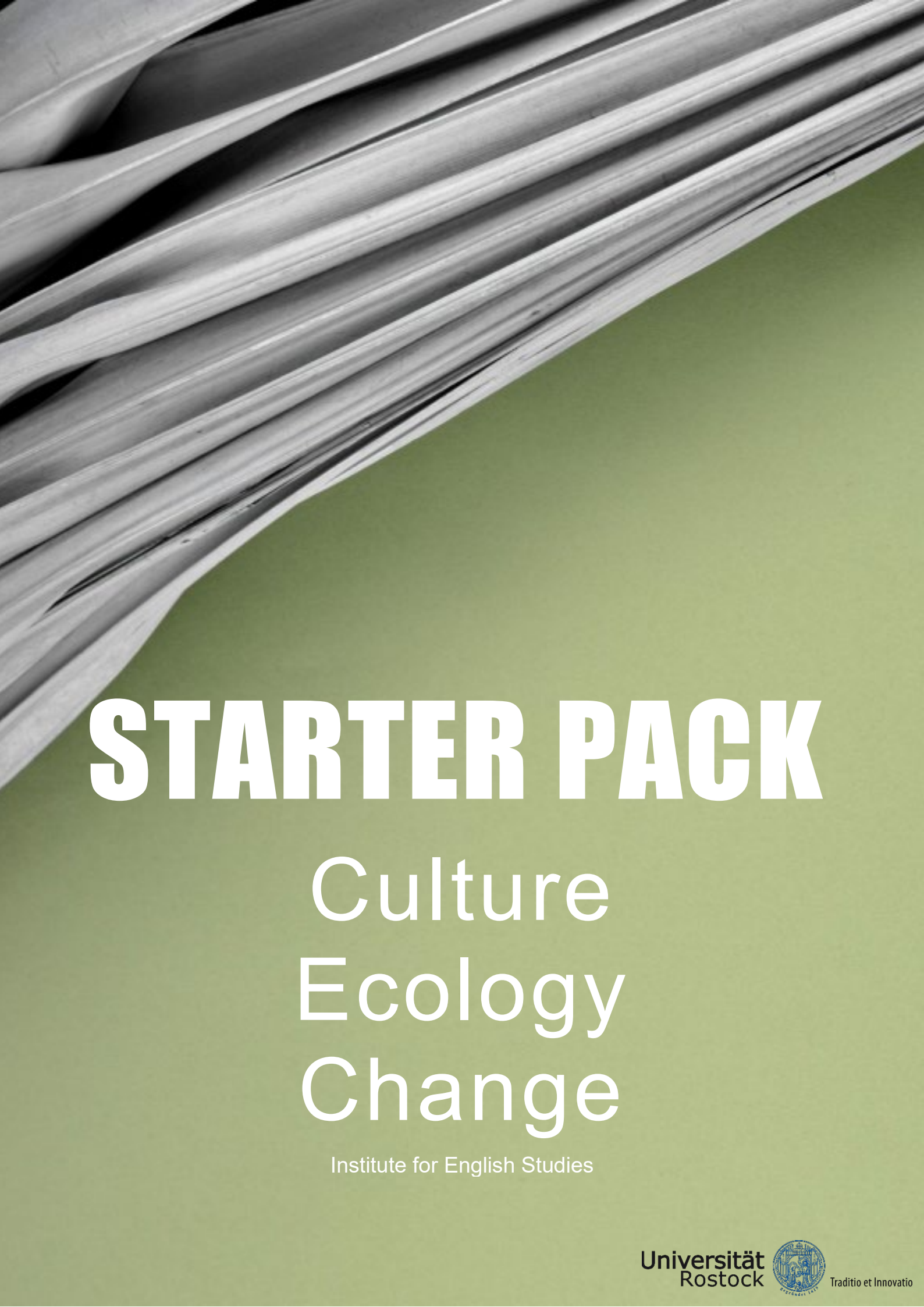




STARTER PACK

Culture
Ecology
Change

Institute for English Studies

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Starter Pack: Culture, Ecology, Change

Dear (new and prospective) Culture, Ecology, Change-students,

if you are reading this document and introduction, you are either considering studying Culture, Ecology, Change (or, as we call it, *CEC*) or are already enrolled into the programme. We're happy you're here and/or hope to see you in Rostock very soon.

