

Global Environmental History: How do we live in the Anthropocene?



Image by Levi Walter Yaggy, 1893. "Geological Chart." David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.

History & Environmental Studies 465
Spring 2023, 3 credit hours
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11-11:50, Science Hall 180
Thursday or Friday Discussion Sections

Prof. Elizabeth Hennessy
elizabeth.hennessy@wisc.edu

**Please put "GEH" in the subject line

Office Hours: Mondays, 3-3:30pm (Zoom); Tuesdays, 1-2:30 pm by appointment, 115E Science Hall; or by appointment (email me if these times don't work for you)

Sign up here: <https://calendly.com/elizabeth-hennessy/office-hours-15-minutes?month=2023-01>

TA: Nicolás Felipe Rueda
Office Hours: Fridays, 2-3pm; 175A Science Hall or via Zoom

Email: ruedarey@wisc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Scientists argue that we have entered the Anthropocene—a “human age” in which people have fundamentally reshaped the planet in ways that put the future of life in jeopardy. Climate change, ocean acidification, and species extinctions on a scale not experienced since the demise of the dinosaurs are just three of the problems scientists identify as central to this new geological epoch. This class approaches this social and environmental crisis using the framework of global environmental history. This means that we will seek to understand the Anthropocene by investigating how people living in different societies in different times and places have shaped, and been shaped by, their natural environments over the course of world history. How and when did the Anthropocene begin? And what do we do about it? How do we live in the Anthropocene today?

The class is structured around debates about when the Anthropocene began and what it should be called—would Capitalocene or Plantationocene be more appropriate terms? Why have scholars proposed those terms, and what is at stake in using them? Did the human age begin with the evolution of the human species? Is it a modern phenomenon that began with the discovery of the new world, advent of capitalism, or colonial histories of plantation agriculture? Or did this new era begin more recently: during the “Great Acceleration” of urbanization and development during the 20th century, or with the creation of atomic bombs? How can we judge which of these proposed dates is best? Our goal is to understand how and why relationships between people and their environments in each of these moments changed so significantly that they have left permanent marks on the planet. Each of these proposed timelines for dating the beginning of the Anthropocene holds a different explanation for what is causing the global environmental problems we now face, and thus also points to different solutions for how to address the crisis. To create a more sustainable future, we need to understand how and why we got into this global environmental crisis.

Through this class, students will learn about the social, political, and economic processes through which different societies have shaped, and been shaped by, the natural world. Students will gain an understanding of what is at stake in different proposed dates for the beginning of this new geological epoch. They will learn why historical debates about periodization matter for how we understand and live in the world today. Practically, students will gain skills for historical analysis, public communication, and writing for the web.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class students will be able to:

- Define “the Anthropocene” and evaluate different approaches for dating and naming this new “human age”
- Understand and analyze the intersections of multiple historical socio-natural processes—such as extraction, colonialism, racism, capitalism, agriculture, industrialization, and modernization—to explain the production of uneven development and environmental crises
- Document and analyze aspects of modern life that will be “modern fossils” in the distant future
- Explain the importance of historical analysis for understanding contemporary environmental problems

- Apply historical methods to analyze how a material object of their choice illustrates a particular interpretation of the Anthropocene
- Write effectively for public web audiences

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE STRUCTURE

Participation (lecture, reading responses & discussion activities)	15%
Modern Fossil Geology Museum Visit & Photo Essay	10%
Who is the anthropos? Essay	15%
Mid-Term Exam (In-class short answer and essay)	20%
End-Term Exam (In-class short answer and essay)	20%
Final project: Anthropocene in an Object Essay	20%

Participation (15%)

Participation grades will be based on attendance and active participation in class and section, which includes group discussions, reading responses, worksheets, and other activities.

