

LIT 3400: Imaging Climate, Seeing the Anthropocene

Professor Terry Harpold

Fall 2018, Section 11BB

Time: Tu, per. 5–6 (11:45 AM–1:40 PM), Th, per. 6 (12:50–1:40 PM)

Location: Turlington (TUR) 2306

office hours: W, 12–2 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 3400 (*registered students only*): <http://elearning.ufl.edu>

“The World to Come” WWW site: <http://harn.ufl.edu/theworldtocome>

Imagining Climate Change WWW site: <http://imagining-climate.clas.ufl.edu>

Course Description

We live in an age of worsening ecological instability and crisis. Climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity collapse, and mass extinction threaten to reshape the collective futures of humans and other living things of the Earth. As we enter the late *Anthropocene*, the geological epoch defined by human influences on the environment, our former habits of mind and body are more and more incompatible with emerging situations on the ground, in the air, and under the water. But we humans are by nature timorous and reactive; creating new habits is difficult for us, who often find willful neglect, cynicism, and despair the easier solutions. In this course we will start with the positive humanist assumption that to prepare for the world to come we must reimagine it, ourselves, our communities, our civilization, and our species. A hopeful resolve to think and act anew must come to us first by way of the creative imagination.

Our principal model for this work of bearing witness and renewing possibility will be a landmark international art exhibition at UF’s Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, “[The World to Come](#)” (September 18, 2018 – January 6, 2019). The exhibition, which features works by more than 45 contemporary international artists, will challenge us to discard obsolete assumptions about human destiny, to confront catastrophic environmental injustices and reflect on our bonds to each other and to non-human life, and to consider the viability, if not the necessity, of a *planetary* humanism.

Students are encouraged to attend the exhibition and a two-day international symposium affiliated with it (October 19–20), featuring scholars, artists, and scientists whose research and teaching are focused on environmental crisis and the environmental imaginary.

We will also read recent alphabetic– and image-texts (critical nonfiction texts, graphic novels, comics) that address the ecological and political perils facing us in the late Anthropocene. They show us, unsparingly, the costs of neglect, cynicism, and despair; some imagine also constructive responses and new habits of mind and body that may help us to find resilience and positive acceptance of the realities of world to come.

Graded writing assignments include a take-home midterm exam, three short critical essays, and three group presentations on selected works of art in the exhibition.

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.

Demos, T.J. *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today*. Sternberg Press, 2017. ISBN 9783956792106. 96 pp. (\$26.00 list, print).

Neufeld, Josh. *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge*. Pantheon, 2010. Orig. pub. 2009. ISBN 9780375714887. 208 pp. (\$18.00 list, print). *Also available in iBook and Kindle editions.*

Squarzoni, Philippe. *Climate Changed: A Personal Journey through the Science*. Translated by Ivanka Hahnenberger, Abrams, 2014. Orig. pub. 2012. ISBN 9781419712555. 480 pp. (\$24.95 list, print). *Also available in iBook, Kindle, and comiXology editions.*

Tobocman, Seth, Peter Kuper, Susan Simensky Bietila, and Jordan Worley, editors. *World War 3 Illustrated #47: Climate Chaos*. WW3, 2016. ISBN 9781939202253. 152 pp. (\$10.00 list, print).

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

The following text, the exhibition catalog, is available for purchase only from the Harn Museum of Art Bookstore.

Oliver-Smith, Kerry, editor. *The World to Come: Art in the Age of the Anthropocene*. Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida, 2018. ISBN 9780983308584. 170 pp. (\$34.95 list, print).

If you become a student member of the Harn Museum (<https://harn.ufl.edu/join>) – membership is free – you will receive a card that entitles you to a 10% discount on the exhibition catalog and additional benefits at the Harn and other museums nationwide.

These texts will be made available via the course’s electronic reserves (Ares, <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/>). Other required and recommended readings for the course will be made available via the WWW or via Ares.

Chute, Hillary. “Why Disaster?” *Why Comics? From Underground to Everywhere*, HarperCollins, 2017, pp. 33–68.

Leopold, Aldo. “Thinking Like a Mountain.” *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, Oxford University Press, 1949, pp. 129–33.

