Scholarship in the humanities contextualizes and complements environmental science and policy with a focus on narrative, critical thinking, history, cultural analysis, aesthetics, and ethics. For more than twenty years, the University of Oregon has placed the environmental humanities at the center of conversations about our ecological futures.

The UO Environmental Studies Program is a national leader for integrated environmental humanities, making ours the only Association of American Universities institution to offer a fully interdisciplinary doctoral degree in this field, with a stellar placement record. Home to two of the field’s leading journals (Environmental Philosophy and Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities), the university enjoys a uniquely collaborative relationship among the sciences, arts, social sciences, policy, and law, as well as an established record of “public humanities” involvement with local and regional community partners. Research areas with outstanding opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration include bioethics, climate change, environmental justice, ecocritical theory and philosophy, food studies, health, Native American and international indigenous studies, new media, urban environmental studies, journalism, art and architecture, law, and social movements.

This newsletter is the work of the UO Environmental Humanities Collective, associated with the Environmental Studies Program in the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Architecture and Allied Arts, and the School of Law. Inside is evidence of the wide range of humanities disciplines within these schools and programs that provide collaborative voices and perspectives shaping research and public perceptions of environmental issues. Climate change is an exemplary issue for such collaboration. Environmental scientists have identified the climate change crisis, and social scientists have analyzed causes and policy options. However, public responses to scientific reports and policy debates are confused by the narratives of conflicting interest groups. These are storytelling problems that humanists can critically analyze and interpret from many revealing angles, demonstrated in the following pages. Examples include architecture professor Brook Muller’s work on ecologically sustainable buildings, philosophy professor Ted Toadvine on biodiversity, history professor Marsha Weisiger’s work on Western U.S. rivers, and English professor Stephanie LeMenager’s new book on petroleum culture.

Petroglyph near Hart Mountain, Oregon. Photo by Matthew Dennis
Brook Muller, associate dean of the School of Architecture and Allied Arts and associate professor of architecture, gave a lecture on his new book, *Ecology and the Architectural Imagination* April 2, 2014, as part of the twentieth annual Holistic Options for Planet Earth Sustainability Conference (HOPES—see below). He offered a series of speculations on architectural possibilities that emerge when ecology is embedded from conceptual phases onward, how notions of function and structure of ecosystems can inspire ideas of architectural space making and order, and how the architect’s role and contribution can shift through this engagement. Ecological architects working in increasingly dense urban environments can create diverse spaces of inhabitation and connect project-scale living systems with those at neighborhood and region scales. Equipped with ecological literacy, critical thinking and collaboration skills, designers can play important roles in the remaking of our cities. Read more on the A&AA website.

**Stephanie LeMenager**, the Barbara K. and Carlisle Moore Distinguished Professor of English, has a new book, *Living Oil: Petroleum Culture in the American Century*. A work of environmental cultural studies, the book utilizes a wide spectrum of cultural forms, from museum exhibits and oil industry tours to poetry, documentary film, fiction, still photography, novels, and memoirs. Its unique focus is the aesthetic, sensory, and emotional legacies of petroleum, from its rise to the preeminent modern fossil fuel during World War I through the current era of “tough oil.” LeMenager conceives of tough oil as a bid for continuity with the charismatic lifestyles of the American twentieth century that carries distinct and extreme external costs.

On April 1, a *New York Times* story featured Professor LeMenager’s winter term seminar, *Cultures of Climate Change*. The story explained that course readings included nonfiction by Sontag and Derrida and cultural media as well as climate fiction or “cli–fi.” LeMenager said, “Speculative fiction allows a kind of scenario-imagining, not only about the unfolding crisis but also about adaptations and survival strategies.” Graduate students Shane Hall and Steven Siperstein were also cited, including Hall’s comment that “climate change itself is a form of story we have to tell.” Excitement about this UO environmental humanities course was so great that the story was reprinted in major newspapers in Germany, Spain and Italy. Siperstein, with coeditors Hall and LeMenager, are editing a new volume, *Teaching Climate Change in Literary and Cultural Studies* with contributors from the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Asia.

