

Professor Stephanie LeMenager  
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Office hours: Th 1-4

## ENG 607. The Cultures of Climate Change

**Goals of Course:** This course takes global anthropogenic climate change as a case study through which to explore the interdisciplinary axes of the environmental humanities. The course examines the cultures of climate change from the perspective of academic humanists and artist-activists. We'll also delve into philosophical conversation about the so-called new geological epoch of the Anthropocene and the end of humanism in theory and biological fact. To complement our critical reading, we'll explore the recently named genre of "cli-fi" or climate fiction (Nathaniel Rich, Daniel Krumb) and consider what Krumb describes as the infinitely more climate-active poetry scene (The ADRIFT project). We will foray into the methods of documentary literatures and film, drawing theoretical insight from primary texts including John Hinklenton's graphic novel *100 Months* (2012), the film *Sun Come Up* (dir. Jennifer Redfearn, 2010), Marko Peljhan's new media project "arcticperspectives," and the videography of First Nations scholar/environmental justice activist Warren Cariou. Guiding course concerns include bridge-building between the "two cultures" of the sciences and the humanities, the value and effect of traditional and new media genres, and establishing a working definition of the environmental humanities as an academic field and public intellectual practice.

### **Texts:**

Ian McEwan, *Solar* (2010)  
Nathaniel Rich, *Odds Against Tomorrow* (2013)  
Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003)  
*Sun Come Up* (dir. Jennifer Redfearn, 2011)  
*Land of Oil and Water* (dir. Warren Cariou, 2009)  
John Hicklenton, *100 Months* (2012)

### **Assignments:**

**Regular Participation (15%).** Regular participation includes consistent attendance and substantive commentary on course materials. Every week students who wish to be considered for an "A" grade for participation should come in with a list of three conceptual questions and three passages or scenes for discussion, from readings or media texts.

**Seminar Leadership (15%).** Students will organize in small teams and choose one-two reading or media texts to present to the class. Presentation will include explaining the central ideas or themes of the text, its format and stylistic particularities, and its contexts of production. Student team presentation should take approximately one-half hour. Only one such presentation will occur each week.

**Conference (25%).** On Week 5 of the course, we will stage a mock conference, with students presenting from 5-page papers to be turned in at the end of class. PowerPoint or other visual materials may be used for the presentation but are not part of the page count. Each paper should include a short bibliography of two secondary (critical, philosophical) texts *not* assigned for class and focus on course materials as primary texts for explication and analysis.

**Paper Abstract and Bibliography for Final Session (10%).** In Week 10, we'll conduct a brainstorming session in which students bring one-page abstracts (single-spaced) of their final papers. The abstract should include a bibliography of five texts not assigned in the course.

**Seminar Paper of 10-12 pages (35%).** The final paper can be on a topic of your choice, so long as it draws heavily on course materials and themes. It should have a bibliography of approximately ten items, five of which should be from outside course assignments. The paper can be an elaboration and extension of your conference paper from Week 5. Final papers due to Prof, via email, by March 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Accessible Education**

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon and request that the Accessible Education Center send a letter explaining what accommodations may be helpful to you in this course.

### **Inclement Weather**

If inclement weather makes traveling to campus difficult, I will notify you by email and/or voice mail about whether we are holding class. If the weather is bad, check your email for a message from me. Whether or not I decide to hold class, you should use your own judgment about the safety of traveling to campus.

### **Reading Schedule:**

#### **Week 1**

1/7 *Narrative Challenges: Scale, Doubt, Denial*

**Readings:** Interview with Bruce Caron for *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* (2013); Naomi Klein, "Capitalism v. the Climate" (2011); Jonathan Franzen, "My Bird Problem" (2005).

**Media Texts:** [www.lightblueline.org](http://www.lightblueline.org), Eve Mosher, "High Water Line," *The Canary Project*

#### **Week 2**

1/14 *Genres: What Can the Novel Do?*

**Readings:** Terry Eagleton, "What is a Novel?", M.M. Bakhtin, excerpts from *The Dialogic Imagination*; Daniel Krumb, BooksBlog entry for *The UK Guardian*, "Climate Change Fiction Melts Away Just When You Need It" (2012)

**Media Texts:** Ian McEwan, *Solar* (2010), The Adrift Project

### **Week 3**

1/21 *Fiction, Speculation*

**Readings:** Ursula LeGuin, "Do It Yourself Cosmologies," Adam Roberts, "Defining Science Fiction," excerpts from *Speculate This!* By Uncertain Commons, def: "possible world."

**Media Texts:** Nathaniel Rich, *Odds Against Tomorrow* (2013)

### **Week 4**

1/28 *Philosophical Interlude I: Anthropocene Temporalities*

**Reading:** Paul J. Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind" (2002); Andrew Revkin, "Confronting the Anthropocene,"; Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses" (2009); Chakrabarty, "Brute Force" (2010); Slavoj Zizek response to Chakrabarty in *Living in the End Times* (2011)

**Media Texts:** Listen to discussion between Chakrabarty and Richard White at: [http://ehp.stanford.edu/seminar\\_recording\\_chakrabarty.htm](http://ehp.stanford.edu/seminar_recording_chakrabarty.htm)

### **Week 5**

2/4 **Class Conference**

### **Week 6**

2/11 *Witness, Document, Testimony*

**Readings:** Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003); Jacques Derrida, "Poetics and Politics of Witnessing" (2005)

**Media Texts:** *Sun Come Up* (dir. Jennifer Redfearn, 2011)

### **Week 7**

2/18 *New Media Toolkits for Progressive Change*

**Readings:** Interview with Ed Morris, "Battling Climate Change with Art and Activism"; Interview with Matt Coolidge for *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* (2013); Rita Raley, "Introduction" to *Tactical Media*.

**Media Texts:** Marko Peljhan, "arcticperspectives.org"

**Guest Lecture:** Marko Peljhan, U. of California

**Week 8**

*2/25 Indigenous Remediation*

**Readings:** Warren Cariou, "Tar Hands Manifesto"; Kyle Powis Whyte, "Justice Forward: Tribes, Adaptation, and Responsibility," *Climatic Change* (2013)

**Media Texts:** *Land of Oil and Water* (dir. Warren Cariou, 2009)

**Guest via Skype:** Warren Cariou, U. of Manitoba

**Week 9**

*3/4 Philosophical Interlude 2: Posthuman Ecologies*

**Reading:** Bruno Latour, "Compositionist Manifesto" and excerpts from *Reassembling the Social*; Stacy Alaimo, "The Naked Word: The Transcorporeal Ethics of the Protesting Body" (2010)

**Media Text:** John Hicklenton, *100 Months* (2012)

**Week 10**

*3/11 Grad Student Roundtable: Brainstorming with Abstracts*