

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF LETTERS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Syllabus

Title of the Course: IED 6/743 Comparative Novel
Instructor: Prof. Dr. SERPIL OPPERMAN
Year and Term: Spring 2016
Classroom and Hours: Seminar Room, Monday 13.00-16.50
Office Hours: Monday 10.00-11.30

Aim and Content:

This course focuses on the emerging genre of climate change fiction (known as “Cli-Fi”) comparing the cultural and social contexts in which selected American, British, and Turkish novels deal with pressing environmental problems. In a way we will be comparing “the cultures of climate change” (Stephanie LeMenager) and the Anthropocene epoch in exploring how different cultures respond to the severity of the global ecological crises. In responding to the fragility of ecosystems and the biological environments increasingly devastated by human practices, such as the use of pesticides, fracking, global pollution, and overconsumption of natural resources, the novels themselves aim to raise ecological awareness. They dramatize the ecological effects of human-induced alterations of the planet’s life-support systems. One of the questions we will address in analyzing the novels is, whether fictional texts from different cultural backgrounds offer new ways for thinking about climate change and other environmental issues. In other words, when scientific facts are slow to reach the public awareness, can eco-fiction succeed in changing our relations with the environments? Ecocritics and the environmental humanities scholars repeatedly argue that what “we need now are stories and characters that connect us to these facts—perhaps even without us knowing it at first—in ways that inspire lasting change and have the power to change our worldview” (John Yunker).¹ Yunker also states that “writing acts as a mirror, reflecting our culture, our time and place in history. Yet writing can also influence culture, nudge it forward, or redefine it entirely.” Dan Bloom, who coined and popularized the term “cli-fi,” also contends quoting Steve Masover (a cli-fi novelist) that “literature and film play a critical role in shaping human understanding of real world issues and solutions, and that changes in human understanding drive changes in social organization and behavior.”² Such claims will be discussed in detail while we analyze the novels within broader scientific, theoretical, and political debates about climate change and specifically about the scientifically and culturally debated question of the Anthropocene epoch. In doing so we will compare the novels’ stylistic conventions in addressing the issue of how their different cultural forms as well as the conventions they are written in shape the ways people see, understand, and relate to the world.

Course Outline:

¹ <http://www.ecolitbooks.com/2014/11/necessary-evolution-environmental-writing/>

² <http://www.sdjewishworld.com/2016/01/14/66609/>

Week I-III: Introducing Cli-Fi genre

1. Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow: "Cli-Fi: Birth of a Genre." *Dissent* (Summer 2013): 58-61.
2. Adam Trexler and Adeline Johns-Putra." Climate Change in Literature and Literary Criticism." *WIREs Clim Change* 2011 2 185–200 DOI: 10.1002/wcc.105
3. Terry Gifford: "Biosemiology and Globalism in *The Rapture* by Liz Jensen." *English Studies* 91.7 (November 2010): 713-727.
4. Greta Gaard. "What's the Story? Competing Narratives of Climate Change and Climate Justice." *Forum for World Literature Studies "Activist Ecocriticism Studies"* Spec. issue, ed. Simon Estok. 6.2 (June 2014): 272-291.
5. Greg Garrad, ed, *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*, (Chapter 23, Astrid Bracke. "The Contemporary English Novel and its Challenges to Ecocriticism." pp.423-439; and Ursula Kluwicz. "Talking about Climate Change: The Ecological Crisis and Narrative Form." Pp.502-516
6. Patricia Yaeger. "The Death of Nature and the Apotheosis of Trash." *PMLA* 123.2 (March 2008): 321-39.
7. ---. "Literature in the Ages of Wood, Tallow, Coal, Whale Oil, Gasoline, Atomic Power, and Other Energy Sources." *PMLA* 126.2 (March 2011): 305-326.
8. ---. "Sea Trash, Dark Pools, and the Tragedy of Commons." *PMLA* 125.3 (May 2010): 523-45.
9. Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer., et.al. "Anthropocene Ecologies: Biotechnical Relationalities in Late Capitalism." (See Cecilia Asberg in academia.edu)

Online Sources:

<https://sites.temple.edu/clifi/>

Ian Sample: "Anthropocene: Is this the new Epoch of Humans?"

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/oct/16/-sp-scientists-gather-talks-rename-human-age-anthropocene-holocene>

Robert Macfarlane: "The Burning Question."

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/sep/24/featuresreviews.guardianreview29>

Rodge Glass: "Global Warning: The Rise of Cli-Fi"

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/may/31/global-warning-rise-cli-fi>

Climate Change Fiction: <http://blogs.uoregon.edu/eng104/>

Week IV-VI: Introducing the Anthropocene Narratives

1. Jan Zalasiewicz, Mark Williams. Et al., "Are We Now Living in the Anthropocene?" *GSA Today* 18.2 (February 2008): 1-8.
2. Will Steffen, Paul J. Crutzen and John R. McNeill. "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?" *Ambio* 363.8 (December 2007): 614-621.
3. Jan Zalasiewicz, Mark Williams, Alan Haywood and Michael Ellis. "The Anthropocene: A New Epoch of Geological Time." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 369 (January 2011): 835-841.
4. Tobias Boes, Kate Marshall. "Writing the Anthropocene: An Introduction." *Minnesota Review* 83 (2014): 60-72.
5. Will Steffen, Jacques Grinevald, Paul Crutzen and John McNeill. "The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 369 (2011): 842-867.
6. Timothy Morton. "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Term *Athropocene*." *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 2014 doi:10.1017/pli.2014.15.