Four times during the semester, each student will write a **300-word critical reflection on one of the week's readings** and post it to the weekly discussion board. These reflections should not summarize the article but should identify a major argument; the evidence used to support that argument; and then offer your thoughts analyzing the implications of that argument as it relates to other readings. **These are due Wednesdays by midnight.**

Active participation includes listening, speaking, sharing ideas with other students, and otherwise being engaged in what is going on in class. I encourage all students to come to both my office hours and Nicolás's and to chat with us after class – these are excellent ways to show us that you're engaged and interested in the course.

You will be responsible for grading your own participation. I want you to feel empowered about your participation grade, as we are aware that students have different participation styles. Keep track of your attendance, contributions to class discussions, responses, etc. At the end of the semester you will submit a self-assessment. As long as it squares with my assessment and Nicolás's then you'll receive the grade you submit.

This 3-credit course meets as a group for 3 hours per week. The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

Modern Fossils: Geology Museum Visit & Photo Essay (10%)

In the second week of the semester, students will complete a mini-project engaging with the geology of the modern world. This project involves two components: a visit to the [UW-Madison Geology Museum](#) and the selection of “modern fossils”—some parts of our contemporary environment that, ten thousand years from now, may become part of the geological strata that will form the bedrock of a future Madison.

Prompts will be posted on Canvas. Note that the museum is free and open Monday – Friday: 8:30am – 4:30pm; Saturday: 9 am – 1 pm).

Who is the anthropos of the Anthropocene? Essay (15%)

The second course assignment is a 500-word polished essay answering the question, “Who is the anthropos of the Anthropocene?” Who is part of the Anthropocene and what do they do that makes them so? Prompts will be posted on Canvas.

Anthropocene in 100 Objects Photo & Essay (20%)

Students will curate a public “Anthropocene in 100 Objects” website to showcase the diversity of interpretations of the Anthropocene. For this project, students will each select a different object to represent the Anthropocene—such as the atomic bomb—and write a 1,500 word historical essay explaining (a) how this object reflects human-environment relationships in a particular place and time and (b) why this object is illustrative of the Anthropocene. [While students will create content for the website, they will not be responsible for building the site.] See previous class’s website: <https://anthropoceneobjects.net>.

Exams

The mid-term and end-term exams will both be in-class blue book short-answer and essay exams. Unless you have received special accommodations through the McBurney Center, you must be present in class to take the exam. Make up exams will only be considered under extreme circumstances with proper documentation.

	Assignment	Submission Method	Due Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology Museum Visit	Go to museum/ Canvas	2/9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Modern Fossil Worksheet & Photos	Canvas	2/9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anthropos Essay Draft	Canvas & Hard Copy in Discussion	2/23
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anthropos Essay Final Draft	Canvas	3/2
	Mid-term Exam	In class	3/7
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anthropocene in Objects: Library Research Visit	In-person at Memorial Library	3/30-31
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anthropocene in Objects: Object Image & Pitch	Canvas & Hard Copy in Discussion	4/4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anthropocene in Objects Essay Draft	Canvas & Hard Copy in Discussion	4/27
	Final Exam	In class	5/4

□	Anthropocene in Objects Essay Final Draft & Image	Canvas	TBD Finals Week
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Grading Rubrics

A 93-100	B 83-87.5	C 70-77.5	F <59.5
AB 88-92.5	BC 78-82.5	D 60-69.5	

During the semester I will circulate rubrics outlining how we will grade each assignment. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be marked down five percentage points (on a 100-point scale) per day late. (I.e., if due in Thursday, and you turn it in Friday that is one day late; Saturday would be two days late, etc.)

Grading Policy: I am not a big fan of grades, for several reasons. One is that this is an interdisciplinary class and you're all coming to this class with different personal and educational histories, majors, familiarity with the content and necessary skillsets, as well as pandemic-life struggles. It's very difficult, if not impossible, to have one set of criteria that would be fair to everyone in these circumstances. Second, I am interested in what you are learning and what you think about the topics we'll study together. So that is what I want evidence of – not how much time you had to study for a quiz the night before. (If you want to read more about why many teachers are moving away from traditional grading, check out [“The Case Against Grades” by Alfie Kohn](#).) So I am going to offer two “re-dos” to help you earn the grade you want in this class. To be clear: there is no curve in this class; you're not competing against each other. I will be delighted if you all earn As because that shows me that you will have mastered the content and thought about it deeply.

