

## LIT 3400: Imaging Climate, Seeing the Anthropocene

Professor Terry Harpold

Fall 2018

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

### Course Description

We live in an age of growing ecological instability. Climate change, accelerating environmental degradation, and mass extinction are reshaping the collective futures of humans and other living things of the Earth on a scale that is without precedent in the memories of our civilization and our species. As we enter this new phase of the *Anthropocene*, the geological epoch defined by human influence, our former habits of mind and body are incompatible with new situations on the ground, in the air, and under the water. But humans are by nature conservative and timorous; creating new habits is difficult for us, who find willful neglect, cynicism, and despair the easier solutions. In this course we will start with the fundamentally humanist conviction that how we prepare for and respond to the world to come depends on how we may (re)envision that world and our roles in it. Hopeful resolve to think and act differently, and the ability to do so, come to us first by way of the creative imagination.

This course will focus principally on visual imaginaries of the late Anthropocene. We will read widely in contemporary graphic fiction and –nonfiction on the subject of global climate change and ecological crisis, and view a small number of fiction films on these themes. Our principal model for the work of bearing witness and renewed insight will be a landmark art exhibition at UF's 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 visual artists, will challenge us to discard assumptions about human privilege and mastery of nature, to rethink the bond of humans to non-human life, and to locate an openness and sense of wonder that may lead to critical reflection, shared responsibility, and the possibility of a *planetary* humanism.

Course writing assignments include participation in threaded discussions of weekly readings, a short research paper on selected works and artists exhibited in "The World to Come" and a take-home final exam.