



Climate Cohort

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Introduction

With each annual record-breaking year, anthropogenic climate change's global and local realities continue to worsen in scale and ferocity. Our planet faces intersecting ongoing and impending global, regional, internal, and interpersonal crises catalyzed by past, future, and lasting impacts of neoliberal capitalism, neo-imperialism, heteropatriarchy, and colonialism. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, various refugee crises, and imperialist wars speak to how the inequalities of the planet's dominative systems of life manifest, the impacts disproportionately affecting those least responsible for it. What does it mean then to attempt to live in a dying world? What can more just, equitable, and livable futures look like? Audre Lorde shares how when "we become more in touch with our own ancient, black, non-European view of living as a situation to be experienced and interacted with, we learn more and more to cherish our feelings, and to respect those hidden sources of our power from where true knowledge and therefore lasting action comes."

With the advents of ongoing globalization and colonialism have come extensive ecological, cultural, and relational devastation, usurping long-held relationships between humanity and nature through racial capitalism's systemized extractive and exploitative projects. Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities are at once both most vulnerable to the climate crisis and at the forefront of resistance efforts – albeit with great costs. Between 2002 and 2018 alone, at least 1,734 people, the majority Indigenous were murdered across 50 countries for the defense of their lands from extractive industrial projects, including but not limited to mining, logging, and agricultural conversion (Grant and Le Billon). The climate emergency is not a crisis of the future - it is already here. By 2014, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) acknowledged the responsibility for climate change and its impacts are unevenly distributed as well as deeply gendered and racialized (Huang). The ensuing crisis of forced displacement due to climate change will produce up to 140 climate-displaced people across South Asia, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America (Rigaud et al). Nixon's concept of slow violence refers to this gradual and hidden destruction caused by neoliberal capitalist industrial activities, often seen as psychologically and geographically distant from the Global North. Climate displacement across the Global South is a vivid example of the slow violence of capitalism's disproportionate externalized impacts. Naomi Klein's notion of "sacrificial peoples" further explains how marginalized communities bearing this violence are concentrated within regions that are rendered "sacrifice zones," due to the disparately distributed environmental harms from pollution, contamination, toxic waste, industry, and other forms of generational, ongoing, and impending violences.





In this moment then, multidisciplinary collaborative co-creation, navigation, and action around formulating more just climate futures becomes more urgent. Global and local climate interventions are intimately intertwined and given UBC's vocal commitment to fostering more engaged and intersectional co-curricular educational programming, the Climate Cohort will center and prioritize how climate solutions must be based in intersectional Indigenous knowledges as the anthropogenic nature of the crisis is one caused and accelerated by modernity and it most disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and racialized peoples, specifically women and femmes.

False climate solutions must also be unpacked and viewed critically as the antidotes to climate crisis' systemic violences and hopelessness can be action and capacity building rooted in relationality, care, joy, love, intersectionality, and community. Cultivating enduring community that is trauma-informed, intersectional, and anti-oppressive that helps build greater capacities for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity is thus growing more vital. Seeking non-Eurocentric modes of knowledge sharing and knowledge mobilization is a key priority, especially those that engage with the gendered and racialized nature of crises at hand. Examining and understanding the intersecting dominative systems of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy is urgent in catalyzing intergenerational, interdisciplinary, and transnational climate action towards more transformative solidarities - and thus futures.

Connections to Campus Plans

The Climate Cohort locates itself within rich and vibrant sustainability leadership within UBC. As a leader in global institutional climate leadership, UBC faces a pivotal year ahead, with rising global and local temperatures, costs of living, and acceleration of extreme weather events. Strategic priorities in the 2021 Climate Emergency Engagement Final Recommendations Report include the need to “operationalize UBC’s commitment to climate justice [and] support climate leadership and initiatives led by Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC)” and to “establish mechanisms and processes that ensure Indigenous perspectives, communities, and worldviews shape the development and implementation of climate related initiatives and policies” in order to “expand, strengthen, and coordinate climate research” and “support community wellbeing in the face of the climate crisis” through welcoming and developing greater institutional capacity for engaging with the full range and complexity of Indigenous perspectives, encourage civic engagement, and build capacity for mental health, resilience, and community strategies. With a thematic focus on intersectional and Indigenous feminist climate solutions and intergenerational, multidisciplinary, decolonial educational programming and solidarities, the Climate Cohort's work is in meaningful conversation with bringing these institutional commitments to further life, particularly through participatory space co-creating and diverse partnerships. The UBC Sustainability Hub and their 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, the CAP 2030, and Climate Emergency Taskforce Report all also offer vocal, comprehensive calls to these actions.



