



ESEH Summer School in Anthropocene Histories

Dates: August 25-28, 2025

Location: Division of History of Science, Technology and Environment, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm and Utö, Sweden

Organised by: Center for Anthropocene History, Division for History of Science, Technology and Environment, KTH, in association with European Society for Environmental History

Course responsible: Kati Lindström (KTH), kati.lindstrom@abe.kth.se

Teaching faculty: Jan Zalasiewicz (University of Leicester), Onur Inal (Universität Wien), Sverker Sörlin (KTH), Sabine Höhler (KTH), Adam Wickberg (KTH), Sandra Swart (Stellenbosch University), Libby Robin, Susanna Lidström (KTH), Christoph Rosol (Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology), Thomas Turnbull (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science)

Grading scale: Pass/ Fail

Credits: 5 ETCS

Course description:

The Anthropocene is not just a geochronological epoch to be defined by the International Commission on Stratigraphy. It is a state of the world where the human and the natural intersect so profoundly that it has started to impact the workings of our planet. The anthropogenic environmental changes have acquired historical agency on the planetary level. Thus, exploring and writing Anthropocene histories is a call and attempt to mend the longstanding separation between human and Earth history and engage seriously with the natural and the material in various ways and formats. While science can identify geophysical and biogeochemical changes, it is history that connects the rapid planetary changes with the explanatory dynamics of human societies and asks how and why such geological records have emerged in the first place.

This Summer School is intended for doctoral students in history, STS, philosophy, sociology, and neighboring humanities disciplines working on the history of *anthropogenic environmental changes that have impacted Earth processes on a planetary scale* without necessarily confining themselves to the geological definitions of the Anthropocene. Together, we will discuss how Anthropocene

Histories can and should be written and what are the *sources and methods* that allow historians to account for the elemental *materiality* in their writing. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Anthropocene governance – resources, extractivism, politics and justice;
2. Histories of Earth elements and spheres: hydrosphere (oceans and terrestrial water), minerals (geosphere), cryosphere (ice, snow, permafrost), biosphere (multi-species history), atmosphere (air) and supra-atmospheric space;
3. Time, temporalities, historiographical principles of periodisation;
4. Modelling and the Digital Anthropocene;
5. Material, non-textual sources.

Course setup:

The Summer School includes lectures, plenary discussions, workshops, hands-on exercises and out-of-classroom learning opportunities. All Summer School participants are expected to submit a written text on their topic in advance and present it at a workshop, followed by feedback and discussion with other participants and lecturers.

Eligibility

The Summer School is open to all doctoral students and early post-docs worldwide interested in the above topics. A few places can be given to excellent MA students. The working language of the summer school is English. While the range of topics is potentially wide, we will give preference to applicants who engage with the planetary scale of anthropogenic environmental change and pay special attention to the material, scalar, spatial and temporal aspects of history.

Course requirements:

The course is presential. Each participant is expected to present their work and give feedback to others. The participants are expected to submit a draft of a chapter or an article that is included in their thesis two weeks before the summer school, that is by August 11.

Each student presentation session will consist of a 15-minute presentation of the student's chapter or its context in general (we will use a timer!), followed by comments by a senior faculty member (max 10 min), peer review (5 min) and open floor for questions and comments (10 min). Participation in all these work moments is necessary for a pass.

Course program:

DAY 1 Mon 25th – Lectures and Discussions on the Concept of Anthropocene

Lead by the Anthropocene Working Group and the Centre for Anthropocene History

Place Division of History of Science, Technology and Environment, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, 5th Floor, Teknikringen 74D, 114 28 Stockholm

9.15-10.15 Welcome round

10.15- 12.00 Meet the AWG: A discussion round on the AWG definition of the Anthropocene

Jan Zalasiewicz & Libby Robin

12.00-13.00 Lunch

13.00-14.45 Meet the Center for Anthropocene History:

Sverker Sörlin & Sabine Höhler

14.45-15.00 Coffee break

15.00-16.15 Regional Anthropocenes: Discussion

Moderator: Susanna Lidström

Discussants: Sandra Swart, Onur Inal, Libby Robin et al.

16.30-17.30 Bus to Årsta brygga

17.55-18.45 Boat to Utö, arriving at Gruvbyggan pier stop.

