# ENVS1574 Fall21 Engaged Climate Policy in the U.S.: Rhode Island and Washington, DC

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**Course times**: Monday 3-5:20 pm, and additional weekly project meetings TBA
**Location**: Room 106, Urban Environmental Laboratory; Roberts office 203, hours T/Th 1:30-2:30
**Climate and Development Lab:** Room 207 UEL; **Office**: UEL rooms 203 and 202.
**Teaching Assistant: Finn Lowden,** finnian_lowden@brown.edu

**Description:** Sufficient and equitable policies addressing the crisis of climate change have been elusive, and United States' leadership is crucial for an adequate global response. After several weeks of readings and lectures on climate policy, the course shifts to team-based research to produce strategic, policy-relevant briefings and scholarly outputs with partner organizations in Rhode Island, Washington, and internationally. Students will travel to D.C. for five days in October to attend meetings with experts and staff from government agencies, industry organizations, think tanks, and environmental NGOs, and to hold a briefing on our joint research.

**Expectations:** The course will be built around a set of core readings and team-based research. Course requirements fall into the following categories:

1. Lead discussion one day,
2. Attend Friday lecture series and meetings with speakers,
3. Attend five days of meetings and interviews in Washington, D.C.
4. Write three reaction papers to semester readings,
5. Productively participate in a small team-based research project, and
6. In lieu of a final exam, research teams will present during the last week of class.

**Two-page reading reaction papers SEQs** (Summary, Evaluation, Questions) (3): The class will be divided into two groups on the first day of class, which will alternate days preparing two-page reaction papers on the readings, starting the next week. These are due by 10 pm on the Sunday night before class on Canvas. These discussion papers should discuss two readings, and please do not write only about the very short readings. Give the posting and paper a descriptive title that captures your main point. SEQ papers should include 4 parts: 1. An introductory paragraph raising a paradox or central question about the topic of the readings, lay out a roadmap of your organization, and foreshadow what you conclude about the readings.  This is crucial. [1 paragraph]  2. a concise summary of the central points or arguments the author(s) present(s) [2-3 paragraphs].  3. a brief assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the authors' central argument [2-3 paragraphs].  Without being authorities, comment here on whether the author's evidence really supports what they set out to do and their conclusions.  How does their viewpoint color the interpretations they make?  Say why you agree or disagree with their project and

conclusions.  Here we encourage you to be contentious and take a risk by taking a strong stand that will get debate going in class.  Finally, 4. Provide two discussion questions related to the readings.  One should be a lingering question for you, and the other a question that will promote class discussion. We are looking for well-written SEQs which summarize and critique the readings directly, support their arguments, make clear their organization and logic, and when possible draw in questions and issues raised in other readings and earlier in the course.

All class members are responsible for signing on to Canvas and reading each other's papers before the scheduled class. Those students *not* writing a reaction paper for that week are required to write at least **two questions/responses** on the ideas of at least two of the student reaction papers. Post reaction questions to Canvas by 1pm--two hours before class on Monday.

Each week there will be **two discussion leaders**, who will have written an SEQ paper for that week. These two will summarize the readings, before offering one or two key points and questions from their SEQ papers and the online discussion to kick-start the class discussion of the readings. The rest of the class, who will have either written online SEQ papers or responses as mentioned above, will use the class leaders' guiding questions to join in the discussion.

**Small team-based research project:** Students will participate in team-based research projects which will produce a product, sometimes with an external partner organization or expert. Student work will be at many different stages in these projects, and may involve outreach to partners, co-designing the project, interviews, database creation, online research work, writing, graphics production, layout, correspondence, logistics for release, publicity, etc. Know that project-based engaged research is open-ended, uncertain, lumpy (requiring a lot of work at some times with long waits in between), and sometimes fails entirely. But we are trying new things and generating new material that we hope can be impactful.