Re-Dos

I want students to have some control over the grade they earn in this class, regardless of your skillset when you walk in the door on day one and the other challenges of life these days. If for any reason, you're not happy with the grade for an assignment (essay, test, whatever), you may have TWO “re-dos.” Let Nicolás and I know that you are re-do-ing the assignment via email and via the notes in Canvas and turn it in again to the original Canvas box. **These will be due within two weeks of when you receive your grade on a given assignment – don't wait until the end of the semester!**

PLEASE NOTE: If you plagiarize or use AI to complete the first take on the assignment, you forfeit your right to use a re-do on that assignment. (See below on academic integrity.)

Participation

You will grade your own participation in class and submit a self-assessment at the end of the semester with reflections on the various aspects of participation (class attendance, discussions, reading responses, notetaking, etc.) As long as my assessment and Nicolás's match yours, that is the participation grade you will receive.

Notetakers

Our second strategy for helping you learn in this class is communal notes. For each discussion section, I am going to ask that you sign up to take thorough notes during lecture once during the semester, to be saved in a Google doc to which your entire discussion section will have access. I expect we will face issues related to illness and attendance because of the ongoing pandemic. I want to be sure that anyone who misses part or all of a class has a way to access the content because I am not recording lectures. We'll create sign-up sheets and shared Google docs for these notes, one per discussion section.

Attendance

You may miss two classes without penalty. I recommend saving these “freebies” for family commitments, job interviews, and unforeseen sick days. If you need to miss more classes, PLEASE CONTACT ME or NICOLAS BEFORE the class you'll miss so we can work out how you can best catch up. Excessive absences will subtract from your participation grade and make it difficult for you to perform well in class. **If you miss more than two classes (lecture and discussion sections) without documented illness** or the like, you can earn back your participation by attending relevant talks on campus; watching a documentary; or reading news stories and posting a 300-word description to the relevant weekly discussion board.

HONORS ENROLLEES REQUIREMENTS

This course is Honors-Optional. Prof Hennessy is teaching a joint Honors and Grad discussion section, and all students who are taking the class for Honors should enroll (Thursdays, 1:20-2:10). All of the above information also applies to Honors students, with the following additions:

Honors students will be expected to **complete additional readings and four 1-page (~500-word; single-spaced) critical reflections on those readings, which are due Wednesday at midnight of the relevant week** (so that I can read them before section). This is INSTEAD of the four -300 word responses listed above. (You get to pick which weeks you want to do this – any week we have discussion sections is an option.) For these additional readings, you should pick one of (or about a 20-page part of) the extra “Grads” readings assigned for that week, or if there are no listed grad readings, one of the other readings for the week. These reflections are intended as a jumping-off point for our discussion sections.

Honors students are also expected to **complete a longer final Anthropocene in Objects essay of ~3,000 words based on original archival research** (more details about this later in the semester).

GRADUATE ENROLLEES REQUIREMENTS

Graduate students who wish to take this course for graduate credit must obtain the instructor's approval, attend lectures, and enroll in Prof Hennessy's Honors/Grad section (Thursdays, 1:20-2:10). Graduate students will be expected to **complete additional readings each week, and to write eight 1-page (single-spaced) critical reflections on the week's readings, which are due Wednesday at midnight** (so that I can read them before section). (You get to pick which weeks you want to do this.) In addition, **instead of the mid-term, final, and final Anthropocene in Objects research paper**, graduate students will **arrange individually with Professor Hennessy a final product that meets their current needs**. This could be an annotated bibliography, a research paper, a funding proposal (of ~10 pages). Whatever the final product, you will need to follow assignment deadlines to propose your end project and share drafts before the end of the semester.

