

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF THEORY AND CRITICISM
COURSE OUTLINE
CSTC 9223B (CLIMATE CHANGE)

TERM:	Winter Term 2021
INSTRUCTOR	Dr. Michael E. Gardiner
OFFICE:	SSC 5424 (661-2111, ex. 85139; e-mail: megardin@uwo.ca)
CLASS TIME & LOCATION	Wed. 1:30-4:30 pm (online)
OFFICE HOURS:	Online by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as the global issue of the 21st-century. Although it presents a clear existential threat to human civilization, not to mention millions of non-human species, and indeed the very ecosystemic integrity of the planet itself, social theory has been slow to address the social characteristics and ramifications of climate change. In helping to redress this oversight, this course seeks to explore a series of interlocking topics, including: the roots of the present crisis in the consolidation of 'fossil capital' and the modern techno-scientific world-view; possible effects of global warming (rising sea-levels, habitat destruction, agricultural collapse, mass migration, war), and how they might be assessed and mitigated; questions of environmental ethics and the emergence of such activist movements as Extinction Rebellion; different ways of conceptualizing human/nature relations (indigenous, feminist, 'altermodern', etc.); cultural perceptions of climate change, including climate denialism and 'climate trauma'; the 'Anthropocene' vs. 'Capitalocene' debate; and approaches that connect climate breakdown to intensifying social inequalities and the rising danger of neo-fascism(s) (including 'eco-fascism'), such as arguments for transitioning to a post-carbon economy, prospects for a 'Green New Deal', and so on.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

This course is seminar-based, and hence reading and writing intensive. The required readings are intended to give students as broad a comprehension of the key debates and issues in each area of social theory as possible. Each student will be expected to give one oral presentation based on class readings (whenever possible on primary texts), and submit in written form a week after the presentation (2,000-2,500 words; 8-10 pages, double-spaced, 12-scale font), worth 20% of the final grade. Students will also be expected to write one term paper (20-25 pages, 5,000-6,000 words, double-spaced, 12-scale Times New Roman font), worth 45% of the total grade, which will be due 23rd April by 12 noon. Students are advised to develop a term paper outline by around mid-term and discuss it with the instructor. 15% is awarded for online class participation. (Students missing more than three online seminars run the risk of failing the course outright.) The final 20% is awarded to online forum postings. All papers submitted may be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). (The only acceptable excuses for missed deadlines will be for documented medical reasons or family bereavement/illness; late papers will otherwise be docked 5% per day.)

EVALUATION BREAKDOWN:

Participation (online):	15%
Online forum responses	20%
Oral presentation:	20%
Final paper:	45%
Total:	100%

REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. Synchronous virtual meetings (15% participation)

These being Covid times, seminars will be synchronous sessions via Zoom scheduled during the allotted time above. Sessions will be one and a half hours between 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm, with a short break around the middle. Each session will typically be organized around one oral presentation by a student (more on this below), followed by discussion. The goal is to try to overcome the limitations of the technology as much as possible and emulate a face-to-face seminar.

2. Asynchronous responses to readings (20%)

20% of the final grade will be allotted to written responses to *one* of the class discussion questions pertaining to the readings posted each week (2 marks each, ten per term), 200-250 words each post. Part marks may be given. Five should directly address questions posed by the instructor; five responding to other student posts. Such postings cannot involve questions or readings student base their oral presentation on (see below). All posts should be done in a respectful and scholarly manner.

3. Class presentation (20%)

Each student will be required to present orally on one of the readings assigned in a given week. This will be a critical précis that raises questions for class discussion. Prepare for a 15 minute presentation. The use of (very) short video clips or other materials is acceptable, but has to be approved by the Professor in advance. A week after the presentation, the student will submit a written version (2-2,500 words, double-spaced 12-scale font Times New Roman) of the talk for grading (20% of final grade).

