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Dear Students,

Congratulations on your decision to join Southwestern University and welcome to your Advanced Entry Seminar (AES) *International Climate Fiction*. I look forward to meeting you and to working with you in the spring semester and beyond!

I expect that collaborating in our seminar on academic topics of global importance will provide support in your transition to becoming engaged members of the Southwestern community. As we explore the emerging genre of Climate Fiction produced in different cultures, you will start defining and re-inventing yourself in your new roles as Southwestern students. I hope that I can be an efficient mentor on your journey of personal, intellectual, and creative growth and intercultural learning.

*Climate Change Literature* constitutes a new genre characterized by a mix of factual research and speculative imagination. One of the questions that drives our explorations in the Seminar is, how reading narrative fiction about climate change is connected to our critical roles in society. Research suggests that experiences of reading fictional narratives may have an important and profound impact on how people feel and behave in their daily lives. Across disciplines, scholars assert the value of narrative fiction as a vehicle for empathetic growth. Furthermore, empirical studies show that reading fiction improves our capacity for empathy and prosocial behavior.

While experts in science communication are looking for effective ways of sending their message about the urgency of climate change issues, perspectives from the Humanities offer interesting insights we will explore in class.

Translating climate science data into accessible stories, *Climate Fiction* and *Climate Art* help us relate to others by moving us in ways that scientific data on climate change cannot. Together we explore how the genre’s representations of science and human choices can play significant roles in how we think and feel about the global challenges of climate change. We ask how international climate fiction connects us across cultures and invites us to see, to care, and to act. The course will increase our understanding of the interconnectedness of different kinds of knowledge, different ways of knowing, the power of story-telling, and the power of images – images we create for ourselves as we are reading, and images artist create about climate change.

Here are some of the questions we will engage:

1. How are scientific inquiry and climate change data integrated with the dreams, fears, and desires about possible futures of our planet in the emerging genre of *Climate Fiction*?
2. How can this emerging fictional genre help engage people with climate change? How can we increase intercultural knowledge and competence by studying Climate Fiction produced in different cultures around the world?

3. How is care for the planet promoted through representations of environmental justice and social justice issues in Climate Fiction?

Our shared readings for the Seminar come from Finland, the USA, England, Italy, Nigeria, Germany, and other places. I am asking you to purchase three texts that will not over-challenge the budget. Used or e-copies are fine. You might be able to get them all for a total of about $10.00 or so. Those three required texts are also available through our campus bookstore.

Ilija Trojanow, The Lamentations of Zeno. Translated by Philip Boehm (Verso, 2016)
(From $ 2.49 -- $17.17)

(From $ 0.99 -- $14.80)

Mark Martin, Ed., I'm With the Bears. Short Stories from a Damaged Planet.
(From $ 4.90 -- $10.42)

We will use additional on-line resources and films in class. Those additional materials will be available on Moodle, our course management site, or shared as photo copies in class.

AES is a required course for our transfer students. My aim is to offer the Seminar as an inclusive and interdisciplinary part of the curriculum, with rich materials for exploring intercultural perspectives and social justice issues that connect our curriculum across disciplines. Climate Fiction as a genre already bridges the Natural Sciences and the Humanities and you will be asked to bring perspectives from your own past and current work in the various disciplines you pursue. Transformational learning through creative projects will also be part of our Seminar.

If you have questions as you begin thinking about your first semester at Southwestern, please feel free to e-mail me at berrothe@southwestern.edu. I will be in Georgetown during the winter break and will watch for your messages. I look forward to meeting you and to sharing exciting and productive ways of learning and growing at Southwestern.

With all my best wishes for a happy, healthy, and productive time during your fall 2019 activities and preparing for the spring 2020 semester at Southwestern University.

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Dr. Erika Berroth