Graduate Learning Objectives

In addition to learning objectives listed above, graduate students will also:

- Analyze current academic debates about the concept of the Anthropocene across interdisciplinary literatures
- Conduct original research and apply theoretical tools to inform an in-depth historiographical paper, research proposal, annotated bibliography or other final product based on original research and analysis of course readings

Graduate Grading Rubric

A	4	BC	2.5	D	1
AB	3.5	C	2	F	0
B	3				

Graduate Assignments & Grade Structure

Participation (lecture participation, contributions to class discussion board, quality of contribution to section discussion)	25%
Weekly Writing Responses (8)	20%
Individual Final Project	
Proposal	5%
Draft 1	10%
Draft 2	10%
Final	30%

Graduate Readings

Graduate students will also analyze additional readings to those assigned to undergraduates, outlined in the course plan.

COURSE POLICIES

TECHNOLOGY

You are all adults and I will treat you as such and expect you to be responsible for your own conduct in class. You may use your laptops to take notes, but you may not shop, watch videos, play games, use social media, or IM during class. I will not permit you to use cell phones in class in any way. If you do, I will take your phone for the remainder of the class period. See below in Academic Integrity on use of AI for assignments.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Anti-racist classroom – A brave space

I am committed to making the classroom as open and as safe a space as possible for everyone. Doing so will require you to respect each other's differences. This means not judging each other based on perceptions of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, immigration status, appearance, ease with English language, etc. I will not tolerate disrespectful or racist behavior, comments, or

microaggressions. I will make every effort to accommodate any physical, learning or other disabilities. If you are a McBurney student, please come see me after class or during my office hours to discuss accommodations.

We will discuss difficult topics in this class and I expect that each of you will have different levels of comfort and familiarity as we approach these topics. You should expect some discomfort, especially if you have not previously given much thought to how whiteness works. That said, my goal is to build with you a class experience that leaves you all feeling respected and valued. To make the classroom as equitable and welcoming as possible, we'll spend some time establishing and refining community ground rules. I cannot promise a space that is free of microaggressions or assertions of white supremacy, but I will do my best to try, and to address problems as they arise. It is OK to make mistakes; expect to be called-in so that mistakes can become opportunities for learning.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, PLAGIARISM, and AI

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

Plagiarism amounts to turning in work or participating in class activities based on work that is not your own. It is a serious offense and grounds for failing an assignment (or worse) in my classroom. You must give attribution in your written work both when you directly quote someone else's words and when you use their ideas. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism is and to avoid it. For more information, consult the UW-Madison Writing Center:

<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>

If you would like further guidance, just ask.

You are not permitted to use AI services, such as ChatGPT, to complete assignments. I will consider this cheating and grounds for failing an assignment. Among the most important goals of this class is to teach you to think, analyze sources, and write convincingly about them. These are invaluable skills that will serve you no matter what your major or what you want to do with your life. They will also enable you to identify the quality of AI products – when they can be useful and when, as we say, they “go off the rails” and don't make sense. But to make those judgements you need to know how to do the analyses on your own first.

OPEN-DOOR

My office doors are always open to you as students and as people should you need to discuss anything broadly related to your ability to succeed in school, whatever it may be.

I also want you to know that, like most faculty, I am obligated to report all incidents of sexual assault reported to me to the university. I want to help in a way that would be helpful and comfortable to you, but please bear this in mind as you gauge who you chose to speak with and how

much you tell us. Other options include: [Campus resources for victims](#). [Confidential reporting options](#).

Office Hours: You are my only class this semester, so my office hours are meant for you. Please [sign up at the link here](#) (also in Canvas). You don't need to write to me before you sign up, unless there is something you'd like me to read or consider before we talk. We can do in-person or Zoom. If in person, I expect visitors to my office to wear a mask. Most meetings can be 15 minutes, but if you'd like to chat longer or would like me to read more than 1 page of writing, then sign up for 2 sessions in a row.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION DUE TO COVID-19

Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to me as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with me concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course. I will work with you to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

Credit Standard

This is a 3-credit class. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor:student meeting times (2 hours per week for 15 weeks), as well as reading, writing, and peer-review work as described in the syllabus (below).

