Course: WRDS 150.712   Instructor: Sang Wu   Office Hours:
Time: TTh 9:30-11am   Email: sang.wu@ubc.ca   TTh 1-2pm & by appt
Location: SWNG 208   Office: BUTO 218

WRDS 150 – The Anthropocene

Course Description

This course introduces students to academic reading and writing through analysis of scholarly discourses in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. We will focus our investigation on climate change and other global crises, and issues of responsibility concerning them, in the era of the Anthropocene. Coined at the turn of the 21st century, the word is compounded from the Greek *anthropos* ("human") and *kainos* ("new"). The Anthropocene is the new epoch of humans: one in which planetary conditions are shaped by human activity rather than vice versa, humankind as a force of geological agency has overtaken physical geography and natural history, and the familiar distinction between man and nature no longer holds. A closer look at the scientific and semantic implications of the term, however, reveals it to be less straightforward than initially appears. Currently not officially recognized as part of the Geologic Time Scale, what should be understood or measured as the basis for the Anthropocene means different things to different disciplines. How do scholars from fields as diverse as geology, climatology, sociology, history, anthropology, and psychology, engage with the common idea of the Anthropocene? Do studies of pre-industrial greenhouse gas emissions, critiques of environmentally unsustainable trends of industrial, socioeconomic, and technological acceleration in an age of world capitalism, and theories of the end of human history at the limits of human "meaning" and modernity, ask similar research questions despite starkly contrastive methodologies? How are the discursive challenges posed by referring to singular abstractions (e.g., humans as a "species," the sense of a "universal" history or geostory, the "Anthropocene") represented across multiple disciplines, reflective of the conceptual difficulties which arise in accessing or preserving a nature no longer distinguishable from the human interventions that create and destroy it? How is our sense of *what* it means to be natural objects or human subjects, and what it means not to be, informed by *how* our discourses produce meaning?

By examining peer-reviewed articles from a wide range of disciplines, you will be encouraged to think critically about the Anthropocene and to assess the term's capaciousness as well as its deficiencies. You will learn how to distinguish the ways in which research genres structure and communicate knowledge, how to identify and participate in scholarly conversations, and how to formulate your own research plan. You will practice different modes of academic writing targeted at scholarly audiences, employ strategies for improving organization and fluency, and develop confidence in your own voice. Assignments are structured to build on your reading and writing skills throughout the term; along the way, you will receive plenty of feedback from your instructor and peers. The course will culminate in a research paper demonstrating not only your ability to produce knowledge but also the relevance of academic scholarship to your personal interests.

Course Objectives

This course will introduce you to the ethical knowledge-making practices of scholarly communities, such as particular academic disciplines and research fields. You will begin to participate in scholarly conversations within those communities by performing the actions of academic researchers, scholarly communicators, and peer-reviewers. You will also produce work in several scholarly genres and familiarize yourself with the conventions of communication of specific academic disciplines. In so doing, you will begin to develop your own scholarly identity as a member of academic research communities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Working with scholarly sources to read and interpret academic discourse in context

You will work with scholarly articles to recognize how the conventions of communication within academic disciplines, including forms of argumentation and what counts as evidence, reflect and shape the types of knowledge associated with research cultures in the university. This will be done by:

   a. Reading, summarizing, comparing, and critically evaluating scholarly articles, retaining the key arguments/findings and emphases of the originals.
   b. Recognizing forms of argumentation and identifying the rhetorical moves made by members of specific academic research disciplines, including practices of positioning, definition, attribution, hedging, and presupposition/assertion.
   c. Recognizing the goals, methods, and citation practices of specific academic research disciplines.

2. Engaging in apprentice scholarly research

You will participate as apprentice members of academic research communities by identifying and tracing the scholarly conversation around a research problem and by developing questions, collecting evidence, and constructing arguments through ethical and collaborative practices of scholarship. This will be done by:

   a. Developing a research project that addresses a gap in knowledge within a particular research community, and which implements relevant discursive features and rhetorical moves in a variety of genres, including a research proposal and working bibliography, a presentation, and a final paper.
   b. Gathering relevant and credible primary and secondary sources, using appropriate tools and methods, including UBC Library resources.
   c. Engaging responsibly with and within research communities, using appropriate citation practices that meet the expectations of academic integrity and adhering to ethical standards of data collection with research collaborators. Engaging in constructive and collaborative practices of knowledge production, including performing peer review and integrating feedback.

Required Reading

Giltrow, Janet, et al. *Academic Writing: An Introduction*, 3rd edition. Peterborough: Broadview, 2014.

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. "'As He Himself Puts It': The Art of Quoting." *"They Say/I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2014. 42-52.

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Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2009). The Climate of History: Four Theses. *Critical Inquiry 35.2:* 197-222.

Crutzen, Paul J. and Eugene F. Stoermer (2000). The "Anthropocene." *IGBP Global Change Newsletter 41:* 17-18.

Cunsolo, Ashlee, and Neville R. Ellis (2018). Ecological grief as a mental health response to climate change-related loss. *Nature Climate Change 8:* 275–281.

Hansen, J. E. (2007). Scientific reticence and sea level rise. *Environmental Research Letters 2.2:* 1-6.

Lewis, Simon L. and Mark A. Maslin (2015). Defining the Anthropocene. *Nature 519.7542:* 171-180.

Steffen, Will, et al. (2011). The Anthropocene: From Global Change to Planetary Stewardship. *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment 40.7:* 739-61.

Zalasiewicz, Jan, et al. (2015). When did the Anthropocene begin? A mid-twentieth century boundary level is stratigraphically optimal. *Quaternary International 383:* 196–203.

Assignments and Evaluations

Article Summary (in-class essay)	10%
Group Presentation	10%
Discourse Analysis (in-class essay)	15%
Annotated Bibliography	15%
Research Proposal*	5%
Research Paper Draft	10%
Research Paper Final	20%
Participation and Attendance*	15%

* **Research Proposal** Because the paper requires students to have an appropriate plan for research, you may not proceed with the research paper until you have received approval for the research proposal. If a student fails to submit an acceptable proposal, they will need to revise and resubmit until it is approved.

* **Participation and Attendance** The participation grade will be assigned based on contributions to class discussion, preparedness and attention, writing exercises, peer reviews, and regular attendance and punctuality. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes and submit the day's writing exercise, if applicable, through Canvas before midnight. If you are absent for more than **five** classes without providing a valid reason with documentation, you will automatically receive **zero** for your participation grade.

Participation and Submission Requirements

PARTICIPATION: All readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned, and you should bring *Academic Writing: An Introduction* and each week's research article with you unless told otherwise. To succeed in this course, you are expected to come to class on time prepared to think and talk in a way that demonstrates you've engaged with the course material, contribute regularly to classroom discussions, demonstrate active listening skills, and interact respectfully with others. Make sure that you're listening to and responding to the ideas of your classmates in addition to offering your own, and always pay attention to whomever is speaking (be it a fellow student or me). Behaviors that represent a refusal to respect and pay attention to others include: chatting or whispering while someone is speaking, texting or surfing the internet, sleeping, having headphones on, sighing or eye-rolling, etc. Such behaviors will result in you receiving a "disruptive behavior" warning; three warnings are equivalent to one absence.

Participation also includes, but is not limited to, taking part in writing exercises, making an effort throughout the peer review process, and completion of occasional additional readings.

SUBMISSIONS: All assignments must be either submitted through Canvas or printed out and handed to me. I will not accept assignments by email. Assignments are due in class on the due date unless otherwise indicated, and they will be penalized as late if they are not handed in by this time (see "Deadlines" below). Assignments should be typed in a legible 12pt font and they should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Always number your pages and staple together each essay; on the front page, include your name, my name, and the date. You should use either APA or MLA style in accordance with disciplinary conventions. Finally, make sure you include a title for your assignments.

Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: We—me, ASRW, UBC and the scholarly community at large—share an understanding of the ethical ways that we use to produce knowledge. A core practice of this shared value of academic integrity is that we acknowledge the contributions of others to our own work, but it also means we produce our own contributions that add to the scholarly conversation: we don't buy or copy papers or exams, or have someone else edit them. We also don't falsify data or sources, or hand in the same work in more than one course.

Because it is so important that research be done ethically, I expect WRDS 150 students to meet these expectations. Any instance of cheating or taking credit for someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, can and often will result in at minimum a grade of zero for the assignment, and these cases will be reported to the First-Year Programs Chair, and the Faculty of Arts Associate Dean, Academic. See the UBC Calendar entries on "Academic Honesty," "Academic Misconduct," and "Disciplinary Measures," and check out the Student Declaration and Responsibility. See also "Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism" from the Chapman Learning Commons, and bookmark the OWL website for how to use APA citation style.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities if they are registered with Access & Diversity. The university also accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled exams. Please let me know as soon as possible if you will require accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent because of varsity athletics, family obligations, performance schedules, or other commitments will not necessarily be accommodated and should discuss any planned absences with me ahead of time.

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is mandatory in this course (see "Assignments and Evaluations" above). Attendance is a crucial factor in determining a student's success: as class activities and course assignments are designed to be cumulative, missing class will impact your ability to complete subsequent assignments. Further, your involvement in class enhances the learning process for the whole group, and it demonstrates your awareness of being part of a scholarly community. If there is a serious issue that prevents you from attending class (e.g., prolonged illness, accident, family tragedy, mental health or emotional well-being), please feel free to discuss it with me confidentially. You should also speak with your faculty's Academic Advising Office about academic concession.

