

Call for Papers

Transformations in Critical Times. Perspectives from the Environmental Humanities

*Conference of the International Doctorate Program (IDK) Um(Welt)Denken. The
Environmental Humanities and the Ecological Transformation of Society*

November 6-7, 2025, Augsburg

In an era of profound social, political, and environmental challenges and crises, calls for transformations have become increasingly urgent. Focusing on the socio-environmental dimensions of the crises, this international interdisciplinary conference explores the theoretical implications and practical meanings that scientists, politicians, activists, and other publics associate with transformation. The conference will focus on recent developments but understands them in their respective historical contexts. Playing out on global, regional and local levels, present transformations are linked to past experiences and culturally specific visions of what future lives and living conditions might look like. It is from this vantage point that we call for papers that a) conceptualize the idea of socio-environmental transformation or b) explore the actual or imagined implementation of transformative acts and action in the past, present or future and across the globe.

a) Conceptualizing Transformations

We seek papers that address the following questions: What does transformation in the past, present, and (imagined) future mean when it comes to handling the socio-environmental crises and disasters that humans and non-humans face with increasing frequency and intensity? Does it entail a catalogue of steps and measures to stimulate radical changes on all levels, including political decision-making processes and governance structures, legal systems, and patterns of production and consumption? Or should we think of it as a succession of non-simultaneous changes and/or acts of transition? How can imaginaries help rethink the trodden paths of transformative acts and actions? What are the global, regional, and local dimensions of socio-environmental transformations in the context of geopolitical reordering and the blurring of fact and fiction? How far can theoretical paradigms such as complexity, ambiguity, and simultaneity prove to be helpful when (re-)conceptualizing transformations?

b) Practicing Transformations

Transformations are often described as processes linking the present to the future. Moving beyond this general definition, we seek papers that analyze the practical dimensions of socio-environmental transformation processes. Who are the actors involved in transformation processes and what are the relationships between them? Who determines practices, goals, and visions, and how are they contested? What is the relationship between transformative practice and theory? In what ways are scientists called upon to become politically active, and what are potential pitfalls? Case studies can relate to past and present practices and transformations across the globe, and they can also explore imaginaries of future transformations.

We welcome submissions from all postgraduates and researchers from diverse disciplines including environmental ethics and philosophy, environmental history, human geography, anthropology, economics, and ecocriticism engaging with the **environmental humanities**.

Organizers will cover participants' accommodation and a subvention towards the cost of travel.

Paper Submissions

Please send your proposal for a 15-minute paper presentation with title, abstract (max. 400 words) and a short bio by June 15, 2025, to Laura Grötsch (laura.groetsch@wzu.uni-augsburg.de).

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Date: November 6-7, 2025

Venue: University of Augsburg (Germany)