

The Program in Cultures, Civilizations and Ideas presents:



Reading the Book of the World: What the Humanities Can Teach Us about Climate Change

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Global climate change presents an unprecedented challenge to the survival of our species—not least because human beings have so far proven remarkably inept at developing the conceptual tools that would be necessary to truly imagine it. The temporal and spatial dimensions are too vast, the causal connections too complex. Everybody understands what weather is, but “climate” is an abstraction, and no effective movement for social change was ever founded on an abstraction. Many prominent theorists of our current ecological crisis have argued that to truly understand climate change will require us to shed our humanist baggage, and to become “post-human.” In my talk, I will take a more modest approach. By focusing on the history of a particular humanist metaphor, namely that of our world as a book that demands to be read, I will demonstrate both the difficulties of humanist thought in the face of catastrophic climate change and, I hope, gesture towards some solutions for our imaginative impasse.

Thursday, April 30, 2015: 12.40-14.00

Bilkent University Library Orientation Room: Sandwiches and Beverages Available