

**Arts & Science 3TR3 Trees Inquiry**  
2018-19 (Term 1); Fridays, 11:30 am-2:20 pm, CNH 207  
Dr. A. McQueen, ajmcq@mcmaster.ca  
Office hours: Tues 12:30-1:30 pm and Fri 2:30-3:30 pm (CNH-601)

Inspired by the trees on McMaster's campus, this course examines trees and their significance through a number of different lenses and from a variety of disciplinary perspectives: biology; colonial and economic histories; visual, material and performing arts practices; psychology; indigenous and environmental studies; poetry and prose. The course will meet in classroom settings, it will move to various locations outdoors on campus and will go off campus for field trips. You will need to come to class prepared to be on the move by wearing comfortable clothing and shoes. When we move from the interior classroom to the outdoors, you will want to carry a light backpack, with a minimum of weight and only essential items such as: a pen and medium-sized notebook or pad of paper and a small bottle of water. You will also need to plan for various weather conditions and on any given Monday afternoon and bring with you items appropriate for your personal needs such as: comfortable waterproof walking shoes, protective sunscreen, hat, rain jacket or full rain gear (jacket, pants, and preferably a hat over an umbrella so that your hands are free).

**Required texts:**

Richard Higgins, *Thoreau and the Language of Trees*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate*. Vancouver: Greystone books, 2015.

**Course Schedule**

Nota bene: All articles will be posted on Avenue to Learn.

September 7            **Introductory class:** Campus Tree Hunt  
Discussion of the Portrait of a Tree assignment

September 14        **Portrait of a Tree** assignment

September 21        **Trees and the Visual Arts**  
Reading assignment:  
Bruce Braun, "Colonialism's Afterlife: Vision and Visuality on the Northwest Coast." *Cultural Geographies* vol. 9, no. 2 (2002): 202-247.  
Stacey R. Jessiman, "The Repatriation of the G'psgolox Totem Pole: A Study of its Context, Process, and Outcome," *International Journal of Cultural Property* vol. 18, no. 3 (2011): 365-391.  
Submit your notes on the Braun and Jessiman articles

- September 28      **Research and reading session** (your professor will be presenting research at an international conference)  
 No formal class meeting – you are to complete upcoming reading assignments and work on the topic you propose for your Principal Research Project
- October 5          **Mac Forest Field Trip**  
 Reflection paper due on Trees and the Visual Arts  
Reading assignment:  
 Juyoung Lee et al., “Restorative effects of viewing real forest landscapes, based on a comparison with urban landscapes,” *Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research* vol.29 (2009): 227-234.  
 Submit your notes on the Lee et al. article  
 In-class activities: Forest walk and journaling exercise
- October 12        **Reading week**
- October 19        **Royal Botanical Gardens Arboretum Field Trip**  
 Reflection paper due on the Mac Forest Field Trip  
Reading assignment:  
 Chorong Song et al., “Physiological and psychological effects of walking on young males in urban parks in winter,” *Journal of Physiological Anthropology* vol.32 n.1 (January 2013): 18-22.  
 Chorong Song et al., “Physiological and psychological responses of young males during spring-time walks in urban parks,” *Journal of Physiological Anthropology* vol. 33 n.1 (May 2014): 8-15.  
 Submit your notes on the Song et al. articles  
 In-class activities: Walking meditation and asana exercise
- October 26        **Henry David Thoreau**  
 Reflection paper due on the RBG Arboretum Field Trip  
Reading assignment:  
 Richard Higgins, *Thoreau and the Language of Trees*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.  
 Submit your notes on the Higgins book
- November 2        **Trees and Indigeneity**  
 Visiting Speaker: Dr. Kaitlin Debicki  
Reading assignment:  
 Kaitlin Debicki, “Okwire’shon:’A, The First Storytellers: Recovering Landed Consciousness in Readings of Trees & Texts,” Doctoral Thesis, McMaster University, 2017, pages iii-vi, 1-50, 239-242.  
<https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/22045>  
 Submit your notes on the Debicki dissertation

- November 9                   **Shinrin-yoku**  
Reading assignment:  
 Chorong Song et al., “Physiological Effects of Nature Therapy: A Review of the Research in Japan,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* vol.13 n.8 (August 2016): 781-798.  
 Hiroko Ochiai et al., “Physiological and Psychological Effects of a Forest Therapy Program on Middle-Aged Females,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* vol.12 n.12 (December 2015): 15222-15232.  
 Hiroko Ochiai et al., “Physiological and Psychological Effects of Forest Therapy on Middle-Aged Males with High-Normal Blood Pressure,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* vol.12 n.12 (March 2015): 2532-2542.  
 Won Sop Shin et al., “Forest experience and psychological health benefits: the state of the art and future prospect in Korea,” *Envrionmental Health and Preventive Medicine* vol.15 n.1 (2010): 38-47.  
 Submit your notes on the Shinrin-yoku readings

- November 16                   **Trees and Communication**  
Reading assignment:  
 Peter Wohlleben *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate*. Vancouver: Greystone books, 2015.  
 Submit your notes on the Wohlleben book

November 23                   Presentations of Principal Research Projects, group 1

November 30                   Presentations of Principal Research Projects, group 2

**Assessments**

Nota bene: All written assignments must be submitted in both printed form at the beginning of class and electronically to Avenue to Learn prior to class.

***Portrait of a Tree assignment*, September 14<sup>th</sup> 20%**

During our first class, we will go on an exploratory Campus Tree Hunt that will “introduce” us to different trees. Each of you will then focus on one of the trees from the hunt for this Portrait of a Tree assignment. In Week two of class we will return to the trees and during those return visits, each of you will present your research as a “portrait” of “your” respective tree. Many consider teaching the highest form of learning, and this assignment will be the first of two opportunities in this class to explore how that perspective applies to you.

Your assignment will include two outcomes: you will give a 10-15-minute presentation, followed by approximately 5 minutes during which you will answer questions from the class; and you will also submit a one-to-two-page (single-spaced) paper that outlines the key points of your presentation. Your presentation, paper, and response to questions will all be graded as a whole.

Your *Portrait of a Tree* should draw on research from various discipline-based perspectives. You should include an in-depth discussion of the tree from a biological perspective, identifying the features or markers that are considered representative and including information related to what can be seen in different seasons. Your *Portrait* can also draw upon some of the following ideas, as relevant, and others as you choose: the geographic origin of the type of tree; the history of its presence in North America; its significance in specific cultural contexts; if it has been the focus of a particular economic or environmental concern; if there is a work of poetry or prose that focuses on the type of tree and you wish to include it you can do so in whole, or in part, as time permits. Please include other lines of inquiry as you deem appropriate for the tree that is your focus as well as the resources you have found.

Be sure to manage your time, and do a test run of your presentation as no one *Portrait* will be allowed to go longer than 15 minutes, so that we respectfully ensure there is enough time for all of the presentations. Your paper will be due on the same day as your presentation. Your paper must include a bibliography that follows a consistent format (such as Chicago or APA) that includes all of your sources. While you may use the first person "I" voice during your presentation, you should not do so in your written paper.

There are quite a number of helpful websites related to tree identification, organized through botanical gardens, universities, nature conservancy groups and other botany-focused organizations, and you can certainly use (and cite) those sources. Your research must, however, extend well beyond web-based research and explore journal articles, books, or works of creative writing that are relevant for a broad understanding of the tree type that is the focus of your assignment.

### **Participation and Engagement with Course materials, 24%**

This part of the course assessment evaluates not just that each person is physically present for class. For our course to be successful this semester, we must each be actively engaged through our minds, attentive to others, and open to our exploratory, in-class activities, including our field trips. You must participate and engage in ways that demonstrate mature and responsible behaviour that manifests an understanding of the important roles each person plays in the learning environment we share.

When you **participate** and **engage**: you are consistently connected; you contribute to class discussions; you are an active listener; you take notes when your peers are giving presentations; and you offer constructive feedback to presentations, remaining considerate

of the parameters of our time together and that we need to ensure everyone has opportunities to contribute. You must demonstrate sensitivity towards the interests of others, and/or tolerance of differences, and consistently manifest respect for the intellectual work and personal interests of others. You will need to arrive on time for each class and you will need to be mindful if/when the class meets on campus somewhere other than KTH B107, for example for the *Portrait of a Tree* assignment and field trips.

Your **analysis of the readings** is part of your participation grade. We will read and discuss two books, a number of articles, and a chapter of a doctoral dissertation. You will need to be well prepared for the in-class discussions, and you will need to bring either your handwritten notes or a printed copy of any notes you have recorded electronically. You will submit those notes at the end of the class and they will be returned to you during the following class meeting. Your notes on the readings will be reviewed and marked as either: Complete, High Complete, or Unsatisfactory. If you repeatedly submit notes that receive an Unsatisfactory, you must recognize that will impact your overall participation grade. Do not plan to consult notes on any electronic device during class time. Your contributions to class discussion of the assigned readings must demonstrate not only that you have completed the reading assignments, but that you have done so with time to reflect on the points that have emerged, to you, and the important concepts and approaches that you believe each book offers. You should be well positioned to discuss specific information you learned (facts and details), as well as the author/book/study's success in conveying the broader goals of the research. Be sure to consider each author's intent and approach, the structure s.he used to organize the chosen material, including to what extent you evaluate the content and structure as achieving what the authors defined as their aims. You will receive a mid-term participation grade at the beginning of class on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

Each of you will have **questions** emerge in your minds throughout this class. Take note of those questions while you're reading, while you listen to presentations, as you participate in our walks, meditations, and field trips and commit to at least a short period of time each week to answering one of the questions in some detail. You can include these questions among your class, presentation and reading notes. Part of your interest in this exercise is to find out "information", the **answers to your questions, large and small** as they may be. And part of your interest is to **observe how and when your mind asks questions**, and what stimulates that to occur. Aim to seek out an "answer" to one question each week that our class gathers. Bring your notes on your questions to each class meeting. We will take opportunities during class time to discuss our individual questions, and we will have a more focused **discussion of this exercise** the week of our field trip to the Royal Botanical Gardens (October 19<sup>th</sup>) and again when we have our final in-class discussion of assigned reading (November 16<sup>th</sup>).