4. Final Term Paper (45%)

The final term paper (5,000-6,000 words, 20-25 pages, double-spaced 12-scale font Times New Roman), worth 45% of the final grade, will be due 23rd April by 12 noon.

Reading List

Week 2 - Jan. 20 - What is the Anthropocene?

Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, 'Welcome to the Anthropocene', *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us*, London and New York: Verso, 2016, 3-18 (15 pgs.)

Todd Dufresne, 'World as Object or the Anthropocene Condition', *The Democracy of Suffering: Life on the Edge of Catastrophe, Philosophy in the Anthropocene*, 2019, 49-118 (69 pgs.).

David Wallace-Wells, 'Cascades', *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming*, New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2019, 3-36 (33 pgs.)

Week 3 - Jan. 27 - Anthropocene vs. Capitalocene

Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', *Critical Inquiry*, 35 (Winter), 2009, 97-122 (25 pgs.).

Nick Dyer-Witheford, 'Struggles in the Planet Factory: Class Composition and Global Warming', *Interrogating the Anthropocene: Ecology, Aesthetics, Pedagogy, and the Future in Question*, Jan Jagodzinski (ed.), London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 75-103 (24 pgs. + 4 pgs. refs.).

Donna Haraway, 'Staying with the Trouble: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene', *Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*, Jason W. Moore (ed.), Oakland: PM Press, 2016, 34-76 (26 pgs. + 16 pgs. refs.).

Daniel Hartley, 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and the Problem of Culture', *Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*, Jason W. Moore (ed.), Oakland: PM Press, 2016, 154-165 (11 pgs.).

Andreas Malm and Alf Hornborg, 'The Geology of Mankind? A Critique of the Anthropocene Narrative', *The Anthropocene Review*, 1(1), 2014, 62-69 (8 pgs.).

Week 4 – Feb. 3 – New Materialism(s), Eco-Marxism(s)

Bruno Latour, 'On the Instability of the (Notion of) Nature', *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017, 7-40 (33 pgs.).

Andreas Malm, 'On What Matter Does: Against New Materialism', *The Progress of This Storm: On Society and Nature in a Warming World*, London and New York: Verso, 2017, 78-118 (40 pgs.).

Jason W. Moore, 'Cheap Food and Bad Climate: From Surplus Value to Negative Value in the Capitalist World-Ecology', *Critical Historical Studies*, Spring, 2015, 1-43 (43 pgs.).

Week 5 – Feb. 10 - Climate trauma/catastrophism/pandemics

Nigel Clark, 'Volatile Worlds, Vulnerable Bodies: Confronting Abrupt Climate Change', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 27(2-3), 2010, 31-53 (22 pgs.).

Andreas Malm, "Corona and Climate", *Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency*, 2020, London and New York: Verso, 1-29.

E. Ann Kaplan, 'Prologue: Climate Trauma and Hurricane Sandy', *Climate Trauma: Foreseeing the Future in Dystopian Film and Fiction*, 2015, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, xiii-xix (7 pgs.).

Margaret Ronda, 'Mourning and Melancholia in the Anthropocene', *Post45*, 6, 2013, 1-7 (7 pgs.). (<https://post45.org/2013/06/mourning-and-melancholia-in-the-anthropocene/>)

Jussi Parikka, 'Planetary Memories: After Extinction, the Imagined Future', *After Extinction*, Richard Grusin (ed.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, 27-50 (18 pgs. + 5 pgs. refs.)

Roy Scranton, 'Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene', *Energy Humanities: An Anthology*, Imre Szeman and Dominic Boyer (eds.), Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2017, 384-388 (4 pgs.).

Nicole Seymour, 'The Queerness of Environmental Affect', *Affective Ecocriticism*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Kyle Bladow and Jennifer Ladino (eds.), 2018, 235-256 (21 pgs.).

Week 6 – Feb. 17 – Reading Break (no classes)

Week 7 – Feb. 24 - Ecomodernism, Geoengineering

Holly Jean Buck, 'Programming', *After Geoengineering: Climate Tragedy, Repair, and Restoration*, London: Verso, 2019, 211-239 (28 pgs.)

