


Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, Energy Transition and International History


Ruud van Dijk

Department of History

University of Amsterdam

"Losing Earth"?: Activism and Diplomacy on the Environment and Climate since 1968

Course catalogue number	143421416Y
Credits	6 EC
Language of instruction	English
Entry requirements	Priority for students History of International Relations (Geschiedenis van de internationale betrekkingen)
Time period(s)	Sem. 1 Sem. 2 
College/graduate	Graduate School of Humanities
Lecturer(s)	> dr. R. van Dijk (co-ordinator)
Contact	Onderwijsbalie/Education Desk Turfdraagsterpad 15-17, 1012 XT Amsterdam 0.06 +31 20 5254952
Is part of	> Exchange programme Exchange Programme Graduate School of Humanities (MA)



Objectives

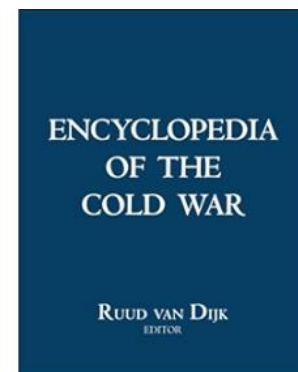
- Obtain knowledge of the emergence of environmental degradation and climate change as subjects of transnational activism and international relations since the middle of the 20th century.
- Gain insight into the politics of environmental protection and collective action against climate change since the 1960s, globally and in various parts of the world.
- Apply historical knowledge and historical thinking on these issues in a contemporary case-study, using scholarly literature and historical and contemporary primary sources.
- Present the preliminary results of the research to other members of the group; provide and receive peer-review; present the end-result of the research in a wider context, with commentary from members of the UvA-ASH research group Environment & Society: contestation & governance.

Contents

The way the modern world since the 19th century has created wealth and prosperity--a carbon-based economy--has caused ecological and climatological problems so severe that most of this progress will be at risk for people all over the world in this century. This is the great paradox, and challenge, of our time: what has made many people thrive, and what others hope will do the same for them, now threatens most of what has been accomplished.

As humanity has become aware of the threat, there has been a close connection between on the one hand, what happens locally, regionally, and nationally, and, on the other hand, what individuals, groups, and governments have been able to accomplish inter- and transnationally.

Without a scientific consensus there can be no basis for action: without local and transnational







<https://www.theguardian.com/world/from-the-archive-blog/2019/oct/30/the-fall-of-the-berlin-wall-archive-november-1989>

The Decade We Could Have Stopped Climate Change Losing Earth Nathaniel Rich



The History of Globalization and International Relations (Open UvA college)

Course catalogue number	112210157Y
Credits	6 EC
Language of instruction	English
Entry requirements	At least 48 EC of an academic propedeutic year obtained.
Time period(s)	Sem. 1 Sem. 2 
College/graduate	College of Humanities
Lecturer(s)	> mw. prof. dr. E. Buettner (co-ordinator) > dr. R. van Dijk
Contact	Onderwijsbalie/Education Desk Turfdraagsterpad 15-17, 1012 XT Amsterdam 0.06 +31 20 5254952
Is part of	> Bachelor Geschiedenis > Exchange programme Exchange Programme College of Humanities (BA)

 Add to course registration

Objectives

- Knowledge of, and insight into, international relations since the middle of the nineteenth century, with special attention to processes of globalization

Contents

Insight into the relationship between what is called globalization and international politics is essential for understanding recent international history and, indeed, today's world.

It is the goal of this lecture course to explore this relationship for the period since the 1860s. Lectures and readings will consider themes such as the emergence and transformation of the nation-state model; European expansion and modern imperialism; the era of the two world wars; the rise of the United States; the Cold War, decolonization, and the rise of a liberal-democratic order after 1945; the ebb and flow of globalization; migration; social, cultural, and ideological transfers and flows across borders.



Rafe Pomerance, center, with other activists in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, in 1989 for the first major diplomatic meeting on global warming. Credit...From Daniel Becker

EXXON: THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

BY: NEELA BANERJEE, JOHN H. CUSHMAN JR.
DAVID HASEMYER AND LISA SONG



A BRIEF HISTORY OF WHAT

SHELL KNEW

Newly unearthed documents shine light on what Shell knew about climate change and its own role in increasing emissions.

