

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

This *Companion* offers a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the environmental humanities, an interdisciplinary movement that responds to a world reconfigured by climate change and its effects, from environmental racism and global migration to resource impoverishment and the importance of the nonhuman world. It addresses the twenty-first-century recognition of an environmental crisis – its antecedents, current forms, and future trajectories – as well as possible responses to it. This book foregrounds scholarship from different periods, fields, and global locations, but it is organized to give readers a working context for the foundational debates. Each chapter examines a key topic or theme in Environmental Humanities, shows why that topic emerged as a category of study, explores the different approaches to the topic, suggests future avenues of inquiry, and considers the topic's global implications, especially those that involve environmental justice issues.

JEFFREY JEROME COHEN is Dean of Humanities at Arizona State University, and former copresident of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. His book *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* received the 2017 René Wellek Prize in comparative literature from the American Comparative Literature Association. In collaboration with Lindy Elkins-Tanton, he cowrote the book *Earth* and with Julian Yates, he is cowriting *Noah's Arkive: Towards an Ecology of Refuge*.

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But there are also daily fruitful and sustaining relationships that deserve mention here; they also made this book happen. Stephanie would first like to thank Jeffrey, whose wholehearted and exuberant commitment to the joyful act of thinking continually makes space for new visions of what humanists can and should accomplish. She also thanks Cris Mayo, who patiently lived with this volume, and Hollis Robbins, who encouraged her to say yes to this opportunity. Colleagues and friends at West Virginia University and the National Humanities Center provided the ideal intellectual world to bring this project to fruition. I am grateful to them every day.

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Chronology

1962	Publication of Rachel Carson’s <i>Silent Spring</i>
August 1963	The Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and United States sign the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty banning nuclear detonations in the atmosphere, outer space, and underwater as radioactive carbon reaches its peak in the atmosphere.
1970	First Earth Day celebration
July 1976	Seveso disaster
March 1979	Three Mile Island accident and subsequent radiation leak in Dauphin County, PA
1980	US Congress passes the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as the Superfund program, to investigate and clean up sites contaminated with hazardous substances. The law was a response to growing awareness of hazardous waste sites, most notably the Love Canal disaster in Niagara Falls, NY, and the Valley of the Drums site in Brooks, KY.
December 1984	Bhopal disaster
April 1986	Chernobyl nuclear disaster
1988	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to assess and report on the risks of human-induced climate change.
1989	Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound, Alaska
1989	Publication of Bill McKibben’s <i>The End of Nature</i>

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1992	The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) formed
1992	The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), an international environmental treaty intended to stabilize global greenhouse gas emissions, is adopted.
1993	<i>ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature and the Environment</i> , the official journal of ASLE, publishes its first issue
1995	Nigerian environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa dies
1995	Publication of Lawrence Buell’s <i>Environmental Imagination</i>
1997	The Kyoto Protocol, an extension of the UNFCCC, sets greenhouse gas emissions targets that are binding under international law for developed nations
2000	In an IGBP newsletter, Paul Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer propose using the term “Anthropocene” to denote the current geological epoch
2004	Wangari Maathai wins the Nobel Peace Prize
2007	Publication of <i>Material Feminisms</i> essay collection, edited by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman.
2008	Publication of Ursula K. Heise’s <i>Sense of Place, Sense of Planet</i>
2009	Publication of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s “The Climate of History”
2009	The Anthropocene Working Group of the Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy established to provide sufficient scientific evidence for the Anthropocene to be formally ratified as the current geological epoch by the International Union of Geological Sciences
2010	Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico
March 2011	Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster
June 2011	Publication of Rob Nixon’s <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i>
2014	Atmospheric carbon dioxide crosses 400 parts per million

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June 2015	Pope Francis’s encyclical declares climate change to be a global problem and one of the principle issues facing humanity
September 2015	World leaders at the United Nations General Assembly agree to 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
December 2015	The Paris Agreement, an agreement within the UNFCCC, is adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference by (then) 196 countries with the intention of limiting global warming to less than two degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels.