

Climate Change Leadership in Practice

1MV078 | Fall 2021

Literature Overview

We've created an architecture where you can choose which books you want to read in this course to a large extent, allowing freedom in where you focus your studies and how you conduct your learning. The aim is to help you begin developing your own critical relationship and engagement with climate change leadership and to allow this to steer the leadership work that you engage in. Any particular book chapters that we've identified as key reading will be added to a course reader with other relative texts and resources, which will be made available before the course begins. Below is a descriptive list of the books which have been consulted and (partially) read in the planning and crafting of the course content. We recommend that you choose a selection of books which take up varied themes and subjects as their focus. During the course we will rely on one another's readings to bring critical and creative input to our sessions together.

As a 30 credit course, you will read (at least a large part of) **6 books** in this course. We recommend choosing 5 from this list below and supplementing with a book we have not considered, for which we encourage fictional literature but leave the choice open. We recommend you read all of the descriptions below and follow the links to see the structure and contents of the books that grab your attention.

As this is quite a large volume of literature, and we meet intensively for the first 6 weeks of the course, we recommend getting started on the books which interest you most as soon as possible. This means that you should choose, at least, some of your books before we start the course, but there will also be room for discussion of book choices in the first few days of the course. Many of the books are available from the university library and online, with physical copies found in the CEMUS library once term has begun. Please email if you have any difficulty finding or accessing a book.

Course Books

Please choose:

- At least 2 books from Group 1
- No more than 1 book from Group 2
- 5 or 6 books in total from the list, depending on if you'd like to read something not included

Key: Course 'modules'

Books are labelled if we believe they speak to the themes and content of a particular module. Understandably, there is a lot of overlap of book themes and course themes that spills between and across modules. An overview of the themes we hope each module will take up can be found in the preliminary course schedule.

- Systems of Power and Resistance - **SPR**
- Places and Memories: Entangled and Embedded - **PMEE**
- Embodied Narratives and Orientated Bodies - **EN&OB**
- (Political, Material, Cultural) Ecologies - **(PMC)E**

Group 1: Core Literature. Pick at least 2

These are the books which we have read the most whilst planning the course. They reflect and are reflected in the course content, framing and guests. Please pick at least 2 of the following 6 books- you may choose all 6 if you really wish to.

1. **Akomolafe B:** [*These Wilds Beyond Our Fences: Letters to My Daughter on Humanity's Search for Home*](#). North Atlantic Books; 2017. 352pp.

SPR, PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

Bayo Akomolade's book is an incredibly engaging attempt to 'arrive in the middle' for their daughter, Alethea. Through their book and the stories they re/tell, Akomolafe encounters the hopes, dreams, ideas and personal traumas which they see filling this space of fatherhood and shaping their relationship with Alethea. They attempt to meet the world around them and the people in it. Through their collection of Letters to Alethea, Akomolafe tells an urgent story of modernity and the religious, colonial, gendered and alienated foundations on which it has been built on. But most of all, they tell a story of searching for belonging and meaning in a disconnected world, and go some way to finding it.

These Wilds Beyond Our Fences brings together the core themes and ideas addressed in the course, in a lyrical, poetic text. At one point early in the book, Bayo admits to have written in knots at times, to ensure that Alethea and any other reader slows down and reflects on the meanings of the words. Whilst this makes this a slower and arguably less accessible read than some of the other books in this list, it ensures to make it a meaningful and captivating encounter with the stories and practices described in the book.

2. Hausdoerffer J, Parry Hecht B, Nelson MK, Kassouf Cummings K (Eds): [What Kind of Ancestor Do You Want to Be?](#) University of Chicago Press; 2021. 253pp.

SPR, PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

This beautifully written and arranged book interweaves essays, interviews and poetry from a thoughtful community of Indigenous and other voices to explore what it means to be an ancestor- now and always- and what we want to leave to our descendants. It's structured wonderfully into 6 parts, which move narratively from one to the next. It explores such ideas as community, multigenerational ethics, colonialisms, ancient wisdoms, more-than-human descendants and love as a regenerative power. It's a very accessible, moving book about "healing our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our most powerful ancestors-the lands and waters that give and sustain all life." I especially recommend choosing this book if you do not select any fictional literature from outside this list.

