

Your Life in Ruins

Architecture in the Trans-Apocalypse

**Apocalyptic Realism, Climate Sorrow, Ecological Grieving,
Anthropessimism, Necrofuturism, and Other Reckonings with
Environmental Catastrophe**

W 00000002024 Arch 603 TU 2:30-5:20pm 2108 AAB Prof. Andrew Herscher

Climate apocalypse is virtually always regarded as world-ending; the world has therefore become that which must be saved from apocalypse. Anxiety, fear, and dread of an impending, threatened, and/or forecasted end of the world have thus sponsored any number of activities to defer, reverse, or deny climate apocalypse, all based on the premise that this apocalypse can in some way be averted. Investigating the potentials of new technologies, new materials, and new forms of interdisciplinary research, much of current design thinking follows from this premise. And yet, however well-meaning, this thinking blocks comprehension of crucial historical, political, and social facts: that the world is already irreversibly changing by synergistically-related environmental catastrophes that have been termed the “trans-apocalypse”; that the world as a survivable condition is already in the process of ending for many of the human and more-than-human beings that inhabit it; that prudent risk management necessitates the consideration of worst-case scenarios; and that the end of the world has already been a lived historical experience for humans whose lives have been expendable in colonialism, slavery, genocide, racial capitalism, and extractive plundering. This seminar will therefore undertake a thought-experiment based upon the following questions: What if design would occupy itself not with reversing, surviving, or withstanding climate apocalypse, but rather with living equitably, ethically, and justly within this apocalypse? What if imagining that climate apocalypse can be averted makes us not more but rather less able to deal with this apocalypse? And what if the opposite of hope in reversing climate apocalypse is not hopelessness but acceptance of the apocalypse that virtually all inhabitants of the planet are contending with in one form or another? We will conduct this thought-experiment by exploring a number of positions that integrate climate apocalypse into cultural imagination and investigating some of the design implications that ensue from those positions, mining design-based thinking that has engaged world-ending as an ongoing reality and by attempting