

# Sophie Chiari

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“The Fated Sky: Climate, Weather and the Environment in Early Modern England”

4:00 pm Monday, April 16

Eggers Hall, Rm 151

If eco-critical approaches to literary texts receive more and more attention, climate-related issues remain neglected in the field of drama studies. Taking Shakespeare as its starting point, this seminar will focus upon these issues. In particular, it will address the ways that popular and religious beliefs still shaped human relations to meteorological phenomena. Yet, at the same time, a growing number of literati promoted free will rather than determinism and insisted on human ability to act upon celestial forces. In his plays, Shakespeare tries to reconcile the scientific approaches of his time with more popular ones rooted in superstition and, above all, he promotes a sensitive and pragmatic understanding of meteorological events. The seminar will thus explore the interaction between scientific and popular cultures, the way climatic phenomena could be dealt with on stage and, ultimately, the complex, kaleidoscopic vision of the playwright on the subject. In particular, we will examine the significance of such a literary and historical investigation of climate to our own pressing concerns about climate change and ecological crisis.

Sponsored by The Humanities Center, The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, The Department of English, The Department of History, and the Medieval and Renaissance Working Group

