In this time of profound environmental transformation, humanities perspectives are urgently needed to help interpret the rapidly changing world around us and chart a path towards a more just and sustainable future.
We launched Yale Environmental Humanities five years ago to highlight and deepen the pioneering work in humanistic studies of the environment across the Yale campus. With more than a dozen environmental humanities-related campus programs and over fifty faculty working in this vital, expansive field, we sought ways to better connect, publicize, and deepen this collective scholarship, interdisciplinary teaching, and public engagement. The program was brought into being in the spirit of community, in response to some of the most significant challenges of our times.

In this present moment of rapid and profound environmental change, humanities scholars have an important opportunity to reshape how we think about environmental problems and to contribute to broad interdisciplinary conversations about humanity’s future. Environmental challenges, including the looming threat of climate change, demand a deeper understanding of how humans relate to each other and to the natural world. Our visions of possible worlds, ethical relationships, and social organization will play a determining role in shaping our shared planetary future.

Through our website and events, curated common calendar, weekly newsletters, and course compilations, Yale Environmental Humanities has served as a platform for Yale faculty and students who are at the forefront of the humanistic exploration of the environment. As a program, we have sought to build on these campus strengths, bringing together participants from diverse fields, including history, anthropology, architecture, literature, religious studies, environment, law, history of art, music, film and media studies, and the arts. We have strengthened this intellectual community through collaborative public programming, a new graduate certificate in the environmental humanities, and a small grants program that encourages Yale affiliates to put the humanities into action. In the coming years, we hope to expand our public-facing work related to energy and climate, and to continue to support a dynamic and diverse community on campus and beyond.

At a time when the humanities are increasingly required to show their importance and role in contemporary higher education, the environmental humanities demonstrate how deeper humanistic understanding and humanities practices are necessary to make sense of, and even solve, urgent social-environmental problems. Yale Environmental Humanities builds on Yale’s legacy in the humanities and in environmental studies to further such work together, and so contribute to our collective social and environmental well-being.

Paul Sabin, Faculty Director, Yale Environmental Humanities
Randolph W. Townsend, Jr. Professor of History and American Studies

Yale Environmental Humanities gratefully acknowledges the support of the inaugural 320 York Humanities Grant Program, Faculty of Arts and Sciences Division of Humanities, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, School of the Environment, School of Architecture, Planetary Solutions Project, Whitney Humanities Center, Yale College Environmental Studies, Center for Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration, Council on East Asian Studies, Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Memorial Fund, and Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale.
Background on the Program

Yale Environmental Humanities is a campus-wide effort to advance faculty and student teaching and research, and to showcase Yale’s strengths in the study of the environment across the humanities and the humanistic social sciences. It is a multi-disciplinary program with a global scope that partners with many of Yale’s department and schools, programs and centers, including the MacMillan Center’s regional councils, Center for Environmental Justice, Forum on Religion and Ecology, Institute for Sacred Music, Law, Ethics and Animals Program (LEAP), Program in Agrarian Studies, Whitney Humanities Center, Yale Environmental History, among many others.

Yale Environmental Humanities hosts a common calendar promoting more than 150 environmental humanities events across campus each year. Each week, the program circulates a newsletter to more than 1600 people promoting events and activities. The program also distributes course compilations to publicize dozens of undergraduate and graduate/professional offerings in the environmental humanities. A successful Graduate Certificate in the Environmental Humanities, sponsored by the Graduate School, is pursued by a dozen new students each year, including students from across FAS departments and professional schools.

Through Yale Environmental Humanities’ innovative small grants program, Yale students, staff, and faculty pursue diverse public humanities projects, including public art and performance, oral histories, documentary films, collaborative mapping, and New Haven-based initiatives.