3. Dabiri E: [What White People Can Do Next: From Allyship to Coalition.](#) Penguin Books; 2021. 150pp.

SPR, PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

This insightful short book is the collection and elaboration of a series of essays and reflections that Emma Dabiri originally began as an online resource. Described as incisive, radical and practical, in it Dabiri critically challenges popular ideas of online activism and 'allyship', arguing that we need to build on revolutionary ideas of the past to forge intercommunal coalitions for change. It is a book which troubles ideas of identity and challenges easily drawn lines of racialisation in an academically accessible way, whilst grounding this analysis in thinkers and social change movements of the past and social media movements of the present. You may never browse instagram (in the same way) again!

4. Alaimo S: [*Exposed: Environmental Politics & Pleasures in Posthuman Times.*](#) University of Minnesota Press; 2016. 188pp.

PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

Like this course, Stacey Alaimo doesn't try to tell a universal, singular story in *Exposed*, but instead collects a series of essays surrounding the idea of flesh enmeshed with place. They put scientists, activists, artists, writers, and theorists in conversation to explore ideas of pleasure, materialism, politics and more. The book explores ideas of dwelling, desiring and being; "ultimately, *Exposed* calls for an environmental stance in which, rather than operating from an externalized perspective, we think, feel, and act as the very stuff of the world."

Described as accessible, this book draws on a large body of work which encompasses feminist materialisms and posthumanisms, environmental thought and aesthetics. If this is your first experience with any of these fields, it's a really exciting book to explore these new ideas and challenge disciplinary ways of thinking. However, I would consider not reading *both* this book and Anna Tsing's *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (below) if you have encountered these ideas before: although they have very different subject matter, the framing of ideas is quite similar and I would maybe suggest choosing whichever sounds more interesting to you in case you don't like the writing style or find it difficult to grasp.

5. Tsing AL, Swanson H, Gan E, Bubandt N (Eds): [*Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet.*](#) University of Minnesota Press; 2017. 352pp.

PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

The essays in the book are collected around two core themes: Ghosts and Monsters. It's a wide-ranging and ambitious book which brings together social and natural sciences, artworks and storytelling in conversation with each other. It encounters themes of ecology and evolution, landscapes, nuclear ecologies and imaginaries, multi-species assemblages and multi-lineage individuals. It is a book which centres entanglement and cuts across disciplines in a refreshing way. Regardless of your background, you should find things both new and familiar in this book, brought together in ways you may not have previously considered.

6. Martusewicz RA, Edmundson J, Lupinacci J: [*EcoJustice Education: Towards Diverse, Democratic and Sustainable Communities*](#). Routledge; 2011. 315pp.

SPR EN&OB

Written as a book for students of education programmes, this is a very accessible, practical introductory book that introduces and elaborates a lot of key social science concepts and questions, encompassing learning about discourse and practice, systems of power and Indigenous knowledge in the context of sustainability. Using creative and communicative examples from the classroom, the authors discuss such ideas as framing, democracy, matrices of domination, justice and pose thoughtful and important questions. It is an impressive book which uses very clear language and suggests readings, resources and organisations to look to for more information. If you have not come across these ideas before, I really recommend you choose this book!

Group 2: Scientific Discourse. Pick no more than 1

Whilst scientific discourse will not be addressed in isolation in this course, it will repeatedly emerge in critical conversation with other discourses, stories and practices. Therefore, it is useful to have some level of understanding of 'the science' that is invoked by the ideas and realities of climate change.

7. Hansen J: [*Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity*](#). Bloomsbury; 2009. 277pp.

PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

James Hansen's book tells a story of developing scientific knowledge about climate change and planetary systems alongside attempts to communicate this to the US government in the first decade of the 21st Century. It explains more and less familiar aspects of climate forcings and atmospheric energy balances, the benefits, pitfalls and challenges of modelling and how scientific discourse can be used to affect emissions changes in the short and medium term. It is situated firmly in the US context politically and institutionally, but as a personal account, that retells stories of key meetings and missed opportunities and communications. It tells a very interesting story about communicating science and about scientific philosophy. Hansen's writing is very readable, if slightly repetitive in places, and comes from one of the voices at the forefront of climate science in the US as it emerged as a discipline.

