

ENST 4000 – SEMINAR IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
THE POLITICS OF THE ANTHROPOCENE



“Airshow” by Fred Herzog, 1968 © Equinox Gallery.

“The conquest of the earth... is not a pretty thing when you look into it...” – Joseph Conrad, 1899

“But where the danger is, also grows the saving power.”- Friedrich Hölderlin, 1803

“The future is unwritten.” – Joe Strummer, 2007

**Instructor:** Dr. David Hugill, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, B448 Loeb Building,  
[david.hugill@carleton.ca](mailto:david.hugill@carleton.ca), 613-520-2600 ext. 8689

**Teaching Assistant:**

**Class Meetings:** Tuesdays, 8:35-11:25AM, SA 409

**Office Hours:** By appointment (Monday and Wednesday PMs preferred)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

What are the political, social, ethical and cultural implications of living in an age where human activity has become the dominant force shaping the planet's environments? Our aim this semester is to think critically about this question as we consider how societal institutions respond to environmental concerns, how various stakeholders understand environmental questions, and how environmental priorities are implemented in social, political and economic decision-making. To achieve this objective, we will take a deep analytical dive into the meaning and politics of "the Anthropocene."

ENST 4000 is an advanced seminar designed to give you an opportunity to build upon and apply the analytical skills and disciplinary expertise that you have acquired throughout the course of your university career.

You should expect the following from our work this semester:

- **Active Discussion:** This class is designed to be a discussion-based seminar. It is critical that you do the readings in advance and come to class prepared to discuss their contents. The success of this course hinges on active in-class engagement. The significant weight given to participation (25%) as a portion of the final grade is a reflection of this fact.
- **Challenging material:** The weekly readings (generally about 50-75 pages in length) are usually challenging. You should start reading at least a few days in advance of the seminar. Ideally, all readings should be consulted twice.
- **Timely feedback:** I will do my best to return all assignments within two weeks of submission.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop an in depth understanding of the idea of the Anthropocene, and its contested status
- To engage with cutting edge /contemporary research in the field of Environmental Studies
- To consider the political implications of human-driven environmental and climatic changes
- To build a classroom community of comradely exchange and develop professional communication skills

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Required texts are available online (via the Ares portal on our class cuLearn page) and/or at the MacOdrum Library reserve desk. I strongly recommend purchasing physical copies of two course texts, both of which are available under our course number (ENST 4000) at Haven Books (43 Seneca Street), phone: 613-730-9888, email: [havenbooks@cusaonline.ca](mailto:havenbooks@cusaonline.ca)

They are:

1. Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene* (Pelican Books, cheap version, **OR** Yale University Press, beautiful version).
2. Cormac McCarthy (2007), *The Road*, (Vintage).
3. Kathryn Yousoff (2018), "A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None" (University of Minnesota Press)

## COURSE CALENDAR

UNIT 1: What is the Anthropocene?	
<b>Week 1:</b> January 7, 2020 ** <i>Intellectual biography uploaded to cuLearn by noon on Friday January 10</i>	
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introductory discussion of course policies</li> <li>○ Assign Groups for weekly discussion handouts</li> </ul> <p>Required Readings (distributed in class, no advance reading required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer (2000), “The ‘Anthropocene’” in <i>The International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGPB: A Study of Global Change of the International Council for Science (ICSU) 41</i>, pp. 17-18.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2:</b> January 14, 2020 ** <i>Sample handout provided by instructor</i>	
Defining the Anthropocene	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), “The Meaning of the Anthropocene” in <i>The Human Planet</i>, pp. 1-17</li> <li>○ Jamie Lorimer (2017), “The Anthro-Scene: A Guide for the Perplexed,” <i>Social Studies of Science</i> 47(1), pp. 117-142.</li> <li>○ Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), “Defining the Anthropocene” in <i>The Human Planet</i>, pp. 295-327.</li> </ul>
Workshop (final hour)	<p>Asking Good Discussion Questions and Preparing an Effective Handout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kyla Wazana Tompkins (2016), “Some Notes on How to Ask a Good Question About Theory that Will Provoke Conversation and Further Discussion from your Colleagues,” <a href="https://bit.ly/2ChQoLv">https://bit.ly/2ChQoLv</a></li> </ul>
UNIT 2: The History of the Anthropocene	
<b>Week 3:</b> January 21, 2020 ** <i>Group 1 Handout</i>	
History of the Anthropocene 1	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), “Globalization 1.0, “The Modern World” in <i>The Human Planet</i>, pp. 149-187.</li> <li>○ Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz (2017), “Polemocene: Resisting the Deterioration of the Earth since 1750,” pp. 253-287.</li> </ul>
Workshop (final hour)	TBD
<b>Week 4:</b> January 27, 2020 ** <i>Group 2 Handout</i>	