Over the past five years, Yale Environmental Humanities has been guided by a steering committee whose faculty members, past and present, have included:

- Paul Sabin (Professor of History; Faculty Director, Yale Environmental Humanities);
- Sunil Amrith (Professor of History);
- Deborah Coen, (Professor of History of Science and Medicine);
- Keller Easterling (Professor of Architecture);
- Cajetan Iheka (Associate Professor, English);
- Katja Lindskog (Lecturer, English);
- Lisa Messeri (Assistant Professor, Anthropology);
- Rick Prum (Professor of Ornithology, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology);
- Jennifer Raab (Associate Professor, History of Art);
- Oswald Schmitz (Professor of Population and Community Ecology)
- K. Sivaramakrishnan (Professor of Anthropology and Environment);
- Gary Tomlinson (Professor of Music & the Humanities);
- Gerald Torres (Professor of Environmental Justice, YSE; Professor of Law, YLS);
- Mary Evelyn Tucker (Senior Lecturer, YSE/Divinity/Religious Studies);
- Michael Warner (Professor of English and American Studies).

The Steering Committee also has benefited from the service of graduate students, postdocs, and affiliates from Anthropology, Environment, History of Art, History, Law, Literature, Music, and other programs. These have included: Siobhan Angus, Samara Brock, Paul Burow, Estrella Castillo, Deepi Chatti, Hannah Cole, Breeanna Elliott, Mark Frank, Shalini Iyengar, Lav Kanoi, Caitlin Kossmann, Isabel Lane, Gabriel Lee, Charlotte Leib, Tyler Lutz, Camila Marcone, Jeania Ree Moore, Viveca Morris, Carlos Nugent, Taylor Rose, Ashanti Shih, Tomo Sugimoto, Lydia Tuan, Ilia Tyagi, Katharine Walter, Teona Williams, Shoko Yamada, and Helen Yang.
Environmental Humanities Courses and Faculty

Each academic year, Yale offers dozens of courses that approach environmental issues from a broad range of humanities perspectives. Some of the courses are entirely focused on the environment and the humanities; others approach the environmental humanities as one of several integrated themes. Through such courses, faculty and students from diverse disciplines and programs across the university together can pursue a broad interdisciplinary conversation about humanity and the fate of the planet. These included courses offered by departments and programs such as African Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, Architecture, English, Film Studies, History, Philosophy, Religion Sociology, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies among others.

A small sampling of course titles drawn from course listings over five years is offered below to indicate the breadth of fields and topics represented:

- “Culture, Power, Oil” - Douglas Rogers
- “Rivers and Civilization” - Harvey Weiss
- “Plants and People” - Linda Puth
- “Man and Nature in Chinese Literature” - Kang-i Sun Chang
- “Landscape, Mobility, and Dislocation” - Jennifer Raab and Tim Barringer
- “The Politics of Food” - Max Chaoulideer
- “Perfect Worlds? Utopia and Dystopia in Western Cultures” - Maria Jordan
- “Postcolonial Ecologies” - Cajetan Iheka
- “Reckoning Environmental Uncertainty” - Anthony Acciavatti
- “Environment, Medicine, and Science in South and Southeast Asia” - Sunil Amrith
- “Fruits of Empire” - Gary Okihiro
- “Environmental Justice in Modern South Asia” - Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan
- “Home” - Felisa Baynes-Ross
- “Animal Law” - Jonathan Lovvorn and Doug Kysar

Since the program’s founding in 2018, several scholars working in fields related to the environmental humanities have joined the Yale faculty. They include:

Anthony Acciavatti  Alvita Akioboh  Sunil Amrith  Hi‘ilei Hobart  Jonathan Howard  Cajetan Iheka
Elleza Kelley  Lisa Messeri  Morgan Ng  Carolyn Roberts  Gerald Torres  Nurfadzilah Yahaya
The Graduate Certificate Program

The Graduate Certificate in the Environmental Humanities is available to Yale doctoral students and professional school students who seek to establish a strong foundation in environmental humanities topics and methodologies across the humanities disciplines and the humanistic social sciences. Through a holistic curriculum, certificate students create (i) an individualized elective concentration, (ii) complete two semesters of the Environmental Humanities certificate workshop, (iii) present their research in an interdisciplinary setting, and (iv) fulfill teaching requirements or pursue public humanities projects. To date, twenty-two students have completed the certificate, and a number of certificate recipients, who have completed their PhDs, have gone on to impressive teaching, postdoctoral, and industry positions.

