



Call for Proposals

Climate Change, Climate Crisis: Canadian Perspectives

47th Annual Conference of the GKS · February 20-22, 2026 in Tutzing

The 47th Annual Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking countries will focus on the topic of climate change and climate crisis. While climate change is a planetary phenomenon affecting everyone, Canadians experience its impacts in particular ways not least due to their country's sheer size and geographical location. Canada's terrestrial and maritime territory is vast, home to diverse ecosystems and many environments, which are all affected by a changing climate. At the same time, Canada remains an oil producer with continental ties to the United States contravening its tenuous reputation as a nation of environmentalists and the birthplace of Greenpeace. Hence, the various critical and creative ways in which climate change is represented, narrated, and imagined by those who call Canada their home or homeland contribute to a specific Canadian perspective which deserves more attention. Canadian Studies scholarship is particularly well positioned to address the many meanings, impacts and challenges of climate change in Canada and allows us to understand what is Canadian about (experiencing, addressing, mitigating, writing, legislating, denying, and coping with) climate change.

The effects of climate change continue to make headlines. Earlier this year, Torontonians woke up to the unwelcome news that their city had seen an increase in rats as milder winters allow the rodents to thrive. Other breaking stories expose how eroding shorelines both reveal and destroy archaeological evidence of past communities and Indigenous histories on Turtle Island. Canada, the land of forests and lakes, is facing increasingly devastating droughts and wildfire seasons which endanger the lives and livelihoods of the country's human and non-human population. There is scientific consensus that their frequency and intensity have increased due to climate change. Last year's wildfire season – which destroyed vast parts of Jasper, a tourist favourite in the Rocky Mountains, and blanketed much of the country and continent with smoke – contributed to Canada's second highest annual carbon emissions since 2003. This came close to the country's record-breaking year 2023, which produced 23 percent of the world's entire wildfire carbon emissions. Up north, the Canadian Arctic warms nearly four times as quickly as the globe. This so-called Arctic or polar amplification also leads to landslides, floods, and thawing permafrost, thereby releasing methane, an extremely potent greenhouse gas. Processes induced by climate change endanger the natural habitat of Arctic wildlife including the iconic polar bear, and detrimentally affect the livelihoods of northern and Indigenous communities. These residents warn that the changes, which they have observed in their homeland for a long time, amount to a climate crisis jeopardizing their fundamental right to life. Most famously, Inuk activist and author Sheila Watt-Cloutier argued in her book *The Right to be Cold* (2015) that environmental rights were human rights.

Like other countries Canada faces the political, economic, social, and cultural challenges of planetary climate change. While much less populated than its southern neighbour or its European cousins, Canada's per capita fossil energy use has historically been high, contributing to current and so-called legacy emissions of greenhouse gases. Canada is not only a high-energy society, which some Canadian scholars have described as a *petroculture*, but it is also one of the world's largest energy producers and

major emitter of greenhouse gases. As a signatory to the 2016 Paris Agreement, the Canadian government is committed to addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and has introduced a carbon pricing system. It has pledged to decarbonize its economy and espoused ambitious net zero emissions goals by 2050, partly built upon existing electrification agendas which are in turn facilitated by the historically significant role of hydropower in some of its provinces, especially in Quebec and British Columbia. However, in a changing world, in which geopolitics have returned oil and gas to the forefront of diplomacy, whether in Canada's dealing with a Trump-led United States or due to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, these policies come increasingly under attack. Until recently, and before US-Canadian relations soured and seized all political attention, it looked like the 2025 federal election would be mainly fought over the carbon tax. While many Canadians agree that climate change is real, climate disinformation and so-called climate delay narratives gain more traction. Canada's climate crisis is thus not only a story of the many and diverse impacts of climate change on its natural and built environments and on its vulnerable communities, it is also a political crisis and includes phenomena such as climate grabbing, i.e., the appropriation of land and resources for the purposes of climate change mitigation. As Canadians continue to fight for climate change action and demand climate justice for those who suffer most from the impacts of climate change, it is time to focus on the Canadian story of climate change.

Three themes will structure our conference. These themes are aimed to be open and they welcome contributions from all disciplines. They cover, but are not limited to, the following topics:

1) impacts of climate change

- on territory (terrestrial and maritime, urban and rural)
- on the atmosphere, weather patterns
- on wildlife, habitats, and (water) ecosystems
- coastal erosion, wildfire, draughts, atmospheric rivers
- on environments (natural, built, political, economic, business, social, cultural, etc.)
- on economics and economies (local/regional, national...)
- climate refugees and climate migration (domestic and international)
- climate change and inequality
- land/climate grabbing

2) communicating and narrating climate change

- climate histories
- the Anthropocene / the Great Acceleration
- Indigenous knowledge and oral histories
- stories of climate change
- cli-fi / climate fiction
- ecocriticism and climate change
- political narratives and framing of climate change (including climate denialism, climate delay narratives, climate adaptation and resilience)
- media coverage
- global warming or climate change?
- climatic turn
- climate ethics
- climate change and (higher) education

3) addressing and confronting climate change

- climate activism, climate action, civil society

- human rights and climate change
- climate justice / Indigenous climate justice
- saving archaeological and heritage sites
- adaptation vs. mitigation of climate change
- climate research / innovation and technologies / decarbonization and net zero technologies / renewable energy / green tech / green revolution / hydrogen
- carbon politics / carbon pricing / carbon taxes / carbon trade
- federal, provincial, and municipal climate policies / Canadian federalism and climate change / multilevel governance of climate change
- climate diplomacy, climate security, foreign policy and climate change / international cooperation (from Kyoto to Paris)
- US-Canada relations and climate change
- climate governance
- climate crisis and Canadian extraction / petroleum economy
- oil / tar sands and global climate action
- Petrocultures / climate humanities / energy humanities
- economic transformation/green economy

We invite individual paper proposals in both English and French across all academic disciplines involved in Canadian Studies, Quebec Studies, and Indigenous Studies on any of the above-mentioned themes and topics. We also welcome thematic panels, round tables, short pitches, workshops, posters, or networking events.

Proposals/abstracts of max. 500 words can be submitted in French or English and should outline:

- methodology and theoretical approaches chosen
- content/body of research
- which of the three sub-themes specified above the paper speaks to (if any).

In addition, some **short biographical information (max. 250 words)** should be provided, specifying

- current institutional affiliation and position
- research background with regard to the conference topic and/or sub-themes.

Abstracts should be submitted no later than **May 5, 2025**, to gks@kanada-studien.de.