key notion of sustainability's **three pillars**, 2) as a key component of the University Studies Program, 3) as a prominent value of the UW Oshkosh campus and community, and 4) as a vital concern for humanity in the 21st century.

Modern World Literature & Sustainability

Of course, this is a class in modern world literature, and while it is important to emphasize that we will be using the lens of sustainability to examine each of our texts, we will also be considering these texts as works of literature, developing the skills, knowledge, and methodologies required to study such texts properly. Literary texts are a special form of human discourse that allow us to consider questions like sustainability from many diverse perspectives, in settings that will resonate with us long after we put the books down, provided we approach them with the care and rigor they deserve. Only then will we be prepared to consider the ethical issues outlined above.

Learning Objectives

To summarize, over the course of the semester, students should expect to undertake or achieve the following:

- Develop critical and creative thinking skills through close readings and written analyses of literary texts;
- Continue to develop their oral communications skills (in class discussions) and writing skills (in assignments);
- Understand, through encounters with secondary sources, the importance of context when studying literature;
- Continue to develop research skills through finding, selecting, and incorporating scholarly sources;
- Understand the many ways in which sustainability emerges as a central issue in many works of modern world literature, from Europe, to South America, to Asia, to Africa, and beyond;
- Analyze the principles of ethical reasoning that underpin the choices individuals and societies make related to sustainability;
- Apply all of the above, via a Final Project, in relation to a topic of ongoing, contemporary significance in a way that will prepare students for work in future USP courses.

Please note: many Quest II courses are composed of two learning communities per section, each enrolled simultaneously in a Quest I writing or speaking course. Given the intensive and extensive writing in Department of English Quest II courses, our section is limited to one learning community of 25 students.

Course Information & Policies

Instructor Information

Cary Henson

Office: Radford 329

Office Hours: tba

Phone: #2264

Internet: www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/henson/

Spring 2014

Section tba

Time: tba

Room: tba

E-Mail: henson@uwosh.edu

Books / Articles

Required Texts

- Platonov, Andrei. *The Foundation Pit*. Trans. Robert Chandler, Elizabeth Chandler, and Olga Merson. New York: New York Review of Books, 2008.
- Sepúlveda, Luis. *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*. Trans. Peter Bush. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 1995.
- Sinha, Indra. *Animal's People*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009.
- Macgoye, Marjorie Oludhe. *Coming to Birth*. New York: Feminist Press, 2000.
- University-level writing reference book (including research and documentation sections).

Articles (e-reserve or D2L)

- Heinberg, Richard. "Beyond the Limits to Growth." *The Post-Carbon Reader: Managing the 21st Century's Sustainability Crises*.
 - Heinberg, Richard. "What Is Sustainability?" *The Post-Carbon Reader: Managing the 21st Century's Sustainability Crises*.
 - Conquest, Robert. "Collision Course, 1928-1929." *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*.
 - Sawyer, Suzanne. "Opening." *Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador*.
 - Broughton, Edward. "The Bhopal Disaster and Its Aftermath: A Review." *Environmental Health*.
 - Branch, Daniel. "Introduction." *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011*.
-

Grading

Your grade will be determined as follows:

- Class Participation 15%
- Quest I Reflection Essay 5%
- Study Question Responses (4) 20%
- Literary Analysis Essays (3) 15%
- Research Assignment #1 10%
- Research Assignment #2 10%
- Final Project Draft 5%
- Final Project 20%

Note that the Final Project, in addition to being submitted in hard copy in class, will also be uploaded to the student's **ePortfolio**. Further instructions will be provided in class.

Letter-to-Point Conversion: A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3.0; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.0; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.0; D- = .67; F = 0.

For items that will be assigned points, those points will be tallied and converted to letter grades for that portion of the course assessment using the following scale (points round down except in the case of "+" grades):

0-59=F; 60-62=D-; 63-67.5=D; 67.51-69=D+; 70-72=C-; 73-77.5=C; 77.51-79=C+; 80-82=B-; 83-87.5=B; 87.51-89=B+; 90-92=A-; 93-100=A.

