ANTH 483: Climate Change and Culture

This seminar will explore what global warming has come to mean to us ideologically, philosophically, culturally, and emotionally. As Mike Hulme argues, climate change is currently more powerful as a mobilizing idea than a physical reality. Most citizens of the global north are yet to be physically harmed by climate change, yet it affects us nonetheless: we feel a pang of guilt when we fly, a sense of loss when watching an arctic nature documentary. Many find climate change threatening not to their physical security but to their ideological convictions: we fear a new religion of environmental guilt, an anti-consumerist Puritanism, a challenge to national sovereignty, or a vindication of scientific hegemony. Some of us find secret delight in global warming, regarding it as a rhetorical godsend—it functions as the ultimate proof of what we already believed about human hubris, Western greed, or failed capitalism. Still others hope climate change is not solved too quickly, as it attracts attention to previously overlooked causes: global social justice, the preservation of indigenous autonomy, the scaling back of human endeavor, deeper rootedness in our local communities, or (conversely) strengthened global solidarity.

Please note: The final class session is on TUESDAY (not Friday), April 16th, 10:05am-12:55pm.

Office hours
By appointment – please email me to set up a time.

Course requirements
- Close reading of all of the articles in the coursepack, and all of your classmates’ term papers (to be completed before the corresponding class session)
- Attendance
  - Exception will be made only for medical/psychiatric reasons, family emergencies, and the like. Please email me as far in advance as possible if you are unable to attend class. You will be required to make up your participation grade for that day by writing some comments on that day’s readings.
- Active participation in class discussions
  - Please come to class each week with at least one comment or question about each reading assignment, and one comment or question about the topic as a whole
- Occasional presentation of a reading to the class
- Term paper (due 11:59pm April 1st)
  - Please email the paper to all of the students in the class and myself so that we can read it before your presentation
  - This is a research paper on any topic related to climate change and culture – please email me or set up an appointment to discuss the topic
  - 3500-4500 words (approximately 14-17 double-spaced pages)
  - There is no minimum or maximum number of sources, but you should do enough research to write about the topic with many specific details and a minimum of redundancy
  - Any citation style is acceptable as long as it is clear and consistent
- Presentation of term paper to the class

Grading scheme
- 50% class participation
- 50% term paper
Course schedule

Week 1, Jan 11: Introduction; Why do we call climate change an ‘environmental’ issue?

Week 2, Jan 18: What would it mean for us if climate change ends nature?
Allison

Allison

Tracey

Week 3, Jan 25: Who if anyone should be blamed for climate change?

Lucy

Rudiak-Gould, Peter. Climate change mitigation and self-blame in the Marshall Islands.
Yasmin

Hughes, David. The Vulnerability Defense.
McKenzie

Week 4, Feb 1: Why are we not concerned about climate change?

Hannah C.

Hannah A-D

Hannah A-D
Week 5, Feb 8: Is climate change skepticism legitimate?


Odessa


Tesia

Julie Brugger. Why Americans Don’t Believe in Climate Change.

Veronica

Week 6, Feb 15: How can climate change be made visible?

Rudiak-Gould, Peter forthcoming. ‘We have seen it with our own eyes’: Why we disagree about climate change visibility. Weather, Climate & Society.

NOTE: This reading is not in your coursepack. I will email it to you a week before the class session in which we will discuss it.

Matthew


Carly


Matthew


Morganne

Week 7, Feb 22: What can indigenous people teach us about climate change?


Maythe


Lila


Charlotte
**Week 8, March 1: How can climate change best be communicated?**


Robin


Robin


Lindsay


Lindsay

**Week 9, Mar 8: NO CLASS (Reading week)**

**Week 10, Mar 15: Are there any acceptable solutions to climate change?**


Melanie


Anna


Veronica

**Week 11, Mar 22: NO CLASS (Instructor is out of the country)**
Week 12, Mar 29: NO CLASS (Good Friday)

Can climate change be an opportunity?
(Although we will not have a class meeting, please read the following articles and email the instructor an approximately 2-page [single-spaced] paper describing your reaction to the articles and how they relate to the idea of making climate change an opportunity)

   NOTE: This reading is not in the coursepack – it replaces the other Nuttall reading that is in the coursepack. The article you should read is available at www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/IA_1-2_08_Arctic.pdf


April 1st, 11:59pm – TERM PAPER DUE - please email the paper to myself and to all of the students in the class

Week 13, April 5: Student term paper presentations and discussion
   Robin
   Hannah A-D
   Hannah C
   Maythe
   Odessa
   Allison

Week 14, April 12: Student term paper presentations and discussion
   Matthew
   Charlotte
   Morganne
   Carly
   Yasmin
   Anna
   Tesia

Week 15, April 16 (TUESDAY): Student term paper presentations and discussion
   Veronica
   Tracey
   McKenzie
   Lucy
   Lindsay
   Melanie
Lila