This document, or "survival pack" as we have lovingly labelled it, is designed to give you a first idea of what you are about to encounter in your everyday academic ventures. It is not a comprehensive overview but hopefully gives you some helpful orientation (especially if you are coming from a non-humanities academic background).

We have organised this 'starter pack' into five short sections. First, the **programme overview and basic information section** gives you a short overview of the structure and different components of your degree. It may seem overwhelming now, but do not despair. You will receive more guidance later. Then, mainly for those from different academic backgrounds, we provide a very short introduction to **literary & cultural studies**, each from the perspective of your lecturers and current CEC-students. We hope that this gives you an idea of what we *actually* do day-to-day. Thirdly, the **Tips & Tricks** section gathers some practical advice from staff and (current) students - suggestions for managing workload, participating in seminars, making the most of your (and our) time, etc. Next, we have compiled a short list of **preliminary reading suggestions**. These are texts we like to work with and think about, so they may (or may not...) come up again during your studies with us. Last but not least, the **Glossary of Important Terms** offers (very) brief explanations of (some) key concepts you will encounter throughout our studies, along with suggestions for possible further reading. These are by no means exhaustive definitions, and you will surely learn that we like to question everything regardless of how 'clear-cut' it may seem - but we hope they can be a starting point for you to feel more at home with the kind of terms and vocabulary of our field(s).

We hope our "starter pack" helps you to get a sense of orientation before you begin your "Culture, Ecology, Change" journey with us. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to having you!

Esther-Marie Schilling (study coordinator)

& Prof. Christian Schmitt-Kilb, Prof. Kylie Crane, Prof. Marion Schulte, Prof. René Dietrich.

With special thanks to Bonnie McClellan and Tabitha Wedemann without whom this document would not exist!

1. Programme Overview and Basic Information

LP/ credit points										
	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
1 st semester	Theory: Culture, Ecology, Sustainability ("Theories") Theorie: Culture, Ecology, Sustainability		Theoretical Approaches to Ecological-Cultural Change ("Approaches") Zugänge zu Theorien ökologisch-kulturellen Wandels			Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainability 1 Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf Nachhaltigkeit 1		Free Choice		
2 nd semester	Diachronic Dimensions of Ecological-Cultural Change Diachrone Dimensionen ökologisch-kulturellen Wandels				Science Communication Wissenschaftskommunikation		Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainability 2 Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf Nachhaltigkeit 2		Experiences and Reflection on Culture- Ecology-Change (Internship) Praktikum: Culture, Ecology, Change	
3 rd semester	Research Culture and Sustainability Forschung Kultur und Nachhaltigkeit		Transformation: Designing Futures Transformation: Zukunft gestalten				Entanglements of Ecologies and Cultures Verflechtungen von Ökologie und Kulturen			
4 th semester	M.A. Thesis "Culture, Ecology, Change"									

modules / contents

“Approaches” introduces interdisciplinary perspectives and core areas for analysing the material and cultural dimensions of contemporary crises, such as the climate crisis and environmental degradation, as well as their socio-cultural and economic effects. The module comprises a lecture series and seminar covering a wide range of academic fields and perspectives such as literary and cultural studies, economics, media studies, marine ecology, biology, and more. A special focus is placed on core theories of environmental humanities and (literary) ecocriticism, and how these intersect with, for instance, postcolonial approaches, human-animal studies, or Indigenous studies.

“Theories” is designed to introduce you to the dynamic fields of the *environmental humanities* and *ecocriticism*, two related bodies of theory and critical thinking that

- acknowledge that we live in the "Anthropocene", an age of multiple anthropogenic environmental and humanitarian crises (e.g. the climate crisis),
- recognize the urgency to think beyond the conventional dichotomy of nature and culture, and to read and work across disciplinary boundaries, in order to understand and critically engage with these crises,
- negotiate fundamental questions and problems which the idea of an inextricable entanglement of the human and the more-than-human world poses for cultural and literary studies, but also for the humanities in general.

Reading a wide variety of theoretical texts, you are invited to question apparently self-evident binaries such as "nature" and "culture"; be made acquainted with central concepts such as the Anthropocene, post-humanism, anthropocentrism, scaling/scalar literacy, environmental justice, and slow violence; and learn about fields of study such as Postcolonial Ecologies, Material Ecocriticism, Ecopoetics, Human-Animal-Studies, Blue Humanities, (New) Nature Writing, and Ecofeminism.

