



Oregon Humanities Center

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Fall 2020

How do Americans think about climate change?

What are the psychological, cultural, and political reasons why some people passionately engage with issues surrounding climate change, while others are apathetic, and some are downright dismissive and hostile?

Anthony Leiserowitz, the founder and Director of the [Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#) (YPCCC) and a Senior Research Scientist at the Yale School of the Environment, will explore this question as he delivers the 2020-21 Kritikos Lecture “Climate Change in the



American Mind” on Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 5 p.m. via [Zoom](#). His talk will be the first in the OHC’s 2020-21 [Climate Justice series](#).

Climate change is one of the most daunting challenges of our time. Americans have diverse and sometimes opposing views about global warming, fundamentally shaping the political climate of climate change. Leiserowitz will explain recent trends in Americans’ climate change knowledge, attitudes, policy support, and behavior and discuss strategies to build public

and political will for climate action.

Leiserowitz is an expert on public climate change and environmental beliefs, attitudes, policy preferences, and behavior, and the psychological, cultural, and political factors that shape them. At Yale, Leiserowitz examines how Americans and others around the world respond to the issues of climate change and other global challenges. YPCCC seeks to discover what people understand and misunderstand about the causes, consequences, and solutions of climate change; how they perceive the risks; and what kinds of policies they support or oppose.

As he explains, Leiserowitz’s research with YPCCC “suggest[s] it is

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Collin outlines strategies to heal climate injustice

How can centuries of environmental exploitation and social injustice in the U.S. be unraveled? Robin Morris Collin, the Norma Paulus Professor of Law at Willamette University College of Law, will share her passion for creating solutions to remedy environmental injustice. She will deliver the 2020-21 Colin Ruagh O’Fallon Memorial Lecture “The Geography of Injustice and the Ecology of Reparations” on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 5 p.m. via [Zoom](#).

Collin asserts that, driven by the legacies of colonialism and slavery, U.S. public policy has deliberately subordinated nature and people in pursuit of profit by discounting the value of people and places into commodities for transactional exchange. Our economy, which relies on patterns of extraction, consumption, and pollution, has deeply harmed the earth and its people. Poor

communities, especially communities of color, are disproportionately impacted by pollution, waste disposal, hazardous sites, resource depletion, and disasters in the natural and built environment.

To visualize how people and places are affected by environmental injustice, Collin has been utilizing the [EPA’s EJSCREEN: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#), which collects and analyzes information to assess and compare environmental and human health risks borne by populations identified by race, national origin, or income. Injustice has literally been mapped.



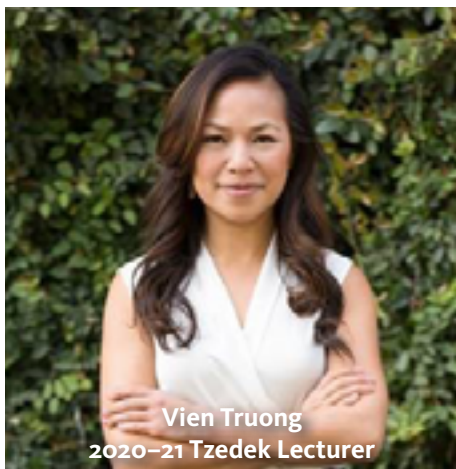
Beyond defining the problems, Collin will outline key strategies that can lead to healing. She contends that in

order to heal we must reestablish a reciprocity between ourselves and nature, and we need to center environmental justice in the heart of sustainability. To that end, Collin maintains that environmental justice must be included in the core curriculum so all will understand why equity matters.

We must reexamine our shared histories and recognize the truth of where we are now—not try to deny or disguise it. She also believes that injured communities

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Upcoming Climate Justice lectures in winter and spring



Vien Truong
2020-21 Tzedek Lecturer

"Fighting for the Future"

Tuesday, February 2, 2021 (Eugene)
Wednesday, February 3, 2021 (Portland)



Naomi Oreskes
2020-21 Cressman Lecturer

"Can Science Be Saved?"

Friday, March 12, 2021



Bathsheba Demuth
2020-21 Clark Lecturer

"The Reindeer and the End of the World"

Tuesday, May 4, 2021



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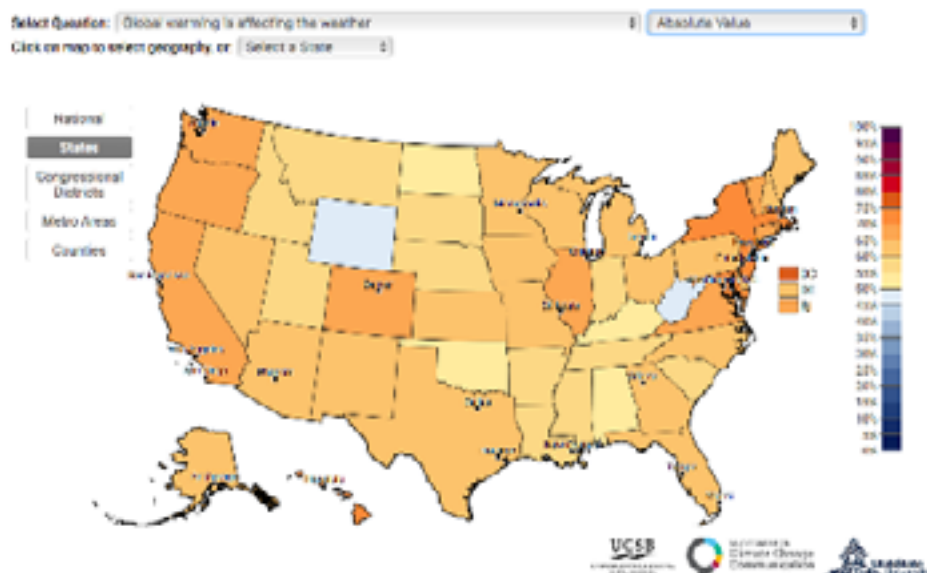
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Estimated % of adults who think global warming is affecting the weather (64%), 2020