They put emphases on collaborating to expand public discourse around climate change and the paramount need to "foster a culture of engagement and advocacy on climate action" and as outlined in the Indigenous Strategic Plan," the University of British Columbia has been, and continues to be, in many respects, a colonial institution" (8) and that "colonialism is a daily reality at UBC. One need not look far to recognize the value that has been placed on Eurocentric approaches to teaching and research." The climate crisis is a vivid invitation to critically engage with and more vocally advocate for changing these narratives and systems.

Cohort Goals and Learning Objectives

The Climate Cohort aims foster interdisciplinary, personal, collaborative, and community engaged spaces for (un)learning that deepen understandings of climate justice and emerging strategies that move away from Eurocentric, ethnocentric modes of knowledge production. Instead, we seek to build capacities for embracing the diverse possibilities and futures that can await. Central to this approach are decolonial pedagogies rooted in land, (in)justice, and intergenerational healing from ongoing, past, and impending violences of colonialism at internal, interpersonal, institutional levels. Centering feminist Indigenous frameworks, namely the power in lived experience and emotional knowledges is a key theme. As Schaffer and Smith highlight in the production, circulation, and reception of storytelling that enter political and global discourse, "all stories emerge in complex and uneven relationships of power." At various levels of dissemination, stories inextricably negotiate themselves the highly political site of its production in human rights discourse and the impact of its transmission. Thus the Cohort centers lived and emotional knowledges as ways to erode the historical marginalization and homogenization of non-Eurocentric ways of knowing and being, through the following guiding objectives and invitations -

- Centering relations, solutions, and conversations rooted in IBPOC (Indigenous, Black, People of Colour) experiences, knowledges, and ways of being
- Co-creating forums for students and community members to deepen competencies and capacities around understanding complexities of the climate crisis and its anthropogenic causes through hosting engagement and collaboration events, online and in-person
- Cultivating ecosystems of (un)learning and care across institutions and stakeholders
- Developing spaces for intergenerational and interdisciplinary connection and collaboration to broaden the audiences and people involved in climate work - including students, academics, land defenders, community organizers, and beyond
- Facilitating welcoming environments that highlight interconnections with generational and personal histories to help collectively mourn, honour, map, and envision alternate geographies and topographies that can emerge from intergenerational contexts of trauma and healing and climate (in)justice.
- Complicating ongoing projects and processes of histories and futures in the making, emphasizing they are (un)made possible by the interweaving of dominative systems and their lived, daily embodiments with/in/beyond our senses of selves and place



Collaboration offers a special opportunity for different fields to come together and use our complex emotional knowledges of systems, ecological and existential grief, anxiety, rage, and fatigue that comes with climate crises to drive us toward enduring radical collective action. Our sorrow and anger motivate us to envision beyond Eurocentric capitalist ways of thinking and living to consider more dynamic, healing, and caring ways forward. We aim to create spaces where we can work with and learn from our lived experiences, leading to transformative community-building opportunities that honor and uplift difference without reproducing the disparate systemic harms across gender, race, class, and geography.

"Colonization is a theft of layers, an impairment of being where entanglement cannot be sensed or recognized... **the cognitive dimension of colonialism traps our imagination into [a] single story of progress, development and human evolution...**[generating] epistemic violence and "epistemicide" eliminating other possibilities of knowing/being...our disenchantment with colonialism does not translate into... disinvestment in it [as] we don't know how to exist outside of it, and we are afraid of being "paralysed" by the process [and] afraid of life beyond the fences... **Rediscovering our capacity to imagine beyond... requires different questions and different vocabularies anchored in the uncertainty and precariousness of our entangled collective vulnerabilities.** It requires a move from epistemic certainty...to epistemic reflexivity (where we get disenchanted and, ultimately disillusioned with the false promises and pleasures of our frames and fences), and to a state of...openness (where we experiment with other possibilities for being/knowing without grafting them into what we are familiar with)..."

Even generations from now, what will I have been responsible for? What do I need to do right now to nurture the possibility of a viable world for this family? **What kind of politics, relationships, language and forms of existence are necessary to enact this inter-generational responsibility?** And what if the "family" is not just the people I have blood ties with? **What if, beyond notions of linear time, these great-grandchildren are already around me?"**

- Dr. Vanessa Andreotti, **"Multi-layered Selves: Colonialism, Decolonization and Counter-Intuitive Learning Spaces."** *Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures*



Partner unit

The Climate Cohort's partner, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) responds to the evolving complexities of climate change adaptation and mitigation needs by connecting experts in partnerships that pursue cutting-edge research and implement solutions. PICS is hosted and led by the University of Victoria in collaboration with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Northern British Columbia.

