
UK - Environmental Humanities Initiative

CHSS Workshop Series Grant Proposal

Submitted by Dr. [Bob Sandmeyer](#) (Department of Philosophy) et. al.

Faculty and Graduate Student Participants

UK Main Campus Faculty

Daniel Kirchner, Senior Lecturer, Lewis Honors College

Daniel Kirchner is a Senior Lecturer in the Lewis Honors College. He is also the Faculty Mentor for the UK Singletary Scholars. He holds a B.A. in international relations and German (Johns Hopkins University), an M.T.S. in 19th century philosophy and theology (Harvard University), and a Ph.D. in philosophy (Indiana University). Building from a background in the history of philosophy, Kirchner has spent the last twelve years developing innovative teaching in the classroom and collaborating on interdisciplinary curricula in both an environmental studies major and interdisciplinary Asia and the environment initiative. He has experience teaching a wide range of courses in the humanities, introduction to ethics, environmental ethics, food ethics, biomedical ethics, ethical theories, and 19th century philosophy. His teaching emphasizes a historical focus on primary text material and experiential engagement with contemporary ethical issues.

Bob Sandmeyer, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, College of Arts and Sciences

A founding member of the Environmental and Sustainability Studies faculty, Bob Sandmeyer's home is in the Department of Philosophy. In 2009, Routledge published his book, *Husserl's Constitutive Phenomenology: Its Problem and Promise*. This work traces and analyzes Edmund Husserl's attempts to present a systematic articulation of the phenomenological problematic. He is currently developing a cluster of articles around "the idea of an existential ecology" as sketched out in *Place and Phenomenology*, edited by Janet Donohoe (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017). He is coordinator of the newly established [UK Environmental Humanities Initiative](#).

Doug Slaymaker, Professor of Japanese, College of Arts and Sciences

Doug Slaymaker is professor of Japanese at the University of Kentucky, USA. His research focuses on literature and art of twentieth century Japan, with particular interest in the literature of post-3.11 Japan, and of animals and the environment. Other research projects examine Japanese writers and artists traveling to France. He is the translator of Kimura Yūsuke's *Sacred Cesium Ground* and *Isa's Deluge* and Furukawa Hideo's *Horses, Horses, in the End the Light Remains Pure* (Columbia University Press). His translation of Kimura Saeko's *Sonogo: shinsai bungakuron* (*Postdisaster Literary Theory*) is in production (Lexington Books).

Kathy Swan, Professor of Social Studies Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education

Kathy Swan is a professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Kentucky. Swan was awarded UKY's Great Teacher Award in 2021 and has been a four-time recipient of the National Technology Leadership Award in Social Studies Education, innovating with inquiry-based curricula including the *Inquiry Design Model (IDM)*. Dr. Swan served as the project director and lead writer of the [College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards](#) (2013), the national standards for social studies. She has co-written a number of best-selling books and worked extensively with educational institutions including the Smithsonian American History Museum, Smithsonian American Indian Museum, National Geographic, Library of Congress, and the Southern Poverty Law Center where she consults on building inquiry-based initiatives for teachers. She is the co-creator and

co-director of [C3 Teachers](#) and [Making Inquiry Possible](#) facilitating networks of educators around the world who are helping social studies and civic education become relevant in K-12 schools.

UK Graduate Students

[Colby Clark](#), PhD Candidate, Department of Philosophy, College of Arts and Sciences

Colby Clark is a doctoral student in Philosophy. His research focuses on how the metaphysical principles of complex systems theory map onto biogeographical patterns. In particular, he is interested in ontological claims that link the topographical features of a landscape with the topological rates of exchange within ecosystems.

[Margaux Crider](#), Graduate Student, Department of Sociology, College of Arts and Sciences

Margaux Crider is a first-year doctoral student in Sociology interested in environmental sociology, sociology of religion, and gender studies. She graduated from Centre College in 2018 with a B.A. in Environmental Studies and French. She has worked in the nonprofit sector and served as an Americorps VISTA, focusing on healthy food security initiatives. More recently, she lived in Madison, WI where she completed her M.S. of Agroecology at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Using mixed methods of ethnography and videography, her thesis research explored the environmental justice and agroecological efforts of Catholic nuns in southwest Wisconsin.

[Rachel Herrington](#), ABD Candidate, Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences

Rachel Herrington is a doctoral student in History whose research focuses on 18th and 19th century global environmental history and the enclosure of commons and its effects on marginalized and indigenous communities. Her dissertation project will present the story of how the enclosure of common systems shaped the displacement of people on a global scale whilst remaining true to the main aim: to bring the people---Scottish Highland crofters and Mi'kmaq First Nation Canadians from the margins where they have dwelled for centuries in historical scholarship to of the center of not just their history, but our collective history. She completed her M.A. in History at the University of Kentucky in 2019. Her most recent essay "The Trouble with Truth, Reconciliation, Peace and Friendship Treaties: Indigenous Land and Resource Rights Among the Mi'kmaq" was published in the History News Network in October 2021. She has worked as a teaching assistant in the Department of History at UK since 2017 and is a founder member of the Environmental Working Group in the same department. In the summer of 2021 she taught a UK upper-level undergraduate course on indigenous communities and commons enclosure in the Scottish Diaspora. Currently she teaches freshman composition in the Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Information department at the University of Kentucky.