Specific guidelines for all assignments and projects will be distributed and discussed in class and are available on the course web site.

Early Alert

To provide you with early feedback on your performance, we will have a graded essay early on in the semester (see the course schedule). In addition, our class will participate in the university's Early Alert program. Per the university, "Early Grade Reports will indicate if you have academic performance or attendance issues and specific steps you can take and resources available to help you improve. It is common for students to be unaware of or over-estimate their academic performance in classes so this will help you be aware early on of your progress and provide strategies for success in the classroom. You will receive an email during the 5th week of classes. It is important to read the entire email carefully." Should you receive an Early Alert, it is imperative that you make arrangements to meet with me to develop an action plan.

ePortfolio

As you move through your courses at UW Oshkosh, you will archive your learning in an ePortfolio. The ePortfolio can be found in D2L. The ePortfolio will help you keep track of papers, speeches, reports, projects, and other assignments in your Quest and Explore courses, so that you can see your progress and connect ideas across different classes. You can continue to use this portfolio in your major classes, so that you are ready for your Capstone course or experience as you near graduation. You can even use the ePortfolio after you graduate to show evidence of your learning to employers or graduate schools. In this course (and in all your USP courses), a specific assignment has been designated to be uploaded to your ePortfolio: in our case, the **Final Project**. More details will follow in class.

Attendance/Participation Policies

Excessive absences will severely affect your ability to complete this course satisfactorily, given the complexity and breadth of the material and skills to be covered, as well as the fact that many other aspects of your grade will depend upon your being present in class. Therefore, to maximize your learning, not to mention your class participation grade, you should adhere strictly to the following guidelines:

- Be prepared (read carefully and always bring the relevant texts and study questions to class);
- Participate actively and regularly (mere presence counts for little);
- Treat colleagues and professors with respect (see below);

More specifically, if you accumulate more than 8 absences, for any reason, you will fail the course. All absences above 3 (excluding those officially excused by the University and with documentation--see the Student Handbook) will reduce your Class Participation grade by 1 letter. You should be on time for each class session. In the event you must be late, please make every attempt to minimize the disruption your late arrival has on the class. Tardiness will count as 1/2 absence and, if in excess of 20 minutes, as 1 absence.

In terms of classroom comportment, you are also expected to behave professionally and respectfully. The classroom is neither a dorm nor a lunch room. Further, do not engage in behavior that detracts from my ability to teach and, most importantly, your colleagues' ability to learn. Penultimately, please turn off your electronic devices (i.e., phones) once class begins. If you have an exceptional circumstance that requires you to leave a device on, notify me before class. Otherwise, turn them off and put them away.

Overview of Primary Readings

Below you will find the publishers' overviews of our four primary readings. Each novel is set in a different historical, geographical, and cultural context of the modern world. Three of the four novels are short (under 200 pages), and all are available in inexpensive paperback editions.

The Foundation Pit

"In Andrey Platonov's *The Foundation Pit*, a team of workers has been given the job of digging the foundation of an immense edifice, a palatial home for the perfect future that, they are convinced, is at hand. But the harder the team works, the deeper they dig, the more things go wrong, and it becomes clear that what is being dug is not a foundation but an immense grave. *The Foundation Pit* is Platonov's most overtly political book, written in direct response to the staggering brutalities of Stalin's collectivization of Russian agriculture. It is also a literary masterpiece. Seeking to evoke unspeakable realities, Platonov deforms and transforms language in pages that echo both with the alienating doublespeak of power and the stark simplicity of prayer."

