

**ENGL 5310-110: American Literature**  
**Nature and the Environment in the Long Nineteenth Century**  
Texas A&M University–Central Texas, Spring 2020

**Course Information**

Dates: Jan 13–Apr 30, 2019  
Building: Heritage Hall  
Room: 203  
Type: Face-to-face and Hybrid with supplemental materials made available online through Canvas.

**Instructor and Contact Information**

Instructor: Dr. Stephanie Tavera  
Email: [stavera@tamuct.edu](mailto:stavera@tamuct.edu)  
Office Phone: (254) 519-5773  
Office: Heritage Hall 204M  
Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays from 9:30 AM–11:00 AM

**Course Overview and Description.** This course focuses on restricted periods in American literary history with an emphasis on a thematic or genre development during the period. This semester, we will explore the theme of nature and the environment as it is represented in a variety of literary texts throughout the long nineteenth century (circa 1820-1905). Students may repeat this course for credit when the topic varies.



**Expected Learning Outcomes/Course Objectives.**

Students will examine the representation of nature and the environment in a variety of literary texts from the nineteenth century, tracing its development from indigenous perspectives to gender(ed) narratives of natural subjects. As part of our exploration, we will engage with scholarly voices in the field of American studies to challenge our perceptions of the natural world and its relationship to race, class, and gender, among other vectors. By the end of the semester, students who have successfully completed the assignments should be able to:

1. Analyze and interpret texts by employing close reading skills with an eye towards themes in nature, environmental issues, nonhuman subjects, and the relationship of the human toward the larger ecosystem. In short, apply an ecocritical lens toward the authors and texts from this semester.
2. Engage in a conversation with scholarly texts from the field of American studies by responding to the ideas presented therein with one's own critical perspective using the literary text as a foundation for response.
3. Express their ideas and readings of a text in clear, logical, organized, concise, and persuasive ways, in both written and oral forms.
4. Perform independent research, using the MLA bibliography and other methods.
5. Use web-based scholarly sources in an effective manner.

**Means of Achieving Course Goals.** Students will achieve the above course goals by:

1. Attending brief lectures and participating in seminar-style class discussions and occasional small group discussions and activities both face-to-face and online (e.g. discussion boards).
2. Reflecting on learned material through oral presentation including **one** teaching demonstration and **one** presentation of the seminar paper abstract.
3. Submitting writing projects to assess knowledge and mastery of the material including: **one** teaching statement and **one** reflection on the teaching demonstration, **four** exploratory papers

that engage with a literary text and a scholarly text each time, **one** research paper proposal, and **one** seminar research paper with abstract and bibliography.

The goal of these assessments is to gain skills in close reading and textual analysis; to explore, examine, and engage with a specific theme significant to this historical period across a variety of literary genres; and to understand writing and meaning-making of literature as a process by which knowledge is gained through trial-and-error.

**Disclaimer:** *Due to its subject matter, some of the following material will contain mature content—some of which may contain sexual references or innuendos.*

### Required Texts.

Mary Hunter Austin, *The Land of Little Rain* (1903). Echo Library, 2006. ISBN-13: 978-1406806786.  
 William Apress, *A Son of the Forest and Other Writings* (1829). Ed. Barry O'Connell. University of Massachusetts Press, 1997. ISBN: 1558491074 (ISBN13: 9781558491076)  
 John James Audubon, *Writings and Drawings*. Library of America, 1999. ISBN13: 978-1883011680.  
 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings*. Norton Critical Edition, 2007.  
 Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: The Original 1855 Edition*. Any publication.  
 Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Reading Edition*. Belknap Press, 2005. ISBN13: 978-0674018242.  
 Edgar Allen Poe, *Selected Tales*. Oxford University Press, 2008.  
 Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*. Penguin Classics Edition (Paperback), 2009. Forward by Nathaniel Philbrick.  
 Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896). Broadview Press, 2009. Ed. Deborah Carlin.  
 Zitkala Sa, *American Indian Stories* (1900+). Introduction by Layli Long Soldier. Penguin, 2019.

