



LIT 6934: Climate Fiction

Professor Terry Harpold

Fall 2017, Section 03A9

Time: M, per. 6-8 (12:50-3:50 PM)

Location: Turlington Hall (TUR) 4112

office hours: M, 4-6 PM & by appt. (TUR 4105)

email: tharpold@ufl.edu

home page for Terry Harpold: <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/tharpold/>

e-Learning (Canvas) site for LIT 6934 (*registered students only*): <http://elearning.ufl.edu>

Course Description

As we move into an era of greater climate instability, climate science will shape how we imagine the collective futures of humans and other living creatures of the Earth. In this course we will investigate a vital contribution of the humanities to our understanding of the significance of climate change. We will read a wide range of climate-related texts, mostly from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and mostly in the emerging genre of *climate fiction*: stories that are grounded in realities of global climate crisis, mass extinction, climate-induced migration, and economic collapse: a world in which former habits of mind and body are incompatible with situations on the ground, in the air, and under the water. The diverse authors whose works we will study show that creating new habits is difficult and perilous; it is easier to find fear, cynicism, and despair - none of which responses, it is clear, is up to the challenges of the real futures that approach us.

Much of what we will read is, implicitly and explicitly, an indictment of the blind hubris, cruel appetite, and reckless improvidence that have pushed us all toward terrible ends. This course proposes that the literary imagination of climate, haunted by the losses and negotiations of crisis, may also point in the direction of a new *ethic* of climate that embraces critical reflection, shared responsibility, and hopeful resolve.

Graded writing requirements for this course include periodic participation in seeded class discussions and a final research paper.

Required Texts to Purchase

These texts are available at the UF Bookstore and from online vendors. Used and electronic editions (iBook, Kindle, etc.) are permissible - indeed they are encouraged¹ - so long as the version of the text you read is *otherwise identical to the editions noted below*. I encourage you whenever possible to buy from independent booksellers. If you choose to buy your texts online, I recommend sources such as Abebooks.com and Alibris.com that serve independent booksellers.

Ballard, J.G. *The Drought*. Liveright, 2012. Orig. pub. 1962. ISBN 978087140401 5. 240 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

. *The Drowned World*. Liveright, 2013. Orig. pub. 1962. ISBN 9780871403629. 208 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. University of Chicago Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0226526812. 176 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

. *The Hungry Tide: A Novel*. Mariner Books, 2006. Orig. pub. 2004. ISBN 9780618711666. 352 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Itäranta, Emmi. *Memory of Water. A Novel*. FHarper Voyager, 2014. ISBN 9780062326157. 272 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Robinson, Kim Stanley. *New York 2140*. Orbit, 2017. ISBN 9780316262316. 624 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Scranton, Roy. *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization*. City Lights Books, 2015. ISBN 9780872866690. 144 pp. (print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Smith, Stephanie A. *Other Nature*. Tor Books, 1995. ISBN 9780312856380. 253 pp. (print). *Note: this book is out of print. Inexpensive, unused copies may be purchased directly from the author, a UT faculty member. I will announce how this may be done early in the semester.*

Squarzoni, Philippe. *Climate Changed: A Personal Journey through the Science*. Trans. Ivanka FHahnenberger. Abrams, 2014. Orig. pub. 2012. ISBN 9781419712555. 480 pp. (print, graphic nonfiction). *Also available in iBook, Kindle, and comiXology editions.*

¹ See my "Policy on environmentally unsustainable activity in the classroom," below.

M, Sept 18 *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet XI, lines 1-203 (*Ares*, 8 pp.)
Ballard, *The Drowned World* (1962)

M, Sept 25 LeGuin, "The New Atlantis" (1975, *Ares*, 30 pp.)
Turner, *The Sea and Summer* (1989)

M, Oct 2 **No class meeting (Harpold is out of town)**

The Burning World

M, Oct 9 Ballard, *The Drought* (1962)
Tinai research paper proposals (2 pp.) due by the start of class

M, Oct 16 Itäranta, *Memory of Water* (2014)
Reviewed research paper proposals returned by TH

M, Oct 23 Watkins, *Gold Tame Citrus* (2016)