The Old Man Who Read Love Stories

"An aging widower lives quietly in a river town in the rain-soaked Ecuadoran jungle where, increasingly, tourists and opportunists have begun to make inroads. He takes refuge in his books--paperback novels of faraway places and bittersweet love. But one day a trader pushes nature too far, setting a protective mother ocelot on a bloody rampage through the village a hunter who once lived among the Indians and knows the jungle better than anyone, is pressured to join the expedition that will hunt down the animal. Drawn from his peaceful life, he is forced into the middle of a raging conflict between man and nature that is resolved--temporarily--by a powerfully climactic confrontation."

Animal's People

'I used to be human once. So I'm told. I don't remember it myself, but people who knew me when I was small say I walked on two feet, just like a human being...'

"Ever since he can remember, Animal has gone on all fours, his back twisted beyond repair by the catastrophic events of "that night" when a burning fog of poison smoke from the local factory blazed out over the town of Khaufpur, and the Apocalypse visited his slums. Now just turned seventeen and well schooled in street work, he lives by his wits, spending his days jamisponding (spying) on town officials and looking after the elderly nun who raised him, Ma Franci. His nights are spent fantasizing about Nisha, the girlfriend of the local resistance leader, and wondering what it must be like to get laid. When Elli Barber, a young American doctor, arrives in Khaufpur to open a free clinic for the still suffering townsfolk -- only to find herself struggling to convince them that she isn't there to do the dirty work of the Kampani -- Animal gets caught up in a web of intrigues, scams, and plots with the unabashed aim of turning events to his own advantage. Profane, piercingly honest, and scathingly funny, *Animal's People* illuminates a dark world shot through with flashes of joy and lunacy. A stunning tale of an unforgettable character, it is an unflinching look at what it means to be human: the wounds that never heal and a spirit that will not be quenched."

Coming to Birth

"In this quietly powerful and eminently readable novel, winner of the prestigious Sinclair Prize, Kenyan writer Marjorie Macgoye deftly interweaves the story of one young woman's tumultuous coming of age with the history of a nation emerging from colonialism. At the age of sixteen, Paulina leaves her small village in western Kenya to join her new husband, Martin, in the bustling city of Nairobi. It is 1956, and Kenya is in the final days of the "Emergency," as the British seek to suppress violent anti-colonial revolts. But Paulina knows little about [politics], about city life, or about marriage, and Martin's clumsy attempts to control her soon lead to a relationship filled with silences, misunderstandings, and unfulfilled expectations.

Soon Paulina's inability to bear a child effectively banishes her from the confines of traditional women's roles. As her country at last moves toward independence, Paulina manages to achieve a kind of independence as well: She accepts a job that will require her to live separately from her husband, and she has an affair that leads to the birth of her first child. But Paulina's hard-won contentment will be shattered when Kenya's turbulent history intrudes into her private life, bringing with it tragedy—and a new test of her quiet courage and determination."

Class Schedule

Schedule is subject to change. *Unless otherwise specified, all readings for the week should be completed by the Monday of that week*, for use in class discussion throughout the week.

Week 1 (2/3)

- *Review of the University Studies Program & Liberal Education*
- *Introduction to Quest II, Ethical Reasoning, and the Signature Question: Sustainability*
- *Radford Teaching Lab (Friday)*
 - *Introduction to the Class Web Site; D2L*
 - *Liberal Education, USP Learning Outcomes, and Quest II*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - Required office visit (in groups, Radford 329, before Monday, February 17)
 - Sustainability Handouts (D2L)
 - Heinberg, Richard. "Beyond the Limits to Growth." (D2L)
 - Heinberg, Richard. "What Is Sustainability?" (D2L)

Week 2 (2/10)

- *Sustainability: Definitions, Issues, and the Three Pillars*
- *"Modern" / "World" / "Literature"?*
- *Reading World Literature through the Lens of Sustainability*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - **Quest I Essay due Monday, February 17**
 - Robert Conquest, "Collision Course, 1928-1929." *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (e-reserve)
 - Begin Andrei Platonov, *The Foundation Pit*

Week 3 (2/17)