- Knar Abrahamyan, PhD ‘22, Music – Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Race at Columbia University
- Elena Adasheva-Klein, PhD candidate, Anthropology
- Hanna Ehrlich, PhD ‘22, School of Public Health - Postdoctoral Fellow at the EpiCenter for Disease Dynamics, University of California, Davis
- Kristy Ferraro, PhD candidate, Yale School of the Environment
- Abigail Fields, PhD Candidate, French
- Anna Hill, PhD ‘22, English – Postdoctoral Fellow, Vanderbilt University
- Shalini Iyengar, PhD candidate, Anthropology
- Lav Kanoi, PhD candidate, Anthropology and Environment
- Vanessa Koh, PhD ‘23, Anthropology and Environment - Mellon Fellow in Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities, Princeton University
- Caitlin Kossmann, PhD candidate, Program in the History of Science
- Charlotte Leib, PhD candidate, History
- Cheng Li, PhD ’22, East Asian Literatures and Cultures - Assistant Professor of Chinese Studies at Carnegie Mellon University
- Tyler Lutz, PhD ’21, Physics – PhD Student, Department of English, University of Chicago
- Carlos Nugent, PhD ’20, English – Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University
- Kaggie Orrick, PhD Candidate, Environment
- George Papamatthaiakis, MEd ’23, Architecture
- Taylor Rose, PhD candidate, History
- Lindsay Stern, PhD candidate, Comparative Literature
- Miklós Veszprémi, PhD ’22, Music – Sustainability and M&A Consultant, EY-Parthenon
- Sarah Weston, PhD candidate, History of Art and English
- Teona Williams, PhD ’22, History and African American Studies - Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow in Geography at Rutgers University-New Brunswick
- Helen Yang, PhD candidate, English

Whitney Fellowship in the Environmental Humanities

Yale Environmental Humanities and the Whitney Humanities Center co-sponsor the Whitney Fellowship in the Environmental Humanities for Yale Graduate School students. The distinction comes with supplemental research funds, mentorship, and additional programming. To date, two cohorts of fellows have undertaken the program, with a third matriculating in 2023:

2021–22

- Meenakshi A, History
- Allegra Ayida, History
- Shubhashree Basnyat, English
- Dante LaRiccia, History
- Camila Marcone, Medieval Studies
- Julien Néel, French
- Harshavardan Raghunandhan, History
- Nelli Yang, East Asian Languages & Literatures
- Parker Zane, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations

2022–23

- Ding-Liang Chen, American Studies & Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
- Pierre Forfert, French
- Sasha Karsavina, Slavic Studies
- Aishwarya Kazi, Anthropology
- Nathaniel LaCelle-Peterson, Film and Media Studies and Comparative Literature
- Mikhail Moosa, History
- Marcus Yee, History
Post-Doctoral Fellows

Yale Environmental Humanities has partnered with the Council on East Asian Studies and the Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration to bring three postdoctoral fellows to Yale. We have also welcomed visiting postdoctoral fellows in History and History of Art. These scholars have participated in the intellectual life of the Environmental Humanities program, serving on its steering committee, and helping to facilitate the “Topics in the Environmental Humanities” workshop with program faculty. This required workshop for the Graduate Certificate in Environmental Humanities explores key concepts in the field and diverse approaches to pedagogy and methods.

Tomo Sugimoto (Council on East Asian Studies Fellow)

Tomo Sugimoto came to Yale as postdoctoral associate studying the rise of the indigenous rights discourse in Taiwan. His ethnographic research focused on urbanized Austronesians’ land reclamation movement in the face of violent displacement, and explored the differences in treatment and popular perception of certain native claims to foraging, fishing, hunting, and dwelling on Taipei’s land. Sugimoto is currently a UX researcher using his ethnographic training in the private sector.

