



mesh

multidisciplinary
environmental studies
in the humanities

Photo by Tanva Gautam

MESH Leaf I

Environmental Humanities

The environmental humanities (also known as ecological humanities) is a new multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary field of research addressed to the socio-cultural dimensions of today's pressing environmental problems, such as resource depletion, toxic pollution, anthropogenic climate change, escalating extinctions, the emergence and spread of new pathogens, and the many forms of environmental injustice with which these problems are entangled.

Fostering dialogue and debate across the disciplinary divides that separate the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences, the environmental humanities examine in particular the cultural assumptions, attitudes, meanings, and values that both inform, and are in turn informed by, prevailing patterns of human interaction with other living beings and our shared physical environs, in order to contribute to transformative change in research agendas and the wider society.

MESH

MESH (Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities) is a research hub addressing the social, cultural and ethical dimensions of global environmental change, together with its associated ecological, climate and health crises. Bringing the historical, philosophical, literary, linguistic and cultural anthropological expertise of the humanities into conversation with the natural and social sciences, MESH

fosters research and knowledge exchange across three main areas of enquiry:

Decolonial Cultural Ecologies
Multispecies Conviviality
Disaster Preparedness

These are also the respective themes of the MESH symposia in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Activities



Public lectures at the University of Cologne with eminent environmental researchers from around the world



(Collaborative) multidisciplinary methods seminars with environmental researchers from the University of Cologne



Public lectures at the University of Cologne with environmental experts active in the public sphere



Work-in-progress seminars with environmental researchers from the University of Cologne



MESH's workshops, symposia, and colloquia with lectures concerning the overarching research theme of the respective year



MESH researchers' talks and presentations at conferences and elsewhere

Projects

- Cultural Evolution in Changing Climate: Human and Earth System Coupled Research, HESCOR (University of Cologne, since 2023)
- Just Futures? An Interdisciplinary Approach to Cultural Climate Models, CCM (Universities of Cologne, Duisburg-Essen, Klagenfurt, Leeds & Sheffield, 2023 – 2026)
- Of Apple Trees and Christmas Trees: Multispecies Conviviality and Linguistic Performance of Knowledge and Authority (Universities of Cologne and Rostock, since 2023)
- Rethinking Fables in the Age of Global Environmental Crisis (Universities of Cologne & Kent a.o., 2023 – 2025)
- Sharing a Planet in Peril, SAPP (University of Cologne & Arusha a.o., since 2023)
- Rewilding the Anthropocene (University of Cologne a.o. 2022 – 2026)
- Vom Anthropozän erzählen (University of Cologne, 2022 – 2023)
- Climate Change Literacy, CCL (Universities of Cologne & Duisburg-Essen, 2021– 2022)
- The European University for Well-Being, EUniWell (Universities of Cologne & Birmingham a.o. since 2020)
- Future Rural Africa. Future-making and Social-ecological Transformation, CRC TRR 228 (Universities of Cologne & Namibia a.o. 2018 – 2025)
- Disaster Preparedness through Climate Change Literacy using Multimedia Textures for People with Intellectual Disabilities by Katrin Klandt (since 2022)
- Images, Stories, and Spatialities of the Island Hazardscape by Mars Edwenson Briones (since 2022)
- The Living Lyric: Contemporary Eco-Poetics and the Eco-Political Praxis of Attention, Communication and Activism in a Time of Climate Crisis by Tanya Gautam (since 2022)
- Mediterranean Critical Zones – Socioecological Crises and Strategic Resilience in Egypt and Lebanon by Christoph Lange (since 2021)
- Practices of Prediction and Prognosis: Linguistic Analysis of Prospective Communication by Carolin Schwegler (Sub-project of the PreTAD project, Universities of Cologne, Bonn, Geneva & ACE Barcelona, 2021 – 2025)

Structure and Partners



Further Reading

General Introduction

Emmett, R., & Nye, D. (2017). *The Environmental Humanities: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

Hubbell, J. A., & Ryan, J. (2022). *Introduction to the Environmental Humanities*. London, Routledge.

Publication by MESH Researchers

Bartosch, R. (2019). *Literature, Pedagogy, and Climate Change: Text Models for a Transcultural Ecology*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Bartosch, R. (2022). Dying to Learn: Teaching Human-Animal Studies in an Age of Extinction. In A. Hübner et al. (Eds.), *Multispecies Futures. New Approaches to Teaching Human Animal Studies* (pp. 77–94). Berlin, Neofelis.

Bartosch, R., Adone, A., Hoydis, J., Junker, K., Kumar, S., & Rigby, K. (2023). Zukunftsgestaltungskompetenz im Angesicht der Katastrophe: *Ecological literacy* als mehrdimensionale Herausforderung. In G. Brandhofer, E. Rauscher, & C. Sippl (Eds.), *Futures Literacy: Zukunft lernen und lehren* (pp. 111-122). Innsbruck, Studien Verlag.

Bollig, M., & Krause, F. (2023). *Environmental Anthropology*. Stuttgart, Uni-Taschenbücher (UTB).

Hoydis, J., Bartosch, R., & Gurr, J. (2023). *Climate Change Literacy* (Cambridge Elements in Environmental Humanities). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Krause, F. (2023). *Thinking Like A River: An Anthropology of Water and Its Uses Along the Kemi River, Northern Finland*. Bielefeld, transcript Verlag.

Rigby, K. (2016). Religion and Ecology: Towards a Communion of Creatures. In S. Iovino & S. Oppermann (Eds.), *Environmental Humanities: Voices from the Anthropocene* (pp. 273-294). London, Rowman and Littlefield.

Rigby, K. (2019). Weaving the Environmental Humanities: Australian strands, configurations, and provocations. *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* 23(1), special issue on the Environmental Humanities, ed. Graham Huggan, 5-18.

Rigby, K. (2020). *Reclaiming Romanticism: Towards an Eco-poetics of Decolonization*. London, Bloomsbury Academic.

Schwegler, C., Mattfeldt, A., & Wanning, B. (2021). Natur, Umwelt, Nachhaltigkeit. Literarische, diskurs-linguistische, kritische und bildungspolitische Perspektiven auf Sprache und Kultur im Überblick. In A. Mattfeldt et al. (Eds.), *Natur, Umwelt, Nachhaltigkeit. Perspektiven auf Sprache, Diskurse und Kultur* (Sprache und Wissen 51) (pp. 1-31). Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter.

Doing Doctoral Studies at MESH

Are you interested in making a difference in academia and beyond? A PhD in Environmental Humanities combines outstanding academic research and transdisciplinary engagement. The University of Cologne offers a PhD in Environmental Humanities under the leadership of MESH and invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified applicants with a Masters degree (or equivalent) in the environmental humanities or one of its sub-disciplines (environmental history, environmental literary and cultural studies, environmental linguistics,

environmental philosophy, ethics and/or religious studies, or environmental anthropology). In order to guarantee disciplinary excellence and interdisciplinary fit, a member of MESH's directorate will act as one supervisor of any planned PhD project in collaboration with a second supervisor from your home discipline. Please get in touch with both potential supervisors before applying. More information on the application process as well as on funding opportunities and international regulations can be found below.

Funding and Support

a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne

Doctorate

Albertus Magnus Center for Early Career Researchers

Career orientation and development for doctoral candidates

DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)

Scholarship Programmes Database

UoC International Office

Prospective Doctoral Students



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