

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg  
Institute for Advanced Study

*Fiction* ∫ *Science*  
MEETS

THE WORLD OF SCIENCE  
UNDER THE LITERARY MICROSCOPE

WORKSHOP:  
BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION: CLIMATE CHANGE  
FICTION  
APRIL 22 – 23, 2016

Organizers:  
Sina Farzin (University of Hamburg)  
Emanuel Herold (University of Bremen)



Program

**Venue:**

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg  
Institute for Advanced Study  
Lehmkuhlenbusch 4  
27753 Delmenhorst  
Germany  
[www.h-w-k.de](http://www.h-w-k.de)

# INFORMATION

## BACKGROUND

*Since global warming seems, almost by definition, hard to imagine (after all, it's never happened before) it gets short shrift. (...) And here science can take us only so far. The scientists have done their job – they've issued every possible warning, flashed every red light. Now it's time for the (...) artists, whose role is to help us understand what things feel like.*

-- Bill McKibben, Introduction to *I'm with the Bears*, p.3

Novels and short stories that depict research on climate change and/or its ecological and social ramifications have been gaining in prominence. In the U.S. in recent years, fiction that deals with climate change is being discussed in the media under the label “cli-fi” (climate fiction) and billed as a new genre.

From an interdisciplinary perspective, we are interested not so much in the question of literary classification as in the (self-)positioning of cli-fi as a boundary genre that picks up literary, scientific, political, and general societal discourses and articulates them in a new way. The self-representations of authors as well as the comments by reviewers in scientific and literary media reveal a literature that actually aims to elucidate scientific knowledge and even attempts to inspire readers to political action. Thus cli-fi serves as a cultural focal point for re-imagining the future socio-ecological consequences of global warming. What sort of crossover is there between scientific and literary speculation, and what similarities and differences do we see, both in the texts themselves and in their effects on readers? We want to discuss the potential social effects of climate change fiction from various disciplinary perspectives on our workshop.

## ABOUT FICTION MEETS SCIENCE

FMS is a research and writers' fellowship program that brings together sociologists, literary scholars, novelists, and scientists to examine the literary and social ramifications of a recent trend: an overall increase in the quantity of mainstream and literary fiction about science, and a shift in the ways that science is addressed in fiction. *For more information see [www.fictionmeetsscience.org](http://www.fictionmeetsscience.org)*

## PARTICIPATION

Guests are welcome, but should register by sending an email to [Sina.Farzin@wiso.uni-hamburg.de](mailto:Sina.Farzin@wiso.uni-hamburg.de) before March 15th, as space is limited. There is no registration or conference fee.

# AGENDA

**Friday, April 22**

- 10:00**            **Welcome, Announcements and Introduction**
- 10:45**            **Speculative Futures**  
Sascha Dickel
- 11:35**            **BREAK**
- 11:55**            **Fictional Facts: Communicating Climate Science in the  
Mirror of Literary Reception**  
Sonja Fücker / Uwe Schimank
- 12:45**            **Cultural Constructions of Floods and Climate Change**  
Anna Barcz / Thorsten Heimann
- 13:35**            **LUNCH (HWK Bistro)**
- 14:45**            **Narrating Climate futures**  
Alexandra Nikoleris / Johannes Stripple / Paul Tenngart
- 15:35**            **How Al Gore set the future on fire**  
Jules Buchholtz
- 16:25**            **The climate of science-art and the art-science of the climate**  
Simone Rödder
- 17:15**            **BREAK**
- 17:45**            **Keynote: Anticipating Climate Change Futures**  
John Urry
- 18:45**            **DINNER**

## **Saturday, April 23**

- 9:30**                    **Framing Fiction with Fact: Science and Literature in the Peritexts of Climate Change Novels**  
Sina Farzin / Emanuel Herold
- 10:20**                    **The Climate Change Novel and the Figure of the Child**  
Adeline Johns-Putra
- 11:10**                    **BREAK**
- 11:30**                    **The Climate Change Romance**  
Karsten Levihn-Kutzler
- 12:20**                    **Nature Strikes Back**  
Amy C. Chambers
- 13:10**                    **LUNCH**

Session Chairs: Sina Farzin; Susan M. Gaines; Emanuel Herold; Peter Weingart