Professor LeMenager has begun an ongoing collaboration with Stockholm University in collaboration with Associate Professor Claudia Egerer, which will be an environmental humanities dialogue. Egerer will come to the University of Oregon in 2015, and LeMenager will teach a five-week seminar at Stockholm University in fall 2014. Graduate student exchanges are planned for the future.

Her Moore Chair sponsored four lectures and workshops on environmental humanities during the academic year:

- **Stacy Alaimo**, University of Texas at Arlington: “Composing Blue Ecologies” (October 2013)
- **Marko Peljhan**, University of California at Santa Barbara: “Coded Utopias” (February 2014)
- **Warren Cariou**, University of Manitoba: “Tar Sands Genres: Rethinking Form in an Irrational Moment” (February 2014)
- **Jennifer Wenzel**, University of Michigan: “Postcolonial Environments” (April 2014)

LeMenager gave many invited lectures and presentations on petroleum culture and the environment and the environmental humanities at universities in the U.S., Canada, and Sweden. Among these were a keynote — “Do We Need the Energy Humanities?” — for the Institute on Culture and Society (June 2014), “Living Oil in the USA” at the University of Iowa (April 2014), “The Future of the Environmental Humanities” at the University of Washington (November 2013), and “The Environmental Humanities” at the University of Stockholm, Sweden.

**Esther Jacobson-Tepfer**’s new book, *The Archaeology of Belief in Prehistoric North Asia: Liminal Beings, Mythic Time* (Oxford University Press), is the result of more than twenty years of survey, discovery, and research in the Altai Mountains of Mongolia and adjoining regions in South Siberia. Using monumental surface structures and rock art, Jacobson-Tepfer considers the manner in which layers of archaeology set within a landscape context can reveal the shape and ecology of archaic beliefs. In turning to preserved mythic traditions of Siberian peoples, she attempts
Featured Faculty Cont’d

to flesh out the liminal beings revealed in the rock monuments.


For more information on the Mongolian Altai Inventory Project, visit mongolianaltai.uoregon.edu.

Marsha Weisiger, the Rocky and Julie Dixon Chair in U.S. Western History, has won a National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Research Fellowship for a year of archival research and writing on a monograph, *The River Runs Wild*, which explores the shifting meanings of “wild” since the mid-nineteenth century. During last summer’s research at the Huntington Library, she examined thousands of photographic prints, glass lantern slides, and home movies of the Southwest’s Green and Colorado Rivers, funded by the UO Research, Innovation, and Graduate Education (RIGE) Program and the Huntington Library. Those images will also be used for two related projects. The first, *Danger River*, explores how men and women narrated their adventures down the Colorado River over the century from John Wesley Powell’s geological expeditions of 1869—72 to Edward Abbey’s photo essay for *Playboy* in 1977. Second, she plans to undertake an interdisciplinary expedition down the Green River in the company of three ecologists, a geomorphologist, an environmental photographer, and another environmental historian and conservationist. The resulting book, *Living Rivers*, written for a popular audience, will focus on the prospects for resilience in an era of climate change. She spoke recently at the University of Idaho on “Hippies, Hoedads, and the Environmental Movement.”

Mary Christina Wood, Philip H. Knight Professor of Law and faculty director of the Environmental and Natural Resources Law program, has published a new book: *Nature’s Trust: Environmental Law for a New Ecological Age* (Cambridge, 2013). This book exposes what is wrong with environmental law and offers transformational change based on the public trust doctrine. An ancient and enduring principle, the trust doctrine asserts public property rights to crucial resources. Professor Wood gave keynote addresses on the subject of her book for the Thirty-Second Public Interest Environmental Law Conference in February and for the Joint Campus Conference at the end of May, which will include graduate environmental studies programs at Oregon State University and Portland State University, as well as the UO.

