



**University of Guelph  
Department of History**

**MA Thesis Defence**

**Student:** Jake McIvor

**Date:** April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Time:** 1:00pm – 3:00pm

**Place:** Hybrid (contact [histacademic@uoguelph.ca](mailto:histacademic@uoguelph.ca) for location/virtual link).

**“Boys and Their Toys: The History of Gender and Geoengineering”**

**Abstract**

Geoengineering is a techno-scientific response to climate change with a long history but has steadily grown in influence among the scientific community since 2006. Despite the incorporation of geoengineering into international climate policies, there are a number of critical scientific and social questions that geoengineers have yet to answer. This research explores the origins of geoengineering and the influence of masculinity in the field, demonstrating how masculinity has historically shaped geoengineering and how modern geoengineering aims to preserve hegemonic masculinity globally.

Geoengineering evolved from scientific weather manipulation research dating back to the 19th century. From the beginning, it has always been dominated by men, and it has maintained strong connections to the military and other male-coded institutions. Much of historical geoengineering research was pioneered by military scientists like Edward Teller and Lowell Wood operating in Lawrence Livermore Labs. Modern geoengineering research and funding is controlled by a “Geoclique” including other male scientists like David Keith and Ken Caldeira, who greatly underestimate the social dimensions of climate change. Geoengineering serves hegemonic masculinity because it promises to “fix” climate change without disrupting existing social hierarchies in any meaningful way. Much of modern hegemonic masculinity is predicated on the consumption of fossil fuels, and the world’s most powerful men are all invested in the current socio-economic balance.

**Advisor:**

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