

---

## Climate Science and Digital Culture: An Environmental Media Practicum

Professor Allison Carruth

---

### SEMINAR OVERVIEW

This transdisciplinary seminar is designed for graduate students interested in the environmental humanities, comparative media studies, and science communication. A six-week short course, the seminar will investigate strategies of and challenges to communicating climate science in the context of digital media developments of the last two decades, with a particular focus on American journalism and social media cultures. Students will examine and experiment with a range of media—including documentary, op-ed, data visualization, immersive storytelling, and virtual and augmented reality. The course will also consider the media cultures and narrative strategies of communities leading movements for climate justice. Through individual and collaborative assignments, students will test out different forms of science communication and will experiment with crafting multimedia environmental stories informed by their research and addressed to public audiences.

### COURSE TEXTS

- Course website with secondary readings and links to assigned digital / online materials
- Candis Callison, *How Climate Change Comes to Matter: The Communal Life of Facts*
- Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*
- Mike Hulme, *Weathered: Cultures of Climate*
- Lauren Redniss, *Thunder & Lightning: Weather Past, Present, Future*

### REQUIREMENTS

DESCRIPTION	% of GRADE
<b>Seminar attendance and participation via Zoom</b>	20%
<b>Individual assignment #1: "Lightning talk"</b>  <u>A 6-8 minute talk</u> about a focused aspect of your research/research interests designed for a cross-disciplinary audience of environmental scholars. To support the talk, design <u>no more than 8 visually compelling slides</u> with carefully chosen graphics and limited text that engage and guide the audience; define terms, data, analysis; avoid using detailed text on slides as notes for yourself or crowding slides with different graphics; use a consistent style for visuals and text.	20%

<p><b>Collaborative project: Design of a public environmental event</b></p> <p>As a team, select a significant environmental challenge and design the idea and structure for a public event that would engage a diversity of researchers and community groups. Each team has broad latitude in how they approach this collaborative project. The final deliverable should include the following elements submitted as either a PDF packet or a website (e.g., on WordPress): a conceptual vision that includes organizing questions and themes, a proposed format, a tentative budget and fundraising plan, a list of potential participants (individuals and/or groups), and two pieces of promotional material.</p>	<p>30%</p>
<p><b>Individual assignment #2: Popular science story</b></p> <p>Identify a concrete and specific topic of environmental science / environmental culture related to your current research interests; conduct limited secondary research to flesh out your angle on and a narrative of that topic addressed to a diverse, public audience of readers in Los Angeles. Write and revise a <u>1,200-1,500-word story</u> about the topic that attends to both scientific and social dimensions. Include ideas and expertise from outside your own discipline and from one or more community groups. The final story can include images, figures, sound, video clips or other media provided you provide appropriate attribution and captions.</p> <p>To accompany the story, include a <u>bibliography of sources you consulted and/or cited as well as a 1-page reflection</u> on the challenges and rewards of this assignment and how it has informed your understanding of and approaches to science communication.</p>	<p>30%</p>



CREDIT

*"Dear Climate" (Posters, podcasts and participant-authored letters), 2014-2018  
Core collaborators: Una Chaudhuri, Fritz Ertl, Oliver Kellhammer, and Marina Zurkow*

**COURSE SCHEDULE (This six-week short course meets the second half of the semester)**

Date	Assigned Materials & Deadlines (Complete in advance of the seminar each week)
WEEK 7 W 3/17	<i>Introduction of seminar materials and methods</i> <input type="checkbox"/> READ: C. Callison, <i>How Climate Change Comes to Matter</i> (2014) <input type="checkbox"/> READ L. Kuehne, "Practical Science Communication Strategies for Graduate Students" (2014) <input type="checkbox"/> READ/VIEW Climate science op-ed, data visualization, and public talk <input type="checkbox"/> WATCH <i>Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change</i>
<b>F 3/19</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b> <b>Rehearsal of lightning talk with teams</b>
WEEK 8 W 3/24	<i>Science communication and anti-science in the age of social media</i> <input type="checkbox"/> READ D. Broussard and B. Lewenstein's, "A Critical Appraisal of Models of Public Understanding of Science" (2010) <input type="checkbox"/> READ J. Cook, et al. "How Americans Were Misled About Climate Change" (2019) <input type="checkbox"/> READ N. Oreskes, "The scientific consensus on climate change" (2004)  <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORE Stories and social media pages of IPCC Sixth Assessment Report; <i>The Guardian</i> climate section; <i>The Economist</i> climate section; 350.org; Climate Justice Alliance; Heartland Institute
<b>F 3/26</b>	<b>DEADLINE: Final lightning talk</b> <i>record with slides/visuals, submit a Box or Dropbox link of mp4 video</i>
WEEK 9 W 3/31	<i>(Digital) cultures of climate change</i> <input type="checkbox"/> READ M. Hulme, <i>Weathered</i> , Chs. 1-4, 8, 12 (2017) <input type="checkbox"/> VIEW Richard Misrach and Kate Orff, selections from <i>Petrochemical America</i> (2014) <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORE Climate Central, "Surging Seas" <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORE Climate Impact Lab, "Climate Impact Map" <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORE <i>New York Times</i> , "How Much Hotter is Your Hometown Than When You Were Born" (2018)
WEEK 10 W 4/7	<i>Climate data, climate stories, climate communities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> READ R. Guha and J. Martínez-Alier, "Environmentalism of the Poor" (1998) <input type="checkbox"/> READ M.F. Dahlstrom, "Using narratives and storytelling to communicate science with nonexpert audiences" (2014) <input type="checkbox"/> LISTEN / READ Winona LaDuke. "They Clearly Thought They'd Bought a Slam-Dunk Pipeline: An Interview" (2016) <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORE #NoDAPL feeds on Instagram and Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> WATCH <i>Chasing Ice</i>

WEEK 11 W 4/14	<i>Collaborative project showcase</i>  <i>Emerging genres / media of science communication</i> <input type="checkbox"/> READ/VIEW Lauren Redniss, <i>Thunder &amp; Lightning</i> (2015) <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORE Dear Climate project: posters, meditations, social media <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORE Selection of immersive and VR/AR climate stories
<b>F 4/16</b>	<b>DEADLINE: Collaborative project</b>
WEEK 12 W 4/21	<i>Seminar conclusions and synthesis   discussion of popular science stories</i>
<b>F 4/23</b>	<b>DEADLINE: Draft of popular science story for peer review in teams</b>
<b>F 5/5</b>	<b>DEADLINE: Final version of popular science story</b>