



World Society, Planetary Natures conference

Call for papers

World Society, Planetary Natures: Crisis and Sustainability in the Capitalocene and Beyond

Binghamton University, July 10–11, 2015

An international conference sponsored by the World Society Foundation

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS IS MARCH 1, 2015

Since 2008, a broad consensus has emerged among scholars of global change: ours is an era of “converging crises.” Popularly expressed in the language of “triple crisis” – climate, energy, and finance – there is considerable uncertainty as to how these crisis-tendencies fit together, and if they are nearly so independent as the language of convergence suggests. If many scholars view the unfolding turbulence of the 21st century as an era of multiple crises, others have turned towards a different way of seeing crisis. This emerging alternative seeks to unify dimensions of human and extra-human natures in the world history of the present – as in the distinctive approaches of the Anthropocene and world-ecology perspectives. Through this different way of seeing, a crucial question has taken shape: Are we living the Age of Humans (the Anthropocene) or the Age of Capital (Capitalocene)?

World Society, Planetary Natures seeks to bring together scholars of global social change and global environmental change in the pursuit of new syntheses of “political economy” and “political ecology,” broadly conceived. The conference therefore privileges a double engagement: 1) with the core concerns of world-historical and global studies; and 2) with a broader multi-disciplinary community focused on global environmental change, past and present.

The conference pursues three major goals. First, we encourage a serious intellectual cross-fertilization between scholars engaged in the study of global social change and those engaged in the study of global environmental change. Second, the conference will facilitate a sustained exploration of the relations unifying the differentiated moments of 21st century crisis. These include not only the “triple crisis” argument, but comprise a wide range of crisis tendencies – such as food, inequality, employment, and social reproduction – as well as to the emergent possibilities of “commoning.” Third, the conference welcomes creative elaborations of globalization – in its manifold historical and contemporary expressions – as “ways of organizing nature.” In contrast to seeing

neoliberalism as acting upon global natures, this alternative encourages a view of globalization as developing *through* the web of life. Such an alternative rethinks aspects of recent (and *longue durée*) world history as new human-environment configurations in which humans make environments, and environments enter into the constitution of power, re/production, and inequality. This entails the socio-ecological reconstruction of taken for granted “social” phenomena, such as the Washington Consensus, financialization, the European Union, or the rise of the BRICS. To investigate, analyze, and narrate historical change as if nature matters – as producer no less than product of capital and power – implies a much more decisive shift than commonly recognized: in our theoretical frames, methodological choices, and narrative strategies.

We welcome papers, panels, and proposals related – but not restricted to – the following topics:

The Financialization of Nature: Commodities, Carbon markets, Conservation, etc.

One, Two, Many “Sovereignties”: Food, Land, Energy, and Beyond

Planetary Urbanization

Cheap Labor, Unpaid Work, and the Crisis of Human Natures

Green Catastrophism and the Theory of Global Crisis

Narratives of Nature, Crisis, and Capitalism

Modernity and Climate Change

Scientific Revolutions and Capitalist Natures

Class Dynamics of Agro-Ecological Change, North and South

Crises: Social, Ecological, or World-Ecological?

Ecology and Imperialism

The ‘Long’ Green Revolution: Renewal or Demise?

Culture *as* Ecology

Green Keynesianism and the Myth of Sustainability

Industrialization and the Production of Nature

Anthropocene or Capitalocene?

New (and Old) Practices of Commoning

World-Literature and World-Ecology

Value, Nature, and Ontological Politics

Environmental Histories of Capital, Empire, and Commodities

Commodity Frontiers, Past and Present

The Environment-Making State

Markets, Trade, Investment: Does Nature Matter?

Nature as Accumulation Strategy

Crises of Social Reproduction

Neoliberalism's Crises... or Not?

Surplus Humanities

Climate and Capitalism: Two Crises or One?

Nature and Hegemony

Ecological Exhaustion and War

We welcome proposals for individual papers as well as paper sessions and panel discussions. Inquiries and proposals may be sent to: planetarynatures@gmail.com.

Venue: The conference will be held 10–11 July, 2015 at Binghamton University (USA).

Travel grants: The World Society Foundation sponsors a small number of travel grants for students and for participants from Africa, Asia, Latin-America and Eastern Europe (ISA country categories B and C). Travel grants will be allocated on the basis of a competitive assessment of full papers (of about 8.000 words) submitted. Deadline for submission of papers for travel grants is March 1, 2014; papers must be sent by e-mail to: planetarynatures@gmail.com. Applicants receiving travel grants will be notified before 15 April, 2015.

Publication: Outstanding conference papers will be published in a conference volume.

Conference Sponsorship: The main sponsor of the conference is the World Society Foundation (Zurich, Switzerland). In addition the conference is supported by the World-Ecology Research Network and the Department of Sociology of the University of Neuchâtel.

Organizing Committee: Christian Suter, Université de Neuchâtel; Diana C. Gildea; Jason W. Moore, Binghamton University.

WORLD SOCIETY FOUNDATION 

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