

Carleton University
Fall 2025 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

EACH 2000: Introduction to the Environmental and Climate Humanities

Prerequisites: Second-year Standing

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***** This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change. A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. *****

Course Description: This course will offer an introduction to the environmental and climate humanities. We will look at how climate change has been portrayed in a variety of the media, both fiction and non-fiction. Through these examinations, we can gain an appreciation for what stories get told, by whom, and for what purpose: a certain connections and relationships will be emphasized while others ignored; certain images in architects will be grounded, while others are minimized; particular topics will be broached, while others are left by the wayside; and some solutions will be put forward while others get downplay or ignored.

We will look at the links between reading, seeing, knowing, and acting to discover what role the humanities can play in responding to climate change. Through close reading and discussion, we will examine the effects of climate change on various subjects, as well as animals and the biosphere. Part of the goal of the class is to "stay with the trouble" with a community of others, in order to understand the problem together and to "imagine the world otherwise".

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester students in this course will be better able to:

- Understand the role of the humanities and social sciences in climate change studies
- Practice interdisciplinary research, writing, and thinking
- Offer clear, concise, and powerful communications in writing and speech and other media
- Contribute constructively to class discussion
- More acutely notice the changing world around them
- Critique the list above, the idea of learning outcomes in general, and their role in the neoliberal university
- Be able to provisionally articulate what the world *should* be like and how we might get there.

Texts:

Butler, Octavia et al. *Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation*. Abrams ComicArts, 2021. (~\$25)

Chambers, Becky. *A Psalm for the Wild Built*. Tordotcom, 2021. (~\$25)

Lerner, Ben. *10:04: A Novel*. Picador, USA, 2015. (~\$20)

Porritt, Jonathon. *The World We Made: Alex McKay's Story from 2050*. Phaidon, 2013. (~\$20)

Wong, Rita & Cindy Mochizuki. *perpetual*. Blewointment, 2015. (~\$20)

Texts will be available at the Carleton University Bookstore.

Evaluation:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Short Responses (2x10%)	20%
Observation Pieces (2x10%)	20%
Midterm Podcast	25%
Final Project	25%

Attendance: Students will be allowed three absences. Additional absences will impact the final grade. Absences and contributions to the class overall are taken into account when calculating the final participation grade. If you need to be absent from class due to unforeseen circumstances, email me *before* class to let me know you will not be attending and (in general) why. Try to get notes and materials from others to see what we've covered.

Short Responses: This is an exercise in focussed attentions assignment involves close reading of an article or story that we've looked at and responding to it, in the manner of a book review or critique. These can be either positive or negative, but should use evidence from the text to prove your points. There will be one response before the midterm break and one after. More details will be available on Brightspace.

Observation Pieces: This work involves observing a place in the world and is an exercise in focused attention. You are welcome to document the place through the use of photography, art, audio recordings, poetry, or other media. The goal is to experience a place fully, notice how time changes and focuses our perceptions, and attempt to get across the essence of a place to your reader. Again, one of these will occur before the midterm break, and one after.

Midterm Podcast: In small groups of 4-6 people, you will create a short podcast by asking questions of other members of your group. The recorded materials and your own individual transcript are submitted for the project; part of the grade is shared by the entire group whereas your own section is graded individually. This gives you an opportunity to articulate some of your views on climate change, politics, nature, and texts that we've looked at; at the same time, it gives you a chance to get to know your fellow classmates and where they are coming from in terms of their viewpoints, politics, and perspectives.

Final Project: The final project involves responding to some of the major works that we've looked at over the course of the semester. It is essentially designed so that people can draw together materials from one of our "elements" into a thesis-based paper or other thesis-based work (video, zine, website, or other media engagement). Regardless of format, the project should involve deep engagement with the material and be the equivalent of 6-8 pages of written text. MLA citation of sources is required.