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MEDIA TIP
March 24, 2017

The Anthropocene: how humans are rapidly changing Earth systems

Human activities—ranging from the combustion of fossil fuels, deforestation and damming of rivers, through to the dropping of nuclear weapons and even the global spread of the domestic chicken—are having pervasive and persistent impacts on the Earth. Experts are currently debating whether these impacts together constitute a new geological age: the Anthropocene.

University of Colorado geologist and expert on the Anthropocene, James (Jai) Syvitski, will give a free public lecture at the University of Victoria next Tuesday, March 28, on why the Earth appears to have entered a new geological age. In his talk, Syvitski will discuss when the Anthropocene began; what the implications are for science, society and the environment; and ultimately how our actions will decide our future as a civilization.

The Holocene is the official current geological epoch, which started some 11,700 years ago when the last ice age (Pleistocene) ended and glaciers began to retreat. But many scientists believe that humans have changed the Earth system sufficiently to produce distinct signatures in rock layers, sediments and ice, as well as biological and atmospheric changes.

Dr. Syvitski was a co-author of one of *Science magazine's* top-ranking articles for 2016: *The Anthropocene is functionally and stratigraphically distinct from the Holocene*, which noted: "Human activity is leaving a pervasive and persistent signature on Earth. Vigorous debate continues about whether this warrants recognition as a new geological time unit known as the Anthropocene."

Media are welcome to attend the Tuesday talk, which is hosted by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), a four-university collaboration hosted and led by UVic.

Advance interviews with Syvitski are available on request.

What: Free public lecture by Prof. James Syvitski. Seating is limited, [please register for a seat](#).

When: 3:30 p.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday, March 28

Where: [Haro Room](#), Cadboro Commons Building, University of Victoria

For more information including Syvitski's full bio and awards visit the [PICS website calendar](#).

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