

# Chapter 10

## The Instructional Design of Reading and Interpreting English Fiction

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading and Interpreting English Fiction is one of the courses which having goal in introducing some social theory relevant to the current issues through discussing literary works. This course is the following course of English literature which have been taken by students in the previous class. In English literature, students learn about the definition of literature, the genre of literature and current issues of literature. While in the Reading and Interpreting English Fiction, students are led to read and analyse relevant literary works which is linked into current social theory such as ecocriticism and postcolonialism.

This course is based on the theory that literature is a reflection of society, especially when it comes to ecological issues and climate change (Abrams, 1971; Garrard, 2010). In designing this course, I

focus solely on how to increase students' ecological awareness through reading literary works, as has been done by (Wiyatmi et al., 2023; Hutama & Setyabudi, 2020). My reasoning is based on the assumption that literature serves as one of humanity's most powerful tools for understanding and responding to the ecological crisis, bridging the gap between raw scientific data and human experience. Through novels, poetry, essays, and memoirs, literature translates the abstract realities of climate change, species extinction, deforestation, and pollution into vivid emotional and ethical narratives that statistics alone cannot convey. Works such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and Jostein Gaardner's *The World According to Anna* awaken ecological consciousness by allowing readers to inhabit the perspectives of rivers, forests, and animals. Moreover, it also fosters empathy where indifference once prevailed. By exposing the cultural, historical, and economic roots of environmental destruction, literature challenges dominant anthropocentric worldviews and imagines alternative ways of living with the more-than-human world (Hasbi et al., 2025). In an age when scientific warnings often fail to spur action, literature remains uniquely capable of moving hearts and minds, cultivating the moral imagination necessary for genuine ecological responsibility and planetary care (Buell, 2009).

In this course, I focus using ecocriticism approach in reading and interpreting literary works. Ecocriticism, as defined by (Garrard, 2004), is a branch of literary theory grounded in the premise that “human beings, literature, and the environment interact”. Idrus & Mukahal (2021) further elaborates that ecocriticism serves as a methodological framework within literary studies to investigate ecological hazards and functions as a multidisciplinary call to scientific engagement in mitigating the effects of climate change. Love describes ecocriticism as an explicit response to a previously neglected dialogue between literature and the environment, aiming to elevate this discourse to a higher level of human consciousness (2003). He also

emphasizes that ecocriticism represents the participation of the field of English literature and pedagogy in addressing the environmental realities of our time.

## 2. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

### 2.1 Course Content and Topics

The learning goal of this course is to provide an understanding of the global ecological crisis and increase students' ecological awareness through reading literary works such as novels and poetry in both English and Indonesian. This course has 16 sessions, including a midterm and final exam. I divided the sessions into two activities: the first, which I explained, is a lecturing session, and the second is a student presentation. Below are the topics I covered in the lecturing session.

| No. | Topic  |
|-----|--|
| 1   | Global Ecological Crisis and Environmental Awareness |
| 2   | Foundations of Ecocritical Theory                    |
| 3   | Waves of Ecocriticism                                |
| 4   | Major Theoretical toolkits of Ecocriticism           |
| 5   | Practical Methodology of Ecocriticism                |
| 6   | Genre and Form in Ecocritical Perspective            |

The selection of the topic in this course is highly pertinent, as it bridges literary studies with pressing real-world issues, fostering a deeper understanding of how texts reflect and influence human interactions with the environment. Ecocriticism, as a theoretical framework, encourages students to analyze literature not just for aesthetic or narrative elements, but for its ecological implications, such as representations of nature, environmental degradation, and

human responsibility. Its urgency stems from the escalating global ecological crisis, including biodiversity loss, deforestation, and pollution, which are intrinsically linked to climate change; by examining literary works through an ecocritical lens, students can uncover how narratives perpetuate or challenge anthropocentric views that exacerbate these problems, making literature a tool for environmental advocacy and cultural critique.

Students must be aware of this topic because it equips them with critical skills to engage with contemporary challenges, empowering them to interpret literature as a mirror of societal values and a catalyst for change in the face of climate change. In an era where environmental disasters like extreme weather events and rising sea levels threaten global stability, understanding ecocritical theories helps students recognize the role of storytelling in shaping public awareness and policy. This knowledge not only enhances their analytical abilities in literary studies but also cultivates ethical citizenship, encouraging them to apply these insights beyond academia—such as in activism, policy-making, or creative writing—to contribute to sustainable solutions and foster a more ecologically conscious society.

Meanwhile, the second session is the application of ecocriticism in literary and cultural studies with the following topics; The selection of *The Bee Maker* by Moby Warren for presentation and paper assignments in an ecocriticism-focused literary analysis course is justified by its poignant exploration of environmental degradation, particularly the collapse of bee populations due to pesticide overuse and human-induced biodiversity loss, which serves as a metaphor for broader ecological crises. This novel integrates themes of environmental ethics and human responsibility toward nature, making it an ideal text for students to apply ecocritical toolkits such as analyzing representations of non-human entities and critiquing anthropocentric exploitation.

The selection of *Educated* by Tara Westover, a memoir detailing the author's upbringing in a rural, survivalist family in Idaho, is chosen for its subtle yet profound depiction of human-nature entanglements, including off-grid living, herbal medicine, and the harsh mountain environment as both a source of sustenance and peril. Through an ecocritical lens, students can examine how the text portrays the land as a contested space influenced by ideological isolationism and resource extraction (e.g., the family's junkyard operations), highlighting themes of environmental stewardship versus neglect.

While, the novel *Terus Bodoh Jangan Pintar* by Tere Liye is selected due to its narrative of environmental activists resisting corporate mining concessions, particularly nickel extraction, which underscores themes of ecological destruction, social injustice, and moral resistance against exploitative resource development. Ecocriticism applies here by revealing how the story critiques human greed's impact on landscapes and communities, making it suitable for student presentations that explore indigenous or local perspectives on environmental defense.