8. Emanuel K: [*What We Know about Climate Change*](#). The MIT Press; 2018. 66pp.

(PMC)E

This very short book, or maybe a long essay, succinctly presents an overview of the climate change science discourse. It is brief, clear and accessible, distilling the key information from the past few decades of research into a short read. Due to being short, it doesn't contain a wealth of detailed information or perspectives, but it does point to further reading beyond this 'primer'.

9. Hulme M: [*Contemporary Climate Change Debates: A Student Primer*](#). Routledge; 2020. 280pp.

PMEE (PMC)E

Mike Hulme has focused his research within climate change and scientific discourses around climate change for over a decade. This series of essays, debate 'yes' / 'no' responses to a series of issues, ranging from the use of tipping point concepts, to China's role in the climate crisis, to the opportunities and challenges surrounding social media usage in climate change discourses. They have substantial experience in analysing the interfaces between climate science(s) and politics and this broad, detailed text is a high quality, if somewhat dry introduction to the field. If you are comfortable reading writing that is more 'academic' in its style, this book is highly recommended.

Group 3: Other Considered Works

These are books which we have either spent less time and focus on, or have decided that, whilst great works, they are less relevant to the course and its themes than the core literature. As such, the themes and topics taken up in these books are varied and a number formulate particular theories or concepts in some detail. Certain excerpts from some of these books will also be given in the course reader but reading the entire book gives the option to broaden and deepen your knowledge in diverse areas of thought.

10. Ghosh A: [*The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*](#). University of Chicago Press; 2017. 176pp.

PMEEEN&OB

Amitav Ghosh is primarily a novelist, and so this is a wonderfully written book. One particularly attractive aspect is that it's made up of lots of very short chapters, sometimes only a few pages; it feels like it can be read at a different pace, in lots of smaller pockets of time, than some other books. In truth, if we'd read more of this book it may be in the core literature group, taking up such themes as storytelling and fiction, writing histories and political imaginaries. Ghosh writes about homogenisations of ideas dictating what can constitute 'serious fiction' and 'believable stories', a process which quite clearly overlaps with the political sphere and who can be seen as 'electable'. It speaks to the power of narratives and how stories are never just stories, but technologies to shape practices and empower certain bodies and systems over others.

11. Bennett J: [*Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*](#). Duke University Press; 2010. 156pp.

PMEE(PMC)E

Having read the introduction/preface of *Vibrant Matter*, I was sure we would be basing a large part of the course around it. It has figured slightly less than initially imagined, as other books have seemed to present more accessible accounts of the importance of materiality and the vibrant life of matter. However, this is still a great book, if a bit theoretically heavy towards the start (builds a lot on Spinoza, Deleuze and Guattari). If you want to learn more about centring the vibrant materiality of things and a well developed and formulated conception of material, political ecologies, this is a great book for you.

12. Tsing AL: [*The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*](#). Princeton University Press; 2015. 288pp.

SPR PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

Another very captivating book which tells a reflective and evocative story through very readable small chapters. Tsing explores the world's most valuable mushroom, Matsutake. In their remarkable work, they trace the ecological and economic entanglements from which Matsutake mushrooms and their systems of growth, collection, commerce and consumption emerge. If it wasn't for the emergence of Stacey Alaimo's *Exposed*, written from a similar lens, and if more of this book was read early in the planning process, this could also have potentially been a core course book.

13. Ahmed S: [*Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*](#). Duke University Press; 2006. 179pp.

SPR EN&OB

In one of Sara Ahmed's seminal texts, they formulate a new framework of knowing, being and thinking with bodies. Both queering phenomenology and constructing a phenomenology of the queer, Ahmed's conception of Orientations will challenge the way you see social relations and, more largely and abstractly, ecosystems of all kinds. It is a fantastic exploration of how bodies are always orientated towards certain objects and bodies and away from others, often following invisible lines of orientation. Only in discomfort, in dis-orientation, can we realise we were ever orientated in the first place. The book speaks to themes primarily of Embodied Narratives and Orientated Bodies as taken up in one of the course models, but is also applicable across the course. Our reasoning behind it not being a core book is that we will set a chapter from it as part of the EN & OB module, and it can be a bit theoretically heavy in places. But still, it's an excellent book that would be a great choice.