- 1981** Shell commissions a "greenhouse effect" study from the Climate Research Unit at University of East Anglia.
- 1988** Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) formed.
- 1988** Shell Confidential Report: "The Greenhouse Effect." The authors cite fossil fuels as the "main cause" of increasing CO₂, quantify Shell's unique contribution to climate change, and urge action even in the face of scientific uncertainty.
- 1989** Global Climate Coalition (GCC) founded.
- 1992** Rio Earth Summit and creation of UNFCCC.
- 1992** Shell Speech: "Three Cornered Challenge - energy, environment and population." States that "government intervention in the process of change, either nationally or internationally, should not distort competitive forces."
- 1994** Shell Report "The Enhanced Greenhouse Effect - A review of scientific aspects." Report concedes the "consequences of global warming could be dramatic" but takes care to note the "major business implications."
- 1995** Shell Management Brief "Climate Change." Brief challenged IPCC science by emphasizing the opinions of skeptics who believed "the concerns over global warming to be exaggerated and misguided."
- 1995** UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol.
- 1997** Shell Internal Report "Is Climate Change Occurring Already?" The report contrasted the company's research with the IPCC Second Assessment, new scientific studies, and media reports, drawing stronger conclusions that global warming is linked to fossil fuel use.
- 1998** Shell Internal TINA Group Scenarios 1998-2020 Report. Shell predicts climate lawsuits, direct action following major US storms. Constructs a carbon budget for remaining global coal, oil, and gas reserves.
- 1998** "Reflections on Kyoto" presented at Davos World Economic Forum. Shell Chairman declares, "...since the balance of scientific evidence suggests a link between climate change and human activity, we have a responsibility to take prudent precautionary action."
- 1999** "Listening and Responding- The Profits and Principles Advertising Campaign." Report highlights Shell's "major part in the move from oil to gas ... planting the seeds of renewable energy ... committed to making renewable energy commercially viable."
- 2001** Shell leaves GCC.
- 2001** United States pulls out of Kyoto Protocol & GCC disbands.

<https://climateinvestigations.org/shell-oil-climate-documents/>

In Sudan and beyond, the trend towards global peace has been reversed

Conflicts are growing longer. Blame complexity, criminality and climate change



the globalisation of criminal networks makes it easier for rebel groups to deal drugs or launder looted diamonds.

The most worrying factor, however, is climate change. It does not directly cause war, but it makes it more likely. When farmers are displaced by droughts or floods, they often move onto lands that traditionally belong to other ethnic groups. In just one region of Mali, an NGO counted 70 conflicts, mostly over land and grazing rights. In the Sahel, an arid vastness below the Sahara desert, climate change has disrupted livelihoods so badly that jihadist groups find it easy to recruit. They promise divine justice—and stress that this means getting your pasture or farmland back. Civil wars are already concentrated in hot, poor countries; as the climate grows harsher, the belt of bloodshed around the equator will surely grow wider.

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Climate crisis

IMF should give poor countries \$300bn a year to fight climate crisis, says Joseph Stiglitz

Developing nations need equivalent of US Inflation Reduction Act, says Nobel prize-winning economist

Larry Elliott in Marrakech

Fri 13 Oct 2023 10.51 CEST



Houses submerged in floodwater in Blantyre, Malawi, in March. Photograph: Thoko Chikondi/AP

Poor countries should be provided with \$300bn (£246bn) a year from the International Monetary Fund to finance their fight against the climate crisis, the Nobel prize-winning economist [Joseph Stiglitz](#) has said.

“Developing countries can’t do it on any scale. Unless developing countries and emerging markets reduce their emissions, no matter what pieties we do in the US and Europe, we will get global warming. The rhetoric is about doing something about climate change and then rather than getting onboard [the people] you most need to get onboard, you alienate them.”

Losing Earth?

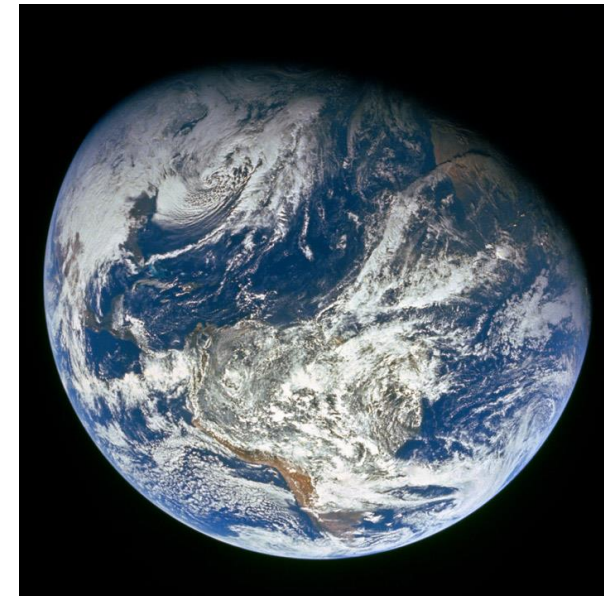
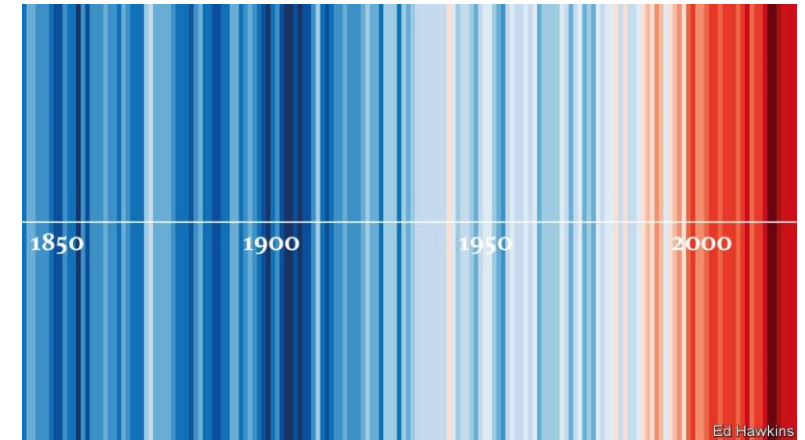
Activism and diplomacy on the environment and climate since 1968