New Joint Hire in Environmental Studies and English

Sarah Wald is the first joint hire between environmental studies and English, scheduled to begin teaching in both departments fall 2014. She told interviewer Marsha Weisiger that she was drawn to the UO because the university “offers one of the most vibrant intellectual communities for work in the environmental humanities, and I’m looking forward to conversations and collaborations with colleagues, students, and community partners.” She is currently completing a book entitled *The Nature of Citizenship: Race, Nature, and Citizenship in Representations of Californian Agricultural Labor*. This book brings together the fields of environmental humanities and ethnic studies to argue that ideas of nature and the natural are central to the narrative strategies Asian American and Latino authors use to contest exclusionary ideologies and practices. Her next project focuses on the infrastructure of mobilit–immobility, transportation justice, and transnational migration. During her first year on campus, she will teach *Eccritical Approaches to Race and Ethnicity and Food Matters*, an interdisciplinary graduate course that contributes to the certificate in food studies, as well as undergraduate courses on environmental literature and nature in popular culture. In previous teaching, she linked a course on sustainable harvests with a farm worker advocacy organization, having students meet with farm-worker activists and produce outreach materials for them. “I’m very excited about the opportunity to build new community partnerships and contribute to existing community partnerships at the UO,” she said. She believes ecocriticism has a central role to play in social justice agendas, explaining that “finding more ways of imagining humans’ relationships to one another is part and parcel of finding new ways of imagining our relationship with the nonhuman or more-than-human world.”
Theater professor Theresa May edited *Salmon Is Everything: Community-Based Theatre in the Klamath Watershed* (Oregon State University Press, 2014), as part of the series on First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies. The collection of essays documents the more than three-year collaborative work of Native faculty, staff, students, and community members throughout the Klamath watershed, which helped her to research and write a play of many voices telling the story of the people directly affected by the crisis of the Klamath River, which caused an enormous salmon die-off in the fall of 2002 and captured national news. The play has been performed a number of times in Northern California and Oregon, most recently at the University of Oregon in 2010.

English Professor Gordon Sayre delivered the Spring 2014 Presidential Research Lecture, "Lines and Voices: Maps and Narratives in 18th Century Middle America," on March 4. He used eighteenth-century maps and narratives to focus on the role of French explorers in American history and their importance for humanities research. The lecture was supported by the UO Office for Research, Innovation and General Education.

Matthew Dennis, professor of history, gave a paper, "The Politics and Ecology of Colonialism in the Early American Republic: Development, Conservation, and Seneca Sovereignty," at the May UO conference “Alternative Sovereignties: Decolonization Through Indigenous Vision and Struggle.” Related to his recent book, *Seneca Possessed: Indians, Witchcraft, and Power in the Early American Republic*, this paper examines the conflicting claims of the Ogden Land Company and those of the Senecas, the political contest that emerged between them (in which the Senecas prevailed), and the implications for understanding the relationship between economic development, changing property law, programs of social and cultural transformations, environmental conservation (in its earliest, inchoate forms), and Native sovereignty. Professor Dennis spent the 2012–13 academic year on leave in Boston, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Massachusetts Historical Society, working on his book project, *American Relics and the Politics of Public Memory*. That book will examine the improbable importance of “relics” in American political culture—publicly significant mortal remains and related artifacts and their defining connections with place—from the colonial period to the present.

Last spring, with environmental studies colleagues Bitty Roy and Josh Roering—of biology and geology—he launched a course to help students better understand Oregon: *Oregon Abroad: A Physical, Natural and Cultural History*. They set up four interlocking courses to be taken simultaneously, and included seventeen days of fieldwork throughout the state, including the Willamette Valley, the Coast Range mountains, the coast, and the Great Basin.

