

## **Environmental Humanities: Ecology, Culture and Intervention**

**International Faculty - Professor Stephen Muecke, BA (Hons.)(Monash) Mès.L.(Paris), PhD (WA),  
Professor of Ethnography at the University of New South Wales, Sydney.**

**Course Coordinator – Dr. Nilanjana Deb, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Jadavpur  
University, Kolkata 700032**

### **Course Overview**

The Environmental Humanities represent the idea that the humanities can effectively intervene in the ongoing global dialogues about the environment that have been dominated by a culture of technocrats deploying the language of the sciences. It is necessary that humanities students learn to engage with the boundaries between the sciences and the humanities, if they are to make productive contributions to global dialogues on the environment. This course allows students to explore the potential of the humanities to contribute to sustainable change at global and local levels while understanding the core scientific discourses that dominate discussions on issues such as climate change and sustainable development. Students will therefore engage with the complexities (and uncertainties) of concepts such as climate change and sustainability; at the same time, they will understand the kinds of tools they can use to think and write critically about development at the local and global levels.

The course helps students address the environmental concerns of our time using critical methodologies developed in disciplines such as literary and cultural studies, philosophy and history. These disciplines are particularly useful in understanding the way in which narratives are crafted about our world. From the narrative of anthropocentrism that places man at the centre of his world to that of the post-human future, 'stories' have shaped the in which both public policy as well as private belief about the environment have evolved. If the narrative of 'development' has led to the depletion of the planet's resources by competing nations, we need to understand the ways in which counter-narratives might be written/told/performed, and the ways in which both co-optation and subversion can be brought about through the means of electronic media and print cultures.

This course seeks to introduce students to the theory and praxis of the emerging field of the Environmental Humanities through field work and training in analyzing and developing various forms of narrativization about man's relationship with the environment. The course will expose

students to emerging critical writing in the Environmental Humanities from around the world, but will use as case studies the culture and history of ecological systems such as the Sunderbans and the East Kolkata Wetlands.

### **SCHEDULE OF LECTURES**

Topic 1: Introduction to Environmental Humanities, the interface of science and the humanities

November 14, 2016

Topic 2: Understanding the complexities of 'climate change' and 'sustainability' - I

November 15, 2016

Topic 3: Understanding the complexities of 'climate change' and 'sustainability' - II

November 16, 2016

Topic 4: Philosophy and the environment: resituating humans and non-humans

November 17, 2016

Topic 5: History, oral history and the environment

November 18, 2016

Topic 5: Literary criticism and the Environment – Eco-critical methodologies

November 19, 2016

Topic 6: Post-anthropocentric ethnography; multispecies ethnography

November 21, 2016

Topic 7: Creative re-envisioning of environmental issues (advertisements, cinema, graphic novels, etc.)

November 22, 2016

Topic 8: Case Study 1: Human Intervention in the Sunderbans; environmental refugees

November 23, 2016

Topic 9: Case Study 2: Urban Kolkata's Wetlands: water bodies, waste, energy; Reading cultural texts related to the case study

November 24, 2016

Topic 10: Case Study 3: Damming rivers – the Narmada Sardar Sarovar dam project; Reading cultural texts related to the case study

November 25

Topic 11: Moving from re-thinking to re-making; forms of activism and action in the city

November 26

Last 3 days of course: Guided reading, fieldwork, ethnographic practice and student presentations

November 26-30, 2016

### **INTERNATIONAL FACULTY**

Professor Stephen Muecke, BA (Hons.)(Monash) Mès.L.(Paris), PhD (WA) is Professor of Ethnography at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, where he is part of the Environmental Humanities programme. He has written extensively on Indigenous Australia, on the environment, and on the Indian Ocean. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and a Faculty member, Global Center for Advanced Studies, Switzerland. He is the author, editor or translator of 19 books, among which are *Appetites for Thought* (2015), *Contingency in Madagascar* (2012), *Joe in the Andamans and other Fictocritical Stories* (2008), *Cultures of Trade* (2007), *Ancient and Modern: Time, Culture and Indigenous Philosophy* (2004), *Rogue Flows: Trans-Asian Cultural Traffic* (2004),

and *Culture and Waste: the Creation and Destruction of Value* (2002), *No Road* (1997), *Reading the Country: Introduction to Nomadology* (1984), *Gularabulu: Stories from the West Kimberley* (1983). He has written 31 refereed articles since 2000. He has supervised 56 research theses, and is a creative writer (ficto-critical writing, poetry) with several shortlistings and prizes.

#### **WHO CAN ATTEND**

Postgraduate students of all departments, research scholars, and young faculty.

#### **COURSE FEES\*:**

For JU students and faculty: FREE;

For postgraduate students from other institutions not receiving any fellowship or stipend - FREE

For stipend-receiving researchers from other educational institutions: Rs 700/-

For young faculty from other recognised educational institutions: Rs. 1400/-

\*Please do note that all those who are selected for the course must register on the GIAN portal (registration fees Rs. 500). This is separate from the fees listed above.

Maximum Intake: 30

**To register, write with full details to [nilanjanadeb@yahoo.com](mailto:nilanjanadeb@yahoo.com) . Write 'GIAN Course: Environmental Humanities: Ecology, Culture and Intervention' at the subject column of the email. Please send a brief CV and a statement indicating your interest in the course. Selection will be made on the basis of these details.**

Last date of Application: October 7, 2016. Important Information • Participants will be provided with all instructional materials, internet facility. • The participants will be expected to pay for their own food and lodging for the duration of the course. • Help will be provided in finding low-cost accommodation to outstation participants.