

## *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### *Syllabus*

## *Cli-Fi: Literary Representations of Climate Change - 44144*

*Last update 08-03-2023*

*HU Credits:* 2

*Degree/Cycle:* 1st degree (Bachelor)

*Responsible Department:* English

*Academic year:* 0

*Semester:* 2nd Semester

*Teaching Languages:* English

*Campus:* Mt. Scopus

*Course/Module Coordinator:* Louise Bethlehem

*Coordinator Email:* [louise.bethlehem@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:louise.bethlehem@mail.huji.ac.il)

*Coordinator Office Hours:* Monday 11:30-12:30

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Teaching Staff:

Prof Louise Bethlehem

Course/Module description:

Human-induced or “anthropogenic” climate emergency is one of the most significant phenomena of our times. So much so, that at the turn of the millennium, biologist Eugene Storer and chemist Paul Crutzen introduced the term “Anthropocene” (anthropo for “human;” cene for “new”) to describe such epochal change at a planetary level. Following such interventions, today it is widely acknowledged that anthropogenic impacts on the earth and its biosystems such as greenhouse gas emissions are triggering unprecedented climate crisis. The course proposes to examine how climate emergency is represented in contemporary works of “cli-fi” or “climate fiction,” whether novels or short stories, asking questions of genre, form, poetics and aesthetics. Given that climate emergency requires an interdisciplinary response, we will also ask how literary methodologies such as close reading can enter into new dialogues with other approaches in the environmental humanities and social sciences.

Course/Module aims:

1. To conduct close readings of all the short stories, novellas and novels set, paying attention to questions of form and genre.
2. To set out the lexicon of ecocriticism and to introduce canonical precursor texts to the category of cli-fi.
3. To examine historical, social and political processes that must be considered when examining cli-fi.
4. To critically evaluate literary methodologies such as close reading in light of interdisciplinary developments in the environmental humanities and social sciences.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. To identify major poetic and generic features of contemporary climate fiction.
2. To distinguish between mimetic and non-mimetic forms of climate fiction
3. To define key terms deriving from ecocriticism and to update them in light of the specific features of climate fiction.
4. To implement interdisciplinary methodologies where necessary.
5. To recognize key themes in the methodological debates between literary critics and other researchers working on climate emergency.

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Attendance requirements(%):

100

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Teaching Arrangements*

*This course consists of a semester-long 2-hour weekly discussion of texts representative of the emergent corpus of climate-fiction, or “cli-fi” as it is known. See "Course/Module" content below.*

Course/Module Content:

*The course comprises three units. In the first unit, we will examine works that can be seen as precursors to the vast outpouring of contemporary cli-fi texts, including Rachel Carson’s classic work *Silent Spring* (1962) and we will survey some of the critical vocabulary generated by ecocriticism as a paradigm. In the second unit, we will examine contemporary short stories in light of questions of genre that arise from the diversity of works that can be designated as climate fiction. How do categories like utopia, dystopia, science fiction, cyberpunk and the thriller cross paths with cli-fi? In the third section of the course, students will choose to engage with one of two cli-fi novels which will form the basis of the concluding workshop of the course. One or more groups will concentrate on mimetic climate fiction that is largely \*realistic\* and one or more groups will concentrate on work of \*speculative,\* non-mimetic climate fiction to produce collective reports to the larger cohort (“referat kevutzati”). The last class of the semester will consist in an open-mike arena for comparing findings, and presenting them as creative-writing assignments, blog entries, poems or book reviews in order to compile a collective publication.*

Required Reading:

*A list of required texts will be made available on Moodle.*

Additional Reading Material:

*Buell, L. (2003). *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press. Print.*

*Buell, L. (2005). *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. Print.*

*Garrard, G. (2004). *Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge. Print.*

*McKibben, B. (Ed.) (2008). *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau*. New*

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*York: Library of America. Print.*

*Primavesi, Anne. "Ecofeminism." Encyclopedia of Science and Religion. Web*

*Grading Scheme:*

*Additional information:*

*In accordance with the regulations of the English Department, all course work must be submitted in English.*