When pondering the subject of ecological catastrophe, it seems we often think in terms of catastrophe to the environment—as if the environment were an abstract entity subject to, but ultimately distinct from, human action. If, however, we pose challenges to such a distinction, how are we to understand the meaning of ‘environment’ and the manner in which ‘we’ relate to it? This talk considers conventional approaches to the environment in order to suggest that it is the idea of the environment in abstraction that marks a disastrous and catastrophic relationship to the world. This seminar, drawn on ethnographic research conducted in rural Vermont, poses questions about alternative political practices and oppositional forms of community.

9,000 Years of Life Under the Bridge: The Archaeology of Chimney Point

The UVM Consulting Archaeology Program recently completed excavations at Chimney Point as part of the construction of the new bridge between West Addison, VT and Crown Point, NY. The project was conducted on behalf of the Vermont Agency of Transportation as part of the federal permit process for the massive construction project led by the New York State Department of Transportation. The results of historic and archaeological research associated with the bridge project illustrate the significance of Chimney Point to the Native American and European history of the Champlain Valley and Vermont. In the space of only a half an acre under the old bridge, archaeologists have found evidence of 9,000 years of human occupation, ranging from Native American settlements and camps, to portions of a French Fort built in 1731, to the location of one of Vermont’s first pottery kilns.

Environmental Catastrophe, or the Catastrophe of the Environment?

Remarks on Politics and Community in the Shadow of Ruin

When pondering the subject of ecological catastrophe, it seems we often think in terms of catastrophe to the environment— as if the environment were an abstract entity subject to, but ultimately distinct from, human action. If, however, we pose challenges to such a distinction, how are we to understand the meaning of ‘environment’ and the manner in which ‘we’ relate to it? This talk considers conventional approaches to the environment in order to suggest that it is the idea of the environment in abstraction that marks a disastrous and catastrophic relationship to the world. This seminar, drawn on ethnographic research conducted in rural Vermont, poses questions about alternative political practices and oppositional forms of community.

Smart Grid 101:
What Does it Mean for Vermont?

Smart Grid is coming to Vermont. Do you know what it is and how it will impact our state? Potentially, Smart Grid will mean better electric service and provide customers with opportunities to reduce their carbon footprint and their electric bills. The addition of high speed information and communication technology to the electric grid will change the way utilities operate and how customers interact with them. Greater reliability, operational efficiency and customer choice are the cornerstones of Smart Grid. This seminar is intended to provide an introduction to the Smart Grid system and a forum to answer audience questions.