19.00 Dinner at Utö värdshus

DAY 2 Tue 26th – Student Presentations, Feedback & Discussions

8.00-9.00 Breakfast

9.00-10.30 Session 1

Caroline Meier, *Harsh conditions: Peru's "High Altitude Research" reflecting the country's post-war engagements in the environmental discourse*

Discussants: Mariana Calvo, Lukas Becker and Susanna Lidström

Sotiris Mikros, *Threatened species data in the 1950s. Preservation of colonial asymmetries as the foundation of key conservation tools*

Discussants: Mariana Calvo, Jasmin Höglund Hellgren, Kati Lindström

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-12.30 Session 2

Adele Leigh Stock, *Colonial Planning and its Afterlives in Kampala's Wetlands, 1900-1925*

Discussants: Lana Uzarashvili, Kimberly Montañez, Thomas Turnbull

Andya Paz, *Timescapes Of The Timelords: The Multi-Temporal Anachronisms In The Anthropocene*

Discussants: Lijuan Klassen, Georg Schäfer, Libby Robin

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.00 Session 3

Ioannis Stavroulias, *Silver Mining and the Anthropocene: How Residues from three Localities (Lavrio, Iberia, Cerro Rico) turned into Global Pollutants*

Discussants: Julia Fine, Sotiris Mikros, Adam Wickberg

Kimberly Montañez, *Water and the Coffee Frontier: Rethinking Agrarian Expansion in Colombia, 1970–1997*

Discussants: Lana Uzarashvili, Caroline Meier, Sandra Swart

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30-17.00 Session 4

Lucile Truffy, *Clean Holidays: A Corporate Invention of the Environment (France, Early 1970s)*

Discussants: Ioannis Stavroulias, Rune Korgaard, Sabine Höhler

Lukas Becker, *Resisting Extraction: Oil and Indigenous Counter-Mapping in Amazonia*

Discussants: Lucile Truffy, Julia Fine, Susanna Lidström

17.00 Wrap up of the day

Evening fun and games, dinner, late swim

DAY 3 Wed 27th – Presentations, Feedback & Discussions + Field Trip

8.00 - 9.00 Breakfast

9.00 - 10.30 Session 5

Mariana Calvo, *The Empire That Never Left: La Forestal in Argentina's Gran Chaco*

Discussants: Caroline Kreysel, Lukas Becker, Adam Wickberg

Georg Schäfer, *Fuelling the Kansan Anthropocene: the entangled emergence of wartime industrial mobilization, synthetic fertilizers, and the second agro-industrial revolution on the Great Plains*

Discussants: Adele Leigh Stock, Lucile Truffy, Sabine Höhler

10.30-11.00 Coffee break 4

11.00-12.30 Session 6

Julia Fine, *Mining the End of Empire: Rio Tinto's Political Ecology of Extraction, 1870-1970*

Discussants: Lijuan Klassen, Rune Korgaard, Thomas Turnbull

Caroline Kreysel, *Washing Down from the Plantation: A Downstream History of Commodities-Based Agriculture in the Brazilian Centre-West (1970s-present)*

Discussants: Adele Leigh Stock, Kimberly Montañez, Sandra Swart

12.30- 13.30 Lunch

Half a day field trip: Anthropocene histories of Utö: geology, mining, cold war and nature protection in a grazing landscape

DAY 4 Thurs 28th – Presentations, Feedback and Discussions

8:00-9:00 Breakfast + Check out of rooms

9.30-11.00 Session 7

Lana Uzarashvili, *Documenting the Atmosphere: Thermal Landscapes in the Subtropics and Artificial Climates*

Discussants: Georg Schäfer, Andya Paz, Christoph Rosol

Lijuan Klassen, *A Genealogy of the Sick Earth: From Homeostasis and Geo-physiology to Planetary Health*

Discussants: Jasmin Höglund Hellgren, Ioannis Stavroulias, Libby Robin

11.00-11.30 Coffee break

11.30-13.00 Session 8

Jasmin Höglund Hellgren, *Between Forest and Framework: Distant Brokers and the Making of Jurisdictional REDD+ in Misiones, Argentina*

Discussants: Caroline Meier, Caroline Kreysel, Christoph Rosol

Rune Korgaard, *Soft Technology: From Alternative Imaginary to Hazardous Promise*

Discussants: Andya Paz, Sotiris Mikros, Kati Lindström

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 Final wrap-up: Methods in Anthropocene history

15.30-16.30 Collect bags and walk to the nearby boat pier Gruvbyggan.

16.30-17.25 Boat to Årsta Brygga boat stop. Thereafter we take a bus (No 846) to the Västerhaninge train station and then the Commuter Train (Pendeltåg) back to Stockholm or wherever you wish. The train will stop at Stockholm Central station. 5