The world warms, and global environmental imaginaries evolve. Epistemic shifts supplant the natural richness of biodiversity with the artificial wealth of neoliberal economies, and overwrite aboriginal forms of cultural inhabitation with naive fictions of wilderness. Changing depictions of culture and environment have compelling implications for human rights and indigenous sovereignties over land, water and natural resources. This course will consider how visions and aesthetics of landscape in the twenty-first century are interconnected with transforming global discourses about environmental security, governance and power. Blending literary and social science perspectives, we will reflect upon cultural approaches to political ecology, and its creative representation. This course will be conducted as a seminar: there will be a strong component of independent reading and writing, supported by class discussions. Assigned texts will include academic work, ecological science fiction / future “cli-fi”, and key documents produced by international agencies. The workload is commensurate with expectations at the graduate level. Assessment will emphasize preparation, participation in open debate, and perceptive critical engagement as demonstrated in both oral and written work. While the merit and quality of written work constitute dominant factors in assessment, thoughtful and consistent contribution to discussion is essential for best success. Final projects to be developed in consultation with the instructor may be scholarly or creative.

Graduate students from any discipline are welcome. Because a sense of community is instrumental to academic work, I will value your engagement with peers as you proceed.

Required texts to buy*:


* The list prices are generally in the range $12-18 but you will find most of the works widely available at a discount if you look online and secondhand. Any edition is acceptable.

Please consult the final syllabus for required course texts, schedule of readings and details of assessment. Contact the Instructor for information or questions: Dr. Tracey Heatherington

Associate Professor, Anthropology
heatherington@uwm.edu

Office hours by appointment, Wednesday afternoons. Please send an email in advance.
Schedule of Readings & Assignments

Jan 21-- first day of class

•Begin Philip K. Dick (1968) *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*

Jan. 28 --

Skim:

Film: *Last Call* (2013) <http://www.lastcallthefilm.org>


Feb. 10 --

•Excerpt, Philip Wylie (1972) *The End of the Dream.*

Feb. 18 --

•Ursula K. LeGuin (1972) *The Word for World is Forest*

Feb. 25 -- Assignment in lieu of class: Drawing upon the ideas presented by the Club of Rome’s report, *The Limits of Growth,* write a 3-5pp. commentary discussing how science fiction of the 1970s reflects emerging global ecological concerns and understandings of the time.

Mar. 4 --

Skim:


Mar. 11 --1-2pp final paper proposals due; should include annotated bibliography

•Begin Paolo Bacigalupi (2009) *The Windup Girl*

Mar. 18 -- break

Skim:

Apr. 1 --
- Begin Liz Jensen (2009) *The Rapture*

Apr. 8 --
Skim:

Film: *The Island President* (2011) <http://theislandpresident.com>

Apr. 15 -- Individual presentations on final projects; paper drafts due.
- Finish Liz Jensen (2009) *The Rapture*

Apr. 22 --
- Begin Nathaniel Rich (2013) *Odds Against Tomorrow*

Skim:

Apr. 29 --

Film: *The Yes Men Fix the World* (2009)

May 6 -- last day of class

Finish Nathaniel Rich (2013) *Odds Against Tomorrow*

May 13 -- final essay projects due
Course requirements and expectations*

20% of assessed work for this course is comprised of ongoing discussions in class. You should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with all the course materials, and a willingness to brainstorm and exchange ideas with peers. It goes without saying that at the graduate level, regular (generally punctual) attendance, preparation and participation is expected, so please email if you are occasionally unable to attend because of illness or emergency. Please avoid scheduling other obligations during class time.

25% of your final grade is contributed by short assignments due Feb. 3 (5%), Feb. 25 (10%), Mar. 25 (10%). These are formal writing exercises of 3-5pp double-spaced, engaging with assigned readings. Citation practice is expected. You may be asked to share these with peers. Feedback is provided.

Individually, in consultation with the instructor, each student will develop an independent research project through successive phases to a final written essay form of approximately 8,000 words. With permission of the instructor, you may choose to fulfill this portion of assessment with a sci-fi or “blurred genre” creative writing project. Students are encouraged and welcomed to consult after class or book an appointment for office hours Wednesday afternoons.

