

IDS 160: The Politics of Climate Change

Tuesday-Thursday 2:00-3:15

Public Affairs 1222

Fall 2019

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Office Hours: Wed 1:00-2:30

What the course is about

This course will explore how governments at the international, national, and regional levels are addressing – or not addressing – the extraordinary challenge of climate change. We will use a combination of readings, lectures, and discussions to better understand the causes, consequences, and policies to address the most important political problem of our time – not just in the US, but in other major countries as well.

To simplify our focus we will narrow our scope in two ways: by concentrating on the challenge of *mitigating*, rather than *adapting to*, climate change; and by concentrating on energy use, rather than agriculture, forestry, and land use.

Teaching objectives

This course is designed to both impart substantive knowledge about climate change and politics, and to help you become more skillful listeners, thinkers, writers, and speakers.

On completing the course, you should be significantly more knowledgeable about the causes, likely consequences, and policy implications of climate change, and hence able to speak and write intelligently about it. You should also grow more skilled in your ability to evaluate evidence, and to distinguish between scientifically-based reasoning and conjecture, popular beliefs, and magical thinking. Since almost everything we know about this issue is based on observational data, you should understand why our knowledge is limited, and how hard it is to distinguish correlation from causation.

This is also an opportunity to consolidate the learning skills you've accumulated over the past two or three years. We will discuss these skills and pool our knowledge about the most effective ways to learn new material, including by reading academic articles.

Format

This class will combine lectures with discussions. Attendance is mandatory and everyone is expected to participate in the discussions.

Readings

Everyone must complete all of the day's readings before coming to class. All readings will be available on the [course web site](#).

Grades

Grading will be based on your performance in four areas:

- Midterm exam: 40%
- Final exam: 60%

The midterm exam will be held in class on October 24, and the final will be on Monday December 9 at 11:30-2:30. Both will combine multiple-choice questions with IDs, short answers, and the final exam will include a short essay.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

A+:	>98.5	B:	81.5-88.5	C-:	70.0-71.5
A:	91.5-98.5	B-:	80.0-81.5	D+:	68.5-70.0
A-:	90.0-91.5	C+:	78.5-80.0	D:	60.0-68.5
B+:	88.5-90.0	C:	71.5-78.5		

I do not grade on a curve. Research on higher education suggests that grading on a curve creates unproductive levels of stress and competition without fostering greater learning. Sometimes a test or an assignment will turn out to be more difficult than I anticipated, and I'll adjust the grades accordingly. What matters is not how you do relative to your peers – I expect *everyone* to do well – but how well you master the material. If you ever feel like a test or assignment is unfair, please come speak with me so I can address your concerns as soon as possible. I'm committed to assessing all students in a fair, inclusive, and comprehensive way.

No Laptops Policy

The class will be a laptop-free zone. Studies show that using laptops (or other devices, also banned) tends to *reduce* the pace of learning in college courses. By taking notes with paper and pen you will get more out of the course.

Absences

Class attendance is mandatory. So is participation in class discussions and exercises. Still, there will be times when some of you cannot attend – due to illness or unavoidable conflicts – and I will accommodate any reasonable absences. You will nonetheless be responsible for making up for missed classes, and learning all the material covered in your absence.

Intellectual property notice

All of the course materials that I have prepared, including my lectures, slides and exams, are my property alone and protected by state common law and federal copyright law. Video and audio recordings are prohibited without my consent. Students shall not sell or distribute notes, or receive remuneration for taking notes, without my express written consent.

September 26: Introduction to the course

October 1: What do scientists know about climate change?

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2014), *Summary for Policymakers and Technical Summary*, pp. 37-49.

The Royal Society (2017), "Climate updates: What have we learnt since the IPCC 5th Assessment Report?"

Recommended:

David Wallace-Wells (2017), "The Uninhabitable Earth (Annotated Edition), *New York*, July 10, 2017

October 3: How does climate change affect economies?

Marshall Burke, Solomon M. Hsiang, and Edward Miguel (2015), "Global non-linear effect of temperature on economic production," *Nature* 527.

October 8: Why is climate change so hard to address?

Kelly Levin, Benjamin Cashore, Steven Bernstein, and Graeme Auld (2012), "Overcoming the tragedy of super wicked problems: constraining our future selves to ameliorate global climate change," *Policy Science* 45:123-152

October 10: Why is the fossil fuel industry so influential?

Will Steffen, Wendy Broadgate, Lisa Deutsch, Owen Gaffney and Cornelia Ludwig (2015), "The trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration," *The Anthropocene Review*, 2(1):81-98.

Eugene A. Rosa and Thomas Dietz (2012), "Human drivers of national greenhouse-gas emissions," *Nature Climate Change*.

October 15: How will climate change affect conflict?

Solomon M. Hsiang, Marshall Burke, Edward Miguel (2015), "Quantifying the Influence of Climate on Human Conflict," *Science* 341(6151).