Myers, Natasha, and Ayelen Liberona. *Becoming Sensor* (<https://becomingsensor.com>).

Næss, Arne. “The Place of Joy in a World of Fact.” *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writing by Arne Næss*, edited by Alan Drengson and Bill Devall, Counterpoint, 2008, pp. 123–32.

Scranton, Roy. “We’re Doomed. Now What?” *We’re Doomed. Now What?* Soho Press, 2018, pp. 3–8.

Taylor, Bron. “Deep Ecology.” *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, edited by Bron Taylor, Continuum, 2005, pp. 456–60.

Course Calendar

Deadlines or events outside of normal class meeting times are marked with an asterisk (). Readings marked as “WTC” are from the “World to Come” catalog. Readings marked as “Ares” are available on electronic reserve. Deadlines for some graded assignments will be set after the semester begins.*

Climate Changed

- Th, Aug 23 *Course introduction*
Signature reading exercise described
- * M, Aug 27 *Signature reading exercise due*
- Tu, Aug 28 *Squarzoni, Climate Changed*
- Th, Aug 30 *Squarzoni, Climate Changed*
- Tu, Sept 4 *Squarzoni, Climate Changed*
Neufeld, A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge
- Th, Sept 6 *Neufeld, A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge*

Against the Anthropocene

- Tu, Sept 11 *Demos, Against the Anthropocene*
- Th, Sept 13 *Oliver-Smith, "Introduction," "The World to Come: Art and Ethics in the Age of the Anthropocene;" Paglen, "The Ethics of Deep Time" (WTC, pp. 1–25)*
- * F, Sept 14 *Workgroups must notify me of six works in the exhibition on which they would prefer to give reports.*
- Tu, Sept 18 *Demos, "A World of Our Making;" De la Cadena, "Uncommoning Nature;" Zylinska, "Feminist Counter-Apocalypse; An Ethical Proposal for the Anthropocene" (WTC, pp. 26–51)*
- * Tu, Sept 18 **"The World to Come" exhibition opens**
- Th, Sept 20 *Myers, "How to Grow Livable Worlds: Ten Not-So-Easy Steps" (WTC, pp. 52–64)*
- * Th, Sept 20 *Harn Museum pARTy gala for Museum members, 6:30–9 PM – students are encouraged to attend*

* F, Sept 21 **Take-home midterm posted to Canvas**

Tu, Sept 25 *In-class brainstorming of midterm prompts*
In-class discussion of selected works from “The World to Come”
(WTC)

Th, Sept 27 *In-class discussion of selected works from “The World to Come”*
(WTC)

* M, Oct 1 **Take-home midterm due**

Why Disaster?

Tu, Oct 2 Chute, “Why Disaster?” (Ares)

Th, Oct 4 Tobocman, *et al.*, *World War 3 #47*

Tu, Oct 9 Tobocman, *et al.*, *World War 3 #47*

Th, Oct 11 *Open class – no assigned reading*

Tu, Oct 16 *Workgroup oral presentations*

Th, Oct 18 *Workgroup oral presentations*

The World to Come

* F, Oct 19 **“The World to Come” conversations with guest speakers**
Students are encouraged to attend Marisol de la Cadena’s informal
conversation with UF students, period 7 (1:55–2:45 PM), Smathers
Library 100. Extra credit may be earned for a short written report on
this event.

* F, Oct 19 **“The World to Come” keynote, 6 PM–8 PM**
Students are encouraged to attend keynote speaker T.J. Demos’s
lecture, “Blackout: The Necropolitics of Extraction.” Extra credit may
be earned for a short written report on this event.

