

CLIMATE IN CONTEXT

HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS AND THE UNPRECEDENTED



Plant growing through cracks in dry clay, Caineville, Utah.

The present climate crisis seems to confront us with a rupture with the past. What can historians offer in the face of scientists' predictions of unprecedented warming and the breakdown of the planetary systems that have sustained civilizations? As anthropogenic climate change subverts the traditional timescale of historical consciousness, do old distinctions between human history and natural history collapse? Does this situation call for new forms of historical writing, or are traditional approaches as relevant as ever? For its 2020-21 theme, the Institute for Historical Studies calls for projects that grapple with the challenges that climate change presents to the discipline of history.

For information about the Institute for Historical Studies' fellowship and application process, please visit: www.liberalarts.utexas.edu/historicalstudies

Follow us on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook.

Taking the category of "climate" in broad terms, we seek scholars whose work explores the historical and historiographic complexities of environmental breakdown. How have history and our understanding of the past shaped social responses—or failures to respond—to environmental concerns? How might social, political, economic, or cultural crises have unexpected historical connections to environmental change? Might we find precedents for the "unprecedented" by uncovering and analyzing the historical roots and analogues of contemporary climate change? For example, how have people understood, adapted to, and recovered from climate events and other environmental disruptions across different time periods and places around the world? Can history offer an alternative to visions of the future that appear to be determined by prevailing climate models, and help provide us with new ways of understanding human agency, adaptability, and resilience? We invite proposals of historical projects that engage these and other questions, in all time periods and all parts of the world.