Mark Frank (Council on East Asian Studies Fellow)

Mark Frank is an environmental historian of China and the world. His most recent project used archival research to explore the relationship between agrarianism and colonialism along the borders of late Qing China. His second book aims to understand China’s relationship with the atmosphere from the late imperial era through the early 21st-century. Frank has previously studied Chinese yak improvement schemes, high-altitude crop experiments, and sedentary-nomadic relations in eastern Tibet during the early 20th century. Frank is now a Faculty Member in History at the Fulbright University, Vietnam.

Hannah Cole (Center for Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration)

Hannah Cole specializes in Caribbean literature. Her work traces post-colonial depictions of plant biodiversity to explore the effects of monoculture plantation society and the ways in which lesser-known flora might provide material and symbolic resources to captive subjects. Her digital humanities project (www.botanicalimaginaries.com) offers interactive maps of plant migration in Caribbean literary texts. Cole is currently a Lecturer on History & Literature at Harvard University.

Gabriel Lee (Cassius Marcellus Clay Fellow, History)

Gabriel Lee specializes in United States environmental history, particularly after the onset of the industrial revolution. His past research has focused on topics ranging from ecological and social change in the Outer Banks to the political economy of concrete. His current book project investigates the environmental, technological, and labor relations of the Portland cement concrete industry in early 20th-century America, including its use in highways, structural architecture, and the control of water. Lee is now a History teacher at the Putney School in Vermont.

Siobhan Angus (Banting Fellow, History of Art)

Siobhan Angus’ research in the history of photography examines the visual culture of resource extraction, capitalism, environmental justice, and settler-colonialism. Her work highlights connections between image-making and mining while showing photography’s potential to confront the current ecological crisis. Angus is currently a professor of communication and media studies at Carleton University. Her forthcoming book, Camera Geologica (Duke University Press) will be published in 2024.
Conference and Symposia Programming

Yale Environmental Humanities regularly organizes interdisciplinary symposia and conferences gathering scholars from within and beyond Yale to share research on cutting-edge topics in the environmental humanities. A sampling of conference and symposia posters is presented below.

- **Plant Humanities Symposium** (Spring 2023)
- **Re(thinking) Landscape Conference** (Fall 2022)
- **Black Environmentalisms Symposium** (Fall 2022)
- **Environmental Humanities Graduate Research Symposium** (Spring 2023)
- **Environmental Humanities Graduate Research Symposium** (Fall 2021)
- **The Aerial Image Conference** (Spring 2019)
- **Academic Careers in the Environmental Humanities** (Spring 2018)

**Keywords:**
- Infrastructure, Temporality, Extremity (Spring 2020)
- Sexuality, Extration, Standing (Spring 2021)
- Sexuality, Extration, Standing (Spring 2021)
- Sexuality, Extration, Standing (Spring 2021)
- Sexuality, Extration, Standing (Spring 2021)
- Sexuality, Extration, Standing (Spring 2021)
The Public Humanities Grants Program

In an effort to engage a wider public with humanities perspectives on environmental issues, Yale Environmental Humanities runs an innovative small grants program. With support from this grant, Yale students, staff, and faculty pursue diverse public humanities projects, including public art and performance, oral histories, documentary films, collaborative mapping, and New Haven-based initiatives. To date, we have awarded over forty grants. The program also organizes “Humanities in Action” panels to showcase this work and inspire further action in these fields. A few examples of these projects follow:

What is Graphic Design Made Of? (2022)
In March 2022, School of Art student Miguel Gaydosh (MFA ‘22) convened What is Graphic Design Made Of?, a symposium investigating graphic design’s material ecology, infrastructure, pedagogy, and potential to address environmental crises. The symposium included workshops, presentations, and installations. Read more at https://wigdmo.org/.

