

Eco-Cosmopolitanism: An Introduction to Environmental Humanities

Professor Mary Childs | T/Th 12:30-2:20 | SLN 12370 | I&S | Autumn 2014

In this course, we will dive into the field of environmental humanities, studying its commitment to encourage humanists – those who study literature and humanities -- to explore the relationship between nature, humans, and literature, and ultimately to actively engage in concerns about our current, global environmental crisis. We will gain a background in philosophical issues that shaped early environmental thought; and read selections from leading eco-critics and environmental scholars such as Ursula Heise, Lawrence Buell, and Axel Goodbody. We will discuss current concepts and debates: What is the anthropocene? What is deep time, deep ecology? Are we moving towards a non-human world order? Is it better to be rooted locally to develop a responsible ethic toward the earth, or to engage in environmental issues from a global, cosmopolitan perspective? Through all of our readings, discussions, and activities, we will work towards a definition of eco-cosmopolitanism, and ask how the humanities can help motivate a significant shift in environmental consciousness.