

CULS5222

## **Culture and Politics of Anthropocene**

**Instructor: Ka-ming Wu**

**Time: Monday 2: 30 to 5: 15pm**

**Venue: LDS 214**

**Teaching Assistant: Zowie Li Zhuoyue**

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### **Course Description:**

The idea of the Anthropocene – the geological Age of Man – has become widely adopted as a way of describing the entanglement of human activities and the natural world after its popularization by Paul Crutzen in 2000. In the age of the Anthropocene, challenges arising from global environmental change are numerous: extreme weather, land and water pollution, species extinction, toxic contamination, just to name a few. These challenges are now raising concerns both from scholars both in the natural science and from the humanities and the social sciences. This course works on a growing field of Environmental Humanities. We examine works of scholars from a wide variety of disciplines including history, literature, philosophy, cultural studies, religion studies, arts.

### **Course Questions:**

1. What are the current methodological and theoretical approaches of understanding the climate crisis in the humanities?
2. How can environmental history, science studies, poststructuralist cultural studies, and eco-feminism help us in the humanities help to contribute to the current climate debates and solutions?
3. What can we as transdisciplinary intercultural studies students contribute by using art, humanities and new media tools to innovatively tackle current environmental and social challenges?

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Acquire knowledge on major environmental events and struggles in the developed world and the Global South
- Comprehend the historical relationships between ecological crisis, colonialism, state developmentalism and corporate politics
- Evaluate the scientific debates of the Anthropocene using concepts such as slow violence and right activist
- Analyze the ways in which art and humanities can serve as interventions and potential solutions to ecological challenges
- Acquire the awareness and contextual understandings of the United States Sustainable Development Goals

**Text book: Rob Nixon**

### **Week 1 Introduction (Jan 8)**

- Haraway, Donna. 2016. Introduction. *Staying with Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Check out course padlet
- Introduce a piece on environmental event

### **Week 2 What is Anthropocene? (Jan 15)**

- Ellis, Erle C. 2018. *Anthropocene: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. A Great Acceleration.
- Robert S. Emmett and David E. Nye. 2017. Introduction. *The Emergence of the Environmental Humanities*.
- The Paris Agreement and the UNSDG
- Glasgow Climate Submit

### **Week 3 The Concept of Slow Violence (Jan 22)**

- Nixon, Rob. 2011. Introduction. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press. 1-45.
- Team making and research preparation (2-3 people in one team)

### **Week 4 Fossil Modernity and Environmental Injustice (Jan 29)**

- Nixon, Rob. 2011. Pipe Dreams, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Environmental Justice and Micro-minority Rights. 103-128
- Team meeting no. 1

### **Week 5 Tree Movements, Poverty and Democracy (Feb 5)**

- Nixon, Rob. 2011. Slow Violence, Gender, and the Environmentalism of the Poor.
- Team meeting no. 2

### **Week 6 Chinese New Year No Class (Feb 12)**

### **Week 7 Dams and Developmental Refugees (Feb 19)**

- Nixon. 2011. Unimagined Communities: Megadams, Monumental Modernity and Developmental Refugees. 150-175.
- [Team proposal presentation 1](#)

### **Week 8 Nuclear: Chernobyl and Anti-Nuclear Movement (Feb 26)**

- Nixon. 2011. Slow Violence, Neoliberalism and the Environmental Picaresque. 45-68.
- [Mid term quiz](#)
- Team meeting no. 3

**Week 9 Plastic and Us (March 4)**

- Stacy Alaimo. 2007. Plastic Chapter. Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in posthuman times.
- Liboiron, Max. “Redefining pollution and action: The matter of plastics.” *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 21, no. 1, 2016, pp. 87-110.
- Team preliminary report

**Week 10 The Sixth Extinction (March 11)**

- Kolbert, Elizabeth. 2014. *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*. Henry Holt and Co.
- Visual: Moral behaviour in animals | Frans de Waal
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcJxRqTs5nk>

**Week 11 Fieldtrip (March 18)**

**Week 12 Guest Lecture (Zoom) (March 25)**

**Week 13 Easter Holiday No Class (April 1)**

**Week 14 Student Presentation in Class (April 8)**

**Week 15 Student Presentation in Class (April 15)**

Assessment Component:	%	Due Date
Week 8 Mid-term Quiz	20%	Mar 1
Week 9 Team preliminary report	15%	Mar 8
<b>Final Project and presentation:</b> Your weekly tutorial meeting will be an exploration and team work of your final project. Start to explore online videos/television/documentary around the world on environmental events /innovative sustainability/waste reduction/marine preservation in different countries.  Think about how you can produce a short video that covers environmental events in the area/city/region/province where you are from. Think about ways of environmental storytelling and communication Write a small reflection next to the video in relation to what you read about Bruno Latour and Rob Nixon. Word limits: 2000 words.	35%	April 12/19

<p>The final two week of the course will be a showcase of your team work discussions and presentations. Physical attendance and face to face interaction are mandatory.</p>		
<p>Final Padlet submission one video (around 3 mins) + a short reflection article  Here is our Padlet page  <a href="https://padlet.com/cuhkmaics/wabh27b78m293izt">https://padlet.com/cuhkmaics/wabh27b78m293izt</a></p>	<p>30%</p>	<p>April 30</p>