

The George Washington University Department of Anthropology Presents
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Climate Change, Slippery on the Skin: Embodied Empiricism in the Climate Debates



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11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Hortense Amsterdam House, Room 202
2110 G. St., NW, Washington, DC 20052

What would it mean to take North American climate change skepticism seriously when people assert that global warming cannot be happening because it's not particularly hot out and the observer has hardly broken a sweat? Although many have characterized such claims as anti-science, intimate appeals to the evidence that bodies can provide are not necessarily strangers to scientific inquiry. Researchers have utilized their bodies as testing, measuring, and tracking devices since the very birth of empiricism. As scholars and policymakers have come to realize that "the latest data" alone may not be enough to prompt the action needed to confront climate change, they have sought to understand what other factors might be involved. Cultural histories of embodied empiricism and the tensions associated with the rise of Big Science can help explain why some climate change skeptics insist on wielding the body as an instrument that they judge capable of registering conditions that enliven or imperil it.

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