Louise Westling, professor emerita of English and environmental studies, published *The Logos of the Living World: Merleau-Ponty, Animals, and Language* (Fordham 2013). Placing Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy into dialogue with literature, evolutionary biology, and animal studies, the book argues for evolutionary continuity between human cultural and linguistic behaviors and the semiotic activities of other animals. Westling also edited *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment* (2013), which offers an authoritative and accessible guide to major areas of environmental literary study in fifteen chapters by scholars from the UK, Australia, Canada, and the U.S.

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**Conferences 2013—14**

**The 2013 Meeting of Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy**, October 24–26

This meeting was held in Eugene in conjunction with the seventeenth annual meeting of the International Association for Environmental Philosophy, October 26–28, both events hosted by the UO Department of Philosophy.

"Defining the Human and the Animal" May 2–3, 2013

Sponsored by the UO German Studies Program, this interdisciplinary conference explored literary, scientific, and philosophical endeavors to define the borders between humans and other animals.
“Biosemiotics and Culture”  
May 3–4, 2013,  
Sponsored by the English department, the Environmental Studies Program, and the College of Arts and Sciences.  
Organized by Professor Emerita Louise Westling and Wendy Wheeler, professor emerita of London Metropolitan University, this conference brought leading biosemiotics scholars from Denmark, Estonia, Singapore, and the U.S. to explore revolutionary trends in the life sciences, suggesting that human semiotic capacities have evolved from the use of signs throughout the natural world.

Thirty-Second Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC), “Running Into Running Out”  
February 28–March 2  
This annual conference at the UO School of Law drew thousands from all over the U.S. and beyond, as it traditionally has done. For streaming of events, go to the PIELC YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/lawpielc to see keynote presentations.

“Biodiversity at Twenty-Five The Problem of Ecological Proxy Values”  
Organized by philosophy faculty members Ted Toadvine and Nicolae Morar and biology professor Brendan Bohannan who offered three interdisciplinary workshops to rethink our understanding of biodiversity. The first of these, “Can Biodiversity Ground Normative Truths?” on November 21, 2013, featured Donald Maier. The second, on March 12, 2014, “Ten Things You Can Do for Biodiversity,” was led by Western Washington University biologist David Hooper. The third workshop, May 12, featured Australian philosopher Kim Sterelny, whose talk was titled, “Biodiversity: The Right Concept Framework for Conservation Biology?”

The 2014 Holistic Options for Planet Earth Sustainability (HOPES) Conference, April 1–5  
Hosted by the Ecological Design Center, a student group at the University of Oregon. Inaugurated in 1994, the conference is an opportunity for students, faculty members, community members, and visiting scholars to discuss the relationship between ecology and design, and how this connection can produce sustainable buildings.

Third Annual Climate Change Research Symposium on Law, History, Philosophy, and Public Policy, April 16  
The keynote address was given by Kate Larson, director for climate change at the Rhodium Group, titled ‘Climate Change Negotiations: An Insider’s Perspective.’ Among sessions on climatography and changing geography, climate politics, and legal responses, one session included “Climate Change, History, and the Philosophy of History,” and another was a graduate roundtable discussion on “Promises and Pitfalls of Teaching Climate Change in the Classroom”.

The 2014 Northwest Women Writers’ Symposium  
“Family, Animal, Story,” May 1–3  
Sponsored by the UO Center for the Study of Women and Society Highlighted PEN/Faulkner Award winner and New York Times bestselling author Karen Joy Fowler, whose novel We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves has opened up new ways of talking about family dynamics and the ethics of animal research. Speakers also included a wide range of Northwest poets, fiction writers, and a panel of scholars in animal studies from anthropology, law, science and literature responded to readings by Fowler at an opening session.

“Alternate Sovereignties: Decolonization through Indigenous Vision and Struggle”  
This conference was organized by Kirby Brown, assistant professor of English and Burke Hendrix, assistant professor of political science, and held May 8–10 at the Many Nations Longhouse on the UO campus. The conference positioned Native American peoples at the center of the discussion, building intellectual and institutional relationships throughout the broader Pacific Northwest. Participants included tribal leaders, attorneys, educators, activists, artists, and other members of the American Indian and First Nation communities in Oregon and the region.

