



AUTUMN 2015

GERMAN 298A (15338)
LIT 298A (17007)
ENVIR 495E (14393)
ENGLISH 365A (14150)
CHID 270B (21936)

Taught in English

MWF 10:30-11:20
location tbd

5 credits, VLPA

Instructor:
Sabine Wilke

Literature, Culture, & the Environment: Food, Animals, Waste, and Climate in the Anthropocene

This course offers an introduction to the environmental humanities. Literature, culture, and the environment are explored in their interlinkages along five examples: the study of food and consumption, animals and the post-human perspective, waste, climate change, and the question of diversity loss in the age that has recently been called the Anthropocene of the Age of the Human by atmospheric scientists. The Anthropocene is a concept that describes the scale of human impact on the Earth in geological terms. The concept was first pronounced by Eugene Stoermer and Paul Crutzen when they measured thin layers of carbon deposit in the Earth around 1800 and consequently announced a new geological epoch in which humankind has a significant influence on the Earth's atmosphere. The idea is that human impact is growing in the area of land use for food production, ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, climate change, and species extinction. We will explore the cultural dimension of the concept of the Anthropocene and how the study of literature and culture can contribute to an understanding of the historical, ethical, and aesthetic dimension of this new era of the human. The course is organized into five modules on food and consumption, animals and the post-human, waste, climate change, and the Anthropocene.