5% of your final course grade is earned automatically by submitting a written 1-2pp paper proposal + briefly annotated bibliography, on or before Mar. 11. There should be a clear explanation of the project, and materials expected to be used. Your project may change somewhat before it is complete, but you should commit to a general direction by this time.

10% of your final course grade is earned by discussing the project in class and submitting a paper draft (at least 4,000 words with formal citations) by April 15. Feedback on the first draft will be provided within two weeks to assist you with the final draft.

The remaining 40% of your grade is determined by the quality of your final class project. There is scope to explore but the focus of the project should be reasonably consistent with the concerns of the course. You are encouraged to make use of course materials, particularly from the second half of the semester, to compliment your research.

Final essay project, option 1:

Academic paper (about 8,000 words) related to the topic of science fiction and contemporary ecological concerns, such as climate change, fresh water scarcity, global environmental justice, energy paradigms, decline of biodiversity, etc. In-text citations and as well as a list of references cited should be used.

Final essay project, option 2:

A sci-fi or “blurred genre” creative writing project embedding critical insights on political ecology within a 6,000-7,000 word narrative accessible to a general audience, appending an explanatory afterward & annotated bibliography of 1,000-2,000 words to demonstrate quality scholarship and intellectual merit.

An extensive list of recommended resources is attached. You are encouraged to seek out research materials and read across fields, especially the humanities and social sciences, but you must also show that you know what you’re reading. It is vital to recognize not only the synergies of different disciplines, but also the differences in intellectual formation and methodological frameworks that underpin them. If you choose to explore beyond your field, remember that the audiences and goals of these works, their expectations and assumptions, as well as their methods and analytical languages, may be quite different. In order to draw from these works, you must learn to understand them in their own terms as well as yours.

If you have a valid reason for submitting an assignment late, there is generally a two-day “grace” period, provided that you come and participate in class. Please do not skip class in order to finish an assignment; it will count as late. Late assignments may be accepted within two weeks, with a one grade-step penalty per week and reduced feedback.

* If you have a student visa, let me know what you need.

As always, academic integrity is paramount. UWM student rights and responsibilities can be found here: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/SyllabusLinks.pdf
General List of Resources —

Documents— (available online)

Academic Non-fiction (on library reserve)
Michael Fischer (2003) Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice
Frederic Jameson (2005) Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions
Lawrence Buell (2009) The Future of Environmental Criticism

Kirsten Hastrup and Karen Fog Olwig, eds., (2011) Climate Change and Human Mobility: Challenges to the Social Sciences

Fiction— (required texts are marked*)
Isaac Asimov (1954) The Caves of Steel
J.G. Ballard (1962) The Drowned World
*Philip K. Dick (1968) Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep
John Brunner (1968) Stand on Zanzibar
Philip Wylie (1971) End of the Dream
Isaac Asimov (1972) The Gods Themselves
John Brunner (1972) The Sheep Look Up
*Ursula K. LeGuin (1972) The Word for World is Forest
Joan Slonczewski (1985) A Door Into Ocean
Elizabeth Hand (1997) The Glimmering
Hamish MacDonald (2009) Finitude
Rosie Chard (2009) The Seal Intestine Raincoat
Ian McEwan (2010) Solar
Margaret Atwood (2010) Oryx and Crake
Margaret Atwood, Paolo Bacigalupi et al. (2011) I'm with the Bears: Short Stories from a Damaged Planet
Rob Ziegler (2011) Seed
Kim Stanley Robinson (2012) 2312
Paolo Bacigalupi (2012) The Drowned Cities
*Nathaniel Rich (2013) Odds Against Tomorrow

Additional Articles, Commentaries, Interviews

Films— (available in the library)
On the Beach (1959--based on the novel by Neville Shute)
Soylent Green (1973--based on the novel, Make Room, Make Room! by Harry Harrison)
Threads (1984)
There Was Once An Island (2010) <http://www.thereoncewasanisland.com>