

Climatic Imaginaries

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Fall 2016, Wednesday 9am–11am, Avery 412

Climate is often seen as an externality, changing or otherwise, to be accommodated or ameliorated by design. Though this scientific and solutions-focused approach is indeed fundamental to the contemporary practice of architecture and urbanism (not to mention politics, government, and daily life), this seminar explores a different proposition—namely, that our environment is not just a resource to be managed or a ongoing circumstance to which we must adapt, but is instead one of the chief figurations of shared cultural values. “Nature” is, in a very real sense, what we see in it. It is historical, epistemic. Our conception of things like air, ocean, rock, ice, and weather condition our engagement with them, and climate registers on many levels within our lived realities. Furthermore, climate has long been present within the disciplinary history of architecture, and this longer history has much to say about our suppositions about what buildings are and do. We will explore climate as it refracts through ideas like political ecology, corporeality, and architectural enclosure.

Students will be expected to undertake their own research on a topic that relates to one of our weekly themes. Course requirements include an in-class research presentation of approximately 15 minutes; a final paper of 5,000 words; and vigorous, incisive participation in our seminar discussions.

Several readings will be drawn from the recently published *Climates: Architecture and the Planetary Imaginary* (Columbia Books on Architecture and the City and Lars Müller Publishers, 2016).

September 7th

Intro

September 14th

Enlightenment, Anthropocene, Imaginaries

Johann Gottfried Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill (1784; New York: Bergman Publishers, 1966), book vii, 163–187.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 35, no. 2 (Winter 2009): 197–222.

Fabien Locher and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, “Modernity’s Frail Climate: A Climate History of Environmental Reflexivity,” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 38, no. 3 (Spring 2012): 579–598.

Paul James and Manfred B. Steger, “Levels of Subjective Globalization: Ideologies, Imaginaries, Ontologies,” *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 12 (2013): 17–40.

Further reading:

Bruno Latour, “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern,” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 30, no. 2 (Winter 2004): 225–248.

Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (New York: Picador, 2015).

Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977).

From *Climates*: Dipesh Chakrabarty in conversation with James Graham, "The Universals and Particulars of Climate," 21–32.

September 21st

Climate as Culture and Concept

Wolfgang Behringer, *A Cultural History of Climate* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), selections.

Denis E. Cosgrove, "Modern Globe," in *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 205–234.

Paul N. Edwards, *A Vast Machine: Computer Models, Climate Data, and the Politics of Global Warming* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), xiii–xxiv and 357–396.

Jodi Dean, "The Anamorphic Politics of Climate Change," *e-flux journal* 69 (January 2016).

Further reading:

Mike Hulme, *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction, and Opportunity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Laura Kurgan, *Close-Up at a Distance: Mapping, Technology, and Politics* (New York: Zone Books, 2013).

Timothy W. Luke, *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Peder Anker, *From Bauhaus to Ecohouse: A History of Ecological Design* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).

From *Climates*: Jorge Otero-Pailos, "The Atmosphere as a Cultural Object," 243–250.

September 28th

Political Ecologies, Managerial Climates

Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City: Elements of a Doctrine of Urbanism to be Used as the Basis of our Machine-Age Civilization* (New York: Orion Press, 1967), selections.

Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage Publishing, 1992), selections.

Arun Agrawal, *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), selections.

From *Climates*: Ross Exo Adams, "An Ecology of Bodies," 181–190; Reinhold Martin, "Risk: Excerpts from the Environmental Division of Labor," 349–359.

Further reading:

Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (New York: Verso, 2011).

Richard Sennett, “Why Climate Change Should Signal the End of the City-State,” the *Guardian*, October 9, 2014.

[Note: from this point forward, all class sections will include one or two research presentations by students which will be framed according to the readings and topics of each given week.]

October 5th

Climate and Colonialism

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. Thomas Nugent (1748; Littleton: F. B. Rothman, 1991), book XIV, “Of Laws in Relation to the Nature of the Climate,” 221–234.

Jiat-Hwee Chang and Anthony D. King, “Towards a Genealogy of Tropical Architecture: Historical Fragments of Power-Knowledge, Built Environment, and Climate in the British Colonial Territories,” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 32 (2011): 283–300.

Lukasz Stanek, “Architects from Socialist Countries in Ghana (1957–67): Modern Architecture and Mondialisation,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 74, no. 4 (December 2015): 416–442.

Eyal Weizman and Fazal Sheikh, *The Conflict Shoreline: Colonialism as Climate Change in the Negev Desert* (Gottingen: Steidl in association with Cabinet Books, 2015).

From *Climates*: Deborah R. Coen, “Seeing Planetary Change, Down to the Smallest Wildflower,” 34–39.

Further reading:

Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, *Tropical Architecture in the Dry and Humid Zones* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1964).

