

Climate Change Arts and Culture

LARTS 459, Spring 2017, T/Th 1:00-1:50, SB 317

Website: www.necmusic.neolms.com

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Course Overview

Welcome to “Climate Change Arts and Culture.” At least 97% of scientists agree that climate change is a real threat with human causes, yet only about half of Americans are aware of this agreement among experts. Meanwhile, U.S. mass media continue to give equal coverage to the opinion that climate change has no human causes, overstate scientific uncertainty, or outright deny anthropogenic climate change; popular debates on climate change, and what to do about it, persist. Clearly, we understand climate change through not only scientific analysis but also cultural discourse. This course explores climate change culture: How do emotions, psychological processes, and values shape perceptions of climate change? How have the media represented climate change? How do literary, visual, and musical artists depict climate change? What ethical problems and local and global inequalities arise as climates change? We’ll develop emotional, aesthetic, and analytical insights and consider (and potentially enact) possibilities for responding to climate change by examining scholarly studies, arts, literature, cultural communication, daily practices, political activism, culture jamming, and immersive climate scenario enactments. My primary goals are for you to become conversant in contemporary climate change culture, to articulate your views in conversation with the ideas you read, to develop cross-disciplinary skills of critical cultural analysis, and, if you wish, to act in response to climate change.

Required Texts and Materials

- Available at Collegiate Press: LARTS 459—“Climate Change Arts and Culture” Course Reader (Gatlin).
- Reliable access to a computer and printer to print readings, type and print assignments, consult college-level dictionaries, and check your NEC email and the course website daily.
- Approximately \$10-20 for photocopying library reserve readings and research throughout the semester.

Course Requirements

Daily Participation and Preparation (45% of final grade)

Since this class is a discussion seminar, much of the work is talking. Exploring the course materials in depth requires a diverse array of ideas from all of you. I recognize that talking in class can be difficult; we will vary our modes of discussion, and I encourage you to see me at any time to discuss participation strategies. The success of our seminar depends upon listening attentively, interacting with your peers, trying out ideas in all stages of development, helping each other build skills of interpretation, respecting one another’s ideas and perspectives, and being willing to reconsider ideas and perspectives in new critical frameworks. Our goal for class discussion will be to sustain a rigorous, engaging, and exploratory academic conversation.

Sometimes I will guide your preparation with specific discussion questions; other times, you’ll formulate your own discussion topics. Either way, you should always come to class with something to say about the materials. Frequent freewrites, discussion questions, quizzes, and other short, informal critical responses designed to help you engage with the materials will comprise a significant portion of your grade. **All out-of-class written work must be typed single-spaced in a standard 12-pt font with 1” margins, printed, and stapled with pages numbered (if > 1 p).**

Discussion-Leading Presentation (8% of final grade)

Collaborating with a small group of peers, you will develop discussion questions regarding assigned text(s), prepare a handout, and lead a day of class discussion. **See specific guidelines on p. 7 of the syllabus.**

Midterm Paper (20% of final grade; must be completed in order to pass the class)

You will write a formal paper (2-3 pages single-spaced) intended to deepen your engagement with the materials, allow you to explore topics of interest in more depth, and help you build critical analysis skills. This paper will require analyzing one of the literary, artistic, or multimedia works we examine or a recent news story, in conversation with scholarly course texts. I will provide specific guidelines.

Final Paper (27% of final grade; must be completed in order to pass the class)

Your final project will be either a longer (3-3.5-page single-spaced) analytical argument paper, or a creative project accompanied by an analytical rationale. Papers might include analyses contextualized by research or comparative analyses of two or more primary texts. Creative projects might include a photographic or filmic interpretation, multimedia illustration, musical composition, theatrical script, or dramatic performance based on ideas from course texts; a fictional, poetic, or creative non-fictional piece; a culture-jamming project; or a planned event. We'll brainstorm ideas as the semester progresses, and I will provide specific guidelines. You'll submit a proposal for approval and present your project or a summary of your paper during our finals session.

Course Schedule

Our calendar may change, depending on the rate at which we move through the materials. I post daily assignments on NEO: <www.necmusic.neolms.com>.