Joint Campus Conference, “Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Broadening Perspectives to Tackle Current Environmental Issues,” May 30  
Faculty members and graduate students in environmental studies from the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and Portland State University shared their research in a day long meeting including poster sessions and papers. Keynote: “Nature’s Trust: Environmental Law for a New Ecological Age” by Professor Mary Wood, director of the Environmental and Natural Resources Law program.
Rethinking Race in the Anthropocene, supported by a generous grant from the College of Arts and Sciences and collaboratively proposed by Stephanie LeMenager (English), David Vázquez (English), and Marsha Weisiger (history and environmental studies). As scholars like Michael Omi, Howard Winant, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, and George Lipsitz point out, processes of race and racialization benefit some at the expense of others. This symposium will bring leading scholars to explore how global climate change might deepen social inequalities such as race and ethnicity, as a result of resource scarcity, habitat diminishment, and an estimated global migration from the most immediately afflicted regions of the world, many in the global south. Assembled scholars will seek to counter these processes by envisioning opportunities brought by climate change for transformational change through the restructuring of economic and social orders. The symposium will include UO faculty members from the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences, in addition to graduate student participants and undergraduate participation by environmental studies students.

River Stories Environmental Leadership Program

On April 7, at Cozmic Pizza in Eugene, an audience of more than 300 people was spellbound by the River Stories Team, part of the Environmental Leadership Program, presenting a collection of stories at the McKenzie River Trust’s annual McKenzie Memories event. Over the course of winter and spring terms, students on this ELP team have been gathering stories of crossing the McKenzie River in a rowboat to get to school, of lodges burning down, of learning how to fish for the first time, of teaching others how to read, listen, even speak to the river. Students have been thinking critically about the ways stories affect the way we feel about place, how they bring us into community with the more-than-human world, and how they move us to act. Students received training in media ethics and interviewing before hitting the ground to do fieldwork using media techniques including audio, video, and photography. Working with community partners, including the McKenzie River Drift Boat Museum, the Lane County Historical Museum, and the Oregon Folklife Network, the team seeks to inspire stewardship for the McKenzie River, Eugene’s sole water source. The River Stories team is in the process of implementing an interactive public art project throughout Eugene and the McKenzie River community and curating an installation at the Lane County Historical Museum that will begin up June 7 and run through January 2015.

Research Interest Groups

Research Interest Groups (RIG) funded by the Oregon Humanities Center (OHC) and the Center for the Study of Women in Society (CSWS) bring graduate students and faculty members together from around campus to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborative research and inquiry, hear visiting speakers, explore new media, and build connections between scholars and community activists.

| The Food in the Field RIG, sponsored by CSWS and led by faculty members including Jennifer Burns Bright (honors college), Courtney Thorsson (English), and Lorri Nelson (landscape architecture). | The Environmental Humanities RIG, sponsored by OHC and led by PhD students Shane Hall and Taylor McHolm (environmental studies and English). | The Human–Animal RIG, sponsored by OHC and led by PhD students David Alexander Craig (Philosophy) and Anna Sloan (anthropology). |
Contributions

Contributions to the Environmental Humanities Collective can be directed to the Ecocriticism Fund of the UO Department of English (1415 Kincaid Avenue, Eugene, Oregon 97403-1286) or the UO Environmental Studies Program (5223 University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403-5223).