“Interdisciplinary Perspectives” (1 & 2) offers trans- and interdisciplinary perspectives on key topics and themes of the M.A., especially from fields outside of literary and cultural studies. Generally, you are free to choose a seminar or lecture from the selected catalogue. Courses offered vary each term but may include topics such as and insights into planetary ecological connectivity, sustainability and development policies, questions of legal justice, biodiversity, marine ecology, as well as agricultural land management.

“Diachronics” centres temporal aspects of ecological crises and social change in a global context. By mobilizing and transforming historical knowledge of anthropogenic intrusions into the environment, the module fosters an understanding of contemporary phenomena of the Anthropocene and their possible developments. You describe, analyse, and

critically assess the various interdependencies between ecological aspects of past infrastructures, historical technologies and economies, everyday practices (from food to leisure cultures), human-animal relations, and ideologies of progress and development. In seminars offered by the English Department, you further train your capacity to analyse and critique the social, cultural, and intellectual dimensions of ecologically relevant practices, and the resulting transformations, from antiquity to imagined futures.

“Science Communication” provides knowledge and skills for translating scientific and academic content into more accessible forms of communication for a larger audience. You train your ability to efficiently and effectively communicate scientific knowledge to a variety of addressees. Discussions address the actors and institutions involved in science communication, as well as how science, the media and the public sphere interact. Examples of and principles pertaining to science communication formats are introduced and analysed, and strategies towards developing abilities in communicating science for a lay audience are practiced. Focusing on discourses in the field of natural sciences, but also including culture, education, politics, and economy, the module explicitly addresses contexts, methods, and problems of science communication.

The **“Internship”** allows you to gather practical experience. You are encouraged to autonomously find a placement and plan your internship in consultation with the course coordinator. Placements may be with the University of Rostock, other academic institutions, non-governmental initiatives and organisations, communal administrations, businesses involved in future technologies, art and architecture projects, etc.. Internships can also be completed abroad.

“Entanglements” explores and investigates the interdependencies and synchronicities of different forms and theories regarding eco-cultural sustainability from primarily cultural- and literary studies, as well as linguistic perspectives. You engage with scientific perspectives and theoretical approaches to socio-ecological phenomena and their transformation in a global context, and test different perspectives and knowledges of (anglophone) ecocriticism and environmental humanities approaches. Special focus is placed on the entanglements of anthropocentric cultures with the more-than-human world. Further topics might include: the Anthropocene, environmental ethics, human-animal-studies, ecofeminism, and eco-linguistics.

“Transformation” combines seminar work with an independent group project. You acquire knowledge about different theories of transformation (crises, transition, rebuilding, agency, resilience, future planning, etc.) and investigate philosophies of change, methods of social and ecological restoration and resilience, theories of cooperation and reciprocity, as well

as literary-cultural utopian and dystopian fictions. Based on this theoretical knowledge, you conduct a practical project.

“Research” offers insights into current academic research in the field of anglophone *environmental humanities*. You engage with cutting-edge research, including (first) encounters with academic research and project management. You formulate their own research inquiry (which might test the grounds for a potential MA thesis topic) and critically reflect on your own and other students’ work to this end.

The M.A.-thesis is the final step of your studies. You can choose and develop their own topic from academic contexts within or relating to anglophone cultural studies, literary studies, or linguistics. The main interest of the thesis must relate to the environmental humanities, and/or in line with the MA study programme. There are regular exchanges and consultations with your chosen supervisor(s).

Basic Information

modules and classes

“Culture, Ecology, Change” is organised into different *modules*. A module can consist of two different classes, e.g. a lecture and a seminar, two seminars, or just one single seminar. Sometimes (e.g. in Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainability), we offer a choice of different topics (i.e. seminars) for the same module, and you may pick the one that interests you most (you may have a seminar called “Ecolinguistics” for the module “Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainability 1”).

official regulations

Please make sure to read through (and understand!) your SPSO (Studiengangsspezifische Studien-& Prüfungsordnung, *course specific study and exam regulations*). Take note of important deadlines (e.g. when you must register for examinations for your respective modules and, later, for your MA-thesis).

The documents are all available via our [website](#).

more info to come...and university email

You will receive more detailed information regarding your classes in the first term, when and how to sign up, important dates in the first week(s), etc. closer to the start of the term in October. **Make sure to set up and regularly check your university email account** and use it for all correspondence with lecturers. This ensures that your emails are not filtered out; also, messages to students in seminars are sent via the online platform for teaching at the university (called [StudIP](#), say shtood-ai-pee) and delivered to this email address.

You can also find a 1st-semester checklist on our website.

2. Literary & Cultural Studies

What is literary studies?

Literary studies is concerned with the reading, analysis and interpretation of literary texts in the context of culture, history, political themes such as "race", class, gender, ecology, etc. Acknowledging the complex entanglement of themes and styles together with a good understanding of how the specific discourse of literature works is necessary to make reading literature critically "productive". In other words: content and meaning in a literary work are not independent of the formal qualities a text possesses. Students of literature have to deal with (literary) history, genre questions, theories of all kinds, philosophical ideas, and cultural-political positions in a critical and self-reflexive manner. Literary Theory, Literary History and Literary Criticism mutually inform each other to consider the individual text not only as a cultural artefact but as a social phenomenon, not merely representation and reflection of environment and society, but a constitutive part of them. As a productive, material process that shapes and is shaped by social and environmental conditions, literature is a powerful tool to help us make sense of ourselves as human beings in our environment, historical moment.

A student's perspective:

In the literary studies portion of this programme, we read literary texts (ecopoetry, short stories, novels, (New) Nature Writing, etc.) from different historical / cultural / literary contexts and analyse them in regard to how human-non-human-relationships are portrayed, challenged and/or renegotiated. We do so by applying concepts and theories from the environmental humanities to these texts. Looking at literature is useful to consider how people have thought and written about environment and crisis, and the contribution such texts may make to bearing witness, creating alternative meanings, and catalysing change. If you do not have a literary studies background but are interested in this aspect of the course, I recommend taking the "Introduction to Literary Studies" seminar for the Free Choice module – I found this very helpful to get familiar with how to approach literary analysis and interpretation.

What is cultural studies?

Cultural Studies *is* and *does* a lot of things. As practiced at the University of Rostock, and in CEC especially, it means thinking about a wide range of cultural texts/artefacts using a set of key concepts (such as, but in no way limited to: Race, Class, Gender, Age, Sexuality, Religion, Modernity, Environment, Media, Intersectionality, ...). We draw insights from many disciplinary contexts to think about what we make of culture and how culture makes us while keeping in mind each artefact's specific cultural context. At the MA level, we spend time reading academic writing from various disciplinary backgrounds about key ideas; we discuss the assumptions and interventions made by the writers; and we think about how this shapes our understanding of a broad range of cultural artefacts, including (but not restricted to): advertisements, documentaries, films, material culture (everything from caps to cups), music and music videos, nature writing, photography, policy documentation, travel writing, ...

(adapted from Kylie Crane, 2022, "Some Fundamentals of Cultural Studies in 12 Music Videos")

A student's perspective:

In the cultural studies courses of this program, we look at various phenomena (such as aspects of everyday life, media, trends, objects, ecosystems, animals, materials, etc.) from multiple critical angles and ask questions like: What can this thing mean, and for whom? How is that meaning created? What power structures does this thing reproduce, maintain, or challenge? With what cultural and historical contexts is this thing entangled? In the context of the environmental humanities, the CEC cultural studies courses especially feature representations of the more-than-human world as well as practices and discourses which reveal something about the complex relationship between humans and the more-than-human world. Sometimes it feels like doing a close reading of things that aren't words, like a close reading of the cling-wrap in your kitchen. Other times it feels like being a detective decoding the everyday and parsing the implicit assumptions that give a phrase or a practice or a commonly held belief its meaning. You might find yourself getting really invested in things you've never noticed before and you might find yourself with many seemingly unrelated search engine tabs open by the end of class!

A note on written assignments of any kind:

Please do not write “for us”. Meaning: you should not present ideas, interpretations, or conclusions simply because you believe they align with the personal views or preferences of your lecturers/examiners. A paper is good if and when its logic is consistent and backed up with evidence, not because it caters/adheres to a specific (individual) viewpoint. The goal of these written exams is to showcase your own scholarly skills, work, and ability to engage with academic discourse(s). We value original ideas, inquiries, perspectives, analyses, interpretations, ... and are not so much interested in the mere re-production of already written and established opinions. On that note: reproducing (& distorting) what has already been written is what AI does. **Do yourself (and us!) the favour (and pay yourself and us respect) and do not use AI to write your papers.** AI draws on extensive environmental resources, plagiarises from written work, and creates arguments that are plausible but not original: All these factors go against the ethos of this master (and, arguable, of education more broadly).