Matteo Pasquinelli, 'The Automaton of the Anthropocene: On Carbosilicon Machines and Cyberfossil Capital', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 116(2), 2017, 311-326 (11 pgs. + 4 pgs. refs.).

Jonathan Symons, 'Ecomodernism and its Critics', *Ecomodernism: Technology, Politics and the Climate Crisis*, Cambridge: Polity, 2019, 51-82 (31 pgs.).

Byron Williston, 'The Question Concerning Geo-Engineering', *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 21:2-3, 2017, 199-221 (22 pgs.).

Week 8 – Mar. 3 - Climate Denialism, Ecocapitalism, Ecofascism

Ashley Dawson, 'Biocapitalism and De-extinction', *After Extinction*, Richard Grusin (ed.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, 173-200 (22 pgs. + 5 pgs. refs.).

Riley E. Dunlap and Aaron M. McCright, 'Challenging Climate Change: The Denial Countermovement', *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*, Riley E. Dunlap and Robert J. Brulle (eds.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 300-32 (24 pgs. + 7 pgs. refs.).

Adrian Parr, 'Climate Capitalism', *The Wrath of Capital: Neoliberalism and Climate Change*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012, 8-21 (13 pgs. + 150-153 refs.).

Blair Taylor, 'Alt-Right Ecology: Ecofascism and Far-Right Environmentalism in the United States', *The Far Right and the Environment: Politics, Discourse and Communication*, Bernhard Forchtner (ed.), London and New York: Routledge, 2020, 275-292 (14 pgs. + 5 pgs. refs.).

Week 9 – Mar. 10 - Media, Infrastructure and Climate Change

James Bridle, 'Climate', *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future*, London: Verso, 2018, 47-76 (29 pgs. + 260-262 refs.).

Sean Cubit, 'Energy', *Finite Media: Environmental Implications of Digital Technologies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, 13-62 (49 pgs.)

Camilo Mora *et al.*, 'Bitcoin Emissions Alone Could Push Global Warming above 2°C', *Nature Climate Change*, 8(11), 2018, 931-933 (3 pgs.).

Week 10 – Mar. 17 - Degrowth, Green New Deal, Ecocommunism

Aaron Bastani, 'Limitless Power: Post-Scarcity', *Fully Automated Luxury Communism: A Manifesto*, London and New York: Verso, 2019, 94-116 (22 pgs.).

John Bellamy Foster, 'On Fire This Time', *Monthly Review*, 71(6), 2019, 1-17, (16 pgs. + 1 pg. refs.).

Boris Frankel, 'The Promise of Definancialisation and Degrowth', *Fictions of Sustainability: The Politics of Growth and Post-Capitalist Futures*, 2018, 179-230 (51 pgs.).

Robert Pollin, 'De-Growth vs. a Green New Deal', *New Left Review*, 112 (July/Aug), 2018, 5-25 (20 pgs.).

Week 11 – Mar. 24 – Alternative Knowledges I

Rosi Braidotti, 'Critical Posthuman Knowledges', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 116(1), 2017, 83-96. (10 pgs. + 3 pgs. refs.).

Nils Bubandt, 'Haunted Geologies: Spirits, Stones, and the Necropolitics of the Anthropocene', *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, Anna Tsing *et al.* (eds.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, 121-141 (16 pgs. + 4 pgs. refs.).

Nicole Seymour, "'I'm No Botanist, But...": Irony, Ecocinema, and the Problem of Expert Knowledge', *Bad Environmentalism: Irony and Irreverence in the Ecological Age*, Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press, 2018, 39-72; 243-246 (33 pgs. + 3 pgs. refs.).

Bernard Stiegler, 'What Is Called Caring? Beyond the Anthropocene', *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 21(2-3), 2017, 386-404 (12 pgs. + 6 pgs. refs.).