- *Utopia, Dystopia, and Sustainability: Andrei Platonov's The Foundation Pit*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - Andrei Platonov, *The Foundation Pit*
 - **Literary Analysis Essay #1 Draft due Wednesday, February 26**

Week 4 (2/24)

- *Utopia, Dystopia, and Sustainability: Andrei Platonov's The Foundation Pit*
- *Literary Analysis Essay #1 Workshop: Peer Editing*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - **Literary Analysis Essay #1 due Monday, March 3**
 - **Selected Platonov Study Questions due Friday, March 7**
 - Begin Luis Sepúlveda, *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*

Week 5 (3/3)

- *Introduction to Research Assignment #1--Sustainability, Post-Soviet Russia, and Beyond*
- *Sustainability and Indigenous Peoples: Luis Sepúlveda's The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - Luis Sepúlveda, *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*

Week 6 (3/10)

- *Sustainability and Indigenous Peoples: Luis Sepúlveda's The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*
- *Research Assignment #1 Workshop*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - Suzanne Sawyer, "Opening" *Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador* (e-reserve)
 - **Research Assignment #1 due Wednesday, March 15**
 - **Selected Sepúlveda Study Questions due Friday, March 17**

Week 7 (3/17)

- *Sustainability and Indigenous Peoples: Luis Sepúlveda's The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*
Sustainability and the Amazon in the 21st Century
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - **Literary Analysis Essay #2 due Monday, March 31**
 - Begin Indra Sinha, *Animal's People*

Week 8 (3/31)

- *Industrial Catastrophe, the Urban Slum, and Sustainability: Indra Sinha's Animal's People*
- *Introduction to Research Assignment #2 and the Final Project*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - Indra Sinha, *Animal's People*

Week 9 (4/7)

- *Industrial Catastrophe, the Urban Slum, and Sustainability: Indra Sinha's Animal's People*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - Edward Broughton, "The Bhopal Disaster and Its Aftermath: A Review"
 - **Selected Sinha Study Questions due Friday, April 14**

Week 10 (4/14)

- *Industrial Catastrophe, the Urban Slum, and Sustainability: Indra Sinha's Animal's People*
- *Library Research Day for Research Assignment #2 and the Final Project*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - **Literary Analysis Essay #3 due Friday, April 25**
 - Begin Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, *Coming to Birth*

Week 11 (4/21)

- *India, Economic Inequality, and Sustainability in the 21 Century*
- *Africa, Postcolonialism, and Sustainability: Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye's Coming to Birth*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, *Coming to Birth*
 - Daniel Branch, "Introduction." *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011* (e-reserve)

Week 12 (4/28)

- *Africa, Postcolonialism, and Sustainability: Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye's Coming to Birth*
- *Final Project Workshop*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - **Research Assignment #2 due Monday, May 5**
 - **Selected Macgoye Study Questions due Friday, May 9**

Week 13 (5/5)

- *Africa, Postcolonialism, and Sustainability: Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye's Coming to Birth*
- *Africa, Competition for Resources, and Sustainability in the 21 Century*
- *Library Research Day for Final Project*
- **Assignment for Next Week:**
 - **Final Project Draft due Monday, May 12**
 - **Final Project Draft due Friday, May 16**

Week 14 (5/12)

- *Final Project Peer Review and Submission (Monday/Friday)*
- *In-Class Essay: Reflections on Sustainability (Wednesday)*
- *University Studies Program: Next Steps*

Study Questions

Study Questions have been prepared for all four of the primary readings, both to ensure adequate preparation for class discussion and to facilitate your analysis and interpretation of the novels. You should use the study questions as guides in your reading and, later, review of the material. You are not required to write out the questions in advance of class discussion, but you must be prepared to discuss them (writing down page references for many of the questions would be a good start). The aim of the questions is to guide you in the development of close reading skills and strategies, with the attention to detail that literary texts require. You will also notice that the questions have been posed so as to focus especially on issues related to sustainability as well as to the various ethical questions raised by the narratives.

