Anthropology’s holistic perspective gives us an opportunity to support and further efforts to find a path through the multi-causal, ill-defined, shape-shifting, and socially complex ‘wicked’ problems that define the newest geologic era: the Anthropocene. Here, I explore the nexus of climate change and energy in the context of social-ecological systems, drawing attention to the range of methods, strategies, theories, and policies employed to address these complex issues. Reshaping the relationship between people and their carbonaceous lifeworlds entails a shift in habitus; I present ways in which the notion of an ‘oasis regime’ can catalyze such a metamorphosis, supporting change at the community, state, and national levels. The pairing of climate change and energy offers an ideal context for engaging with scholars, activists, policymakers, and the wider citizenry, using our collective knowledge to build a more sustainable world.

What tools can we deploy to help us understand and move past this current stage to imagine a different energy future?

With whom should we collaborate to move past the dominant apocalyptic visions into a more sustainable version of the ‘good life’ with all it entails, from culture to culture and species to species?