Goals:

- Critically examining what are climate solutions
- Knowledge mobilization and outreach on education-related programming around social justice, equity lenses, and Indigenous engagement
- Collaborative co-creation through partnerships to hold space to contemplate and address both the enormous challenges and opportunities ahead
- Working together to examine, develop, and coordinate more effective and durable climate solutions, which link cutting-edge academic scholarship and technology development with plans, policies, and projects across BC and beyond

Ambassador Projects

Focus: Transformative Solidarities - mapping stories through engaging local and global leaders, organizers, students, academics, and stakeholders across generations, disciplines, and contexts

Conversation-based Intergenerational Multidisciplinary Educational Spaces

Description

- Collective low barrier, interdisciplinary spaces for faculty, students, organizers, artists, and community for people with interests in connections and making climate work more accessible taking place once per semester, with food and facilitation provided
- Multigenerational and interdisciplinary community-building opportunities in the form of round-table discussions on how (un)learning is a conversation - beginning with discussions with experts, can be higher level with higher intensity topics; such as: calls for what policy/organizing actions need to look like, transnational solidarities between community organizers and academics across racialized communities

Ambassador Involvement

- Communications, coming up with questions/editing questions to spark conversations, arranging venue, catering, marketing, locating and inviting guests, facilitation at each table

Deliverables

- Students can capture what is coming out, with a 1-2 pager on outcomes and lessons, topic focused on solidarities per session to be used to develop future educational networks and programming



Artistic / Embodiment Based Programming

Description

- Collective art-making and sharing spaces that explore climate solutions and complexities via experiential learning-based workshops with artists and collectives
- Lower barrier: open mic and living exhibition, a space for community to gather and share poetry, music, dance, art, etc around social justice, belonging, histories, futures, and climate emotions
- Higher barrier: facilitated art-making sessions and/or trauma-informed somatic workshops (topics could include: grieving lands/futures/bodies, dreaming/imagination as action, mapping our professional/personal journeys under dominative systems that will be shared in the end of the year)

Ambassador Involvement

- Organizing two events, helping with logistics, venue, performers, A/V equipment, facilitation, recording what is happening and how it is impacting, what kind of impact do they see with the processes taking place, helping curate welcoming environments

Deliverables

- Contributions to the educational toolkits around emotional resilience and Climate Kind Pedagogy
- Observations, detailed notes on what/how is it happening, reactions, impact of speakers and participants, collective and shared multimedia artwork, storytelling, and knowledge mobilization

Knowledge-Sharing Community Celebration: Transformative Solidarities Festival

Description

- End of the year festival around Indigenous and Global South solidarities, cultural knowledges, climate solutions and complicating knowledge sharing and mobilizing, centering Indigenous feminist approaches and showcasing Cohorts' yearlong work through uplifting art and music; a space for IBPOC scholars, organizers, and allies to come together
- Transnational solidarities between Indigenous land defenders; discussions around cultures of impunity and state violence, what are Other(ed) ways of having relationships to the land?
- Can encompass 1 panel, 1 film screening, and exhibition or potential for an online exhibition in the form of a zine collaborating with community partners in a hybrid/online format
- uplifting and sharing music, art, and other cultural knowledges such as food from climate vulnerable regions; cultivating approaches to structurally informed, trauma informed, gradual and academic support and peer education-centered approach / accountability



Ambassador involvement

- Developing and implementing a panel on Indigenous land defenders and ecofeminism; organizing a way to share artistic contributions from earlier Cohort programming, either in the form of a exhibition, zine
- Developing, facilitating, and communicating logistics around community partners and artistic/educational programming; marketing, arranging performers, equipment, etc
- Collaboration with Food Systems cohort: 3-4 cultural recipes from climate vulnerable regions, stipends per group for groceries, sharing knowledge through experiential learning; this is the way climate change is impacting the ingredients, ingredients of their cultural foods are at risk, personal histories

Deliverables

- Findings will support cross cohort Living Archive / Online Database Storytelling Project around global and local climate knowledges
- Festival team could observe and produce the outcomes and documents around embodied learning experiences from programming over the year to share with future generations

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