 Projects for Fall, 2021:

| Fall Engaged Projects 2021 | Partner/intended audience | Products | People |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 **The role of the Public Relations industry** in climate denial and delay efforts in the U.S.: Case studies of ad & influence campaigns | Clean Creatives/ climate journalists | Peer-reviewed paper, of cases | **Cartie** w/Bob, 3 students |
| 2 **Unlikely Partners:** oil companies' use of philanthropy to steer and co-opt environmental nonprofits and universities. | Philanthropy News/ Climate Investigations Center/public/journalists | Policy briefing, scholarly article | **Finn** with Bob, 2 students |
| 3 **Public utilities commissions in New England:** moving from inertia to transformation on climate and energy | Climate Solutions Initiative/Synapse Energy and Economics/PUCs | Reviews, articles by spring 2022 | **Timmons and Synapse/Climable person**, 2 students |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 **Power and control:** comparing climate and countermovement funding and boards and influence | Journalists, Foundation Center | Scholarly article(s) | **Galen and Bob**, 3 students |
| 5 **Utilities' Lobbying** in States With Different Fossil/Renewable Portfolios and Ownership Structures**:** | Energy & Policy Institute/ Scholarly outputs/inform social movements | Scholarly article | **Timmons and Trevor** (& Galen), 2 students |

**A typical day in seminar will be structured as follows:**

3-4:15: Review and discussion of the readings, led by two students. Quick summary, then they launch discussion with questions.

4:25-5:20: Project coordination, look ahead to next week

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final grades will be roughly calculated as follows: (subject to revision)

1. Participation in class, leading discussion, activities, and preparing for and time in DC (25%)
2. Three reaction papers (30%)
3. Small-Group Team Research Project (35%)
4. Attend Friday speaker series about climate denial and obstruction in the U.S. (10%)

Readings will be supplied in .pdfs on Canvas and/or by web links.

**Expected hours** this course will require: First 9 weeks: approximately 7 hours per week for reading, plus 2 hours writing summary papers, plus 5 hours a week for small group project =14 hours/week x 9 weeks =126 hours. Time attending interviews, meetings & conference in DC, 12 hours/day x 5 days=60 hours, plus travel time = variable, approx. 14 hours. Exam period 3 hours for presentation by small groups. Rough total: 203 hours.

**The learning goals** for these activities are for students to:

1. Develop core knowledge about local, national and international systems by which climate change is being governed;
2. Develop writing skills and proficiency with communications, including writing policy briefs, weekly summary papers, social media and blogging (weekly papers, blogs, tweeting, etc.);
3. Make connections with key experts and leading decision-makers in the area of climate governance, to advance student careers in this area;
4. Develop analytic and verbal communication skills (interviews, class discussions, etc.).

**Special Needs:** If you have special learning needs that require our assistance and support, you must let us know at the outset so that you can maximize your engagement with this course. Please do! We want to help.

**No Web Surfing Policy:** This course will follow a no computers policy. We will pull up key documents on the screen to use collectively, and can have assigned/collaborative note-taking if people want that. Otherwise, bring writing materials and print copies of readings if possible. Please let us know if any of this creates major difficulties for you, we'll figure something out.

**Diversity and Democracy Statement:** It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. We wish to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let us know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let us know so that we can make arrangements for you.

### ENVS 1574: Engaged Climate Policy in the U.S.: Rhode Island and Washington, DC

Schedule Fall 2021--August 31 version subject to change

Week 1: Sept. 8, noon: **[Unofficial] CDL meeting to meet and get into project groups (Wednesday meeting at noon, lunch provided)**

What is the CDL and how do we work? 2021-22 CDL directions. Discuss how the CDL works, project ideas, provisional deployment into groups, set up first meetings of subgroups to get going, and consider future plans.