* = Group Discussion Leading Days

Wk	Day	Readings
1	T 1/17	Course Introduction
	Th 1/19	▪ Simpson, "In-Flight Entertainment" (6-21). (Short story)
2	T 1/24	What is Climate Change? ▪ <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i> . Dir. by Guggenheim, perf. by Al Gore. (Film) ▪ U.S. Global Change Research Program, <i>Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Science</i> (Skim 10-17); Pachauri and Meyer, eds. <i>Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report</i> . IPCC (27; skim 1-31); Center for International Climate and Environmental Research, <i>Global Weirding</i> . (Visualization of IPCC data).
	Th 1/26	Local Impacts ▪ Boston Harbor Now, "Sea Level Rise Maps"; Douglas, et al. <i>Preparing for the Rising Tide: Executive Summary</i> ; Spector and Leah, "Climate Ready Boston: Municipal Vulnerability to Climate Change."
3	T 1/31	Climate Beliefs, Values, Denial, and Inaction ▪ Norgaard, "Climate Denial: Emotion, Psychology, Culture, and Political Economy" (399-413).
	Th 2/2	Imagining Climate Change: Art, Music, Literature ▪ McKibben, "What the Warming World Needs Now is Art, Sweet Art"; Lippard, ed. <i>Weather Report: Art and Climate Change</i> (4-15). ▪ Eriksson and Gunve, <i>REGN/RAIN</i> . (Performance art) ▪ Kolbert, "Crossing the Line; Mosher, <i>High Water Line: Visualizing Climate Change</i> ; WBEZ 91.5, <i>After Water</i> . (Multimedia) ▪ Musical and multimedia examples from Tin, "The Drop That Contained the Sea"; Libby Larsen and others, <i>The Crossroads Project</i> ; Oakes and Sawe, "The Art of Turning Climate Change Science into Music"; <i>Landscape Music</i> Composers Network.
4	T 2/7	▪ Student Selections from Martin, <i>I'm with the Bears: Short Stories from a Damaged Planet</i> .
	Th 2/9	Workshop: Analyzing Art and Literature
5	T 2/14*	Climate Beliefs, Values, Denial, and Inaction ▪ Oreskes and Conway, <i>The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future</i> (1-18, 35-49; skim 19-33, 51-52).
	Th 2/16	▪ Hoffman, "Climate Science as Culture War"; Leiserowitz, et al. "Climate Change in the American Mind: Americans' Global Warming Beliefs and Attitudes in November, 2013." (Charts)
6	T 2/21	No Class—Presidents' Day Recess
	Th 2/23*	▪ Spahr, "Unnamed Dragonfly Species" (75-93). (Poem)
7	T 2/28	Cultural Perceptions and Media Representations of Scientific Knowledge ▪ Boykoff and Boykoff, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms: A Case-Study of US Mass-Media Coverage" (1190-1204); Black, "Media Attacked for Climate Porn."

	Th 3/2	Workshop: Rhetorical Appeals and Analyzing News Stories
8	T 3/7	Economies, Consumer Culture, Materialism; Loss and Living with Less <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Klein, <i>This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. the Climate</i> (86-95; optional 110-119). ▪ Balkin, Roloff, and Thornton, <i>A People's Archive of Sinking and Melting</i>. (Multimedia)
	Th 3/9*	Global Justice: Privilege, Violence, Voices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International Climate Justice Network, "Bali Principles of Climate Justice"; Nixon, <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i> (1-3, 8-9, 10-11); Klein, "Why #BlackLivesMatter Should Transform the Climate Debate"; Dayaneni and Nube, "How to Break the Climate Stalemate Between the Global South and the North." ▪ Quinn and Roche, "Syria's Climate Conflict." (Sequential art) Midterm Paper Due Friday 3/10
9	T 3/14*	▪ Miller, "What is Left to See?" 81-97. (Short story)
	Th 3/16	▪ <i>Sun Come Up</i> . Dir. by Redfearn. (Film)
--		Spring Vacation—No Class T 3/21 & Th 3/23
10	T 3/28	Humans, Animals, and Ice in the Arctic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lopez, <i>Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape</i> (34-35, 67-70, 107-115, 121, 124-126); Kennedy, "Threatened by Rising Seas, Alaska Village Decides to Relocate"; Watt-Cloutier, "The Inuit Right to Culture Based on Ice and Snow" (25-30). ▪ Goode, "Polar Bears' Path to Decline Runs Through Alaskan Village." (Multimedia journalism) ▪ Banerjee, <i>Arctic Voices: Resistance at the Tipping Point</i>.
	Th 3/30	Guest Artist: Resa Blatman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Smith, "Climate Change: Art and Ecology" (274-295). ▪ Einaudi, <i>Elegy for the Arctic</i>, 2016. (Piano composition/performance art)
11	T 4/4	NGOs, Activism, and Culture Jamming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demos, "Playful Protesters Use Art to Draw Attention to Inadequacy of Paris Climate Talks"; Bloch, "The Arts of Protest: Protest Ban Will Not Stop Creative Actions at COP21"; Fenton and Fauret, "How to Influence a Political 'Frenemy': Lessons from 350 Canada's Climate Welcome." (Multimedia) ▪ Morris, et al. "Bus Ads & Billboards"; Siegel and Morris, "Green Patriot Posters" (Culture jamming) ▪ Senders, <i>The Climate Message</i>. (Video/multimedia)
	Th 4/6	▪ Student-Selected Activist and Organization Profiles from <i>Handbook of the Climate Change Movement</i> ; Höppner and Whitmarsh, "Public Engagement in Climate Action: Policy and Public Expectations" (48-49, 58-60).
12	T 4/11	Workshop: Envisioning Action
	Th 4/13	Hope and Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Solnit, "The Case for Hope"; Kingsolver, "How to Be Hopeful" (452-457); Nelson, "To a Future Without Hope" (458-462).
13	T 4/18	▪ TBA/Student-Selected Readings
	Th 4/20	▪ Wolf, "Civic Engagement and Affect" (125-129). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final Project Development
14	T 4/25	▪ Student-Selected Readings
	Th 4/27	▪ Final Project Development
15	T 5/2	▪ Final Project Development
	Th 5/4	Final Project Due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final Project Presentations
Finals		M 5/8–W 5/10 (TBA): Final Project Presentations

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Nonfiction Books, Articles, and Reports

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