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (2019), "Report on Effects of a Changing Climate to the Department of Defense," Department of Defense, January.

Recommended:

Tamma A. Carleton and Solomon M. Hsiang (2016), "Social and economic impacts of climate," *Science* 353(6304).

October 17: How can we make a difference locally?

David G. Victor, Ahmed Abdulla, David Auston, Wendell Brase, Jack Brouwer, Karl Brown, Steven J. Davis, Carrie V. Kappel, Alan Meier, Mark Modera, Rebecca Zarin Pass, David Phillips, Jordan Sager, David Weil and TomKat Natural Gas Exit Strategies Working Group (2018), "Turning Paris into reality at the University of California," *Nature Climate Change* 8:174-185.

October 22: How will climate change affect migration?

Colin P. Kelley, Shahrzad Mohtadi, Mark A. Cane, Richard Seager, and Yochanan Kushnir (2015), "Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112 (11): 3241-3246.

October 24: Midterm

October 29: What do people believe and why?

Riley E. Dunlap and Aaron M. McCright (2011), "Organized Climate Change Denial," in *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, John S. Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Schlosberg (eds.), Oxford University Press.

Chad Zanocco, Hilary Boudet, Roberta Nilson, Hannah Satein, Hannah Whitley, and June Flora (2018), "Place, proximity, and perceived harm: extreme weather events and views about climate change," *Climatic Change* 149: 349-365.

Recommended:

Larry Bartels (2008), "The Irrational Electorate," *The Wilson Quarterly*, Autumn.

Patrick Egan and Megan Mullin (2017), "Climate Change: US Public Opinion," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20:209-227.

October 31: What are the costs and benefits of mitigation (I)?

Carbon Brief (2019), “Explainer: How Shared Socioeconomic Pathways explore future climate change.”

Carbon Brief (2019), “Q&A: How ‘integrated assessment models’ are used to study climate change.”

Nicholas Stern (2006), *The Economics of Climate Change*, Introduction and Executive Summary.

November 5 & 7: What are the costs and benefits of mitigation (II)?

William Nordhaus (2007), “A Review of the ‘Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change’,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 45:3, 686-702.

Kenneth Gillingham and James H. Stock (2018), “The Cost of Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 32:4, 53-72.

November 12: Does climate change pose an existential threat to civilization?

Will Steffen et al. (2018), “Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene,” *PNAS* 115:33, 8252-8259.

David Spratt and Ian Dunlop (2017), “What Lies Beneath: the understatement of existential climate risk,” *Breakthrough: National Centre for Climate Restoration*.

November 14: How should we approach the crisis ethically?

Simon Caney (2012), “Just Emissions,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 40:4.

Michael F. Maniates (2001), "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" *Global Environmental Politics* 1(3).

Recommended:

David Foster Wallace (2004), "Consider the Lobster," *Gourmet*.

November 19: Can carbon taxes work?

Jesse D. Jenkins, " Political economy constraints on carbon pricing policies: What are the implications for economic efficiency, environmental efficacy, and climate policy design?" *Energy Policy* 69:467-477.

Endre Tvinnereim and Michael Mehling (2018), " Carbon pricing and deep decarbonisation," *Energy Policy* 121: 185-189.

Recommended:

Jonas Meckling, Nina Kelsey, Eric Biber, and John Zysman (2015), "Winning coalitions for climate policy," *Science*, 349(6253).

Jessica Green (2017), "Don't link carbon markets," *Nature* 543.

November 21: Why do countries adopt such different climate change policies?

Nicolas Kosoy, Peter G Brown, Klaus Bosselmann, Anantha Duraiappah, Brendan Mackey, Joan Martinez-Alier, Deborah Rogers and Robert Thomson (2012), "Pillars for a flourishing Earth: planetary boundaries, economic growth delusion and green economy," *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 4:74-79.

November 26: How much do international agreements matter?

Robert O. Keohane and Michael Oppenheimer (2016), "Paris: Beyond the Climate Dead End through Pledge and Review?" *Politics and Governance*, 4.

Recommended:

Robert O. Keohane and David G. Victor (2016), "Cooperation and discord in global climate policy," *Nature Climate Change*.

December 3: Can geoengineering save us?

Edward Parson (2017), "Climate policymakers and assessments must get serious about climate engineering," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(35):9227-9230.

December 5: What is the best path forward?

Elinor Ostrom (2010), "A Polycentric Approach for Coping with Climate Change," *World Development Report Background Paper*.

Jon Hovi, Detlef Sprinz, Hakon Saalen, and Arild Underdal (2016), "Climate Change Mitigation: a role for climate clubs?" *Palgrave Communications*.

Paul Fleckenstein (2019), "Stopping Climate Change Will Never Be 'Good Business,'" *Jacobin*.

December 9 (11:30-2:30): Final exam