Furthermore, *Mata di Tanah Melus* by Okky Madasari is an excellent choice for its direct engagement with ecological wisdom and indigenous knowledge systems, portraying the Melus tribe's harmonious relationship with the environment while critiquing power structures that threaten it. This novel facilitates ecocritical analysis of themes like biodiversity preservation and the role of nature in cultural identity, ideal for student presentations that highlight non-Western environmental narratives.

Finally, *Love in a Time of Climate Change* by Craig Santos Perez, a collection of ecopoetry, is selected for its innovative fusion of love sonnets with themes of environmental catastrophe, recycling poetic traditions to address climate disruption and the sacredness of the earth. Its ecocritical relevance lies in protesting degradation while

reconnecting readers to nature through indigenous lenses, making it perfect for presentations on how poetry can humanize climate discourse.

## **2.2 Teaching Method**

The ecocriticism approach in this course employs an interdisciplinary and place-conscious teaching method that combines close reading of literary texts with critical examination of their environmental representations, ecological implications, and human–nature relationships. Students are divided into several groups according to the topics and literary works that must be presented. Students are led to analyze how literary texts reinforce or challenge anthropocentric worldviews, species hierarchies, and exploitative attitudes toward the natural world, while connecting literary themes to real-world ecological issues such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, and environmental justice. Teaching activities include guided eco-focused close readings and interpretation that encourage students to write paper analysis on some literary works.

## **2.3 Teacher and Student Roles**

In this course, the teacher serves as a facilitator, provocateur, and co-learner rather than a traditional authority figure, guiding discussions, introducing key theoretical frameworks, curating texts and modelling ecologically attentive reading practices while remaining open to insights that emerge from students’ place-based observations and personal experiences with the more-than-human world. Students, in turn, are positioned as active researchers. who lead seminar discussions and contribute to collaborative projects in producing creative-critical work that bridges literary analysis with ecological advocacy.

## **2.4 Activity Types**

In this course, as explained above, there are two main activities: a lecture session by the lecturer and a presentation session by students.

In the lecture session, to further introduce ecological issues to students, the lecturer asks students to observe several ecological problems in their homes. They write up their observations in a report and discuss them in class. Because most of the students are living in pesantren, their observations clearly point to cleanliness issues in the pesantren. In this session, students gain a better understanding of environmental issues through direct observation, complementing their understanding of ecocriticism theory.

The next activity involves dividing students into six groups to read and analyze literary works selected by the lecturer. This activity is divided into two parts: a presentation session and a paper writing session based on the students' analysis of the literary works.

## **2.5 Materials and Media**

In this course, the materials and media used are highly diverse to enrich understanding of the relationship between literature, culture, and the natural environment. The primary materials for this course are some books related to ecocriticism theory such as Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* and Buell's *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the US and Beyond*. In addition, another source for this course is literary works such as *The Bee Maker* by Moby Warren and *Love in a Time of Climate Change* by Craig Santos Perez which are often used as primary texts for analyzing representations of nature and ecological issues. Meanwhile, the media utilized encompass films, television, and visual arts, including documentaries on climate change, eco-films, graphic adaptations, as well as digital media such as videos, which expand the analysis from traditional literature to non-literary narrative forms to explore issues like anthropocentrism, environmental justice, and human-nonhuman interactions in a more interdisciplinary manner.

## **2.6 Assessment and Evaluation**

Assessment in this course is continuous, portfolio-based, and aligned with the course’s commitment to process, reflection, and real-world impact rather than traditional high-stakes. Student learning is evaluated through the following weighted components: (1) Active participation (20%); (2) Discussion and presentation (15%); (3) A creative-critical paper that revisits and curates all prior work, demonstrating growth in ecological literacy, ethical awareness, and the ability to connect textual analysis to material environments.

All assignments receive detailed narrative feedback emphasising strengths and growth areas rather than letter grades until the final portfolio. Criteria prioritise depth of environmental insight, originality in linking literature to place and justice issues, willingness to challenge anthropocentrism, and clarity of expression across academic, creative, and public-facing modes. Late work is accepted with transparent communication, reflecting the course’s valuing of care over punitive rigidity.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

Integrating ecological issues directly into pedagogy and curriculum represents one of the most urgent tasks facing higher education today, and the ecocritical framework presented in this design offers a replicable model for achieving that integration across literary studies and beyond. Rather than treating environmental concerns as an optional “themes” or add-ons, this approach embeds ecological questions at the core of textual analysis, classroom practice, and institutional responsibility, thereby transforming literary education into a site of socio-ecological formation. By combining place-based learning, materialist media analysis, collaborative public projects, and revision-oriented portfolio assessment, the curriculum moves students from abstract knowledge to embodied ecological literacy and civic agency (Garrard, 2016; Islamiah et al., 2017; Salsabila et al., 2025).

Yet successful campus-wide adoption demands more than individual instructor initiative; it requires deliberate curricular redesign that treats sustainability not as a separate track but as a foundational competency comparable to critical thinking or intercultural awareness (Garrard, 2020; Hasbi, 2017; Hasbi & Wulansari, 2025).

To scale this integration effectively, universities should: (1) embed environmental justice and climate literacy outcomes in general education requirements; (2) fund teaching-release or grants specifically for ecological course transformation; and (3) create accessible green spaces, digital mapping tools, and community partnerships as standard instructional resources. When ecological issues are woven into the epistemological and methodological fabric of the curriculum—as demonstrated here—literary studies can play a leading role in preparing students not only to interpret the world, but to inhabit it with greater care and accountability (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

## Author



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