7. Crispin Tickell. "Societal Responses to the Anthropocene." *Philosophical Transactions: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 369 (2011): 926-932.
8. Nicole M. Merola. "Materializing a Geotraumatic and Melancholy Anthropocene: Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*." *Minnesota Review* 83 (2014): 122-132.
9. Kate Marshall. "What Are the Novels of the Anthropocene? American Fiction in Geological Time." *American Literary History* 27.3 (Fall 2015): 523-538.

Week VII-XIV: Discussions of novels:

Jeanette Winterson - *Stone Gods*

Liz Jensen - *The Rapture*

Marcel Theroux - *Far North*

John Burnside - *Glister*

Maggie Gee - *The Ice People*

Buket Uzuner - *Water*

Yaşar Kemal - *The Birds Have Also Gone*

Latife Tekin - *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*

Nathaniel Rich - *Odds Against Tomorrow*

JL. Morin - *Nature's Confession*

Saci Lloyd - *It's the End of the World as We Know It*

Richard Powers - *Gain*

Peter Heller - *The Dog Stars*

Karen Tei Yamashita - *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*

Ruth Ozeki - *My Year Of Meats*

Morgan Llywelyn – *The Elementals*

Yann Martel – *Beatrice and Virgil*

Raymond Federman – *Return to Manure*

Stephen Baxter – *Ark*

L.T. Gibbons – *Project Ark*

Useful Links:

What is Eco-Fiction?: <http://eco-fiction.com/eco-fiction/>

"Scenes from a Melting Planet: On the Climate-Change Novel."

<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/scenes-from-a-melting-planet-on-the-climate-change-novel>

"Cli-Fi: Birth of a Genre": [Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow](http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/cli-fi-birth-of-a-genre) ▪ [Summer 2013](#)

<http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/cli-fi-birth-of-a-genre>

"Global Warming: The Rise of 'Cli-Fi'":

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/may/31/global-warning-rise-cli-fi>

THE "Cli-Fi" REPORT: 50+ academic & media links: <http://cli-fi.net>

A NEW "Cli-Fi" (10 + 8) *Must-Read* Reading List for College Students, Academics:

<http://northwardho.blogspot.tw/2015/12/a-cli-fi-10-8-must-read-reading-list.html>

Welcome to first day of 406 A.D., (anthropocenus deflexus) since Anthropocene began 1610.

<http://northwardho.blogspot.tw/2015/12/this-era-is-no-longer-jesus-dated-anno.html>

Italian professor of eco-criticism explains about current status of "Cli-fi" in Italy now
<http://northwardho.blogspot.tw/2015/12/an-italian-professor-of-eco-criticism.html>

“Imagining Climate Change: Science & Fiction in Dialogue”-February 17–18, 2016-
 University of Florida

<https://imagining-climate.clas.ufl.edu/spring-2016-colloquium/>

Blog archives Cli-Fi classes worldwide: <http://pcillu101.blogspot.com>

Method of Instruction : lectures and student presentations

Requirements: Attendance is compulsory. More than 12 hours of absence will result in F1
 Each student is obligated to read every text listed in this course. The students are expected to study the critical writings and offer critical approaches informed by their ideas in their papers. The focus will be mainly on analyzing the novels in their light. The students are responsible for preparing critical papers on the novels drawing on the ideas presented in scientific and theoretical texts, reflecting on the problematic relationship human and more-than-human forces, and environments.

Method of Assessment: Students are to write ONE major argumentative essay of about 15 pages (Term Paper) with a comparative critical approach of 2 novels of their choice which aims to test their abilities to respond critically to the novels. Students are also to produce class presentations of the listed texts every week. They are expected to attend lectures and participate in class discussions. The aim here is to encourage close attention to the texts and open up lively discussions.

The final assesment will be made on the following basis:

Exam	50%
Major Written Term Paper	30%
Position/Response Papers and Presentations	20%

Texts to be studied as supplementary material.

1. Robert Henson. *The Rough Guide to Climate Change*. London: Rough Guides, 2006.
2. Mark Whitehead. *Environmental Transformations: A Geography of the Anthropocene*. New York: Routledge, 2014.
3. Heather Houser. *Ecosickness in Contemporary U.S Fiction: Environment and Affect*. New York: Columbia UP, 2014.
4. Jim Dwyer. *Where the Wild Books Are: A Field Guide to Ecofiction*. Reno: U of Nevada P, 2010.
5. Adam Trexler. *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*. U of Virginia P, 2015.
6. Rob Nixon. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2011.
7. Nancy Langston. *Toxic Bodies: Hormone Disrupters and the Legacy of DES*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2010