**Additional Texts.** Other course materials for this class can be found on Canvas. These include:

- Stacy Alaimo, “The Undomesticated Nature of Feminism: Mary Austin and the Progressive Women Conservationists”
- Mark Rifkin, “Shadows of Mashantucket: William Apress and the Representation of Pequot Place”
- Christopher Irmischer, “Audubon at Large”
- Laura Dassow Walls’ excerpt from *Emerson’s Life in Science*
- Stephanie Peebles Tavera, “Always Already Sexual: New Materialism in Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*”
- Paul Giles, “The Earth Reversed Her Hemispheres”
- Michael Ziser, “Animal Mirrors: Poe, Lacan, von Uexkull, and Audubon in the Zoosemiosphere”
- Philip Armstrong, “‘Leviathan is a Skein of Networks’: Translations of Nature and Culture in *Moby-Dick*”
- Nancy Bentley, “Clannishness: Jewett, Zitkala-Sa, and the Secularization of Kinship”

**Course Reading Schedule.** Assignments and readings are due on the day they are listed. *As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. – Dr. Tavera*

**1/16** Introduction: Syllabus and Survey of the Field (Chart)  
 Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain* (1903)  
 Stacy Alaimo, “The Undomesticated Nature of Feminism: Mary Austin and the Progressive Women Conservationists” (Canvas)  
**\*\*Assign Exploratory Papers and Teaching Project**

**1/23** William Apress, *Son of the Forest* (1829): Introduction and p. 1-56.

- Mark Rifkin, "Shadows of Mashantucket: William Apess and the Representation of Pequot Place" (Canvas)
- 1/30** John James Audubon, from *Ornithological Biography* (1831): "The Wild Turkey" (195-211), "The Purple Grackle" (211-217), "The Carolina Parakeet" (233-38), "The White-Headed Eagle" (238-48), "The Passenger Pigeon" (260-69), "The Black Vulture or Carrion Crow" (293-314), "The Golden Eagle" (354-58); "My Style of Drawing Birds" (759-64), "Myself" (765-94)  
Christopher Irmischer, "Audubon at Large" (Canvas)
- 2/6** Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836; scanned to Canvas); Henry David Thoreau, "Walking" (260-287)  
Laura Dassow Walls, excerpt from *Emerson's Life in Science* (Canvas)  
Neill Matheson, "Thoreau's *Gramatica Parda*: Conjugating Race and Nature" (613-631)
- 2/13** Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden* (1854): "Economy" (5-58), "Where I Lived..." (58-70), "Sounds" (78-90), and "The Bean Field" (107-115)  
Lawrence Buell, "Thoreau and the Natural Environment" (527-543)
- 2/20** Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" [Compare the 1855 version (27-89) to the 1891 version (188-247)], "To the Garden the World" (248), "Spontaneous Me" (260-262), "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life" (394-396), and "This Compost" (495-497)  
Stephanie Peebles Tavera, "Always Already Sexual: New Materialism in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*" (Canvas)
- 2/27** Emily Dickinson, *Poems*: Fr. 31, Fr. 117, Fr. 202, Fr. 359, Fr. 522, Fr. 721, Fr. 1199, Fr. 1297, and Fr. 1433 (and corresponding letter to Susan, provided in scan via Canvas)  
Paul Giles, "The Earth Reversed Her Hemispheres" (Canvas)  
**\*\*Assign Moby Dick Exploratory Paper**
- 3/5** Poe, "The Black Cat," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "Hop-Frog," and "The Raven" (<http://www.eapoe.org/works/harrison/jah07p43.htm>)  
Michael Ziser, "Animal Mirrors: Poe, Lacan, von Uexkull, and Audubon in the Zoosemiosphere" [ZOOM CLASS for 1.5-hours]  
**Individual Zoom Conference: Brainstorm ideas for final research paper.**
- 3/12 Spring Break!**
- 3/19** Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (1851) [NO CLASS MEETING]  
Philip Armstrong, "'Leviathan is a Skein of Networks': Translations of Nature and Culture in *Moby-Dick*" (Canvas)  
**Online Assignment:** Post a summary of and response to Armstrong's article. Offer one comment and one question to two different classmates.
- 3/26** Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (1851) [NO CLASS MEETING]  
**Online Assignment:** Find an article on one's own. Write a summary and response of the article; post to Canvas. Offer one comment and one question to two different classmates.
- 4/2** Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (1851)  
**Due Date: MD Adaptation Exploratory Paper**  
**\*\*Assign Research Proposal and Seminar Paper**
- 4/9** Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) [NO CLASS MEETING]

**Online Assignment:** Choose favorite short story from Jewett. Write a reflection on the themes in the text and post to Canvas. Offer one comment and one question to two different classmates.