Summer reading:

1. Look over CSSN website
2. CDL website
3. Bill McKibben in *Rolling Stone* Global Warming's Terrifying New Math (2012)
4. McKibben "When 'Creatives' turn destructive: image-makers and the climate crisis." New Yorker, November 21, 2020
5. Under Pressure [more info coming]

Week 2: Sept. 13: **[FIRST CLASS] Introduction and welcome to the class/CDL. (Monday 3 pm, UEL)**

Introductions, discuss syllabus, roadmap for the fall.

The basics: very brief climate science primer (global, national and local; will walk through this primer:

https://warmheartworldwide.org/climate-change/ ); types and trade-offs of climate action: mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage. Discussion of readings and videos.

Divide class into groups A and B for reaction papers and discussion leaders for future weeks

Meetings with research teams (4:30-5:20)

**Speaker:** Friday (9/17) at 3:30 pm. Bill McKibben, 350.org and Middlebury College.

**Readings to be done before class (important):**

1. Jane Meyer → either listen to the two podcasts below, or read her book *Dark Money.*
    1. *'Hidden History' Of Koch Brothers*
    2. Jane Mayer on the Koch network and other foundations, how they work
2. Drilled Podcast on fossil fuel denial networks (Seasons 1 & 3)
3. Read the "Coalitions Report" from the 2018 fall ECP/CDL class
4. Watch Six Degrees
5. Read the first half of this primer and skim the rest


Week 3: Sept 20: **A history of US climate policy**

How has climate change policy been formed and shifted over the five decades the issue has been well known? What forces shaped that policy? Why did the US fail to be a leader on this issue? What happened differently with the Ozone issue and why? What has been the relationship between state, federal and local policy? Why did the U.S. take the approach in Congress of cap and trade? What can we learn from those turns?

**Group A** writes a two page reading SEQ paper: summary/synthesis/questions due before class by Canvas; **Group B**responds with questions by 1pm Monday. 2 discussion leaders from Group A.


**Readings:**

1. Skocpol, Theresa. 2013. "NAMING THE PROBLEM: What It Will Take to Counter Extremism and Engage Americans in the Fight against Global Warming." *Scholars Strategy Network,* January

2013.*https://scholars.org/sites/scholars/files/skocpol_captrade_report_january_2013_0. pdf*

2. Roberts, Dave. "What Theda Skocpol gets right about the cap-and-trade fight." *Grist. Jan 15, 2013.*
3. McGarity, T.O., 2013. The Disruptive Politics of Climate Disruption. *Nova Law Review*, *38*, p. 393.
4. Bartosiewicz, P. and Miley, M., 2013. The too polite revolution: why the recent campaign to pass comprehensive climate legislation in the United States failed.
5. Rich, N. 2018. "Losing Earth: The decade we almost stopped climate change. A tragedy in two acts." *New York Times Magazine* 5 August. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/01/magazine/climate-change-losing-earth.html
6. Naomi Klein response to Rich. "Capitalism Killed Our Climate Momentum, Not "Human Nature" *The Intercept*. August 3, 2018. https://theintercept.com/2018/08/03/climate-change-new-york-times-magazine/
7. Levy, D. L., & Rothenberg, S. (2002). Heterogeneity and change in environmental strategy: Technological and political responses to climate change in the global automobile industry. Organizations, policy and the natural environment: institutional and strategic perspectives, 173-193.

Week 4: Sept. 27: **How US policy is made, on paper, and in the real world**.

Based on middle school civics classes, we have idealized visions of how public policy is created and implemented. But this is not the case, and climate change policy is no exception. Competing coalitions pressure legislators, administrative agencies, and each other to shape the way America deals with issues like this. This week combines some general texts on public policy with some strong arguments on how misguided many efforts to drive public policy through public education have been. Basics of the legislative process (Schoolhouse Rock?). ALEC, SPN, other influence networks, and how we know they are functioning.

