

4th HELAAS Young Scholar Symposium

Athens, March 2, 2024

HELAAS and National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

“(E-co)nnections: The Humanities in a Time of Climate Change”

Call for Papers

The Hellenic Association for American Studies (HELAAS) and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens cordially invite you to the 4th Young Scholar Symposium, a hybrid-format event which will take place on March 2, 2024 at the Library Amphitheatre of the School of Philosophy.

The climate crisis has dominated the public discourse of the early twenty-first century, driving political agendas, mobilizing citizens, and inspiring social action, calling for nothing less than a paradigm shift in our connection to the environment. Quite recently, the 2016 Paris Agreement put a spotlight on the pressing issue of climate change, binding 196 countries to science-based actions for social reformation. In light of the upcoming 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) in Dubai, UAE, and the long tradition of the humanities in offering the checks and balances to scientific progress, “(E-co)nnections: The Humanities in a World of Climate Change” aims to bring together scholars of American Studies and invite them to engage with the issue of climate change from their fresh (cross-)disciplinary perspectives.

As the world stands in awe of the recent images from NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope that celebrate the beauty of nature and spark scientific curiosity, we ask ourselves: how are these images reconciled with the fake news surrounding climate change as well as with the emergence of climate refugees? What is the role of the humanities in providing a more nuanced understanding of climate change and its implications?

Almost 200 years after two landmarks of American literary writing, Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Nature” (1836) and Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854), a rekindled interest in environmental geographies is registered. The growth of climate fiction texts such as Alexandra Kleeman’s *Something New Under the Sun* (2021) and Kim Stanley Robinson’s *The Ministry of the Future* (2020), runs parallel to a trend blooming in contemporary cinema, as evidenced in *Interstellar* (2014) or the apocalyptic *Don’t Look Up* (2021). Within this broader framework of literary and cultural production characterized by a climate crisis, the Symposium seeks to explore the ways in which climate change is understood, represented, and communicated in current sociopolitical and cultural contexts.

It is our understanding that the humanities (and current offshoots such as “environmental humanities” and “posthumanities”) hold a pivotal role in making the urgency of climate change less abstract in addition to fostering approaches to the global discussion on the environment that are based on ethics and inclusivity.

We invite proposals in the fields of literature, art, media, culture, education, and technology that address areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Ecocriticism, ecohumanism, and the environmental humanities;
- Representations of nature and climate change in literature and artistic manifestations;
- The rise of artificial intelligence, digital humanities, and contemporary media transformations;
- Climate activism and civic engagement;
- The environmental footprint of digital technologies;
- Migration and displacement due to climate change;
- Climate justice and social inequality;
- Health, climate emotions (eco-anxiety), and affect theory;
- Eco-fiction and utopian/dystopian narratives in print and digital media;
- Environmental education/literacy and communication;
- Climate change, information (mis)management and dissemination of ‘alternative facts’ in contemporary digital media;
- Posthumanism and visions of an ecological future;
- Postcolonial approaches to the non-human world;
- Ecofeminism in the Anthropocene;
- Travel, road narratives and landscapes;
- Documentary forms and ecological concerns (fast fashion, veganism etc.);
- Tourism, economy, and the environmental impact.

Contributions may consist of individual or collaborative (15-minute) papers, (3-speaker) panels, roundtables, and practical workshops. Send your proposal to helaasyoungscholars@gmail.com, by **November 1, 2023**. Each proposal submission should include an abstract no longer than 300 words and a 100-word biographical note of the contributor(s).

For further information, please, direct your emails to Dr. Theodora Tsimpouki, President of HELAAS (tsimpouki@enl.uoa.gr) or Dr. Thomas Mantzaris, HELAAS Young Scholar Representative (tmantzaris@enl.auth.gr).

Organizing Committee

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