

Aoyama Gakuin University

Environmental Humanities Lecture & Conversation

Climate Change and the Imagination of Infrastructure

Lecture by **Prof. Hannes Bergthaller**
National Taiwan Normal University

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A Conversation on **More Than Human** with
Prof. Bergthaller
and **Prof. SUGA Keijiro**
Meiji University

Moderated by **YUKI Masami**
Professor of English, AGU

Scholars of infrastructure like to say that it is by definition invisible: when it functions as intended, we do not need to pay attention to it. Lately, however, infrastructure has been receiving a lot of attention: it is said that we need new transmission lines, charging stations, windmills, and solar panels. Public transportation systems must be expanded; we need to figure out what to do about buildings along vulnerable coastlines and rivers, about pipelines and railroad embankments on melting permafrost. The climate crisis, it turns out, manifests itself as a crisis of infrastructure - and it requires us not only to rework material infrastructures, but also to rethink the roles it plays in our lives and how it shapes our relationship to the more-than-human world. Modernity had dreamed of infrastructure as a means for emancipating humanity from natural constraints. The climate crisis reveals that modern infrastructures have instead entangled us ever more deeply in natural processes that remain firmly beyond human control. Infrastructures thus do not separate us from the natural world - they are naturecultural hybrids which structure whole forms of life beyond the human. In this talk, I want to look at two writers from the US and China who have engaged with these questions in provocative ways: Kim Stanley Robinson, who in his Mars trilogy developed a concept of "bioinfrastructure" that reverberates throughout his subsequent work up until the present; and Liu Ci-xin, whose texts similarly imagine the Earth itself as infrastructure.

15:00 - 17:00

Nov

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2025

Rm. 17310, Bldg. 17, Aoyama Campus

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