**Speaker:** Friday (10/1) at 3:30 pm. Neela Banerjee, Director of CC, NPR.

**Group B:** Two page reading SEQ paper. **Group A** responds with questions by 1pm Monday.

**Readings:**

1. Consortium for Ocean Leadership. 2018 U.S. Government Primer.
2. Watch Schoolhouse Rock, How a Bill Becomes a Law. ("I'm just a Bill") (3 minutes)
3. Watch CrashCourse, How a Bill Becomes a Law.
4. Stokes, Leah C. and Hanna L. Breetz. 2018. Politics in the U.S. energy transition: Case studies of solar, wind, biofuels and electric vehicles policy. *Energy Policy* 113: 76-86.

5. Laird, F.N. and Stefes, C., 2009. The diverging paths of German and United States policies for renewable energy: Sources of difference. *Energy Policy*, 37(7), pp.2619-2629.
6. Harvey, Hal, Robbie Orvis, and Jeffery Rissman. 2018. *Designing Climate Solutions.* Introduction, Chapters 1-3.

**Supplemental reading of core theory:**

1. Sabatier, P.A. and Weible, C.M., 2007. The advocacy coalition framework. *Theories of the policy process*, *2*, pp.189-220.
2. Harvey, Hal, Robbie Orvis, and Jeffery Rissman. 2018. *Designing Climate Solutions.* Chapter 4: Renewable Portfolio Standards and Feed-In Tariffs.

Week 5: Oct. 4: **Advocacy efforts in support of US climate efforts.**

What have been the main non-governmental advocacy groups and campaigns over the thirty years of climate change in the U.S.? What strategies have they taken? How have they differed from pro-industry/anti-climate action efforts? What is the structure of the movement and which groups and individuals have the most influence and effectiveness? What are the strategies and impacts of climate justice activists?

**Group A:** Two page reading SEQ paper: summary/synthesis/questions due before class by Canvas. **Group B** responds with questions by 1pm Monday.

**Readings**:

1. Caniglia, B.S., R.J. Brulle and A. Szasz. 2015. "Civil society, social movements, and climate change." Chapter 8 in *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives.* R.E. Dunlap and R. J. Brulle, editors. Oxford.
2. Greenberg, J, G. Knight, and E.Westersund. 2011. Spinning climate change: Corporate and NGO public relations strategies in Canada and the United States. International Communication Gazette 73(1- 2), 65-82
3. Blühdorn, I. 2015. A Much-Needed Renewal of Environmentalism? Eco-politics in the Anthropocene, pp. 156-167 in C. Hamilton, C. Bonneuil, and F. Gemenne (Eds.) *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking modernity in a new epoch*. Routledge: New York, NY.
4. McAdam, D., 2017. Social movement theory and the prospects for climate change activism in the United States. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *20*, pp.189-208.

Week 6: October 11: **Indigenous Peoples' Day - No Class**

**Speaker:** Friday (10/15) at 3:30 pm. Janet Redman, Climate Program Director, Greenpeace.

Week 7: Oct. 18: **State-level climate politics and policy**

The national level is important but for many years has been gridlocked or dysfunctional on climate change policy-making. Therefore much attention has shifted to the level of the states and even cities, where coalitions, economies, and legislative and executive structures differ quite sharply. Rhode Island is a fabulous case for our study, because it might appear as a best-case scenario for ambitious climate action (Democratic party supermajorities in both chambers, a Democratic governor, 400 miles of vulnerable coastline, no fossil fuel industry, etc.). However, only certain types of policy have been enacted--several ambitious bills have died in committees and some strong programs on renewables and energy efficiency have faltered in the implementation. Why?

**Group B:** Two page reading SEQ paper: summary/synthesis/questions due before class. Group A responds with questions by 1pm Monday.

**Readings**:

1. Karapin, Roger. 2018. Not waiting for Washington: Climate policy adoption in California and New York. *Political Science Quarterly*. 133(2): 317-353.
2. Salem, K. 2018. *We're All The Good Guys: Advocacy Coalitions and Policy Change in Four Case Studies of Rhode Island Energy Policy.* Honor's Thesis, Brown University. (Focus especially on chapters 2 and 3: "Very Small, Very Centrist" and "Four Case Studies")
3. Culhane, T., G. Hall and JT Roberts. 2021. "Who is delaying state climate action? Interest groups and coalitions in U.S. state legislative struggles." *Energy Research and Social Science*.
4. Roberts, J.T., R. Brulle, L. Maunus, M. Dolan, A. Meakem, H. August, A. Sharpe, A. Ziemer. n.d. Competing coalition discourses on climate change in U.S. states: a pilot study. Unpublished manuscript.
5. Roberts, David. 2019. New York just passed the most ambitious climate target in the country. *Vox*. July 22.
6. See also US EPA. 2016.
7. Ostrom, Elinor. 2010. "Polycentric Systems for Coping with Collective Action and Global Environmental Change." Global Environmental Change 20(4): 550–57.

**\*\*\*Extra meeting later in the week for final Preparation for DC Trip**

Week 8: October 25-29: **The CDL Goes to Washington**

All students will attend five days in DC, attending our own and other groups' events. Travel to DC on Sunday October 20th by Amtrak. Stay at "Historic Mansion, Large and Imposing." Events at William and Mary DC Center, return home Friday night October 25th by Amtrak,

leaving 4pm, arriving 11:30 pm. [See detailed and evolving schedule in Google Doc (to be linked).

**Tentative schedule:**

Day 1: Monday 25 October: Panel discussions: the PR Industry, the Media, and Climate Change

Day 2: Tuesday 26 October: Both sides of the Capitol, Senate Briefing, discussion with staffers

Day 3: Wednesday 27 October: Climate hearings, meetings

Day 4: Thursday 28 October: Hearings, Sessions and State-level action

Day 5: Friday 29 November: Climate change policy and the 2022 election


Week 9: Nov. 1: **Processing What Just Happened, Prospects for Climate Action in America**

Debriefing and discussing the process and outcomes of the election and our trip to Washington, writing up our analyses, and following through on fall group projects and outreach.

**Speaker:** Friday (11/5) at 3:30 pm. Kyle Whyte, University of Michigan. Zoom.

**Readings**:

1.   Current material (blogs, reflections) TBA


Week 10: Nov. 8: **Advocacy efforts in opposition to climate action**

What have been the main advocacy groups and campaigns over the thirty years of climate change in the U.S. to fight off efforts to enact public policy to control greenhouse gases and to slow or stop a rapid transition off of fossil fuels? What strategies have they taken? How have they differed from environmentalist/scientist pro-climate action efforts? What is the structure of the movement and which groups and individuals have the most influence and effectiveness? What are strategies and impacts of "skeptic" and "denialist" activists and industry organizations?

**Speaker:** Friday (11/12) at 3:30 pm. Kert Davies, CIC/ClimateFile.

**Group A:** Two page reading SEQ paper. **Group B** responds with questions by 1pm Monday.

**Readings:**

1. Dunlap, R.E. and A.M. McCright. 2015. "Challenging climate change: The denial countermovement." Chapter 10 in *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives.*R.E. Dunlap and R. J. Brulle, editors. Oxford.
2. Farrell, Justin. 2016. "Corporate funding and ideological polarization about climate change." *PNAS* 113:1: 92-97.
3. Brulle, R. J. 2014. Institutionalizing delay: foundation funding and the creation of US climate change counter-movement organizations. *Climatic Change*, 122, 681-694.
4. Downie, C. 2017. "Business actors, political resistance, and strategies for policymakers." *Energy Policy* 108: 583-592.
5. Read two of the following primary source documents from denial groups:
   1. 2001 briefing memo on meeting between Global Climate Coalition and White House
   2. 1995 primer from Global Climate Coalition after the IPCC 2nd assessment, acknowledging the scientific consensus, and explaining how uncertainty could still be stated.
   3. 1991 Information Council on the Environment denial ad campaign
   4. 2006 Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA) memo on climate alarmism

## Week 11: Nov. 15: **PR, communications, media, public opinion and the public response to climate change**

What drives U.S. public opinion on climate change? Do storms, heat waves and droughts have an impact? Do scientific messages? Do elites, like politicians, columnists, celebrities and TV commentators? How do emotions and cognition drive opinion and behavior? What has been happening with public opinion since 1990? What is the role of the Public Relations industry, and how does it operate? Who is putting money into PR on climate change and efforts to address it?

**Group B:** Two page reading SEQ paper: summary/synthesis/questions due before class by Canvas

**Readings:**

1. Greenberg, J, G. Knight, and E.Westersund. 2011. Spinning climate change: Corporate and NGO public relations strategies in Canada and the United States. *International Communication Gazette* 73(1- 2), 65-82
2. Norgaard, K.M. 2006. "People want to protect themselves a little bit": Emotions, Denial and Social Movement Nonparticipation. *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol 76(3)
3. Shwom, R. L., A.M. McCright, and S.R. Brechin with R.E.Dunlap, S.T. Marquart-Pyatt and L.C. Hamilton. 2015. "Public Opinion on Climate Change." Chapter 9 in *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives.* R.E. Dunlap and R. J. Brulle, editors. Oxford.

4. Carmichael, Jason and Robert J. Brulle. 2016. Elite Cues, Media Coverage and Public Concern: An Integrated Path Analysis Model of Climate Change Public Opinion In the U.S. 2001 – 2013, Environmental Politics.

Week 12: Nov. 22: **Week of Thanksgiving. The US in the UN negotiations**

What has been the role of the United States in the global effort to address climate change? Beyond leadership in science through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC), why has the U.S. so often stood alone or with very few allies in resisting ambitious and scientifically adequate action at the global level? From unsigning the Kyoto Protocol to threatening withdrawal from the Paris Agreement (and decades of obstruction between, before and since) how does analysis of the domestic level help us understand U.S. unilateralism in obstructing action on climate change?

**Group A and B:** Two page reading SEQ paper: summary/synthesis/questions due before class by Canvas

**Readings:**

1. DeSombre, Elizabeth R. 2003. "Understanding United States unilateralism: domestic sources of U.S. International Environmental Policy." In Axelrod, Vig and Downie (eds.) The Global Environment.
2. Downie, C. 2014. Transnational actors in environmental politics: strategies and influence in long negotiations, Environmental Politics, 23:3, 376-394
3. Clémençon, R., 2016. The two sides of the Paris climate agreement: Dismal failure or historic breakthrough? *Journal of Environment and Development.* February.
4. Ciplet, D. and Roberts, J.T., 2017. "Climate change and the transition to neoliberal environmental governance." *Global Environmental Change*, *46*, pp.148-156.
5. Luke Kemp. 2017. "Better Out than In." *Nature Climate Change volume 7, pages 458–460 (2017)*
6. Watch Trump's June 1, 2017 Rose Garden speech announcing withdrawal from the Paris Agreement
7. Watch Obama's video from Alaska August 2015 speech and video from Hawaii September 2016.

Week 13: Nov. 29: **Work Session on projects, discussion of residual topics, preparation for presentations**

**Speaker:** Friday (12/3) at 3:30 pm. Amy Westervelt, Drilled Podcast and Newsletter.

**Readings:** 1. CDL PR Firms/Cartie Report

Week 14: December 6: **Final Class Session**

Peer-to-Peer teaching on group project reports, on what they studied and found, how they presented it, and how they are rolling out their findings. Structure: 5 minutes on the background, why it's important, the context and fundamentals, 5 minutes on the research process, 10 minutes on the findings, 5 minutes on the rollout. 10 minutes Q and A.

Week 15: December 13 - 21: **Reading week/Exam Period**

No exam. Those interested and able can continue to work on CDL projects through winter break and the spring semester.