Sexual Assault Resources

There is an epidemic of sexual assault on college campuses and the UW is, sadly, no exception. If you or someone you know is the victim of assault, the university provides a number of helpful resources, including medical and psychological care as well as the option of confidential reporting. More information is available here: <http://uhs.wisc.edu/assault/sa-resources.shtml>

WEEKLY COURSE PLAN

Readings and assignments listed here are subject to change. Changes will be discussed in class and updated on Canvas. It is your responsibility to keep up with changes and regularly consult the class web space.

Week 1

January 24 – Introduction: Defining the Anthropocene

Reading

- (in class) Paul Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind" *Nature*, Vol. 415, 3 January 2002, p. 23.

January 26 – Defining the Anthropocene

- Lewis, Simon L. and Maslin, Mark A.. "Chapter 1: The Meaning of the Anthropocene," in *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018, pp. 1-16.
- Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin, "Defining the Anthropocene," *Nature*, 12 March 2015, Vol. 519, pp. 171-180.
- David Biello, "Did the Anthropocene Begin in 1950 or 50,000 Years Ago?" *Scientific American* April 2, 2015
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/did-the-anthropocene-begin-in-1950-or-50-000-years-ago/>

No sections this week!

Week 2

January 31 - How do we understand the Anthropocene?

- Christophe Bonneuil, "The geological turn: narratives of the Anthropocene," *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis*, New York: Routledge, 2015, pp. 17-31
- Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Anthropocene and the Convergence of Histories," *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis*, New York: Routledge, 2015, pp. 44-56

Grads:

- Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses" *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Winter 2009)
- Christophe Bonneuil and John-Baptiste Fressoz, "Thinking with Gaia: Towards Environmental Humanities," in *The Shock of the Anthropocene*, Verso, 2016
- Gregg Mitman, "Hubris or Humility? Genealogies of the Anthropocene," *Future Remains* (9 pages)

February 2 – Geology of the Human Age

Readings:

- McKenzie Prillaman, "Geologists Seek to Define the Anthropocene," *Nature*, Vol 613. January 5, 2023. Pp. 14-15.
- Jan Zalasiewicz, Peter K. Haff, Matt Edgeworth, Juliana Ivar do Sul, Daniel Richter, "The Technofossil Record: Where Archaeology and Paleontology Meet," *The Anthropocene Curriculum*,

Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2022.

<https://www.anthropocene-curriculum.org/contribution/the-technofossil-record-where-archaeology-and-paleontology-meet>

- Elizabeth Kolbert, “The Lost World (part two),” *New Yorker*, 23 Dec. 2013 (21 pages)

Assigned: Geology Museum Visit & Modern Fossils Essay

Discussion Sections: Introductions, review so far

Week 3

February 7 – Geology, Race, Colonialism

- Kathryn Yusoff, “The Fabulations of Beginnings; Who and What Gets Marked in Anthropocene Origin Stories,” in “Golden Spikes and Dubious Origins,” *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, pp. 23-29
- Monarrez, Pedro M., Joshua B. Zimmt, Annaka M. Clement, William Gearty, John J. Jacisin, Kelsey M. Jenkins, Kristopher M. Kusnerik, et al. 2022. “Our Past Creates Our Present: a Brief Overview of Racism and Colonialism in Western Paleontology.” *Paleobiology* 48 (2). Cambridge University Press: 173–85. doi:10.1017/pab.2021.28. (13 pages)

Grads:

- Kathryn Yusoff, “Preface,” and “Geology, Race, and Matter,” *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, pp. xi-xiv; 1-22.

February 9: Who is the Anthropos of the Anthropocene? Part I: Early Anthropocene & Species Thinking

Readings:

- William Ruddiman, “Geographic evidence of the early anthropogenic hypothesis,” *Anthropocene* 20 (2017) 4–14 (Skim)
- Rob Nixon, “The Anthropocene: Promise and Pitfalls of an Epochal Idea,” *Edge Effects*, Nov 6, 2014, <http://edgeeffects.net/anthropocene-promise-and-pitfalls/>
- Malm and Hornborg, “Geology of Mankind? Critique of species thinking.” *The Anthropocene Review*. 2014, Vol. 1(1), pp. 62-69.