Collin *continued from page 1*

and damaged places need to be reconnected, one by one.

Collin believes that reparations can change the ecology of subordination, but not with payments—payments will not change systems. Sustainable community-based projects create new systems that bolster relationships between people and the land—like the Southeastern African American Farmers' Organic Network



which is committed to culturally relevant, ancestrally guided, and ecologically sustainable, agricultural-based living. Healing entails a community-by-community focus on restorations, reparations, and re-creations.

Collin, the first U.S. law professor to teach sustain-

ability courses in a U.S. law school, currently teaches Global Sustainability. Prior to her tenure at Willamette University, she was a professor at the University

of Oregon's Law School from 1993 to 2003. While at the UO, she cofounded the Coalition Against Environmental Racism's Environmental Justice conference and the Sustainable Business Symposium, both of which continue into their second decade.

She has been awarded the David Brower Lifetime Achievement Award from the UO's Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, the 2012 Oregon Woman of Achievement Award, the Leadership in Sustainability Award from the Oregon State Bar, the Campus Compact Faculty Award for Civic Engagement in Sustainability, and the national Environmental Justice Achievement Award from the Environmental Protection Agency for her work with the Oregon Environmental Justice Task Force. She was a founding board member of the Environmental Justice Action Group of Portland, and a founding member of Lawyers for a Sustainable Future.

Collin's talk is free and open to the public. Registration is required to participate in the live Zoom event. Register at: ohc.uoregon.edu. The talk will be recorded and available for viewing on the [OHC's YouTube channel](https://ohc.uoregon.edu). For more information contact ohc@uoregon.edu.

possible to improve public understanding of the scientific consensus on climate change in a way that does not trigger political polarization. In particular, our findings suggest that scientists, nonprofit organizations, and policy makers should communicate the scientific consensus using short, simple declarative sentences or simple pie charts. Ultimately, better communication of the scientific consensus on human-caused climate change can contribute to improved public understanding and engagement with the issue."

According to Leiserowitz, despite the distraction of COVID-19, climate change is "not fading from people's memories, it is not fading from their sense of importance just because other issues have arisen."

Leiserowitz earned both his MS (1998) and PhD (2003) in Environmental Studies from the University of Oregon. He studied with Paul Slovic, professor of Psychology and president of Decision Research (DR), with whom he currently serves at DR. He conducts research at the global, national, and local scales, including many surveys of the American public. He conducted the first global study of public values, attitudes, and behaviors regarding sustainable development and has published more than 200 scientific articles, chapters, and reports. Leiserowitz and his colleague Edward Maibach (George Mason University) are winners of the 2020 Stephen H. Schneider Award for Outstanding Climate Science Communication. In addition, he is the host of Climate Connections, a radio program broadcast each day on more than 600 stations nationwide.

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Spiritual leaders speak about their social activism

How has the COVID-19 crisis, and our responses to it, revealed the injustices endemic to our culture? How can we turn things around? And what role does religion play in confronting this crisis?

The UNESCO Chair in Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue and Peace and the UO-UNESCO Crossings Institute will host a series entitled "Getting Religion Right in a Time of Crisis." Sister Helen Prejean will talk about her recent book *River of Fire: On Becoming an Activist* (Random House, 2019) on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 7 p.m. And on the following Wednesday, October 21, also at 7 p.m., Rabbi Michael Lerner will talk about his recent book *Revolutionary Love: A Political Manifesto to*

Heal and Transform the World (University of California Press, 2019). Both talks will be presented via Zoom.

In her book, *River of Fire*, Sister Helen Prejean shares the story of her growth as a spiritual leader, speaks out about the challenges of the Catholic Church, and shows that joy and religion are not mutually exclusive. She writes about the relationships with friends, fellow nuns, and mentors who have shaped her over the years.



Sister Helen has been instrumental in sparking national dialogue on capital punishment and in shaping the Catholic Church's vigorous opposition to all executions. In 1982, she began corresponding with Patrick Sonnier in the Louisiana State Penitentiary. He had been sentenced to death for the murder of two teenagers. Two years later, when Sonnier was put to death in the electric chair, Sister Helen was present to witness his execution. In the following months, she became the spiritual advisor to another death row inmate, Robert Lee Willie, who was to meet the same fate as Sonnier. After witnessing these executions, Sister Helen realized that this lethal ritual would remain unchallenged unless its secrecy was

stripped away, and so she sat down and wrote a book, *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*. That book ignited a national debate on capital punishment and was turned into an Academy Award winning movie and an extraordinarily moving opera.

Social theorist and psychotherapist Rabbi Michael Lerner has developed a

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