3. Tips & Tricks

tip 1: annotate what you read.

Annotations, more broadly speaking, are notes you take in and on a text while reading. We recommend you annotate what you read, always – primary texts (novels, short stories, poems, ...) and secondary texts. (For a video on annotations, see here: [How to annotate a scientific article](#)). **Also: look up words that you do not know!**

Possible annotation methods:

- use the blank pages in the back of the book to track page numbers with passages relevant for a certain topic/theme
- use colour-coded tabs to mark sections you want to return to/ motifs/ characters/...
- in secondary texts, use different colours for different aspects (e.g. mark definitions in red, context in blue, criticism in yellow, etc.)
- annotate *actively*: scribble down questions, moments where you disagree, connections, ...

tip 2: find a note-taking system that works for you.

Most of your/our classes are discussion-based: you read a text in preparation for a session and bring questions, notes, issues, etc. to discuss in class. Often (though not always) there will be no prepared script, summary, or presentation that goes beyond scaffolding for the session, hence: you need to be able to take notes that you can meaningfully and productively work with.

There is a myriad of different page-setups (on paper, and/or digitally), personally (Esther-Marie Schilling), I like to use an adapted version of the **Cornell-Method** for taking notes. (See an overview here: [How to take Notes: Cornell Notes](#))

tip 3: know your sources.

At university, you are required to conduct academic work. First and foremost, this involves adhering to certain rules and considering very specific formal requirements. One of the basic rules is 'good academic practice', i.e. respect for the intellectual property of others. Any violation of this basic standard through intellectual theft (plagiarism) constitutes serious misconduct and can have serious legal consequences. Whenever you take information from a source, you need to give the proper source. This leads to a second point: you need to be able to cite your sources correctly.

At the institute, we generally work with name-date citation systems (MLA, Chicago) and not footnotes. There are citation guides as well as citation software programs available online and via the university network (we have a license for citavi, for example).

Please consult the following websites for an introductory overview:

- Chicago: [Author-Date Style](#)
- MLA: [Works Cited: A Quick Guide | MLA Style Center](#)

You also need to make sure your cited literature that is providing theory or scaffolding for your academic work is appropriate. Your source, ideally, should

- be **published in peer-reviewed journals or by academic presses** (e.g : Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Bloomsbury Academic, or similar)
- have **clear citations and a bibliography**: it is built on solid references. You want to see how the author engages with primary sources and other scholarship.
- has credible **author credentials**: Look up the author's academic background. Are they affiliated with a university or research institution?
- has a marked **publication date** (if relevance is time-sensitive): academic discourse evolves, so newer sources might reflect more current thinking
- offer **critical analysis**, respond to scholarly debates, and/ or situate itself in ongoing conversations
- be written with an **objective tone and structure**: formal, analytical style rather than being overly opinionated or casual

For programme- specific tips, guidelines, and requirements on how to write a term paper and/or report, please consult our “exam form overview”. The document will be available on stud.ip (our central platform) once the term starts.

tip 4: don't be a stranger

If we know you, your ideas and (possible) difficulties we can help! Attend our office hours if you have questions, actively participate in the seminar discussions (it helps you remember things better, promise!), prepare the assigned readings thoroughly, etc. Things tend to run (much!) smoother if you know what you don't understand and can ask for help. We are always happy to help!

Another tip in the same vein: don't be a stranger to your fellow students! Chances are, if you have a question, either they have the same one, or know the answer!

4. preliminary reading suggestions:

- Armiero, Marco. 2021. *Wasteocene: Stories from the Global Dump*. Cambridge University Press.
- Beauman, Ned. 2022. *Venomous Lumpsucker*. Sceptre.
- Carson, Rachel. 2000 (1965). *Silent Spring*. Penguin. Originally published by Houghton Mifflin 1962.
- Farley, Paul and Symmons Roberts, Michael. 2012. *Edgelands*. Vintage Books.
- Ghosh, Amitav. 2004. *The Hungry Tide*. The Borough Press.
- Habila, Helon. 2011. *Oil on Water*. Penguin.
- Hall, Sarah. 2007. *Carhullan Army*. Faber&Faber.
- Haraway, Donna. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Harvey, Samantha. 2023. *Orbital*. Jonathan Cape.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions.
- Lanchester, John. 2019. *The Wall*. Faber&Faber.
- Liboiron, Max. 2021. *Pollution is Colonialism*. Duke University Press.
- Macfarlane, Robert. 2020. *Underland*. Penguin.
- Mandel, Emily St. John. 2014. *Station Eleven*. Picador.
- Müller, Timo and Evi Zemanek (eds.). *Live Handbook Environmental Humanities*. Springer. (available open access)
- Nixon, Robert. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press.
- Okorafor, Nnedi. 2014. *Lagoon*. Hodder & Stoughton.
- Powers, Richard. 2018. *The Overstory*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Robinson, Kim Stanley. 2020. *Ministry for the Future*. Orbit.
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. 1992. *Almanac of the Dead*. Penguin.
- Sinha, Indra. 2007. *Animal's People*. Simon & Schuster.
- Spahr, Juliana. 2011. *Well Then There Now*. Black Sparrow Press.
- Tsing, Anna. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton University Press.
- Winch, Tara June. 2019. *The Yield*. HarperCollins.
- Wright, Alexis. 2016. *The Swan Book*. Constable.

5. Glossary of Important Terms, Recommended Readings

A note on use: this glossary offers an introduction to some of the key themes you will be encountering during your studies but should not be conceived as a concise list of all relevant or related concepts.

Agency: In the environmental humanities, the concept is often applied in theorizing nature and conceiving of more-than-human entities as "agential", i.e. having the capacity to act (proactively). This framing emphasizes the forces of nature as not dependent on or perfectly malleable to human will and design.

related concepts: Dualism(s), Nature, New Materialism, Wilderness

Anthropocene: A proposed new geological epoch following the Holocene which is defined by the significant global impact of human activity upon Earth system functioning (i.e. its life-sustaining biological, physical, chemical processes). While the Anthropocene is not officially recognised in the geological sciences it has gained currency in the environmental humanities. Critics of the term point to its anthropocentrism and universalism, offering alternative concepts such as "Capitalocene", "Plantationocene" and "Chthulucene".

related concepts: Anthropocentrism, Deep Time, Entanglement, Environmental Crisis, Hyperobjects, Modernity, Postcolonial (Eco)criticism, Progress, Slow Violence

further reading:

Davies, Janae, Alex A. Moulton, Levi Van Sant, and Brian Williams. 2019. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene,...Plantationocene?: A Manifesto for Ecological Justice in an Age of Global Crisis." *Geography Compass*, 2019;13:e12438.

Haraway, Donna. 2015. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin". *Environmental Humanities* 6(1), 159-165.

Steffen, Will, Crutzen, Paul and McNeill, John. 2007. "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?" *Ambio* 36(8), 614-621.

Yusoff, Kathryn. 2018. *A Billion Black Anthropocenes Or None*. Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press.

Anthropocentrism: A form of human self-understanding that centralises human perspectives and interests and delimits non-human value in relation to them. Contrastive terms include "biocentrism" (affirming the intrinsic value of all living beings) and "ecocentrism" (affirming the intrinsic value of all ecosystems, including their abiotic elements).

related concepts: Anthropocene, Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism: The projection of human characteristics onto non-human entities. For example, when characterizing the sky as "weeping" or flowers as "laughing."

related concepts: Anthropocentrism

Assemblage: A term used in ecology as well as the environmental humanities to emphasise the open-ended and unstable nature of ecological 'communities' (i.e. species in the same geographical location at the same time). Species in an assemblage have varying and evolving relationships to one another, from co-existence to symbiosis, competition to predation.

related concepts: Ecosystem, Entanglement, Relationality

Deep Time: The cosmological, geological or evolutionary history of the universe and the Earth as a planet, which lays 'beneath' the familiar time scales of human experience. In the environmental humanities, the concept is used to rethink anthropocentric notions of time, particularly in the context of planetary crisis which has begun to collapse the distinctions between human and natural histories.

related concepts: Anthropocene, Anthropocentrism, Hyperobjects

further reading:

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2009. "The Climate of History: Four Theses". *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2), 197-222.

Diachronic: Of, relating to, or dealing with phenomena (of language, culture, literature, etc.) as they change over a period of time. A diachronic corpus, e.g. of a certain genre of novels, contains texts from different time periods. In contrast, a *synchronic* corpus would consist of texts all from roughly the same time period.