- * Sat, Oct 20 **“The World to Come” symposium, 10 AM–6 PM**
Students are encouraged to attend part or all of the symposium. Extra credit may be earned for a short written report on one of the lectures or roundtables of the symposium.
- Tu, Oct 23 *Debriefing of “The World to Come” symposium*
Workgroup oral presentations
- Th, Oct 25 *Open class discussion*
- Tu, Oct 30 Leopold, “Thinking Like a Mountain” (Ares)
 Myers and Liberona, *Becoming Sensor* (<https://becomingsensor.com>,
selected pages and linked texts, TBA)
- Th, Nov 1 *Workgroup oral presentations*
- Tu, Nov 6 *Workgroup oral presentations*
- Th, Nov 8 *Workgroup oral presentations*
- * Th, Nov 8 *Harn Museum Night, 6–9 PM: “Earth Ethics Ain’t Easy”*
Students are encouraged to attend this “dynamic after-hours experience inspired by ‘The World to Come’: performances, art activities, films, tours, free food, photo-ops and more!”
- Tu, Nov 13 *Workgroup oral presentations*
- Th, Nov 15 *Workgroup oral presentations*
- Tu, Nov 20 *Workgroup oral presentations*
- Th, Nov 22 **No class meeting (Thanksgiving Break)**
- Tu, Nov 27 *Workgroup oral presentations*
- Now What?**
- Th, Nov 29 Scranton, “We’re Doomed. Now What?” (Ares)

Tu, Dec 4 Næss, "The Place of Joy in a World of Fact" (Ares)
 Recommended reading: Taylor, "Deep Ecology" (Ares)
 Final class meeting – course debriefing

Tu, Dec 11 **"Now What?" essay due by 12 AM, W (i.e., midnight Tu)**

Evaluation of Performance, Attendance Requirements & Other Course Policies

Your final grade in this course will be determined by the average of three assignments, plus the value of up to two optional extra credit assignments:

- Signature reading exercise: 3% of final grade
- Take-home midterm: 32% of final grade
- Workgroup oral presentations (× 2): 30% of final grade
- Workgroup written reports: (× 2): 30% of final grade
- "Now What?" essay: 5% of final grade

Signature reading exercise. This is a short writing exercise that will help me and your classmates understand your interests and habits; it's essentially a report on your recent reading for pleasure. (I will complete the exercise also.) This is a good way to start off our conversations this semester and to identify shared interests in the class. The exercise is due five days after the first class meeting. Students who register for the course nearer to the end of drop/add can make up this assignment during the second week of class. If you complete this exercise and meet its (very) basic requirements, you will receive a grade of 100 on the assignment. In effect, the assignment is worth 3 free points toward your final grade.

The midterm exam. This is a 10-day, open-book, take-home exam consisting of short essay responses to detailed prompts concerning the assigned texts we have read to the date the prompts are posted. The exam will consist of three prompts; you must respond to two. The exam does not require you to do any research beyond the assigned readings. The completed exam will be between 2400 and 3000 words (approx. 8–10 double-spaced typewritten pages) in length, not including a bibliography.

Workgroups and collaborative projects. Much of the graded work in this course involves collaborations by 4–5 person workgroups. (Four students in a group is the default.) Students will be randomly assigned to their workgroups. I will ask each student for a list of blackout dates when she or he cannot participate in in-class group presentations and will use that information when I schedule the presentations.

Workgroup reports. During the semester your workgroup will produce reports on two works in the “World to Come” exhibition, i.e., one report on each of two works. Each report is comprised of several written elements and an oral presentation. The oral presentations, *no longer than 30 minutes in total length for each workgroup*, are brief summaries of the written elements. All oral presentations are given in class.

Each report is a collaborative analysis of a work of art in the exhibition. A report is comprised of two instances of two elements, each of which is between 800 and 1000 words in length (approx. 3–4 double-spaced typewritten pages). The *critique* element includes a brief biography of the artist and overview of her or his career and a critical reading of the work of art, describing its formal and thematic traits, its artistic contexts, and its specific contributions to an environmental imaginary. The *response* element is *another student’s reaction to the critique element*. Think of it as a second opinion and response to the first student’s critique, including suggestions for nuance and improvement or even another interpretation of the work. For each group report, two students in the group will produce written critique elements and the other two will produce written response elements. All four students participate in the group oral presentation.

When a group is scheduled to give an oral presentation all written elements of the report must be posted to Canvas at least 24 hours beforehand so that other members of the class may review them ahead of time.

This all sounds complicated but in practice it’s pretty straightforward.

Let’s say that Workgroup A is scheduled to give a report on October 16, on Richard Mosse’s 1980 digital chromogenic print *Stalemate* (2011), one of the works in the exhibition. There are four members in the group.² Students 1 and 2 have been assigned critique elements, Student 3 and 4 response elements. Twenty-four hours before the presentation, each student posts the written version of her or his element to Canvas.