Discussion sections:

Due: Modern Fossil Photo Essay

Week 4

February 14 -- Who is the Anthropos? Part II: A Racialized Anthropocene

Readings:

- Laura Pulido, “Racism and the Anthropocene,” *Future Remains*
- Kathryn Yusoff, “Earth Archives, Geological Subjects, and the Race of Strata” and “Geologizing the Social,” *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, pp. xi-xiv; 49-64

Assigned: Who is the anthropos? Essay

February 16 – The Encounter

Readings:

- Charles Mann, 1491 Précis. *The Atlantic*, March 2002.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/302445/>
- Kathryn Yusoff, “1610,” *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, pp. xi-xiv; 29-33
- In class/section: Charles Mann, 1493, Excerpts

Week 5

February 21 – Early Atlantic Worlds

- Kathryn Yusoff, “Black Metamorphosis [1452],” *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, pp. xi-xiv; 33-39
- León García Garagarza, The Year the People Turned into Cattle: The End of the World in New Spain, 1558, in *Centering Animals in Latin American History*, [Martha Few](#), [Zeb Tortorici](#), eds., Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013, pp. 31- 61

February 23 – The Capitalocene

Readings:

- Raj Patel and Jason Moore, Introduction, *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*
- Arun Saldanha, “A date with destiny: Racial Capitalism and the beginnings of the Anthropocene,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2020 Vol 38(1), pp.12-34.

Grads:

Jason Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*

Discussion sections

Due: Draft essay: Who is the anthropos? Print hard copy to peer review

Week 6

February 28 – The Grounds of the Capitalocene

Reading:

- Patel and Moore, “Cheap Nature,” *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*
- Karl Polanyi, The Self-Regulating Market and the Fictitious Commodities, *The Great Transformation*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 [1944], pp. 71-80 (Go to the end of the PDF. The

previous three chapters are optional.)

Grads:

- Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 [1944] (I recommend you do read the foreword by Joseph Stiglitz.) Most important chapters: Evolution of the Market Pattern; The Self-Regulating Market; Speenhamlandm 1795; Market and Man; Market and Nature.

March 2 – The Plantationocene

Readings:

- Sophie Sapp Moore, Monique Allewaert, Pablo Gómez, Gregg Mitman, “Plantation Legacies,” *Edge Effects*, January 2019
- If your birthday is January – June:
 - Joshua R Eichen, “Cheapness and (labor-)power: The role of early modern Brazilian sugar plantations in the racializing Capitalocene,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 38 (1) 2020, 35-52.
- If your birthday is July-December:
 - Judith Carney and Richard Nicolas Rosomoff, “Botanical Gardens of the Dispossessed,” *In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa’s Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Discussion Section

Due: Final Anthropos essay

Week 7

March 7 -- Extraction: Silver and Global Trade

Reading:

- Patel & Moore, “Cheap Money” selection, pp. 70-74, 81-85
- Kris Lane, “Introduction (pages 1-7) “and “Chapter 4: An Improbable Global City,” in *Potosí: The Silver City that Changed the World*, University of California Press, 2019. (~30 pages)

March 9 – Mid-term exam

No discussion sections

Week 8 – Spring break!

Week 9

March 21 – Food & Famine

Reading:

- Patel and Moore, “Cheap Food,” 139-148
- Robert Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, London: 1798. Read Chapters 1, 2 (Especially from page 11-38)
<https://archive.org/details/essayonprincipl00malt/page/n9>
- Mike Davis, “Preface” *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 2002, 1-16

Grads: Mike Davis, “Chapter One: Victoria’s Ghosts,” *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 2002, 25-59

March 23 – No class (Prof Hennessy at ASEH)**Week 10**March 28 – Industrialization: The Thermocene

- Kathryn Yusoff, “1800,” *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, pp. 39-43.
- C Bonniuel and J-B Fressoz, Chapter 5: Thermocene: A Political History of CO₂, *The Shock of the Anthropocene*, Verso, 2016, pp. 99-121.