History of the Anthropocene 2	<p>Required Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin (2018), “Globalization 2.0, The Great Acceleration” in <i>The Human Planet</i>, pp. 227-265.</li> <li>○ Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz (2017), “Thermocene: A Political History of CO<sub>2</sub>,” in <i>The Shock of the Anthropocene</i></li> </ul>
Workshop (final hour)	TBD
<p><b>Week 5:</b> February 3, 2020  <b>**Group 3 Handout</b></p>	
History of the Anthropocene 3	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ J.R. McNeil and Peter Engelke (2015), “Cold War and Environmental Culture,” in <i>The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene since 1945</i>, pp. 155-205.</li> <li>○ Murtaza Hussain (2019), “War on the World: Industrialized Militaries Are a Bigger Part of the Climate Emergency Than You Know,” <i>The Intercept</i>, <a href="https://theintercept.com/2019/09/15/climate-change-us-military-war/">https://theintercept.com/2019/09/15/climate-change-us-military-war/</a></li> </ul>
Workshop (final hour)	TBD
<p><b>Interlude 1</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 6:</b> February 10, 2020  <b>**Midterm Test**</b></p>	
Discussion and Film Screening	<p>No Required Readings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Midterm test (first hour)</li> <li>○ <i>Anthropocene: The Human Epoch</i> (2019); screened in class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reading Break - February 17-21</b>  {Consider reading <i>The Road</i> during the break}</p>	
<p><b>UNIT 3: Limits of the Anthropocene</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 7:</b> February 25, 2020  <b>**Group 4 Handout</b></p>	
The Limits of the Anthropocene I	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Eileen Crist, “On the Poverty of our Nomenclature,” in <i>Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism</i>, pp. 14-33.</li> <li>○ Donna J. Haraway, “Staying with the Trouble: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chtulucene,” in <i>Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism</i>, pp. 34-76.</li> </ul>

Workshop (final hour)	TBD
<b>Week 8:</b> March 3, 2019 <i>**Group 5 Handout</i>	
The Limits of the Anthropocene 2	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kathryn Yussof (2018), “Golden Spikes and Dubious Origins,” in <i>A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None</i>, pp. 23-65.</li> <li>○ Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz (2017), “Clio, the Earth and the Anthropologists,” in <i>The Shock of the Anthropocene</i>, pp. 47-64.</li> </ul>
Workshop	TBD
<b>Interlude 2</b>	
<b>Week 9:</b> March 10, 2020 <i>**Reflection Paper on The Road due on cuLearn by class time</i>	
The Road: Discussion and Film Screening	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cormac McCarthy (2007), <i>The Road</i> (2007) {full text}</li> <li>○ Geoff Mann, “Doom” in <i>Antipode: Keywords in Radical Geography</i> (4 pgs).</li> </ul> <p>Film</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>The Road</i> (2009); screened in class.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10:</b> March 17, 2020 <i>**Special guest Dr. Michael Simpson will join us for the final hour of class**</i> <i>**Group 6 Handout</i> <i>**Preliminary draft or outline of your Encyclopedia Entry Assignment emailed to david.hugill@carleton.ca by Friday March 20th</i>	
The Limits of the Anthropocene 3	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Michael Simpson (2018), “The Anthropocene as Colonial Discourse,” <i>Environment and Planning D: Society and Space</i>, 1-19.</li> <li>○ Zoe Todd (2015), “Indigenizing the Anthropocene,” in <i>Art in the Anthropocene</i>, pp. 241-255, available online at <a href="https://bit.ly/1Rgoili">https://bit.ly/1Rgoili</a></li> </ul>
Workshop (final hour)	TBD
<b>Interlude 3</b>	
<b>Week 11:</b> March 24, 2020 <i>**Group 7 Handout</i>	
The Road: Discussion and Play	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Michael Frayn (1998), <i>Copenhagen: A Play</i>.</li> </ul>

**MARCH 28 - OPTIONAL PUBLIC EVENT**

*National Art Center Discussion on Copenhagen: Points of View*  
 Saturday March 28, 2020 at 12:45 PM  
 Peter A. Herndorf Place, 1 Elgin Street  
 More information at: <https://nac-cna.ca/en/event/23782>

**Week 12:** March 30, 2019

**\*\*Group 8 Handout**

<p>What is to be Done?          Degrowth vs. Green          New Deal vs. Marshall          Plan 2.0</p>	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Robert Pollin (2018), “Degrowth vs. a Green New Deal,” <i>New Left Review</i> 112 (July/August), pp. 5-25.</li> <li>○ Max Ajl (2018), “Degrowth Considered,” <i>The Brooklyn Rail</i>, September 4<sup>th</sup>, available online at <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yaonqpsj">https://tinyurl.com/yaonqpsj</a></li> <li>○ Kate Arnoff with Kevin Anderson (2017), “Could a Marshall Plan for the Planet Tackle the Climate Crisis?,” <i>The Nation</i>, November 16, available online at <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y8lmwovt">https://tinyurl.com/y8lmwovt</a></li> <li>○ Roy Scranton, “Climate Change is Not World War,” <i>New York Times</i>, September 18, 2019, <a href="https://nyti.ms/2mtsCGM">https://nyti.ms/2mtsCGM</a></li> <li>○ Nicholas Beuret, “A Green New Deal Between Who and For What?,” <i>Viewpoint Magazine</i>, October 24, 2019.</li> </ul>
<p>Workshop (final hour)</p>	<p>Encyclopedia Entry Peer Review Exercise  <b>** Please bring your outline or draft to class**</b></p>
<p><b>Week 13:</b> April 7, 2019  <b>**Encyclopedia Entries due on cuLearn by end of class time (11:25 AM)</b></p>	
<p>Work Period          (Encyclopedia Entry          preparation)</p>	<p>No required readings.</p>

