Over the last half-billion years, there have been five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us.

*New Yorker* writer and two-time National Magazine Award winner Elizabeth Kolbert will tell us why and how human beings have altered life on the planet in a way no species has before. Interweaving research in half a dozen disciplines, Kolbert will discuss the topic of her Pulitzer Prize-winning book. She will show that the sixth extinction is likely to be mankind’s most lasting legacy, compelling us to rethink the fundamental question of what it means to be human.