Grads: Andreas Malm, The Origins of Fossil Capital: From Water to Steam in the British Cotton Industry, *Historical Materialism*, 21.1 (2013) 15-68.

Assigned: Anthropocene Objects project

March 30 -- Climate Science and Colonialism

- Smith, J. R. (2021). “Exceeding Beringia”: Upending universal human events and wayward transits in Arctic spaces. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 39(1), 158-175.

Discussion sections: Library Research Visits

Week 11April 4 – The Great Acceleration

Readings:

- Jan Zalasiewicz et al., “When did the Anthropocene begin? A mid-twentieth century boundary level is stratigraphically optimal,” *Quaternary International* 383 (2015) 196-203 (Skim)
- Kathryn Yusoff, “1950s,” *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, pp. 44-48.
- WW Rostow, “The Stages of Economic Growth” *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1959, pp. 1-16

April 6 – Nuclear Colonialism

- Barbara Rose Johnston, “Nuclear Disaster: The Marshall Islands Experience and Lessons for a Post-Fukushima World,” in Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Jill Didur, and Anthony Carrigan, eds., *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities*. Routledge, 2015, 140-161.

Discussion sections:

Due: Anthropocene Object selection: image and abstract. Submit to Canvas and bring print out to discussion

Week 12

April 11 – Oceanic Worlds

Guest lecture: Samantha Newton

Reading: TBD

April 13 – Plantation Presents and Futures

- McKittrick, Katherine, “Plantation Futures,” *Small Axe* Vol 17, No. 3, November 2013 (No. 42), pp. 1-15
- Gabrielle Hecht, “Interscalar Vehicles for an African Anthropocene: On Waste, Temporality, and Violence,” *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 33, (2018) Issue 1, 109-141.

Discussion sections:

Due: Final Image (Submit high-resolution image and permission worksheet to Canvas)

Week 13

April 18 – Contemporary Extractivism

Reading:

- Traci Brynne Voyles, “Prospecting for Magic Ore in America’s New Frontier, *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2015, pp. 55-86

April 20 – Toxic Bodies

If your birthday is January -June:

- Vincanne Adams, “Building the Food Chemosphere,” *Glyphosate and the Swirl*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2023.

If your birthday is July-December:

- Michelle Murphy, "Alterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations." *Cultural Anthropology* 32, no. 4 (2017): 494–503. <https://journal.culanth.org/index.php/ca/article/view/ca32.4.02>

Week 14 What do we do?

April 25 – Stewardship of the Future Earth

Readings:

- Candice Fukijane, Introduction, *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future*: Kanaka Maoli and Critical Settler Cartographies in Hawai'i, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022.
- François Gemenne, "The Anthropocene and its Victims," *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis*, Clive Hamilton, Christophe Bonneuil, and François Gemenne, eds., New York: Routledge Earthscan, 2015, pp. 168-174
- Amitov Ghosh, Selections from *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 1-7, 144-149

April 27 – Manifestos for the Future Earth

Readings:

- The Eco-modernist Manifesto
<http://www.ecomodernism.org/manifesto-english/>
- The Leap Manifesto, <https://leapmanifesto.org/en/the-leap-manifesto/>
- Katherine Gibson, Deborah Bird Rose, Ruth Fincher, *Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene*, Punctum Books, 2015.
- Janae Davis, Alex Moulton, Levi Van Sant, Brian Williams, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, ... Plantationocene?" A Manifesto for Ecological Justice in an Age of Global Crises" *Geography Compass*, 2019.

Discussion

Due: Draft Object Essay [Submit in Word to Canvas and bring a print-out to discussion]

Week 15

May 2 – How do we live in the Anthropocene?

May 4 – **End-term Exam**

FINAL ESSAY Due: During final exam period, TBD