

Spring 2023

HPS/H 169. Selected Topics in the History of Science and Technology. TOPIC: Air, Wind, Fire, Water: Recent Histories of Climate Change (3-0-6)

Climate change is the greatest existential crisis our planet has encountered since modern humans evolved, because it has already begun to radically alter our future. This course will examine our changing understandings of climate change from the early 19th century up to the present day: how we recognized, quantified, ignored, accepted, and embraced it -- and what it now means for the role of science in a broader social and cultural context. The course will focus on a series of case studies over the decades, right up to the current moment. This is a story of hope as well as difficulty, and we will look at examples which provide potentially positive outcomes. In the course of the term, we will read nonfiction as well as fiction, watch films, and welcome several guest speakers who are specialists on the history of climate change.