

Call for Proposals 2021 ASLE Virtual Conference

July 26-August 6, 2021

Conference Theme: EmergencE/Y



The 2021 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment digital convening invites creative and critical engagements around the broad but timely theme of EmergencE/Y. Within a present scoured by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, by intersecting social and ecological crises, including white supremacy and settler colonialist logics and frameworks, how can environmental humanists and ecocritics imagine, conceptualize, theorize, and represent these compounding crises?

The twelve streams and featured talks and performances of this all-remote convening merge in shared explorations of how creators, writers, critics, activists, teachers, collectives—past and present—have made sense of ruptures and crises and made space for being, creating, disrupting, solidarity, and change. We will ask: What is the time and history of the crisis of now? While crisis, like emergency, appears in the short term, its emergence is much longer in the making. How can work by ecocritics and environmental humanists work across these disparate, even divergent timescales? We will explore: How is crisis emplaced? How does it make and remake place? How do the dislocations forced by crisis—of human and nonhuman populations—reshape place attachment? What does attachment to a refuge feel like?

Organizers remind us never to let a good crisis go unused. How might work in the environmental humanities and ecocriticism think with movement insights and energies to catapult beyond the now, so as to emerge in a more just and welcoming place?

The conference will take place virtually, from July 26 - August 6, with a combination of asynchronous and synchronous events. Accepted presenters will be required to provide pre-recorded talks by June 22, 2021. The conference site architecture will include opportunities for commenting on and interacting with presenters' work and with keynote talks asynchronously during the conference period. We hope this inclusive format will facilitate robust participation of all registrants, in all time zones.

Proposals for pre-formed panels and for individual presentations are welcome. Only one proposal per person is allowed. Please indicate your first and second choice stream for your paper/panel. Panels should be composed of at least three and not more than eight presenters (co-presenters are welcome, but would be counted in these totals), and have a maximum of 90 minutes of recorded content. We will make all efforts to accommodate preferences in preparing the slate of panels for streams and to form as inclusive a program as this digital architecture allows.

If you would like to release a call for panelists for your proposed panel proposal, please submit it to <https://www.asle.org/calls-for-papers/>, and we will help circulate it. Please set your submission date before the conference's April 1 submission deadline, so that you will have time to organize the abstracts selected and then submit using the form links below.

Individual Paper Submission Form

Panel Submission Form

Key Dates

Proposals due: Extended to April 5

Decisions out: Approximately May 8

Pre-recorded talks due: June 22

Conference Streams

(both creative and scholarly abstracts are welcome)

Critical Pedagogies | Melissa Sexton, Aubrey Streit Krug, and Kristin Van Tassel, Co-Chairs

This stream welcomes abstracts that theorize and reflect on teaching the environmental humanities.

Topics could include (but are not limited to): strategies and curriculum resources for teaching environmental humanities; integrating environmental topics into courses in varied disciplines; cultivating diversity and solidarity in environmental education; and narratives or critical reflections about experiences teaching environmental texts or course units.

Disease and Health Humanities | Gina Stamm, Chair

This stream invites abstracts that engage with various aspects of disease and health (human and nonhuman) in the environmental humanities, with possible topics including but not limited to the disease and health as they present in the environment in animate, inanimate, and nonliving beings; how the health of the environment finds a reflection in the health of various human communities; nonwestern and/or indigenous approaches to health, the environment, and medicine; how disease or disability can affect the way we engage with the environment; how post- or trans- humanism may change the way disease and health are experienced.

Eco-Theory | Scott Hess, Chair

This stream welcomes abstracts on emergent materialisms, systems, posthumanisms, eco-aesthetics, and affect theory; new theory emerging between the borders of disciplines and in between the human and the more-than-human.

Elemental Rhetoric | Michaelann Nelson and Paul Formisano, Co-Chairs

This stream invites abstracts that address the rhetoric of current environmental emergencies as they shape the earth, water, air, and fire.

Emergent Environments | Caroline Schaumann and Heather Sullivan, Co-Chairs

This stream invites abstracts addressing an array of emerging environments in the Anthropocene, from industrial wastelands populated by strange plants, fungi, or humans to monocultural agricultural or sylvan landscapes, radioactive sanctuaries for animals (as near Chernobyl), cities populated by wild boars, squirrels, urban trees, and large groups of diverse humans, etc.; that is, not just toxic dead-end environments but also vibrant, new, and strangely hybrid, technologically-infused, "dark green" ecosystems of human and nonhuman alike.

Energy Humanities | Jacob Goessling and Jordan Kinder, Co-Chairs

This stream welcomes abstracts that engage with literature, media, and other cultural forms that help to make energy systems and infrastructures legible. We especially encourage the submission of papers that address extraction and postextraction, the cultures and politics of just transitions, energy systems and futures, solar, hydrological, and thermodynamic imaginaries, and the histories and presents of non-fossil energies from wood and whale oil to wind and solar.

Environmental Justice | Ryan Hediger and Shane Hall, Co-Chairs

This stream invites abstracts addressing questions of environmental justice, study and praxis, involving theories, histories, and practitioners, including but not limited to food justice, prison abolition, decolonization, landback, climate justice, eco-feminism, and anti-racism, exposure to risk, segregated toxicity, unrepresentative political processes, environmental law, elemental ecocriticism and justice, reproductive justice, labor and justice. Environmental justice often focuses on specific forms and historical instances of social injustice, but abstracts would also be welcome exploring how the very concept(s) of environmentality are themselves connected to unjust histories and processes, including carcerality, enclosure, settler colonialism, and so on.

Indigenous Ecocriticism | Abigail Perez Aguilera and Kyle Bladow, Co-Chairs

This stream seeks abstracts that address topics of indigeneity, including Indigenous ecocriticism, decolonial studies, non-Western epistemologies, Indigenous media, Indigenous futurisms, and intergenerational knowledge. We welcome papers that explore these and related topics, whether in local or global contexts.

Migrant Ecocriticism | Rina García Chua and Lisa Fink, Co-Chairs

This stream welcomes abstracts that explore, challenge, and theorize displacements, dispossession, movements, and the in-betweens of environments; these include (but are not limited to) texts that engage with postcolonialism, decolonization, migrant, diasporic, (un)bordering, borderlands, and re/defining spaces.

The Pluriverse | Jeremy Elliott, Chair

This stream seeks abstracts that explore the pluriverse. Whether addressing development and accompanying cultural imperialism, or simply presenting ways to be human outside of the universalizing strategies of Western hegemony, we welcome papers that offer underrepresented approaches to environmental concerns. This includes (but not exclusively) approaches such as ecofeminist, BIPOC, agricultural, religious, rural, queer, environmental justice, deep ecology, and permaculture.

Public Engagements | George Handley, Chair

This stream seeks papers that explore why and how the environmental humanities can become publicly engaged in successfully changing hearts and minds for more just and equitable futures. Political polarization in the United States and other national contexts, and its associated challenges of competing epistemologies and often mutually exclusive claims to facts, present considerable difficulties for scholars, activists, and creators who wish to foster significant cultural and political change. Provocations and reflections emergent from diverse local and national contexts, as well as endeavors in all stages of development, are welcome.

Speculative Ecomedia | Bridgitte Barclay and Christy Tidwell, Co-Chairs

This stream invites abstracts addressing all types of speculative fiction - science fiction, fantasy, horror - and a wide range of ecomedia (e.g., film, television, comics, podcasts, museum displays, games).