



University of Stuttgart

American Literature and Culture

**Virtual Lecture Series:
Towards “Environmental
Humanities”?
Ecocriticism in Theory
and Practice**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 8.00 P.M. (CET)

Environmental Literacy and the Grueling Effectiveness of Despair

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More often than not -- when it comes to environmental issues -- the foreign language classroom is relegated to simply providing the vocabulary for technological fixes or conversational expressions of one's (surely indignant) opinion on the state of the world. Yet, foreign language education is deeply embedded in its related disciplines. With Environmental Literacy, it has a part to play in the (Environmental) Humanities that goes above and beyond its usual role as mere vocabulary dispenser:

- How can the learning of English as a foreign language open new perspectives on perceiving, communicating, or learning about the environment, the world around us?
- What is the grueling effectiveness of despair and why do we need hope?
- How do words or expressions, how do texts and images shape the world we see around us? How does our perception have an influence on the English we learn?

The talk attempts to provide a fresh mindset and teaching rationale: I will discuss teaching samples and will introduce background knowledge that help to approach the environment (or the topic of 'saving the planet' as some call it) in a humanist, engaging, productive and, most importantly, hopeful way.