



Cultures of Extinction

WINTER QUARTER 2016

GERMAN 298A (sln: 14984) C LIT 396B (sln: 11854)
CHID 270E (sln: 12386) ENVIR 495A (sln: 14332)
TTh 1:30-2:50, CMU 230, 5 credits, DIV/VLPA
Readings and discussions in English
Credits count towards the Diversity requirement and VLPA
Professor Jason Groves (jagroves@uw.edu)
germanics.washington.edu/courses

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Poster Design by S.N. Welch

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This course takes a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding one of the more wicked problems of the 21st century: mass species extinction, or The Sixth Extinction, as it is often known. Rather than approaching this event as a discrete biological phenomenon, this course looks at how current threats to bio-diversity are implicated in, and connected to, threats to cultural diversity, in particular language loss.

We will seek to understand how discourses of extinction, beginning from its “discovery” in the 18th century, are related to fraught histories of colonialism and imperialism, whose ecological and cultural effects extend into the present and threaten to shape the future.

While the course seeks to grasp the scale of the Sixth Extinction, it will also critically reflect upon, and propose alternatives to, the dominant apocalyptic narratives in which extinction is framed in the popular imagination. Course readings and critical texts drawn from across the humanities and social sciences will explore and critique various framings of “the end” in literature, art, music, and film.

This course is open to majors across the university. English is the language of instruction and course readings. **This course satisfies the diversity requirement as well as VPLA.**