



Archival Visions: Life After Climate Change

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This exercise was created for the [Archives and Climate Change Teach In action](#), a solidarity effort for the 2019 Global Climate Strike. Teach In coordinators are encouraged to review the [facilitation guide](#) & the [design a teaching exercise guide](#).

Learning Scope

Using Samantha Winn's 2019 article, "Dying Well in the Anthropocene: On the End of Archivists," participants through anticipatory mourning will begin by discussing the futility of archival practice due to continued climate changes and the eventual collapse of society as it currently exists. From this perspective, participants will then transition into imagining what the future for archival practice and practicing archivists may look like when considering these drastic changes.

Learning Objectives

Participants should leave this teach-in with the following:

- Identify the role of archives in a post-climate disaster environment
- Describe the impact of climate change on archival practices
- Evaluate the benefits of anticipatory mourning
- Design adapted or new archival practices for a post climate disaster environment
- Participate in collective grief and public mourning with wider archival community

Expected Outcomes

Participants should leave the Teach In with a new understanding of mourning as a result of the unpredictable nature of society and the environment's reaction to climate change. A firm understanding of archival precarity will include a healthy relationship to feelings of resignation and abandonment while also maintaining dignity in order to cultivate better conditions for archivists and the archival community including users, educators, students, and the subjects in records. Overall, participants will begin the stages of mourning in order to better engage with the reality of the changes the climate crisis will enact on society and the world. Through direct engagement, participants can identify survival mechanisms for continued memory work.

Special Considerations

Given the serious and grim nature of the topics covered in this exercise, discussion moderators and facilitators should be cognizant of the emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of participants. Consider conducting breathing exercises, bring supplies for participants to fidget with, or provide a calming visualization for the

group to view and discuss together towards the end of the Teach In. Support resources are listed below and should be shared during or after the Teach In.

Intended Audience

This exercise can be used with participants from a variety of memory and preservation fields.

Time

Teaching exercise requires 1 hour to 1.5 hours. This teaching exercise can also be repeated with the same group of participants over an extended period of time.

- Introduction to Teach In Topics - 5 minutes
- Individual Reading Time - 20 minutes
 - this part can be skipped if participants read ahead of time
- Review visioning questions - 5 minutes
- Visioning (Drawing, Writing, Diagramming) - 20 minutes
- Regroup - 10 minutes

Materials

- Oversize sheets of newsprint or large sticky pad sheets
- Recycled regular sized paper
- Markers, pencils, or crayons
- Floor or table space
- A set of printed copies of the core reading

Readings

CORE

- “Dying Well in the Anthropocene: On the End of Archivists,” by Samantha Winn
 - <https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/107/61>
- Tenets of the Death Positive Movement by the Order of the Good Death
 - <http://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/resources/death-positive-movement>

SUGGESTED

- Cunsolo, Ashlee, and Neville Ellis. “Hope and Mourning in the Anthropocene: Understanding Ecological Grief.” *The Conversation*. Accessed September 17, 2019.
 - <http://theconversation.com/hope-and-mourning-in-the-anthropocene-understanding-ecological-grief-88630>
- “The Effects of Climate Change” NASA Vital Signs of the Planet
 - <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>
- TED Talks Topics - Death
 - <https://www.ted.com/topics/death>

How to lead this exercise

1. Introduce and Discuss Teach -In Topics
 - These can include Resignation, Abandonment, Dignity, End of Life, or Mourning

2. Individual Reading Time
 - Encourage participants to first read the core reading
 - Suggested readings can be split among participants
3. Review visioning questions
 - What might the archival community look like eleven years from now?
 - If changes kept happening? Or if practices continued the way they are now?
 - What would my professional work life look like?
 - What would the goals of a “better archival practice” or “archival community” be?
 - What kinds of archival relationships would exist?
 - What would be the purpose or motivation for memory work?
 - What sort of history would this community be preserving or seeking to preserve?
4. Visioning
 - Individuals spend alone time contemplating the questions and sketching
 - Can be done on individual pieces of paper or on a shared oversize sheet of paper
5. Reunite
 - Participants will share and reflect on individual or group sketches

Source

This teaching exercise was created by Itza Carbajal (www.itzacarbajal.com) as part of the as part of the Global Climate Strike Archives and Climate Change Teach In action held on September 20, 2019. Core exercise components are adapted from George Lakey’s [Vision Gallery](#) training tool. Refer to the original instructions for further insights and potential modifications to this adaptation. Feedback provided by Samantha Winn.

Support Resources

“Grief, Bereavement, and Coping With Loss.” Cancer Info Summary. National Cancer Institute. Accessed September 17, 2019. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/advanced-cancer/caregivers/planning/bereavement-hp-pdq>.

Jamail, Dahr. “Mourning Our Planet: Climate Scientists Share Their Grieving Process.” Truthout. Accessed September 17, 2019. <https://truthout.org/articles/mourning-our-planet-climate-scientists-share-their-grieving-process/>.

Ryback, Ralph. “The Ways We Grieve.” Psychology Today. Accessed September 17, 2019. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-truisms-wellness/201702/the-ways-we-grieve>.

Sloan, Katie, Jennifer Vanderfluit, and Jennifer Douglas. “Not ‘Just My Problem to Handle’: Emerging Themes on Secondary Trauma and Archivists.” *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 6, no. 1 (July 16, 2019). <https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol6/iss1/20>.

Stoknes, Per Espen. “The Great Grief: How To Cope with Losing Our World.” *Common Dreams*, May 14, 2015. <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/05/14/great-grief-how-cope-losing-our-world>.