[Emma Kiser](#), PhD Candidate in the Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences

Emma Kiser is a doctoral student in History who specializes in environmental history concentrating on old-growth forests in the Southern Appalachians. Her research calls on her extensive experience in oral history. She is a founding member of the Environmental History Working Group in the Department of History and is in a leadership position with the Appalachian Research Community at UK. During the summer of 2021 she worked as a nation-wide curriculum developer for African American and Appalachian history. Presently, she is a research assistant in support of Dr. George Wright's work.

UK Extension and Extended Community

[Rhonda Davis](#), Lecturer, Integrative Studies, Northern Kentucky University

Rhonda Davis is full-time faculty and Lecturer in Integrative Studies at Northern Kentucky University. She has a Ph.D. in Environmental Studies and works on complex socioenvironmental problems with undergraduate students. She has worked on various projects such as the STEM Ambassador Program in conjunction with the University of Utah that bridges science and society and environmental education projects. Her research is focused on environmental identity, ecological consciousness, and ecobiogeography.

[Jeffrey Seay](#), PJC Board of Trustees Engineering Professor and Professor of Chemical and Materials Engineering at the University of Kentucky College of Engineering Paducah Extended Campus Program

Dr. Jeffrey Seay is the PJC Board of Trustees Engineering Professor and Professor of Chemical and Materials Engineering at the University of Kentucky College of Engineering Paducah Extended Campus Program. He also holds an appointment as Visiting Professor in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. Dr. Seay joined the University of Kentucky in 2008 after a 12-year career as a process engineer in the chemical industry. In 2020, Dr. Seay established the non-profit venture called Engineers for Sustainable Energy Solutions (ESES). ESES is a volunteer-based organization committed to combating plastic waste accumulation in the environment through sustainable community-based waste to energy projects.

Proposal Outlining the Workshop Series' Design

This CHSS Workshop Grant will act as an incubator for nascent activities of the newly established Environmental Humanities Initiative here at UK (UK-EHI). The UK-EHI community thus proposes a series of three distinct but thematically overlapping workshops which, taken together, highlight specific areas of focus important to our fledgling Initiative. One workshop positions our graduate students in the UK-EHI community at the forefront as we determine our mission and near- and long-term goals. A second workshop codifies the land-grant mission of this University into the UK-EHI by promoting a humanities extension. A third workshop engages the UK undergraduate student body to the themes and pedagogical practices of the Environmental Humanities. All these workshops will take place during spring 2022.

1. Environmental Humanities Workshop

Organized and led by graduate students in Department of History's Environmental History Working Group, the goal of this workshop is two-fold: 1. to introduce the Environmental Humanities to the broader academic community; 2. to develop collaboratively among our community an articulate and coherent mission statement of the UK-EHI and establish medium- and long-term objectives of the Initiative. We envision a hybrid model workshop with presentations and panel discussions held both in-person and on Zoom.

2. Narratives of Self, Place, and Nature Workshop

Specifically designed around the desiderata of building robust community engagement, the purpose of this workshop is to provide a community-based, guided opportunity for participants to read, write, and explore narratives that are relevant to a changing climate. Narrative construction and analysis are powerful meaning-making practices in a world of increasing environmental stresses. This Environmental Humanities-themed workshop will bring these practices to the fore for interpretation and evaluation in relation to the changing human-environment relationship. This workshop would have accessible readings for a wide audience (for example, articles from Orion magazine) featuring diverse voices that serve as the foundation for conversation and exploration of one's own environmental narrative. Guided discussions will allow for people to converse, collaborate, and

create new understandings of patterns in thinking, narrative expression, and power relations as they relate to the human-environment relationship. The organizers of this workshop will include faculty working within and outside the University of Kentucky.

3. The Robin Wall Kimmerer Workshop

Overseen by faculty in the Lewis Honors College, we imagine a workshop devoted to building a community of Environmental Humanists among the UK's undergraduate student body. This workshop will center around a reading of Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer's work, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Looking beyond this single work, the Workshop will integrate contributions and readings that emerge from participants' own disciplinary studies. The goal of the workshop is 1) to examine the challenge to disciplinary knowledge which Kimmerer's work exemplifies; 2) to understand the theoretical, ethical, and political need to integrate traditionally excluded knowledges (TEK) and discourses into scientific practice; 3) to engage in deep discussion about what kind of approaches (teaching, writing, research, experiences, actions) are necessary to accomplish genuine interdisciplinary thinking and work; and 4) to develop specific modes for integrating those approaches into our practices (teaching, writing, research) at the individual and the community level.

UK-EHI Budget Proposal

The UK-EHI proposes to divide the \$1,500 grant equally to each workshop. We anticipate that the \$500 expenses per workshop will go to the purchase of reading materials, refreshments, and physical materials necessary for the successful planning and implementation of that workshop. However, it should be noted that the UK-EHI has also acquired a \$500 mini-grant from the Gaines Center for the Humanities. This Gaines money will be devoted to developing undergraduate engagement and hence will be applied to the Kimmerer workshop. An underlying hope of third workshop centers around bringing Dr. Kimmerer to UK. Hence, CHSS allocated funds that are left-over after purchase of books, materials and refreshments will be used to help sponsor Dr. Kimmerer's visit to UK proposed by the Lewis Honors College.

UK-EHI Workshops Timeline

As noted, all workshops will take place in the spring of 2022. The Environmental Humanities Workshop will take place sometime during the first half of that semester, as early as practicable. The Narratives of Self, Place, and Nature Workshop will require greater planning and community coordination. Consequently, this workshop will take place sometime during the second half of that semester. The Robin Wall Kimmerer will take over the course of the entire semester.