**Reflection Papers** 21%, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>.

You will complete three reflection papers. These are short essays, each approximately 2 pages (single-spaced, typed), that are an opportunity for you to explore your insights and perspectives that you developed from both your readings and in-class materials and experiences.

You will write your first reflection paper following our class on Trees and the Visual Arts and you will explore what you learned from the in-class lecture and discussion, what was particularly interesting to you from that material and how your understanding of the readings you completed for that class (Braun and Jessiman) developed or modified during and following the class meeting. Your first reflection paper will be due October 5<sup>th</sup>.

You will write your second reflection paper following our field trip to the MacForest. You will discuss your insights and how your perspectives have been informed by the experiential learning aspects of this class, and how your understanding of the reading you completed for that class (Lee) changed or evolved during and after the class meeting. Your second reflection paper will be due October 19<sup>th</sup>.

You will write your third reflection paper following our field trip to the Royal Botanical Gardens Arboretum. You will discuss your insights and how your perspectives have been informed by the experiential learning aspects of this class, and how your understanding of the reading you completed for that class (two articles by Song et al) adjusted or expanded during and after the class meeting. Your third reflection paper will be due on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

The reflection papers are designed as vehicles for you to demonstrate your understanding of the issues and experiences the respective classes present, as well as your critical analysis of the ideas you are exploring and any implications in terms of your own self-reflection. Reflection is a way for you to make meaning of what you are learning and for your professor to give you feedback on that meaning making. You can write your reflection papers using the first person (“I”) voice. Each reflection paper is worth 7% of your final grade and must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class and electronically on Avenue prior to class. The reflections will be evaluated on the diligence with which they have been prepared, the depth of the analysis and the quality of the writing.

**Principal Research Project**, Papers due no later than noon on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 35%

For your principal project for the semester you will undertake in-depth research that results in both an oral presentation and a written paper. For the oral component, you will present your research findings to the class for approximately 20 minutes, followed by no more than 10 minutes in which you will lead discussion and/or questions related to your research. The oral components will take place during the final two weeks of class: November 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>; it will not be graded separately but rather assessed as part of the

complete project output and understood as integral to the research process, and an opportunity for feedback while time remains to explore additional avenues.

For the paper component, you will submit an eight-to-ten-page paper (double-spaced), with a bibliography that is not included as part of your page count. As with other assignments in our course, you must use a recognized format (such as Chicago or APA) and apply it consistently to your bibliography and footnotes. Your research paper must not be written using the first person (“I”) voice. You must submit a printed copy of your paper to the Arts and Science main office and an electronic copy to Avenue to Learn.

The principal research project offers you an opportunity for an in-depth exploration of a topic that is of interest to you. We will discuss topic ideas in class to ensure that each of you is working on a different subject, and we will check in as a class at a few points in the semester to discuss how the projects are developing. The list below is not exhaustive but offers some ideas as to areas that you may wish to consider exploring for your project:

- the history of forestry, tree planting, or forest fires in Canada or a region of Canada
- the history of parks in Canada
- the history and ecology of a specific forest in Canada or in an international context such as Muir Woods (USA), the Black Forest (Germany) or Zhangjiajie National Forest Park (China)
- the role(s) of trees for one or more indigenous groups in Canada and/or elsewhere in the world
- the role(s) of trees within a specific religious tradition or practice
- trees and colonialism: the dissemination of non-native trees in a global or geographically specific context
- philosophical references to trees
- musical references to trees, or trees and the construction of instruments
- an individual who has promoted conservation initiatives (such as John Muir or Eliza Scidmore)
- medicinal perspectives on trees (potentially comparing different cultural contexts)
- trees and diseases
- bonsai
- fungi, lichen, and/or moss
- landscape architecture and design in contemporary life or in a specific historical period
- intersections of trees and industrialization, economics and/or business, a particular industry such as pulp and paper, sawmills, logging or a specific company, its industrial or business history and impact
- trees and environmental and/or social justice issues

Nota Bene:

1. Any assignment or paper that is submitted late will be deducted one half letter grade per day.
2. There will be a short break each class meeting. Outside of break, you are requested not to eat during class time, unless health needs require (please discuss with your professor); beverages are permitted.
3. You are asked not to use any electronic devices during class time. Laptops can be used during presentations, if needed.
4. You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences—e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1) Plagiarism - e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2) Improper collaboration in group work. 3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

5. In the event of an absence, you should review and follow the Academic Regulations in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work.” Please consult the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) statement on the following website – <https://artsci.mcmaster.ca/forms-requests/> – and direct any questions or concerns to Shelley Anderson or Rebecca Bishop in the Arts & Science Program Office.
6. If you require academic accommodation, you must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. SAS can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or email [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University’s Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.
7. The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L, and/or McMaster email. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email and course websites regularly during the term and to note any changes. Announcements will be made in class and by using the course email distribution list.
8. Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous, or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office (i.e. to Shelley Anderson or Rebecca Bishop in the Arts & Science Program Office) normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.