I will assign some of these questions for formal submission, following our class discussions. These study question submissions take the place of traditional quizzes and will allow you not only to manifest your understanding of and engagement with the texts, but to do so in writing, as you continue to develop your university-level writing skills (see the Course Objectives). You will not be required to submit all questions for all readings. However, consideration of as many of the questions as possible will help you to focus, structure, and compose your literary analysis essays.

These submissions will be graded on a simple 10-point scale designed to allow you to achieve a high level of success simply based on the fact that you read the material carefully and participated productively in the class discussions of the study questions. I will not be unduly picky regarding your prose, but you must write clearly and grammatically and refer specifically to the texts. Your submissions must be typed and formatted, written in complete sentences with documentation and page references, and effectively responsive to the questions (a study question sample document and feedback rubric can be found on D2L). Study questions count for 20% of the course assessment, so each submission will be worth 5%. All study questions are due in person in hard copy at the beginning of class. Late submissions will be docked one point for each class session they are late.

Please click on the links below to get the study questions for each of the readings (to be completed):

Platonov, *The Foundation Pit*

Sepúlveda, *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*

Sinha, *Animal's People*

Macgoye, *Coming to Birth*

Assignments

This page aims to provide an overview of the different writing and research assignments you will complete for the course and to identify the different course and/or program objectives each assignment aims to achieve. Please note that more detailed guidelines concerning logistics, methodology, expectations, and assessment criteria will be provided in class. The assignments outlined below comprise 85% of your course grade (class participation being the other 15%).

Quest I Reflection (5%)

Early on in the semester, I will ask you to write a medium-length essay (1,000 or so words) in which you reflect on your experience in Quest I. The essay is intended to be informal and self-reflective (though you should still adhere to the expectations of solid writing in terms of language, mechanics, and organization). In this essay, you will discuss the courses you took in Quest I (both the disciplinary course and the WBIS course), the signature question on which you focused, and the approaches taken to that signature question in each course. What did you learn in these courses in relation to those courses' specific topics or theme as well as the signature question? In addition, you should explain in your own words what you understand about liberal education and how the University Studies Program aims to provide that education. Finally, I would like you to voice any questions you have about the USP--its aims, the different components, its relation to your other courses and academic goals, and so on.

Please note this essay, along with preparation for and participation in class during the first several weeks, will provide the basis for any Early Alert notifications.

Study Questions (4, 5% each)

Detailed information about the Study Questions can be found on the [Study Question web page](#). In short, the study questions aim to achieve the following:

- promote the close, detailed consideration of language, structure, style, theme, and context that literary texts require--such reading skills are an essential component of higher education;
- serve as a lens, due to the kinds of questions I have posed, through which we can consider the sustainability-related issues, and the ethical questions they raise, that these literary texts manifest;
- help provide the analytic foundation on which you can compose your Literary Analysis Essays, as well as providing practice in and feedback on your writing skills.

Literary Analysis Essays (3, 5% each)

For each of our first three novels, you will compose an essay of approximately 1,000-1,200 words (roughly 4 pages), in which you expand upon some of the questions above and analyze a particular aspect (or related aspects) of the novels. You will be responsible for developing your own focus, but you also have the latitude to select a focus that engages you, so long as it is in keeping with our sustainability focus and, especially, addresses the ethical dilemmas posed by the novels. These essays aim to continue to enhance the critical and creative thinking skills as well as the written communication skills that you began to develop, one hopes, in Quest I. You will not write an essay on our final novel, as you will be in the process of completing Research Assignment #2 and the Final Project. Further details will be

discussed in class, including topic suggestions, format, university-level writing expectations, and assessment criteria.

Research Assignments (2, 10% each)

You will have two short research assignments (roughly 1,000 words each) that will ask you to step back from, or move beyond, the settings of the novels and examine ongoing, contemporary issues related to those novels. Specifically, Research Assignment #1 will entail finding a scholarly source (academic journal article or book chapter) that address issues of sustainability in post-Soviet Russia or other countries that were once a part of the USSR (such as Kazakhstan, the Ukraine, etc.). These countries continue to face many environmental, social, and political challenges that can be seen as a direct outcome of policies and practices during the Soviet era. You will find a suitable source, write an analytic overview of the contents of the article (guidelines for writing analytic overviews will be discussed in class), and briefly explain the rationale for your selection of the source you chose. Research Assignment #2 will require the same kind of work, in this case examining an issue of sustainability in relation to contemporary India (hopefully touching upon the broader issues confronting these BRICK economies). Completion of these assignments aims to achieve the following:

- work toward four of the USP Essential Learning Outcomes: identification and objective evaluation of theories and assumptions, critical thinking, written communication, and information literacy;
- broaden your understanding of 21st-century global issues as they relate to sustainability;
- provide experience in the methodologies of finding, selecting, reading, and writing about scholarly sources that can serve as a foundation for the Final Project.

Final Project (20%--draft counts an additional 5%)

See the Final Project Guidelines web page

Remember to review the **Plagiarism Policies and Procedures**, as discussed in class.

Final Project Guidelines

Your work over the course of the semester will culminate in a Final Project that will pull together the many different strands of the course: research, critical thinking, global awareness of sustainability issues, and, of course, the special contributions that literary texts can make with respect to those issues, especially as they portray individuals in situations in which they face difficult, often intractable ethical choices.

Rather than writing a traditional research paper, you will conduct a research project that, in many respects, would provide the foundation for the kind of substantial semester research paper you might construct in an upper level course. The first steps are as follows:

1. Select an important work of world literature published since 1980 but earlier than the last few years that involves if not foregrounds issues of sustainability (the readings for our course provide examples of such works). "Important" here means that the work has been seen as significant enough to garner sufficient critical attention (since you need to find several essays that discuss the work). Additionally, the work should not be so recent that there has not yet been enough written about it. I strongly recommended that you identify your work of literature by the end of week 10 of the semester, and I must approve your selection.
2. Find at least 3 substantive, preferably scholarly essays that examine the literary work (though these essays or book chapters do not need to be entirely devoted to your work).
3. Find 6 secondary scholarly sources (journal articles or books) that relate to any of the historical, social, economic, political, or environmental issues that the literary work raises or that serve as background to it. I will provide a sample bibliography using one of our novels.

The Final Project will then contain the following sections:

- An overview and synopsis of the literary work (approximately 500 words);
- **Two** abstracts of the essays that analyze your work (250 words each, written along the lines of the analytic summaries from the research assignments, though shorter);
- **Three** abstracts of the secondary sources (also 250 words each);
- A narrative of roughly 600 words in which you discuss the specific sustainability-related issues raised by the text, the ethical dilemmas faced by the characters arising from those issues, and the ethical questions the text asks us as readers to contemplate;
- A separate, formatted bibliography of all 10 sources;
- A project self-reflection of roughly 400 words in which you discuss what you learned as a student in conducting the project: skills acquired, knowledge gained, obstacles overcome, mis-steps, lessons for the future, etc. When you eventually enroll in a Connect course (or Quest III), you are almost certainly going to have to conduct a more advanced form of such a project. It is vital that you learn from this experience going forward, and the self-reflection will facilitate that process.

When I introduce the project early in the second half of the semester, I will provide you with a list of possible topics, texts, and regions as well as with a rubric that I will use in assessing your projects. To ensure that you make substantial progress on the project before the final due date (which will only serve to help you achieve a better final product), I am assigning a separate 5% to the quality of your draft, which you will then have the rest of the last week to revise, augment, and refine.

Please note: the Final Project will be placed in your ePortfolio, which is discussed on the [Course Information and Policies page](#).

Final Project Draft due Monday, May 12

Revised Final Project due Friday, May 16