EXAM CONFLICTS: If you are taking a course that schedules a common midterm exam outside of regular class sessions, and that scheduled exam conflicts with WRDS 150, university policy requires the instructor of the other course to offer a make-up exam or other accommodation to students who are in a course that conflicts with the midterm, as that course (i.e, WRDS 150) receives priority and students are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes. Students must alert the instructor of the other course by the deadline that instructor has set in order to be accommodated.

DEADLINES: The dates for work to be submitted are final and are not subject to negotiation without a valid reason. Extensions will be given in cases of illness or personal emergency, for which written documentation (e.g., a doctor's note) should be provided. Assignments turned in late without an extension will lose 5% for each day they are late; this includes both weekdays and weekends (e.g., an assignment that is due on Thursday but handed in the following Tuesday will lose 25%: 5% for Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday). If you need to request an extension, please give me at least 24 hours notice whenever possible. Remember that assignments must be submitted either on Canvas or in paper form, not by email.

TECHNOLOGY: Since many of the course readings are available on Canvas, you are encouraged to bring your laptops to class and to use them as appropriate. However, you are not allowed to use your laptop for any non-class related activity, including emailing, instant messaging, doing work for other classes, etc.—such behaviors not only impair your learning, studies have shown that multitasking on a laptop adversely affects the learning of every student in view of that laptop. Use of cell phones and other electronic devices is prohibited, and they should be put away (i.e., not in your hand) during class. If I see you using your laptop for non-class related activities or on your phone, you will be given a warning; three warnings are equivalent to one absence. Should a situation arise where it is crucial that you monitor your phone for messages, please let me know at the beginning of class and I will grant an exception to the technology policy.

EMAIL: I make an effort to reply to emails in a timely manner (within 24 hours), but for any kind of substantive discussion about your work you should attend office hours or make an appointment to meet with me in person. I am available to talk about your writing, assignments and grades, class readings, or any other issues arising from the course. I will look over rough drafts, help you brainstorm ideas for an assignment, and go over written feedback. While I am happy to read through a draft and discuss it with you in person, I will not give feedback over email, nor will I read multiple drafts for a single assignment.

University Resources and Online Writing Resources

ACADEMIC SUPPORT
Online Academic English Support Program (AEP): https://extendedlearning.ubc.ca/study-topic/english-additional-language
Academic Integrity: http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/
MLA & APA Style: http://help.library.ubc.ca/evaluating-and-citing-sources/how-to-cite/
UBC Library: http://www.library.ubc.ca/
UBC Writing Centre: http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/improve-your-writing/

ONLINE WRITING RESOURCES
Online Writing Lab ("OWL") at Purdue University: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/
The following pages are especially helpful:
Grammar: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/
Mechanics: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/4/
MLA Style: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
APA Style: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
Counseling Services: https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/mental-health-support-counselling-services
Access & Diversity: https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/access-diversity

Schedule: WRDS 150

Week	Dates	Readings	Assignments
1	Thu, Sept 5	Crutzen and Stoermer; Giltrow, Genre (Ch. 1)	
2	Tue, Sept 10	Lewis and Maslin	
	Thu, Sept 12	Giltrow, Citation and Summary (Ch. 2)	
3	Tue, Sept 17	Zalasiewicz	
	Thu, Sept 19	Giltrow, Summary (Ch. 3: pp. 31-54; Ch. 4: pp. 63-73)	
4	Tue, Sept 24	Steffen	
	Thu, Sept 26		Article Summary
5	Tue, Oct 1	Giltrow, Introductions (Ch. 8: pp. 159-171; 179-186)	
	Thu, Oct 3	---	
6	Tue, Oct 8		Presentations
	Thu, Oct 10		Presentations
7	Tue, Oct 15	Chakrabarty	
	Thu, Oct 17	Giltrow, Orchestrating Voices (Ch. 6)	
8	Tue, Oct 22	Cunsolo and Ellis	
	Thu, Oct 24	Giltrow, Scholarly Styles II (Ch. 11), Definition (Ch. 7)	
9	Tue, Oct 29	Hansen; Giltrow, Making and Maintaining Knowledge II (Ch. 13)	
	Thu, Oct 31		Discourse Analysis
10	Tue, Nov 5	Giltrow, "Documentation" (Ch. 8: pp. 171-178)	
	Thu, Nov 7	"How to Write a Research Proposal" (Canvas)	Annotated Bibliography
11	Tue, Nov 12	[Peer Reviews]	Paper Proposal
	Thu, Nov 14	Graff and Birkenstein, "The Art of Quoting" (Canvas)	
12	Tue, Nov 19	Giltrow, Conclusions (Ch. 14: pp. 293-302)	
	Thu, Nov 21	[Peer Reviews]	Paper Draft
13	Tue, Nov 26	[Peer Reviews]	
	Thu, Nov 28	---	Paper Final
	Dec 3-18	Exam Period. No Class.	