

Module Full Title	Climate, Change and Culture
Module Code	4HUMS003X
Credit level	Level 4
Length	Semester or Summer school session
UK credit value	20
ECTS credit value	10
College	Liberal Arts and Sciences
School	Humanities
Host programme of study	Study Abroad
Progression and assessment board	
Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Study abroad	Yes
Special features	n/a
Access restrictions	None
Are the module learning outcomes delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with organisation(s) other than the University of Westminster:	No
Summary of module content	This module examines both the impact of climate change on cultural expression, and of cultural texts and sources on our attitudes towards the environment. To facilitate these two perspectives, the module intersperses sessions on contemporary climate fiction, drama, visual art, music, cinema, and television. The module will equip students with an ecocritical vocabulary and the facility and opportunity to employ that vocabulary across a range of media and forms.

Module Aims

This module aims to:

- develop a critical understanding of the historical relationship between culture and the environment;
- develop a critical understanding of recent debates about climate change and culture;
- examine creative and imaginative representations of climate and environment;
- develop skills in analysing across media and forms

Assessment Methods

Rank	Assessment type	Assessment name	Weighting	Qualifying mark	Qualifying set (where the minimum mark required applies across multiple assessments)
001	Portfolio	Media Portfolio	100		

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the module, students will be able to:

LO1: investigate a particular aspect of culture;

LO2: critically reflect on the history of the relationship between culture and the environment;

LO3: independently research the current debates about the meaning and status of the novel and climate change;

LO4: apply ecocritical knowledge across a variety of media and forms;

LO5: communicate clearly and effectively across a range of established registers

Indicative syllabus content

- Introductions to ecocritical vocabulary, texts, and theory
- Colonialism, extracting ecologies, and alternative cosmologies;
- Energy and oil;
- Oceanic studies and natural disasters;
- Ecofeminism;
- Contemporary climate fiction;
- Film, drama and music;
- Non-western texts and approaches

Teaching and learning methods

The module is mostly seminar-based. Learning and teaching will take place in a blended mode material provided on Blackboard for self-study and seminar/workshop preparation. The seminars will comprise a variety of activities, including seminar discussion, tutor presentation, group-based work, in-class exercises, formative feedback, and student presentations. There will be regular visits to relevant locations, exhibitions, film screenings, or public performances across London.

Activity type	Category	Student learning and teaching hours*
Lecture	Scheduled	
Seminar	Scheduled	18
Tutorial	Scheduled	
Project supervisor	Scheduled	
Demonstration	Scheduled	
Practical Classes and workshops	Scheduled	

Supervised time in studio/workshop	Scheduled	
Fieldwork	Scheduled	
External visits	Scheduled	6
Work based learning	Scheduled	
Total Scheduled		24
Placement	Placement	
Independent study	Independent	176
Total student learning and teaching hours		200

*the hours per activity type are indicative and subject to change.

This is a suggested breakdown of independent study hours:

Reading/watching/listening in preparation for seminars – 50 hours

Research for assessment – 45 hours

Production of formative assessments – 60 hours

Selection and editing of final assessments – 21 hours

Total = 176

Assessment rationale: Why has this assessment been used for this module?

All assessments at the University of Westminster are designed to promote and test a) acquisition of knowledge; b) higher-order skills of understanding and evaluation; c) practical skills in conducting research and presentation of findings; d) 'real-world' skills which will be valuable to you in the world of work. Students will increase their knowledge through participating in seminars and through their own reading. In presenting their work for assessment, students will hone their skills in research and accurate citation of sources.

This module is assessed by a **Media Portfolio** (100%). The Media Portfolio (3,000 words) is a written portfolio which engages with a range of media forms. It is designed to allow students to demonstrate critical analysis and practical skills developed during the module, and involves a creative engagement with the module's topics. The individual portfolio pieces will be produced during the module in response to seminar discussion, with students adding examples from their own research and cultural exploration. Formative feedback will allow for students to select their best pieces, avoiding over-burden of assessment at the end of the module. Media Portfolio content will include 3-5 media pieces developed during and beyond the teaching sessions including book, music and film reviews; blog posts; research-based opinion pieces; programme pitches for podcast, radio, or television. These will be based on critical reflections on set readings; research which demonstrates understanding of the ecocritical debates around the module texts; reviews of cultural works outside the module that resonate with the week's themes; and pitches for ideas to further advance public awareness, discussion, and debate.

Assessment criteria:

Detailed guidance and criteria will be provided on the module Blackboard page. These criteria align with the University's grade descriptors which are located here:

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/assessment-guidelines>

University Grade Descriptors are a benchmark point of reference, they are contextualised using specific subject specialist criteria specific to a particular assessment.

In general terms, the Media Portfolio will be assessed on the extent to which it

- shows an engagement with the curriculum (LO2, LO3, LO4);
- gives evidence of independent research into the issues covered by the module (LO1)
- reflects on the relationship between culture and the environment (LO2)
- communicates clearly and effectively in a register appropriate to the media form (LO5)

How will this module enhance employability?

The module enables students to develop their communication skills in producing both formal and informal texts – a key graduate skill for humanities students. It also develops awareness of the cultural significance of environment and the environmental significance of culture, which are increasingly seen as crucial considerations in a variety of public-sector, private-sector and not-for-profit employment scenarios.

Indicative Sources

Ecocritical texts:

- Timothy Clark, 'Derangements of Scale' (2012);
- Dipresh Chakrabarty, 'Anthropocene Time' (2018)

Climate fiction:

- Jesmyn Ward, *Salvage the Bones* (2011);
- Waubgeshig Rice, *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (2018);
- Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Ministry for the Future* (2020);

Film and Theatre:

- *Princess Mononoke* (1997);
- *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2013);
- Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (1613);

Music and TV:

- Joni Mitchell, 'Big Yellow Taxi' (1970);
- Kate Bush, 'Lionheart' (1978);
- Beyoncé, *Lemonade* (2016);
- *The Blue Planet* and *Blue Planet II* (BBC, 2001 & 2017).

Non-western texts:

- Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (2013);
- Alexis Wright, *The Swan Book* (2013)

Romanticism:

- Selections of poetry from John Clare, William Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge;
- Selections of paintings from Caspar David Friedrich, John Constable, JMW Turner

Children's fiction:

- Juliet Donaldson, *The Gruffalo* (1999)
- Niamh Sarkey, *The Ravenous Beast* (2007)
- Piers Torday, *The Last Wild* (2013)

Religious and mythical texts:

- Stories of gardens, flood and apocalypse from the Bible, Quran, The Great Flood of Gun-Yu, The Epic of Gilgamesh