Warwick Anderson, “‘Where Every Prospect Pleases and Only Man Is Vile’: Laboratory Medicine as Colonial Discourse,” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Spring 1992): 506–529.

Hannah le Roux, “The Networks of Tropical Architecture,” the *Journal of Architecture* 8 (Autumn 2003): 337–354.

October 12th

Corporealities: Artificial Air

Peter Sloterdijk, *Terror from the Air*, trans. Amy Patton and Steve Corcoran (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), selections.

Reyner Banham, *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment* (London: The Architectural Press, 1969; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), selections.

From *Climates*: Heather Davis, “Molecular Intimacy,” 205–210; Eva Horn, “Air Conditioning: Taming the Climate as a Dream of Civilization,” 233–241.

Further reading:

Cherian George, *Singapore: The Air-Conditioned Nation, Essays on the Politics of Comfort and Control, 1990–2000* (Singapore: Landmark Books, 2000).

Paulo Tavares, “General Essay on Air: Probes into the Atmospheric Conditions of Liberal Democracy,” 2008, <http://www.paulotavares.net/air> (Links to an external site.).

David Gissen, *Manhattan Atmospheres: Architecture, the Interior Environment, and Urban Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

Janette Kim and Erik Carver, *The Underdome Guide to Energy Reform* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2015).

October 19th Heat on the Persian Gulf Construction Site

(guest session with Laura Diamond Dixit)

‘Abd al-Raḥmān Munīf, *Cities of Salt* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), selections.

Anson Rabinbach, “The Laws of the Human Motor,” in *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 120–145.

Darren Joubert, Jens Thomsen, and Oliver Harrison, “Safety in the Heat: A Comprehensive Program for Prevention of Heat Illness Among Workers in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates,” *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 101, no. 3 (March 2011): 395–398.

John Gordon Lorimer, “Appendix A: Meteorology and Health in the Persian Gulf Region,” in *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, vol. 1, Historical, part II (Calcutta: Superintendent Govt. Printing, 1915), 2205–2211.

October 26 No Class, Midterm Week (and James is out of town)

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November 2nd The Capitalocene

Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2015), selections.

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), selections.

Christian Parenti, "Environment-Making in the Capitalocene: Political Ecology of the State," in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. Jason W. Moore (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016), 166–184.

Donna J. Haraway, "Staying with the Trouble: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene," in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. Jason W. Moore (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016), 34–76.

From *Climates*: Felicity D. Scott, "Securing Adjustable Climate," 90–105.

Further reading:

Peter Sloterdijk, *In the World Interior of Capital: Towards a Philosophical Theory of Globalization*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013).

Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

November 9th

Catastrophe (guest session with Eva Horn)

Readings TBD

Further reading:

Lord Byron, "Darkness" (1916), <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/darkness>.

J.G. Ballard, *The Drowned World* (1962).

Vittoria Di Palma, *Wasteland: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

Matthias Dörries, "The Politics of Atmospheric Sciences: 'Nuclear Winter' and Global Climate Change," *Osiris*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2011): 198–223.

From *Climates*: Jacob Boswell, "Notes from the Wasteland: Competing Climatic Imaginaries in the Post-Apocalyptic Landscape," 41–50; Dehlia Hannah and Cynthia Selin, "Unseasonal Fashion: A Manifesto," 222–231.

November 16th

Representation: Climatic Politics

Emily Apter, "Planetary Dysphoria," *Third Text*, vol. 27, no. 1 (January 2013): 131–140.

Jodi Dean, "The Anamorphic Politics of Climate Change," e-flux journal 69 (January 2016).

T.J. Demos, "Welcome to the Anthropocene!" <http://www.fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/still-searching/articles/27011>.

Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), selections.

From *Climates*: Carson Chan, "Cloud Formations: Climate Change and the Figuration of Community," 192–199.

Further reading:

Birgit Schneider and Thomas Nocke, eds., *Image Politics of Climate Change: Visualizations, Imaginations, Documentations* (Bielefeld, Ger.: Transcript-Verlag, 2014).^[1]_{SEP}

From *Climates*: Emily Eliza Scott, "Archives of the Present-Future: On Climate Change and Representational Breakdown," 130–140.

November 23rd

Planetary and Climate Justice

Gayatri Spivak, "Imperative to Reimagine the Planet," in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 335–350.

Christian Parenti, *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence* (New York: Nation Books, 2012), selections.

Neil Brenner, ed., *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), selections.

From *Climates*: Adrian Lahoud, "Scale as Problem, Architecture as Trap," 111–118.

Further reading:

Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, *Global Warming in an Unequal World: A Case of Environmental Colonialism* (New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment, 1991).

Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Jennifer Wenzel, "Planet vs. Globe," *English Language Notes*, vol. 52, no. 1 (October 2014): 19–30.

November 30th

Remaining Student Presentations