

## **The Climate of Literature**

Harvard University Department of English  
Fall Graduate Symposium | November 11-12, 2021

The Fall Graduate Symposium is an annual department event at which graduate students and a visiting keynote speaker present work on a shared theme. The event is an opportunity for students and faculty to come together, discussing questions that transcend periods and fields. We are now soliciting submissions for this year's theme: "The Climate of Literature."

In the twelve years since Dipesh Chakrabarty argued for the collapse of distinctions between human and natural history in "The Climate of History: Four Theses," ecocriticism has continued to gain footholds throughout the academy while public conversations about the global environmental crisis have only increased in urgency. Surveying the work of countless scholars—including that of Lawrence Buell and other colleagues in our own department—to evidence literature's role amid change on a planetary scale, this symposium asks: what texts, what ways of reading are needed to understand our climate now? How might literature and literary study highlight legacies of human responsibility—and motivate future action?

This symposium invites papers that consider climate from a variety of perspectives. Topics might include global warming, extreme weather, energy, industry, agriculture, animals, extinction, disease, apocalypse, rewilding, geoengineering, the Anthropocene, migration, displacement, intersections with gender, race, or empire, and more; discussions might touch on the ways in which particular genres/forms/texts conceive of ecology, respond to crisis, or create political and aesthetic "climates" of their own. Papers may approach these topics with attention to public humanities work, scholarship and activism, pedagogy, and methodology as well as close readings of individual texts.

Though our intention is to hold the symposium in person at Harvard, we are of course paying close attention to the CDC's recommendations as well as Harvard's developing policies regarding COVID-19. In the event that an in-person symposium becomes impossible, we will proceed virtually over Zoom. If you prefer to participate remotely regardless, please indicate this in your abstract.

Please send a 150-word description of your presentation to [englishcoordinator@g.harvard.edu](mailto:englishcoordinator@g.harvard.edu) by October 15, 2021. We look forward to hearing from you.