## EVALUATION

Assignment	Weight	Short Description
Participation	25%	Based on attendance, evidence of engagement with assigned readings, and active classroom participation.  <i>Participation is a significant portion of your mark because seminars only work if people show up and do the readings.</i>
Intellectual Biography	2.5%	A short introductory description of who you are and how you ended up here; must be submitted by noon on Friday January 10. <b>No late assignments will be accepted.</b>
Midterm	10%	Multiple choice test on readings from weeks 2,3,4, and 5 (February 10).
Group Handout	12.5%	Handout based on weekly readings (maximum 1 page); final version must be emailed to david.hugill@carleton.ca <b>before noon</b> on the Monday before your assigned week.
Discussion Questions, written response (x3)	15%	<b>Three</b> concise (150 words max, per question) written responses to the circulated discussion questions; your assignment must be submitted on cuLearn <b>before</b> class on any three of the following sessions: Week 2 (January 14), Week 3 (January 21), Week 4 (January 27), Week 5 (February 3), Week 7 (February 25), Week 8 (March 3), Week 10 (March 17), Week 12 (April 30).  <b>No late assignments will be accepted.</b>  If you miss a submission, you can make it up by submitting a 400-word reflection on the optional public event at the NAC on March 28 <sup>th</sup> (see above).
Reflection Paper	10%	A short reflection paper (1500 words) on Cormac McCarthy's <i>The Road</i> ; must be uploaded to cuLearn by class time on March 15.
Encyclopedia Entry	25%	A comprehensive encyclopedia-style entry on the word "Anthropocene" (1800-2500 words); due by class time on April 5 <sup>th</sup> .

Please note:

- Late assignments will be penalized by 3% per calendar day (to a maximum of 25% total); no assignments will be accepted after two weeks beyond the original deadline (unless an alternative arrangement has been made)
- All assignments must follow the style guidelines outlined in the Chicago Manual of Style (16<sup>th</sup> edition or later); citations can be formatted in either the “notes and bibliography” or “author-date” style, so long as one of these options is used consistently throughout the document; there is a quick Chicago-style citation guide available here: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)
- All assignments will be assessed on the overall quality of presentation, including citation format, spelling, grammar, coherence of argument, etc.
- Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Carleton University demands academic integrity from all its members. The Academic Integrity Policy (available at <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity>) governs the academic behaviour of students. Academic Integrity is defined as:

***“A commitment even in the face of adversity to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.” – Centre for Academic Integrity (1999)***

Academic dishonesty, in whatever form, is destructive to the values of the university, and risks harming the university’s reputation as place of learning and innovation. Furthermore, it is unfair and discouraging to those students who pursue their studies honestly.

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.”

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

### **Pregnancy**

#### *For exams*

Early in the term, identify your needs for exam accommodations to an Equity Advisor in Equity and Inclusive Communities and fill out an Exam Accommodation Form.

#### *For in-class accommodations ONLY*

If you anticipate you will only require in-class accommodations, discuss them directly with your course instructor. If your request is denied, contact Equity and Inclusive Communities for assistance.

For detailed information on pregnancy and parental leave policies please visit our website at: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student\\_guide.html](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.html)

### **Parental leave**

Either parent may request up to three terms of leave, which must be completed within 12 months of the date of birth or custody or request for leave for health-related family responsibilities. For detailed information on pregnancy and parental leave policies please visit our website at: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student\\_guide.html](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.html)

### **Students with religious obligations**

1. As soon as you receive your course syllabus, identify any potential conflicts between your religious obligations and course requirements.
2. Make a formal written request to your instructor indicating the nature of the religious obligation and suggest possible alternative dates and/or means of satisfying the academic requirements. NOTE: Such request should be made during the first two weeks of the term, or as soon as possible after a need for accommodation is known to exist, but in no case later than the second last week of classes for that term. Even if you are unclear as to the exact date of the obligation (e.g., when waiting for a moon sighting) you are still expected to notify your instructor of the potential conflict and explore accommodation options.
3. If your request for accommodation is denied you may contact Equity and Inclusive Communities and request assistance in an informal review of the decision For detailed information on Religious Obligations please visit our website at: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation).

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC,

meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.  
[carleton.ca/pmc](https://carleton.ca/pmc)

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit:  
<https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

<https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

### **Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities**

<https://carleton.ca/equity/contact/>