

## **Teaching the Environment: How We Can Include Ecocriticism in Introductory Classes**

ASLE 2017 Pre-Conference Workshop

Tuesday, June 20, 1-5pm

Many young instructors, whether they are adjuncts, lecturers, or graduate students, appear to have few opportunities to bring their ecocritical and environmental foci into their introductory classes. These classes tend to focus on narrow subjects (e.g., our ENG 101 class, which is labelled “Introduction to College Writing”) that, ostensibly, do not relate directly to the instructor’s research interests. As instructors of record at University of North Carolina at Greensboro, we have all faced a feeling of disconnect between our research and our teaching. We have attempted to overcome this disconnect in various ways, but continue to try to integrate what we love to read and write about with what we teach.

This workshop is geared towards graduate student instructors, adjuncts, and lecturers who seek to include environmental texts and/or use an ecocritical approach in their classes. We want to establish a space to share our experiments with others in our position. To foster this space, we will divide our workshop time into four parts. We will begin by briefly discussing our experiments with including environmentalism and ecocritical approaches to literature in our 100-level English classrooms; we will discuss how we have included explicitly environmental texts, approached non-traditional texts in an ecocritical way, and how our teaching environments impact our pedagogy. We will then transition into a practicum that allows all participants to use some of the materials we have generated from our classrooms. We will then facilitate a discussion of ideas, successes, and failures, and we will conclude with a syllabus-swap and discussion that will give all participants the chance to ask one another questions and offer advice.

We are not positioning ourselves as experts, but rather as colleagues. This workshop will be an opportunity for graduate students, adjuncts, and lecturers to discuss their teaching, gather suggestions from others, and begin thinking about how we can unite our research and our teaching. We seek to facilitate a conversation and begin creating a network, because fostering this conversation is of vital importance and will be invaluable to everyone struggling to bring their environmentalism into their introductory classrooms or accomplish praxis, which is perhaps the most difficult but most important aspect of our discipline.

### **Workshop Leaders:**

Kayla Forrest, Marc Keith, Bryan McMillan, and Gia Coturri Sorenson are teaching assistants and Ph.D. students in Literature at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro