

# NATIONAL AND LOCAL CLIMATE CHANGE

## POLITICS AND POLICY

### TRINITY TERM 2022

**Convenor: Dr. Navroz K. Dubash**

[ndubash@gmail.com](mailto:ndubash@gmail.com)

#### Module Overview

Climate change has historically been considered a global environmental problem, requiring effective global cooperative action. However, an emergent complementary perspective frames solutions to climate change as the result of myriad national and local decisions, such as around investment, consumption, and livelihoods. From this perspective, the central challenge is less building global cooperation and more enabling national and local systems to develop an integrated response to climate change and development.

This course explores what this perspective on climate change implies for the national and local politics of climate change and resultant policymaking. It particularly emphasizes examples and perspectives from the developing world, which are often under-represented in studies of climate change. The course:

- Examines how global and national governance levels interact and shape each other;
- Explores the growing literature on understanding different varieties of national climate politics;
- Studies what it means to build a climate-ready state; and
- Discusses the role of non-state and sub-national actors.

Collectively, these themes map the complex context within which real-world national climate policy making occurs.

The course is structured to ensure student participation, particularly through student presentations on case studies of national politics and policy. It is designed to be of interest both to those who are keen to delve deeper into the politics and policy of climate change, and to those who have primary interests in other areas but wish to explore the growing integration of climate change into development decisions.

While it is primarily focused on climate mitigation, some of the themes are also salient to climate adaptation.

## Learning outcomes

- Explain the shifting dynamics of climate politics and policy, with growing attention to the national and local scale;
- Understand the importance of national context in climate policy making;
- Examine the different possible approaches to national climate policymaking and institutions.

## Class organisation

The approach for this course will be interactive and participatory. Each seminar will be divided into discussion of the reading for that class, followed by a lecture introducing the readings for the subsequent seminar. For example, in Section 2, we will first discuss the readings for Section 1 and then I will introduce the readings for Section 2, which we will discuss at the beginning of Section 3. During the latter part of the seminar, the structure will shift to individual presentations and discussion of those presentations.

## Assessment

Students will be required to produce a 1500-word written submission. Details of the assignment will be provided by the Programmes team in week 2, Trinity term.

In addition, each student will be asked to prepare a short presentation on a national case study to present in class. These presentations will lay the ground for the final written submission. Details of the case study will be provided at the beginning of the course. In brief, they will require an analysis of the national climate policy context in a country, a discussion of legal and institutional approaches, and an effort to relate one to the other.

As an optional extra, I encourage you to write and submit at least one 'reading response memo' of between 1-2 pages in length that synthesizes (as opposed to summarises) your view of the readings for one seminar. I will provide feedback on any memos submitted, with the aim of helping you form the practice of digesting and synthesizing readings.

## Section 1: Top Down meets Bottom Up: The Interweaving of Global and National Climate Politics

**Wednesday 4 May: 12:30 – 14:30**

Climate change has historically been framed as a global collective action problem – all, or at least most, countries, have to act to solve the problem. Design of international processes have, consequently, been focused on solving the free-rider problem of ensuring that all countries participated. But what if there is another way of looking at the climate problem? Can climate change be understood in the context of multiple and diverse national objective, including addressing climate change but also domestic priorities such as competitiveness and air pollution? How can the international process be designed to take account of and harness these other possible motivations for action? The core readings for this session explore these questions.

I strongly recommend you gain some familiarity with all the readings early in the course – they set the tone for what follows. Aklin and Mildenberger most directly speak to the point I make above, and which animates this course. Keohane unpacks the shifts in global climate politics. Ostrom is a manifesto of sorts (among the last writings of this path-breaking Nobel winning economist) calling for a re-think toward 'polycentric' approaches. Dai is a little known gem that looks at how subtle design changes in international climate agreements can stimulated national actions. I strongly recommend you read all these as early in the course as possible. (If you have to drop one, drop Ostrom, but only because we will come back to it in Session 5.)

The additional readings include Gourevitch and Putnam, which are classic texts that spell out the interaction between domestic and global politics, even if not in the context of climate change. Harrison and Sundstrom, and Held et al are edited collections that apply these ideas of a 'two level game' to developed and developing countries respectively. You could dip into these two volumes to read country cases that interest you.

I will open this session with a discussion of the broad themes of the course, and then introduce the core readings in the second half of the session. Please come prepared to discuss these readings for Session 2.

### Core Readings:

- Aklin, Michaël, and Matto Mildenberger. 2020. "Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change." *Global Environmental Politics* 20(4): 4–27.
- Keohane, Robert O., 2015. The global politics of climate change: challenge for political science. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 48 (1), 19–26. doi:10.1017/S1049096514001541
- Ostrom, E., 2010. Polycentric systems for coping with collective action and global environmental change. *Global Environmental Change*, 20 (4), 550–557. doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.07.004
- Dai, Xinyuan. 2010. "Global Regime and National Change." *Climate Policy* 10(6): 622–37.

### Additional Reading:

- Gourevitch, Peter. 1978. "The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics." *International Organization* 32(04): 881.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1988. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42(03): 427.
- Harrison, Kathryn, and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom. 2007. "Introduction: The Comparative Politics of Climate Change." *Global Environmental Politics* 7(4): 1–18.
- Held, David, Charles Roger, and Eva-Maria Nag, eds. 2013. *Climate Governance in the Developing World*. Cambridge: Polity.

## Session 2: The Diversity of Climate Politics, or Every Unhappy (Climate) State is Unhappy in its Own Way...

Friday 6 May: 13:00-15:00

If, as Aklin and Mildemberger argue (and having read and digested them in the last class, we know this), we have been 'prisoners of the wrong dilemma', and domestic distributive conflict is the key to addressing climate change, then how do we understand these distributional conflicts? What are the issues of contention, and who are the actors that contest them? Are there structural features of national politics that apply across contexts that help us understand these politics? Invariably, much of this reading is case study based, and seeks to unpack individual country cases, while some draw broader lessons from a small sample of cases, such as Finnegan and Schmitz. Excellent cases include Mildemberger for industrialised countries, and Hochstetler, and Shen, for large emerging countries. A broader (but older) set of cases are available in Held et al (in additional reading). This session's readings provide a set of conceptual tools with which to understand how climate politics differs across countries and what this then means for policy making.

### Core Readings:

- Finnegan, Jared J. 2022. "Institutions, Climate Change, and the Foundations of Long-Term Policymaking." *Comparative Political Studies*: 00104140211047416.
- Schmitz, Hubert. 2017. "Who Drives Climate-Relevant Policies in the Rising Powers?" *New Political Economy* 22(5): 521–40.
- Pick one or more from among:
  - Mildemberger, Matto. 2020. *Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics*. Cambridge: MIT Press (Chapter 1)
  - Hochstetler, Kathryn. 2020. *Political Economies of Energy Transition: Wind and Solar Power in Brazil and South Africa*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9781108920353/type/book> (March 20, 2022) (Chapter 1)

- Shen, Wei, and Lei Xie. 2018. "The Political Economy for Low-Carbon Energy Transition in China: Towards a New Policy Paradigm?" *New Political Economy* 23(4): 407–21.

### Additional Reading:

- Mildenberger, Matto. 2020. *Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics*. Cambridge: MIT Press (Chapter 2 and 8)
- Hochstetler, Kathryn. 2020. *Political Economies of Energy Transition: Wind and Solar Power in Brazil and South Africa*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9781108920353/type/book> (March 20, 2022) (Chapter 2 and 6)
- Held, David, Charles Roger, and Eva-Maria Nag, eds. 2013. *Climate Governance in the Developing World*. Cambridge: Polity. (Pick a case study or two)

## Session 3: Varieties of Climate Governance

**Wednesday 11 May: 12:30-2:30**

Having determined that national politics are salient to climate action, what does this mean for how states organise themselves internally to address climate change? And what are the governance problems they should be trying to solve? An emergent effort to study the 'varieties of climate governance' seeks to answer these questions. A small but growing literature examines the growth of climate laws, the nature of climate governance challenges, and the ways in which national context shapes climate institutions. An important aspect of this literature is its focus on definitional issues: what constitutes a 'climate' law, institution, or policy, when so many decisions ranging from urbanisation to stimulus packages could, and perhaps should be linked to climate change? This question of scope makes the study of climate governance particularly rich, as well as empirically demanding.

The core readings for this class draw on a recent collection: please read the overview and at least one case study. Additional readings examine themes such as growing climate legislation and advisory bodies. In an unusual book, Gallagher and Xuan provide a deep dive of comparative governance in China and the US. I have also included a pre-release draft of the introduction and conclusion to a new book that looks at the particular challenge of climate governance in federal countries.

### Core Readings:

- Scotford, Eloise, and Stephen Minas. "Probing the hidden depths of climate law: Analysing national climate change legislation." *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law* 28, no. 1 (2019): 67-81. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/reel.12259>

- Dubash, N. 2021. "Varieties of Climate Governance: The Emergence and Functioning of Climate Institutions." *Environmental Politics* 30(Sup 1): 1–25  
*OR for a much briefer and more accessible treatment*  
Dubash et al. 2021. "National Climate Institutions Complement Targets and Policies." *Science* 374(6568): 690–93
- At least one of the eight country cases (Germany, China, India, US, Brazil, South Africa, UK, Australia) linked under 'related research' at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09644016.2021.1979775>

### Additional Reading

- Iacobuta, Gabriela et al. 2018. "National Climate Change Mitigation Legislation, Strategy and Targets: A Global Update." *Climate Policy* 18(9): 1114–32.
- Averchenkova, Alina, Sam Fankhauser, and Michal Nachmany. 2017. *Trends in Climate Change Legislation*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Elliot, Cynthia et al. 2021. *Climate Advisory Bodies: Experiences and Approaches for Effective Climate Change Policy*. World Resources Institute.
- Gallagher, Kelly Sims, and Xiaowei Xuan. 2018. *Titans of the Climate: Explaining Policy Process in the United States and China*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Jodoin, Sébastien, and Joana Setzer. 2022. "Climate Governance and Federalism: An Analytical Framework." In *Climate Change and Federal Governance*, eds. Sébastien Jodoin, Joana Setzer, and Alan Fenna. Cambridge University Press. (DRAFT TEXT) and Fenna, Alan. 2022. "Reflections on Federalism and Climate Change Governance." In *Climate Change and Federal Governance*, eds. Sébastien Jodoin, Joana Setzer, and Alan Fenna. Cambridge University Press.

## Session 4: Polycentric Climate Governance in Action

**Friday 13 May: 10:45-12:45**

Building on Ostrom's pathbreaking work (which you should read this week, if you did not read it for Session 1), a broad ranging literature examines the proliferation of climate action at multiple scales and across scales. The early literature focused on sub-national action in cities, and transnational coalitions of cities. Since then, other strands look at arenas such as technology innovation, or themes such as experimentation or orchestration. The underlying thrust of the literature is that such efflorescence is to be understood, and perhaps celebrated, as a manifestation of the creativity that human systems can bring to bear to solve the climate crisis. With polycentricity, the shackles of the global collective action frame are truly lifted. Or are they? During this session we will undertake a critical reading of the turn toward polycentricity.

## Core Readings:

- Ostrom, E., 2010. Polycentric systems for coping with collective action and global environmental change. *Global Environmental Change*, 20 (4), 550–557. doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.07.004 (If you did not get to this in Session 1)
- 'Governing Climate Change Polycentrically', Chapter 1 in Jordan, Andrew, Dave Huitema, Harro van Asselt, and Johanna Forster, eds. 2018. *Governing Climate Change: Polycentricity in Action?* 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9781108284646/type/book> (February 24, 2020).
- 'City and Subnational Governance' Chapter 5 in Jordan, Andrew, Dave Huitema, Harro van Asselt, and Johanna Forster, eds. 2018. *Governing Climate Change: Polycentricity in Action?* 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9781108284646/type/book> (February 24, 2020).
- 'Adaptation: The Neglected Dimension of Polycentric Climate Governance?', Chapter 17 in Jordan, Andrew, Dave Huitema, Harro van Asselt, and Johanna Forster, eds. 2018. *Governing Climate Change: Polycentricity in Action?* 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9781108284646/type/book> (February 24, 2020).
- 'Governing Climate Change', Chapter 20 in Jordan, Andrew, Dave Huitema, Harro van Asselt, and Johanna Forster, eds. 2018. *Governing Climate Change: Polycentricity in Action?* 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9781108284646/type/book> (February 24, 2020).

## Additional Reading

While there is now a broad literature on polycentric climate governance, the Jordan et al edited volume provides a very solid entry point. I recommend flipping through other chapters that draw your attention.

## Session 5: Country Presentations

**Wednesday 18 May: 12:30-14:30**

The first half of the session will be used to discuss the readings from Session 5. During the second half we will start exploring country case studies based on student presentations.

The student presentations are intended to give you an opportunity to dig deep into a particularly country context – political, geographic and cultural – and try to understand the opportunities and constraints for climate policy making. I will



encourage you to develop an understanding of various efforts at structuring climate governance in your case study country and ask you to locate and analyse these in political context. By looking collectively at a range of countries, the aim is to apply some of the ideas from preceding sessions and build a cross-country comparative perspective.

## **Session 6: Country Presentations (Contd.)**

**Friday 20 May: 11:15-13:15**

We will continue discussion of student presentations during this session.

## **Session 7: Wrap up: What can we Synthesize about National Climate Governance?**

**Friday 25 May: 12:30-14:30**

Many countries are putting in places climate policies and targets. Not so many are considering the institutions that need to undergird those policies and targets. This course will have focused on how national climate governance, including laws and institutions, can emerge in ways that are cognisant of national and local context. How has this knowledge been summarised in policy relevant ways, notably in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

In this concluding discussion, we will read and comment on salient sections of the newly released IPCC Working Group 3 report. Readings from this week will include sections of the report. We will discuss whether and how these reflect the underlying concepts and issues discussed in this course, and whether and how assessment documents such as the IPCC are useful to policymakers and can be made more so. Discussion of this topical report will allow us to participate in and assess how well academic ideas are making their way into policy conversations, or at least conversations aimed at informing policy and governance.

### **Core Readings:**

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Working Group III 2022. Selections from Chapter 1, Chapter 4, Chapter 13 and Chapter 17.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Working Group II 2022, Chapter 18  
Specific excerpts will be provided at the beginning of the course.