Mapping Grounds for Reparations (2021)
Co-organized by a team of art and architecture students at Yale and the Universidade de São Paulo, this project created a set of maps that contribute to Guarani initiatives to increase public awareness about Guarani land rights in the Jaraguá landscape and to preserve the remaining Atlantic Forest within the region. Learn more about the project at https://groundsforreparations.com/.

Ezell: Ballad of a Land Man (2020)
Taiga Christie (MPH ‘19), then the Yale Schwarzman Center Arts & Public Health Fellow, used her grant funding to produce two outdoor performance pieces in 2022 at Yale’s West Campus. This Place Is a Message is an original outdoor ensemble performance using the immediacy of COVID-19 to conceptualize the climate crisis, while Ezell: Ballad of a Land Man is an environmental, cultural and spiritual parable derived from living in the foothills of Appalachia, one man among many seeking to make sense of the time, place and condition in which we live.

Select Posters: Humanities in Action Panels
Read what Yale Environmental Humanities graduate students have to say:

“The tools I have gained from this certificate will be instrumental as I continue to fight for environmental protections and animal conservation.” - Kristy Ferraro

“As I continue my dissertation research and writing, I will be thinking about Indigenous knowledges and appropriations of Indigeneity, about practices of making technologies and using them to know the Earth, and about various scientific and moral models of the world that have been refracted through the concept of Gaia since the 1970s. My environmental humanities coursework has been essential in shaping my thinking so far, and I know I will continue to rely on many of my fellow environmental humanities scholars as the project progresses.” - Caitlin Kossman

“I understand the Environmental Humanities as a necessary, and generative attempt to engage humanistic scholarship, learning, and experiences in an effort to rephrase environmental challenges in more just, equitable ways—while simultaneously attempting to provide solutions to the existential environmental problems of our times such as global warming.” - Oliver Lucier

- “Understanding and combating the environmental issues that face us in the present is a task that requires curiosity and cross-disciplinary engagement, and the courses … provided me with the means to undertake work in my own field and in the environmental humanities more broadly.” - Anna Hill

“The growing body of scholarship within environmental humanities aims to de-center the human and take non-human agency seriously. I am interested in the works that challenge techno-scientific perspectives on nature as a source for endless economic growth and national prosperity... Three elective courses, taken for this program, allowed me to engage with this theme from different angles.” - Elena Adasheva-Klein

“In many ways, epidemiologists think like environmental humanists. Both are attuned to multispecies relations, complex networks and ecologies, tensions in the relationship between nature and culture. Done well, both integrate many different kinds of evidence and methods to address longstanding human problems. I was drawn to the environmental humanities because while it felt familiar in these ways, it offered a different set of conceptual and interpretive tools to address major questions facing global health.” – Hanna Ehrlich

“The environmental humanities has expanded my methods, frameworks, and approach to Black Studies, as it has become evident that you cannot disentangle Black liberation from the more than human world. In this way, I have been encouraged to join new fields at their very beginnings.” – Teona Williams
Hannah Freed-Thall
(Associate Professor of French Literature, Thought, and Culture, NYU)

Thursday, November 4 at 4 PM
HQ room 136 and on zoom

Yale Environmental Humanities presents
Humans in Action: Storytelling About Rural Transformation & Spring 2023 Welcome Back Reception
January 19, 4:00–6:00 pm
HQ 134 (320 York Street)

A Panel discussion with Suzana Sawyer and Julio Prieto
moderated by Paul Sabin

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS
Tuesday April 16 5:30-6:30 pm
Bowers Auditorium, Sage Hall
Light dinner served

Suzana Sawyer is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at UC Davis who examines struggles over resources in the Amazonian Ecuador. Julio Prieto is lawyer specializing in Environmental Law, Indigenous Rights and Rights of Nature. He represents Ecuadorean indigenous and farmers communities fighting oil pollution in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

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