Important: students who are presenting a critique element must make at least a close-to-final draft of that written report to the other students within the group who are responding to it at least 72 hours before the date of the presentation. Everyone in the course reads all the elements in advance and comes to class aware of the content of the report.

On October 16 all four students give oral presentations of their individual report elements – in this case (four members), of about 7 minutes in length for each student – followed by a brief Q & A session with the rest of the class. In most double-period class meetings, two

² Five-member workgroups are run somewhat differently but the method is comparable.

workgroup reports will be presented on two different works of art. In single-period class meetings only one workgroup report will be given.

Soon after the presentation I will grade the oral and written portions of the report. Each student in Workgroup A is graded only on the elements for which she or he was responsible: Students 1 and 2 for the oral and written critique elements, Students 3 and 4 for the oral and written response elements. **Though all elements are known to the entire class, my communications with you regarding your grades are confidential. Groups collaborate on their reports but grades are assigned to individual students on the basis of their contributions to the reports.**

Student responsibilities are reversed in the second group report: those who completed a critique element in the first report will now complete a response element, and vice-versa. By the end of the semester each group will have given reports on two different works of art and each member of the group will have completed both oral and written critique and response elements.

No later than September 14, each workgroup must notify me of six works it would prefer to report on. I will collate those preferences, select *two* works for each group, and set the schedule of reports. I will endeavor to assign each group works from its original six choices. In the event of many requests for the same works of art groups may be assigned comparable works they did not choose. I advise you to choose your preferred six works as early as possible. *Note that September 14 is before the exhibition opens, so you must make your choices based on the exhibition catalog.* I strongly recommend that you visit the Harn to see the works assigned to your group in their contexts in the exhibition.³

The “Now What?” essay. This is a short essay of between 800 and 1000 words in length (approx. 3–4 double-spaced typewritten pages) on the final two assigned readings. It is also an opportunity to reflect on larger lessons of the course. This assignment will be due during finals week.

Extra credit. You will have three extra-credit opportunities during the semester. You may take advantage of *two* of those opportunities, for up to 6 extra points toward your final grade.

- On Friday afternoon, October 19, Marisol de la Cadena, one of the invited guest speakers in the “World to Come” symposium, will meet with students in an informal setting to discuss a previously circulated reading. If you attend that

³ The Harn is open Tu–Fri, 11 AM–5 PM; Sat, 10 AM–5 PM, and Sun, 1–5 PM.

discussion and write a 600–800 word summary of the conversation, you may receive up to 3 extra points toward your final grade.

- On Friday evening, October 19, T.J. Demos, the keynote speaker, is opening the symposium with a lecture at the Harn on “Blackout: The Necropolitics of Extraction.” If you attend that lecture and write a 600–800 word summary of it, you may receive up to 3 extra points toward your final grade.
- The symposium takes place Saturday, October 20 at the Harn, from 10–6 PM. If you attend at least one of the five guest lectures and panel discussions and write a 600–800 word summary of it, you may receive up 3 extra points toward your final grade.

These extra credit writing assignments must be submitted by November 5.

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	C–	67–69
D+	64–66	D	60–63	D–	57–59

A grade of 56 or below is a failing grade (E). A minimum final grade of C is required for General Education Credit.

If you do not complete an assignment you will receive a grade of 0. 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 make up a missed assignment 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 the submission of graded work. This is of especial importance in the event that you may not be able to participate in your workgroup’s oral presentation.

Attendance & lateness. The texts and images we will review are complex and challenging. You cannot reasonably expect to master them if you do not keep up with required reading or do not come to class prepared and on time. I expect you to adhere to the calendar of

assigned readings and do not give reading quizzes to check on that. Class discussions will often include materials not among the assigned readings. For these reasons, your presence in class is essential and is required. **I take attendance. After five missed class periods, 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 15 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 (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) and provide me with 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. Summaries 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 spelled out in the UF Student Honor 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. If you are found to have engaged in misconduct penalties may include a reduced or failing grade for the course 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 but criminally underfunded 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 reusable containers. Please, no food or beverages in single-use containers and no single-use, unrecyclable cutlery or straws.