A Proliferation of Small Worlds

M, Oct 30 Stewart, *Storm* (1941)

M, Nov 6 Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (2004)

After the Anthropocene

M, Nov 13 Ghosh, *The Great Derangement* (2016)
Scranton, *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene* (2017)

M, Nov 20 Smith, *Other Nature* (1995)

M, Nov 27 VanderMeer, *Borne* (2017)

M, Dec 4 Rosy, *ainé*, "The Death of the Earth" (1910, *Ares*, 68 pp.)
Tinai class meeting

W, Dec 13 *Tinai* research paper due

Evaluation of Performance, Attendance Requirements & Other Course Policies

Your final grade in this course will be determined by the average of four kinds of assignments:

Signature reading exercise: required, but not graded

Initiator of seeded discussions: 20% of final grade

Respondent to seeded discussions: 20% of final grade

Final research paper: 60% of final grade

Signature reading exercise. This is a brief writing exercise that will help me and your classmates to understand your reading interests and habits; it's a good way to start off our conversations this semester and to identify shared interests in the class. I will explain the method of the exercise during the second class meeting. The exercise should be completed before the second class meeting.

Seeded discussions. From the beginning of the third week of the course, our in-class conversations will be "seeded" by short critical observations (min. 300 words each) on assigned readings posted in advance to Canvas by one or more students, and by responses to those observations (min. 150 words each) posted in advance by other students. The aims of these recurring assignments are to jump-start each class's discussion, to give each student an opportunity to orient our face-to-face and online exchanges, and to extend our conversations about the readings outside the confines of the classroom.

The number of seeded discussions and the number of initiators and respondents for each seeded discussion will vary according to the number of registered students in the course and the availability of students to participate on a given day. About one third of the students will be required to participate in this way in each class' seeded discussion. You should expect to be an initiator or a respondent every few weeks.

Here's how the process works. For a given class meeting, several students are assigned to initiate a seeded discussion; several *other* students are assigned to respond to one of the seeded discussions. (Usually two respondents are assigned to each seed. They are required to respond to only that seed and not to others that may be posted for the same class meeting.) The initiators must post their seeds to Canvas at least 48 hours before the class meeting. The respondents must post their responses to Canvas at least 24 hours before the class meeting. (Note that the seeds *must* be posted before the responses are due. If you are an initiator, it is imperative that you are not late in posting your seed. Barring exceptional circumstances, a late seed or a late response will incur a grade of 0 for that assignment.)

Posting the seeds and the responses *before* the class discussion of the assigned reading gives everyone in the course ample time to review the seeds and responses, and to contribute to the threaded discussion if they wish.

Participation in seeded discussions is open to everyone in the class; anyone may add to the emerging thread at any time. (All students should review each day's seeded discussion before coming to class.) Only those who have been *assigned* to initiate or respond will be graded on this participation. Your grade for participation in this process will be based three criteria: did you post the seed on time, did it meet the minimum writing length requirements², and did it show critical insight into the reading, or raise an interesting question, and/or constructively advance our conversations about the readings?

Seeds may be about any aspect of the assigned text or its relation to other texts we have read or discussed. They may be focused tightly on a passage of the text or make more general observations about aspects of the text as a whole. You have considerable leeway here; the key thing is to find something you think would be interesting to talk about, and that you believe will engage the interest of others in the course. Responses are more narrowly defined: your response should *directly* engage the initiator's observation or question - agree, disagree, affirm or dispute; your role is to start a conversation going that is motivated by what you find most interesting in the seed. With luck, others in the class will follow, and the thread will develop along a productive path even before we meet in class to discuss the assigned reading.

Your assignment as an initiator or respondent to a seeded discussion will be made randomly. In no case will you be required to be an initiator on consecutive class meetings, nor an initiator and respondent on the same class meeting. In the second week of class I will ask all students to notify me of two class meeting dates during the semester when they *cannot* serve as an initiator and two class meeting dates when they *cannot* serve as a respondent. I will take these dates into account when I make the random assignments of seeds and responses.

