

PROGRAMME

for the workshop

“Infrastructure and Collapse in the Anthropocene”

in Fulda, 28 - 29 October 2024

Location:

Hochschule Fulda
Leipziger Straße 123
36037 Fulda

Room 22.302

The Anthropocene is an increasingly influential concept across the academy that supposedly inaugurates a new geological epoch. It claims that humans (the Anthropos) have profoundly altered the natural processes of the Earth thereby destabilizing the previous environmental stability of the Holocene (e.g. through climate change, pollution, species extinction, deforestation etc.). Therefore we are not facing a set of “external” problems separate from humanity, but a condition “we” now find ourselves in. A condition defined by the collapse of previously assured binaries: nature/culture, inside/outside, and subject/object. As such, modern notions of progress, development, and markets – the physical and ideological infrastructure undergirding a globalized world – no longer seem to function as intended. The uncertainties that question if infrastructure is able to sustain modern society during climate change invite anxieties of side-effects, destruction, violence, and collapse. Thus the Anthropocene challenges our basic assumptions about how we know and what we understand the world to be.

Beginning from this condition, this two-day workshop seeks to use infrastructure in all its aspects (natural, built, cognitive, affective) as a heuristic entry point to the transformations of the Anthropocene. We will critically question its promises of renewal and collapse (political, economic, ecological, temporal). What counts as infrastructure in the Anthropocene? What hopes and anxieties are tied to infrastructural imaginaries and future projects? What legacies do they carry? What potentials of critical intervention do they hold?

The workshop will offer a series of research presentations, group discussions, a film screening, and an excursion into the Röhn. This event is multidisciplinary and designed to introduce students, researchers, and practitioners to the new “Human” epoch, opening a space for collaborative discussions and the exchange of perspectives.

It is organized by the “(Dis-)entangled Anthropocene reading circle”

Monday, 28 October

- 10:00 Arrival and Introduction
- 11:00 - 13:00 Session 1 - Empirical Case Studies: Nature and Human Mastery
- Jonathan Khosravani (University of Guelph, Canada):
'Natural Infrastructure, Conservation & Coloniality'
- Isaac Adjei (Hochschule Fulda):
'Infrastructural Violence in the Anthropocene: A Qualitative Appraisal of the Bui Hydroelectric Dam Project in Northwestern Ghana'
- Tom Scheunemann (Hochschule Fulda):
'Infrastructures for a New Anthropos - Finding Meaning under the Canopy of Anthropocene Forests'
- 13:00 - 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 - 16:00 Session 2 - Political Infrastructures
- Claudia Wiesner (Hochschule Fulda):
'Challenges to the Social Contract in the Anthropocene'
- Christoph Held (Hochschule Fulda):
'Has Radical Democracy an Infrastructure in the Anthropocene?'
- Philip Liste (Hochschule Fulda):
'Infrastructures of Law/ Law as Infrastructure'
- 16:00 - 16:15 Coffee Break
- 16:15 - 17:45 Session 3 - Conceptual Reflections: Time, Subjectivity and Agency
- Fiona Schradung (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt):
'Time of Breakdown/ Breakdown of Time'
- Caroline Taysen (University of Westminster, London, UK):
'Critical Theory from Theodor Adorno to Frank Wilderson: On the Collapse of Trust in Political Agency and a Rising Disavowal of the Negative'
- 17:45 - 20:00 Dinner
- 20:00 - ca. 22:00 Movie Night: 'Earth' (Austria, 2019)
in Café Chaos (located on the university campus)

Tuesday, 29 October

11:00 - ca. 16:00 Walk to the Rhön:
Connecting our conceptual questions to the forest

Registration

Please register for the workshop with Tom Scheunemann until 21 October:
tom.scheunemann@sk.hs-fulda.de

No registration is needed for the Movie Night.

The Rhön walk on Tuesday is only available for the active participants of the workshop.