Timothy Morton, 'You Are Being Tuned', *Being Ecological*, London: Pelican Books, 2018, 119-126 (8 pgs.).

Week 12 – Mar. 31 - Alternative Knowledges II

Stacy Alaimo, 'Your Shell on Acid: Material Immersion, Anthropocene Dissolves', *Anthropocene Feminism*, Richard Grusin (ed.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, 89-120 (24 pgs. + 7 pgs. refs.).

David Chandler and Julian Reid, 'Introduction: Becoming Indigenous', *Becoming Indigenous: Governing Imaginaries in the Anthropocene*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, 1-22 (20 pgs + 2 pgs. refs.)

David Fancy, 'Geoartistry: Invoking the Postanthropocene via Other-Than-Human Art', *Interrogating the Anthropocene: Ecology, Aesthetics, Pedagogy, and the Future in Question*, Jan Jagodzinski (ed.), London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 117-136 (16 pgs. + 3 pgs. refs.).

Elizabeth A. Povinelli, 'The Ends of Humans: Anthropocene, Autonomism, Antagonism, and the Illusions of Our Epoch', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 116(2), 2017, 293-310 (33 pgs. + 3 pgs. refs.).

Kathryn Yusoff, 'Golden Spikes and Dubious Origins', *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, 232-64 (32 pgs).

Week 13 – Apr. 7 - Anthropocene Futures

Jessie Beier, 'Dispatch from the Future: Science Fictioning (in) the Anthropocene', *Interrogating the Anthropocene: Ecology, Aesthetics, Pedagogy, and the Future in Question*, Jan Jagodzinski (ed.), London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018, 359-400 (25 pgs + 16 pgs refs.).

Fritjof Capra and Hazel Henderson, 'Pandemics — Lessons Looking Back From 2050', March 2020 (<https://www.fritjofcapra.net/pandemics-lessons-looking-back-from-2050/>) (11 pgs.).

Lisa Garforth, 'No Future: Green Utopias between Apocalypse and Adaptation', *Green Utopias: Environmental Hope Before and After Nature*, 2018, 96-125 (29 pgs. + 169-170 notes).

Luc Semal, 'Anthropocene, Catastrophism and Green Political Theory', *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch*, Clive Hamilton, Christophe Bonneuil and François Gemenne (eds.), London: Routledge, 2015, 87-98 (12 pgs. + 2 pgs. refs.).

Jens-Christian Svenning, 'Future Megafaunas: A Historical Perspective on the Potential for a Wilder Anthropocene', *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, Anna Tsing et al. (eds.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, 67-86 (13 pgs. + 6 pgs. refs.).

IMPORTANT POLICIES

A Note on Plagiarism

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. See Scholastic Offences (below) for the link to Scholastic Discipline regulations.

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com: <http://www.turnitin.com>

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Accommodation

Only in exceptional circumstances may a student be provided special accommodation in the completion of a course requirement (i.e., exams, papers). To request a one-time accommodation (brief illness, family emergency), the student should inform the professor when they are able so accommodation can be made. To request other accommodation(s), the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to discuss options. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office.

Completion of Course Requirements

Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall-December 31; Winter-April 30, Summer-August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes

are outlined in the Graduate Handbook:

http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness Western for a complete list of options to obtain help: http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. The [Wellness Education Centre](#) (lower level UCC) assists students in finding mental health and other related resources best suited to their needs: <http://se.uwo.ca/wec.html> Western's School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' [Living Well](#) website provides tips for thriving at grad school and other helpful information: http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/living_well/index.html

Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in [Western's Campus Recreation Centre](#): <http://www.westernmustangs.ca/index.aspx?path=ims#> Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Also, we encourage you to check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>.

Standards of Professional Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all members of the Department of Sociology to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- respect for others both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- active engagement in learning and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- personal integrity (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Students should also be aware of the UWO Student Code of Conduct found at <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>