The final research paper. The core requirement of the final paper for this course (20-25 pp. in length) is that it should engage critically and historically with the genre of climate fiction. Otherwise, the paper can - and should - reflect your own research interests, the periods, disciplines, and genres in which you primarily work. I will review specific requirements of the paper early in the semester. Note that a 2 page proposal for the paper is due in early October. I will review the proposal and return it to you with my

² These word counts do not include any passages you may cite from a text. Only your own, original writing will be applied toward the minimal word count.

recommendations regarding your project. I encourage you to discuss your project with me prior to the due date for the proposal.

There are no other graded assignments in this course. There are no extra-credit assignments.

Grading scheme and graded assignments. The evaluation method in this course is consistent with UF's policies on grading

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

Grades are calculated on a numeric scale, as below:

A	90-100	A-	87-89		
B+	84-86	B	80-83	B-	77-79
C+	74-76	C	70-73		

If you feel that you've been unfairly graded on an assignment, you may make a case in writing for a better grade. I will consider no grade changes without this written rationale.

You may turn in an assignment late without penalty only if you have a written medical excuse from a doctor, a signed letter from a judge or law enforcement officer (if you are called for jury duty or to testify in court, for example), or if a death or serious illness or injury occurs in your family. You should contact me as soon as possible when you anticipate a delay in submission of graded work.

Attendance & lateness. The texts and concepts we will review are complex and challenging. You cannot reasonably expect to master them if you do not keep up with required reading assignments and come to class prepared and on time. Moreover, seminar discussions will often address materials not among the assigned readings. For these reasons, your presence in class is essential and is required. After **two missed classes**, I reserve the right to lower your final course grade by five points for each additional class period that you miss. I treat excused and unexcused absences alike in this regard. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences and to make sure that you complete all required work. If you must miss class, make sure that you turn in any assignments due for that day, and that you are ready if another assignment is due on the day you return to class. In the event of a prolonged illness or other emergency you should notify me as soon as possible so that we may make provisions to insure that you do not fall behind.

Lateness is disruptive to others in the classroom, and is strongly discouraged. If you are more than 30 minutes late to class, this will be considered an absence.

If you have special classroom access, seating, or other needs because of disability, do not hesitate to bring those to my attention so that I may make appropriate accommodations. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the UF Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) by providing appropriate documentation.

If you are unable to attend any part of a class meeting or work on a course assignment because these coincide with the timing of religious observances, you must notify me of this conflict well in advance, so that we may make appropriate adjustments to relevant assignment deadlines.

Use of computers and other electronic devices in class. You may use personal computers and other electronic devices in class for purposes related to class discussion and collaboration. Casual WWW browsing, emailing, chatting, texting, etc., unrelated to classroom activities will not be tolerated. In the event of a violation of this policy, I reserve the right to prohibit your individual use of all electronic devices in class. Apart from those times when I have approved their use in advance, cell phones, pagers, and similar communication devices may not be used during class meetings, and must be set to silent ring at the start of class.

Course evaluation. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be notified of specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Policy on academic honesty. The University community's policies and methods regarding academic honesty, your obligations to me and mine to you with regard to academic honesty, are clearly spelled out in the UF Student FHonor Code, which is available online at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this course. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or oral information in the preparation of graded assignments submitted for this course.
- Substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals.
- False claims of performance or work submitted by a student for requirements of this course.

I am obliged to act on any suspected act of academic misconduct. This may include a reduced or failing grade for the course as a whole or other disciplinary proceedings, as per the recommendation of the Dean of Students. If you have any concern that you may not have made appropriate use of the work of others in your research or writing for this course, please confer with me before you submit the assignment. You should retain all graded materials that you receive from me until you receive your final course grade.

Policy on environmentally unsustainable activity in the classroom. I will distribute all course materials via paper-sparing digital media. I encourage you to purchase e-book editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts, and to return those to circulation if you choose not to keep them at the end of the course. (Donating your unwanted books to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library annual book sale](#) is a good way to get them into other readers' hands and to help raise a bit of cash for our county's fine public libraries.) If you do elect to keep your books, share them with others after the course is over. And a final appeal to your common sense: bring food and/or beverages to the classroom only in durable, reusable containers. Please, no food or beverages in single-use containers.