14. Barrineau S, Engström A, Schnaas U: [*An Active Student Participation Companion*](#). 2019. 227 pp.

EN&OB

As we have detailed in the course Welcome Letter, Examination overview and here, this is a course in which you are expected to co-create and lead your own learning. We will spend some of the first week cultivating this environment and open up many opportunities for this to happen, using this book to guide us and you to some extent. We will recommend that you read some short excerpts in the first week of the course regardless, but if you find the idea

of directing your own learning alien and uncomfortable, it may be worth spending more time with this book.

15. Ingold T: [*Correspondences*](#). Polity Press; 2021.

PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

In all honesty, I've not read much of this book although Ingold's larger body of work is thoughtful and provocative. It doesn't instantly grab the attention as crucially relevant to climate change leadership in practice and is wide-ranging in its scope - but these are the reasons you might just decide to read it. *Correspondences* is a collection of short essays, or correspondences, with trees, landscapes, oceans, skies and artworks. Ingold uses the art of letter writing to relate to these diverse subjects with care, attention and intimacy, using language to articulate relationships in a way usually reserved for human-human relationships. They centre these approaches, emphasising that it is through practising love that connection emerges. We will touch on this book in the course reader.

16. Bauman Z: [*Consuming Life*](#). Polity Press; 2007. 150pp.

SPR (PMC)E

In this book, Bauman presents their formulation of consumers in the consuming society, who simultaneously promote commodities and become commodities themselves. It feels like an updated Marxist take which characterises social and material relations in terms of commodification. It has really interesting connotations for the subjectivities which are formed in such a society and how this relates to consuming the natural world. This line of thinking also goes some way to suggest an explanation as to why many ideas of leading change today revolve around reducing/changing consumption patterns and/or occur in the social media space, and why these are often not effective.

17. Roy A: [*Azadi: Freedom, Fascism, Fiction*](#). Penguin Books; 2020. 214pp.

SPR PMEE

I've read the first essay collected in this small book and it was really intriguing. As with much of Arundhati Roy's work, it is incredibly written and strongly situated in India but the first chapter is an interesting journey through language and languages, literature, history, colonialism, nation-building and narrative materialisation. I can't tell you any more about the book I'm afraid, but the publicity page has a brief description of what is covered in the rest of the essays. Could be an interesting proposition from a wonderful author.

18. Goldman, M.J.; Nadasdy P.; Turner M.D: [*Knowing Nature: Conversations at the Intersection of Political Ecology and Science Studies*](#). The University of Chicago Press; 2011. 304pp.

SPR PMEE

Combining views from the field of political ecology and science and technology studies (STS) this book presents a number of case studies. These follow the packaging of situated knowledge -often in western knowledge institutions- as scientific knowledge is created and also the circulation and translation of that knowledge through networks as it is renegotiated in geographically distant situations. In its wide and interesting array of concerns and cases, this has some similarities in scope to *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*, although the writing is less narrative in its appeal. The introduction alone is a worthy read as an overview of two relatively recent areas of scholarship and how scientific discourse is created by and affects bodies and things.

19. Mbembe A, Of C, Reason B: [*Necropolitics*](#). 2015. 190pp.

SPR EN&OB

This is one of two books on this list that I haven't, as yet, begun to read. It's included, like *Radical Botany*, as an opportunity to take up that mantle. It was an interesting- and relevant-looking book which brings a different perspective and formulation of the realities that we live in. It takes up ideas of democracy, colonialism, militarisation, sovereignty and combines this with concepts of biopower, war and vulnerabilities. The work of Michel Foucault and Frantz Fanon figures centrally.

20. Meeker N, Szabari A: [*Radical Botany: Plants and Speculative Fiction*](#). Fordham University Press; 2020. 202pp.

PMEE EN&OB(PMC)E

In some senses, this is a wild-card pick. Seemingly of potentially less relevance, I have not had time to start reading it yet. I feel that this shouldn't preclude you from reading it though! Especially as we will look at speculative fiction in the course and radical botany centres seeing plants as active and vibrant in ways that other books and themes in the course also do. "A major intervention in critical plant studies, *Radical Botany* reveals the centuries-long history by which science and the arts have combined to posit plants as the model for all animate life and thereby envision a different future for the cosmos." Again, please let us know if you plan to read it so we can take a good look!