Dualism(s): A tradition of thought which posits two separate, opposing forces. Made popular by 17th century philosopher Rene Descartes' theories on the relationship between the realm of ideas and thought ("mind") and the external world ("matter"). Dualistic thinking has been identified by many in the environmental humanities as a major obstacle to ecological thinking: the ideology of reason ("mind") as supreme treats nature and the body ("matter") as subservient to the rational, historically white, male human.

related concepts: Ecofeminism, Entanglement, Natureculture

further reading:

Plumwood, Val. 1993. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge.

(Post-)Colonialism/ Postcolonial Criticism: Postcolonial theory is concerned with the ways in which texts/cultural artefacts shape our understanding of the (formerly) colonised world, both historically and in the present. This includes physical settlement of other territories (colonialism), the wider cultural control of the 'Global South' by (Western) powers, and the reworking of these methods of control in the contemporary world (neo-imperialism, neo-colonialism).

related concepts: Orientalism, Othering, Slow Violence

Ecocriticism: An earth-centred approach to literary studies that emerged as a distinct intellectual movement in the United States in the 1990s. Ecocriticism is generally political in intent, aiming to intervene in the socially uneven destruction of living worlds and provoke a cultural and material shift in human-non-human relations.

related concepts: Ecopoetry, Ecopoetics, New Nature Writing, Pastoral

further reading:

Clark, Timothy. 2011. *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*. Cambridge University Press.

Garrad, Greg. 2023 (2004). *Ecocriticism*. Routledge.

Ecofeminism: Originally a philosophical position and (activist) movement that assumes commonalities in the oppression / subordination of women and nature by/in Western patriarchal systems. It has evolved into a critical approach that combines ecocritical and feminist approaches to literary texts and cultural artefacts and looks for similarities in the (re-)presentation of both. (Critical) Ecofeminism calls for the abolition of the hierarchies inherent in dualisms such as mind/body, rational/emotional, male/female, culture/nature, etc.

related concepts: Dualism(s), Ecocriticism, Feminism, Intersectionality

further reading:

Adams, Carol J. and Lori Gruen (eds.). 2022. *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*. 2nd edn. Bloomsbury Academic.

Merchant, Carolyn. 2020 (1980). *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*. 40th Anniversary Edition. HarperCollins.

Plumwood, Val. 1993. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge.

Ecopoetry: The intersection of ecology and poetry. Critical concepts include exploration of environmental topics, figuring the poem as an ecosystem, highlighting relationality, and experimentation with more-than-human perspectives. Ecopoetry often uses modernist techniques of the twentieth century and writes in contrast to the romantic idealization of nature, which appropriates nature for human meaning.

related concepts: Entanglement, Poetics, Poetry, Relationality

further reading:

<https://ecopoetics.wordpress.com/>

Poets: Alice Oswald, Gary Snyder, John Burnside, Jonathan Skinner, Juliana Spahr.

Epistemology: inquires into the nature of knowledge. It examines not only what we know but also how that knowledge is acquired and maintained, and its limits.

related concepts: Ontology

Entanglement: refers to the interwovenness of different components of an/our ecosystem. It may point to structural/system (inter-)dependencies, exchange, (mutual) support, violence, aid, exhaustion, etc. depending on which constellation and variables are considered.

related concepts: Assemblage, Dualism(s), Entanglement, Natureculture

further reading:

Hodder, Ian. 2012. *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*. John Wiley.

Hyperobjects: A term coined by Timothy Morton to describe phenomena of such immense scale that they present a theoretical and psychological problem, as these phenomena cannot be fully grasped at any one time or place. An example is the climate crisis.

related concepts: Anthropocene, Deep Time, Slow Violence

further reading:

Morton, Timothy. 2013. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*. University of Minnesota Press.

Intersectionality: A concept articulated by the Combahee River Collective and coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, capturing how different systems of discrimination (class, race, sexuality, gender, etc.) overlap and interact. Central to the meaning of intersectionality is that multiple oppressions multiply each other, creating distinct experiences of marginalisation and violence.

related concepts: Ecofeminism, Environmental Justice, Postcolonial Ecocriticism

further reading:

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, Vol 43, No. 6, 1241-1299.