- **History's role**
- **Environmental science and imagination during the Cold War**
- **International Politics in historical perspective**
- **The Resistance**
- **North-South: Asia and Sustainable Development**
- **Activism**

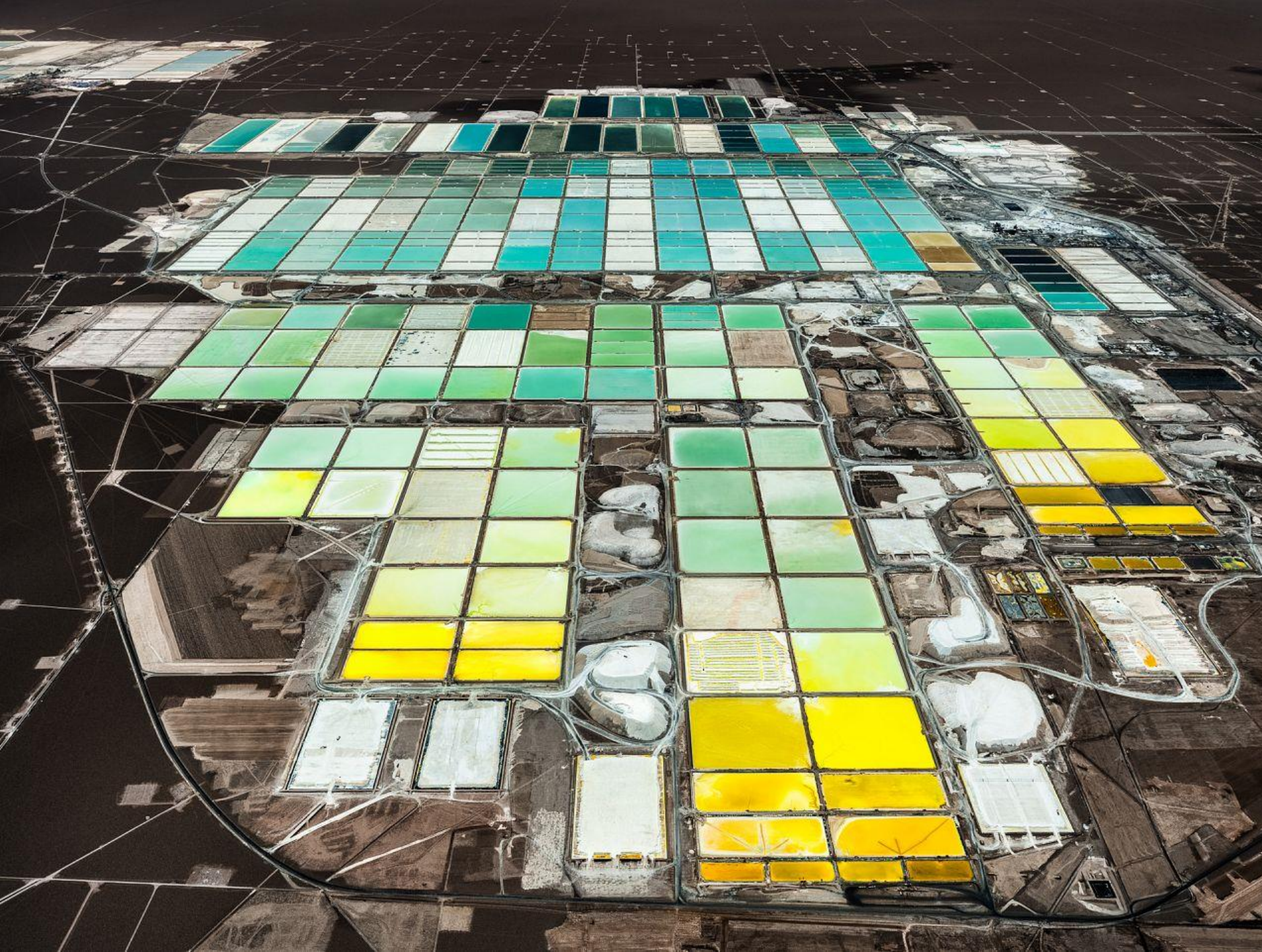
- **Symposium for presentation of the research papers**

with comment from members of the interdisciplinary ASH Research Group:
Environment and Society: Contestation and Governance

Keynote:







'Lithium Fields' in the Salar de Atacama salt flats in northern Chile. [Tom Hegen](#)

<https://www.euronews.com/green/2022/02/01/south-america-s-lithium-fields-reveal-the-dark-side-of-our-electric-future>



"Vagabundierende Wut und Unzufriedenheit": Demo gegen das Heizungsgesetz der Ampelregierung in Erding im Mai.
(Foto: IMAGO/Smith)