**Due Date: Research Paper Proposal**

- 4/16** Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories* (1900+)  
Nancy Bentley, "Clannishness: Jewett, Zitkala-Sa, and the Secularization of Kinship" (Canvas)  
**\*\*\*Deadline:** Exploratory Papers #1, #2, and #3 should be submitted on or before this date; papers due the week we discuss the text that is the subject of the paper.
- 4/23** Prep for Final Research Paper [**NO CLASS MEETING**]  
**Individual Zoom Conference:** Discuss status of final paper.
- 4/30** **Presentations.**  
**\*\*\*Final Seminar Paper due Wednesday, April 30 by 11:59 pm**

**Participation Policy and Attendance.** Your active, informed participation is crucial to the success of the course and your individual success in this class. Carefully prepare for each class by reading in a rigorous, inquisitive manner—even if you are productively baffled. Every day you come to class, you should have something valuable to say and you should be prepared to participate in any activities I assign. All students are permitted two absences—excused or unexcused—during the semester. However, I do request advance communication from students alerting me to your absence. If you acquire more than two absences, I will lower your course grade by one letter. If you miss more than three absences, you will fail the course.

**Grade Distribution.** Final grades for this course are A, B, C, D, and F. Final grades will be calculated as follows: A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=59%-and below. Your final grade for this course will consist of the following:

Exploratory papers (four; 10% each):	40%
Teaching Demonstration	5%
Teaching Statement	5%
Teaching Demo Reflection	5%
Discussion Board Conversations	10%
Research Proposal	5%
Seminar Research Paper	25%
Abstract Presentation	5%

## INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Posting of Grades.** All grades for both major and minor assignments will be posted in the Gradebook on Canvas. I generally grade minor writing assignments within one week of submission date and major writing assignments within two weeks of submission date. Please do not contact me asking about your grade for an assignment until these personal grading deadlines have expired.

**Discussion Board Posts.** The prompt for each of three discussion board posts is provided in detail in Canvas. Please answer the prompt as fully and completely as possible to earn full credit for the assignment. The content of *all* posts should be related to the week's reading and should seek to use correct grammar, sentence structure, and mechanics. Although they are more informal, even minor assignments like discussion board posts are writing assignments and should be treated as such.

**Incompletes.** Students who are struggling to complete the course due to extenuating circumstances may qualify for a grade of incomplete. However, per departmental policy, a grade of incomplete may

only be awarded (1) if the course drop date has already passed and (2) the student can provide documented evidence of extenuating circumstances such as an unplanned and unexpected medical condition or health emergency, etc. Please be advised that students awarded an incomplete must submit all unfinished work prior to the end of the next long semester in order to receive a grade for the course.

**Plagiarism and Paper Reuse Policy.** Please note that plagiarism is a serious offense and will be punished to the full extent. In my course, you are not allowed, under any circumstances, to reuse papers from prior classes in this course or any other course that you have taken at any institution. Reusing papers does not demonstrate any advance in knowledge or skill, and so would not be helpful for you either in terms of your learning this semester, or for me in terms of assessing this learning. If you feel your situation constitutes a clear or significant exception to this rule, you must discuss this with me prior to the due date. Otherwise, paper reuse will be reported as a collusion offense and will also be punished to the full extent per university policy. Similarly, students who plagiarize on an assignment will receive a zero for the assignment for the first offense and be reported to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) for remedial instruction on avoiding plagiarism. A second plagiarism offense may result in failure of the course.

**Turning in Assignments to Canvas.** All major writing projects will be submitted to Canvas. *I will not accept any assignments via e-mail or paper unless accommodation arrangements were made in conversation with me prior to the assignment deadline.* All assignments submitted to Canvas must be saved as a .doc, .docx, or .pdf file to ensure that I am able to open them on my computer (please no Google docs). It is your responsibility to ensure that all of your work is saved in this way and submitted in the correct format. If you submit work in the wrong format, then you may receive a zero for the assignment.