Landscape: The countryside as a primarily visual phenomenon considered from the vantage point of a detached observer. Since the Renaissance the term 'landscape' signified the pictorial depiction of a natural scenery as an object of aesthetic contemplation. However, the term's etymological roots also support a notion of landscape as a material site of human and non-human interaction over time. In this sense, its meaning shifts from signifying a neutral background to human activity to a dynamic and agentic medium.

related concepts: Agency, Entanglement, More-than-human/Non-human, Nature, Place, Space

More-than-human/Non-human: A conceptualisation of entities beyond humans that challenges anthropocentrism by decentering the human. It posits that humans (and humanity) are neither biologically, morally, nor socially superior to other species and assumes them to be entangled with others in reciprocal relationships.

related concepts: Anthropocentrism, Agency, Dualism(s), Entanglement, Human-animal-studies, Post-humanism

Nature: The sum of all structures, substances and powers contained in the universe (nature as everything); the non-human (nature as opposed to culture); the defining characteristic of something (nature as essence). Because of its anachronistic cultural connotations and false binarism, other terms have come to displace it, albeit with slightly different emphases or biases, e.g. “non-human” or “more-than-human”, “naturecultures” or “ecosystems”.

related concepts: Anthropocene, Entanglement, Landscape, More-than-human/Non-human, New Nature Writing, Wilderness

further reading:

Williams, Raymond. 1976. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford University Press.

Williams, Raymond. 1980. “Ideas of Nature.” In *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. Verso.

New Materialism: New materialists propose that all matter has agency, meaning it is capable of self-organization, consciousness, and the capacity to act upon the world. For new materialists, agency is “emergent” (not the property of concrete isolated entities) and distributed (manifests itself only throughout the networks in which these entities are embedded). New Materialism aims to challenge the role of human beings as sovereign over nature by dissolving the role of the singular human subject into a web of material relations in which all beings are enmeshed.

related concepts: Agency, Entanglement, Dualism(s), Anthropocene, Hyperobjects

further reading:

Barad, Karen. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. MNG University Presses.

Bennett, Jane. 2009. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press.

Latour, Bruno. 2008 (2005). *What is the Style of Matters of Concern? Two lectures in empirical philosophy*. Van Gorcum

New Nature Writing: A genre of creative non-fiction that braids history, natural observation, and personal reflection to explore the evolving relationship between the human and more-than-human. In departure from traditional Nature Writing, notions of wilderness and the sublime are challenged and attention placed on entanglement and precarity.

related concepts: Anthropocene, Ecocriticism, Entanglement, Landscape, Nature, Romanticism, Wilderness

Ontology: examines questions of being and existence. Ontological questions aim to understand the nature or essence of a thing.

related concepts: Epistemology

Pastoral: Lat. *pastoralis* “pertaining to shepherds”. A literary mode that depicts an idealised form of rural shepherding life. Writing in this tradition typically contrasts the countryside as a place of simplicity and natural harmony with the complexity / corruption of the city.

related concepts: Ecocriticism, Georgic, Landscape, Nature, Wilderness

further reading:

Williams, Raymond. 1973. *The Country and the City*. Oxford University Press.

Poetics: a) Literary criticism that deals with poetry; the branch of knowledge that deals with the techniques of poetry, and b) the creative principles informing any literary, social or cultural construction, or the theoretical study of these; a theory of form.

Relationality: An ontological position that eschews the division between individual and community and posits the interconnectedness of ecological existence as the basis of reality and identity. Relational worldviews conceive of life as an ever-changing web of interdependencies, where ceaseless movement gives rise to provisionally stable realities (‘a pluriverse’).

related concepts: Assemblage, Dualism(s), Entanglement, Natureculture, Ontology

Slow Violence: A term coined by Rob Nixon that captures harm inflicted gradually over long periods of time. In contrast to sudden catastrophes, which are immediately visible and prosecutable, slow violence manifests through the (often invisible) accumulation and persistence of adverse effects on individuals and communities. Examples include the radioactive aftermath of war, climate change, and biomagnification.

related concepts: Anthropocene, Hyperobjects, Postcolonial (Eco)Criticism

further reading:

Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press.

Wilderness: An ideal of pristine nature existing apart from human civilisation and history. The concept has been criticised as a cultural construction that falsely reinforces a sense of separation between the human and more-than-human.

related concepts: Dualism(s), Ecocriticism, Landscape, Nature, Pastoral, Romanticism, Wilderness

further reading:

Cronon, William. 1996. “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature”. In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, edited by William Cronon. W. W. Norton & Company, 69-90.