Newsletter supported by the Environmental Studies Program, the Oregon Humanities Center, and the Department of English.
## Environmental Studies Faculty

### ARCHITECTURE
- **Brook Muller**  
  Ecology and Urban Development
- **Albert Narath**  
  History of Art and Architecture, Energy and the American West
- **Philip Speranza**  
  Urban Ecology and Modeling
- **Erin Moore**  
  Ecology, Design, and Construction
- **Howard Davis**  
  Urban Design, Social and Cultural Sustainability of Cities

### ART
- **Carla Bengston**  
  Painting, Environmental Aesthetics, Human-Animal Relations

### ART HISTORY
- **Esther Jacobson-Tepfer**  
  East Asian Nomadic Art, Archaeology, Myth

### ANTHROPOLOGY
- **Aletta Biersack**  
  Political Ecology, Historical Anthropology, Gender and Myth
- **Madonna Moss**  
  Zooarchaeology, Animals, and Cultural Identity
- **Francis White**  
  Primate Studies

### CLASSICS
- **Lowell Bowditch**  
  Human-Animal Relationships in the Classical World
- **Christopher Eckerman**  
  Symbolic Landscapes in Ancient Greece

### ENGLISH
- **Stephanie LeMenager**  
  Barbara K. and Carlisle Moore Distinguished Professor of English, Environmental Cultural Studies, Public Humanities
- **William Rossi**  
  Thoreau, History of Science, Evolutionary Discourse, Environmental Writing
- **Gordon Sayre**  
  Exploration and Cartography of North America, Native American Literature and Ethnohistory, Natural History, Ecocriticism

### GEOGRAPHY
- **David Vazquez**  
  Comparative Latino Literature, Comparative Ethnic American Literature, Critical Race Theory, Environmental Justice
- **Jennifer Burns Bright**  
  Food Studies, Comparative Literature
- **Louise Westling**  
  Landscape Imagery in American Literature, Ecocritical Theory, Animal Studies

### HISTORY
- **Shaun Cohen**  
  Human Geography, Carnegie-Global Oregon Ethics Initiative
- **James Meacham**  
  Map Design, Landscape
- **Marsha Weisiger**  
  Rocky and Julie Dixon Chair of U.S. Western History, Environmental History of the American West, Counterculture and Environment
- **Matthew Dennis**  
  Early American History, Environmental Studies
- **Jeffrey Ostler**  
  History of the American West, Pacific Northwest History
- **Mark Carey**  
  Clark Honors College, Environmental History of Latin America, Climate Change
- **Lindsay Braun**  
  History of South Africa and Its Landscape

### INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
- **Stephen Wooten**  
  Food Studies, Expressive Culture

### JOURNALISM
- **Carol Ann Bassett**  
  Environmental Writing and Literature

### LAW
- **Mary Wood**  
  Environmental and Natural Resources Law
- **Adelle Amos**  
  Environmental and Natural Resources Law
- **John Bonine**  
  Environmental Law
- **Caroline Forell**  
  Animal Law
- **Richard Hildreth**  
  Ocean and Coastal Law, International Environmental Law, Climate Change Law

### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- **Ann Bettman**  
  Urban Farm, Sustainable Agriculture
- **Kenneth Helphand**  
  Landscape History, Theory, and Design
- **Roxi Thoren**  
  Urban Design, Ecological Urbanism

### PHILOSOPHY
- **Ted Toadvine**  
  Phenomenology, Philosophy of Nature and Environment
- **Scott Pratt**  
  African American and Native American Philosophies
- **Mark Johnson**  
  Metaphor Theory, Embodiment, Cognitive Science, Aesthetics
- **Bonnie Mann**  
  Ecofeminism, Philosophy of Gender
- **Peter Warnek**  
  Philosophy of Nature

### RELIGIOUS STUDIES
- **Deborah Green**  
  Embodiment and Gardens in Ancient Hebrew Culture

### SOCIOLOGY
- **Kari Norgaard**  
  Environmental Sociology, Climate Change Denial, Environmental Health
- **John Bellamy Foster**  
  Ecological Crisis, Environmental Sociology, Marxism

### THEATER
- **Theresa May**  
  Ecodramaturgy, Ecocriticism, Post-Colonial Theory and Performance