**Late Submissions.** Students who contact me *in advance for an extension* and provide legitimate rationale detailing extenuating circumstances may be granted an extension within a reasonable and negotiated deadline. ***Do not make the assumption that I will grant you an extension—contact me first!*** For those who do not contact me in advance, and simply fail to submit or submit late: I will accept late submissions *for major writing projects only* (e.g. NOT homework, classwork, or discussion board posts) with a deduction of 10 points for each day that the submission is late.

**Student-Instructor Interaction.** The best way to contact me is via email, as I check it regularly both on- and off-campus. Do allow for a 24- to 48-hour turn-around time for emails as I do not sit at my email all day, rather I check it during specific times once or twice per day. If your situation is an emergency, I advise contacting the Chair of the Humanities Department, Dr. Allen Redmon: [allen.redmon@tamuct.edu](mailto:allen.redmon@tamuct.edu) or (254) 519-5750.

**Technology Requirements.** This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system (aka Canvas). OIT strongly recommends the latest version of Chrome or Firefox browsers. Canvas no longer supports any version of Internet Explorer. Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in myCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal. Username: Your MyCT email address. Password: Your MyCT password (same password as used for MyCT email and MyCT Warrior Web).

**Canvas Support.** Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select “Chat with Canvas Support,” submit a support request through “Report a Problem,” or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953. For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

**Other Technology Support.** For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Email: [helpdesk@tamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu.edu) Phone: (254) 519-5466 [Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [http://hdc.tamu.edu]

**WARRIOR SHIELD: Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University-Central Texas.**

Warrior Shield is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in Warrior Shield through their myCT email account. Connect to Warrior Shield by [911Cellular](https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Account/Login) [https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Account/Login] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in Warrior Shield, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

**UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

**Drop Policy.** If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a [Drop Request Form](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf): [https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop\_Request\_Form.pdf].

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits. *Please note: Oftentimes, students feel the need to drop a course because they are overwhelmed by personal or professional responsibilities. As your instructor, I humbly request that you make an appointment or drop by during office hours to speak with me about your concerns before dropping my course.*

**Academic Integrity.** Texas A&M University-Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

For more [information regarding the Student Conduct process](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html), [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html]. If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may [submit a report](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0), [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout\_id=0].

**Academic Accommodations.** At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Office of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717) Canvas page (log-in required) [https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717]

**Important information for Pregnant and/or Parenting Students.** Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit [Student Affairs](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html) [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf) online, please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.

**A Note about Sexual Violence at A&M-Central Texas.** Sexual violence is a serious safety, social justice, and public health issue. The university offers support for anyone struggling with these issues. University faculty are *mandated reporters*, so if someone discloses that they were sexually assaulted (or a victim of Domestic/Dating Violence or Stalking) while a student at TAMUCT, faculty members are required to inform the Title IX Office. If you want to discuss any of these issues confidentially, you can do so through Student Counseling (254-501-5955) located on the second floor of Warrior Hall (207L).

Sexual violence can occur on our campus because predators often feel emboldened, and victims often feel silenced or shamed. It is incumbent on ALL of us to find ways to actively create environments that tell predators we don't agree with their behaviors and tell survivors we will support them. Your actions matter. Don't be a bystander; be an agent of change. For additional information on campus policy and resources visit the [Title IX webpage](https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php) [https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php].

**Campus Carry.** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <https://www.tamuct.edu/police/campus-carry.html>. Per university policy, concealed handguns should not be visible during class and are prohibited in the A&M-Central Texas Counseling Center, including the co-located Community Counseling and Family Therapy Center.

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

**Tutoring.** Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. Subjects tutored on campus include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111. Tutor.com tutoring **will not offer writing support** beginning August 1, 2019, but will continue to offer other tutoring support. If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or have any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at (254) 519-5796, or by emailing Dr. DeEadra Albert-Green at [deeadra.albertgreen@tamuct.edu](mailto:deeadra.albertgreen@tamuct.edu).

**University Writing Center.** Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (TAMUCT) is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. This semester, the UWC is also offering online only hours from 12:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!

Students may arrange a one-to-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WCOOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu) if you have any questions about the UWC and/or need any assistance with scheduling.

**University Library.** The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 85,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](http://tamuct.libguides.com/index) [http://tamuct.libguides.com/index].

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