Politics of Climate Change

Climate change is arguably the most important global challenge in the 21st century. It will reshape weather patterns, storms, sea levels, and agricultural output worldwide, mostly for the worse. Mitigating climate change will require massive economic transformations, affecting energy, transportation, and industrial sectors. What are the politics of that transformation? What are the political forces obstructing it? How do social movements, institutions, and economic interests interact to shape the national and global response to climate change? This course offers answers and insights, primarily from the perspective of political science.

This course: (1) focuses on politics (not physical science), (2) is solution-centered (not ‘admiring the problem’), and (3) amplifies diverse voices. We will consider climate change from multiple perspectives – not just the mainstream American one, but also reading Australian indigenous, African-American, and Asian authors, as well as several from the Global South. We will consider the gendered impact of climate change. The point is to show how the environment affects different people in quite different ways, complicating the need for a collective response. In the end, however, students will be asked to analyze what works for meeting the climate challenge.

This course will be in person. It combines the lecture format with interactive class discussion, so students must be available for the class time slot (i.e., no class conflicts). Students are expected to be ready for the class discussions based on the assigned readings. This means that the readings must be done ahead of the class for which they are assigned. Class participation is important: it makes the class more fun and interesting for everyone. Students are also expected to follow the news on climate issues, which we will discuss in class.

Attendance will not be taken. Students are treated as adults: if you can’t make a class, you don’t need to explain it. However, your participation grade reflects your attendance: if you aren’t around, you don’t contribute to the class.

This syllabus is subject to change. Read it anyway.

Learning Objectives:
This class will:
• explore the relationship between climate change, domestic politics, and global justice
• encourage students to become reflective consumers of information about climate change
• improve understanding of the causes and consequences of climate change
At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- present and analyze major arguments related to climate change
- discuss the social, political, and economic benefits and challenges

**Grading and Requirements:**

A. **Final Paper:** 35%. Students are asked to choose one of two types of papers: 1) a comparison of “Doers vs. Deniers,” or 2) a business plan for creating institutional change on climate. We’ll discuss the method in class. You will choose which option by 10am, September 30, and communicate it in writing to your TA. The paper is due on **Thursday December 8**. Timely completion of the draft paper is part of your final grade. The final paper should be no more than 16 pages, double-spaced.

B. **Interim Writing for Final Paper:** 20%. Regardless of which type of final paper you choose, you will be required to submit, twice, a 6-page (double-spaced) interim paper on a part of the project. The first interim paper is worth 15%, graded by the TA. The second is worth 5%. It will be peer-reviewed (by other students), and only checked for completeness by the TA. The deadline for the first is Friday Oct 21; the second is due Mon Nov 14 (to be discussed in section that week).

C. **Tests:** 30%. Two **in-class** tests. Closed book, no notes, no devices. Test #1 is Monday Oct 24. Test #2 is Wednesday November 30. There is no final exam.

D. **Class Participation:** 15%. Being prepared to critically discuss each reading, each week, is the best way to get the most out of this course. Your ability to engage stimulates others to participate as well. Participation in your TA-led sections is the most important form of participation. Discussion sections are designed to reinforce your understanding of the readings, engage with the material through group discussion, and give you an opportunity to ask questions.

**Course Time Allocation:** Over 13 weeks, students will spend 3 hours per week in class (39 hours total), 7 hours per week doing course reading, weekly assignments, viewing documentaries, and other out-of-class work (91 hours total). In addition, there is a research paper and midterm test that require a minimum of 50 hours of work.

**Academic Conduct:** Please read Brown University’s policies on academic conduct carefully. Handing in someone else’s work or ideas as your own (even if you worked on it together as a group) constitutes plagiarism, as does using someone’s ideas without appropriate citations. You must give a citation when you use an author’s ideas in your writing, even if you do not quote the text word-for-word. If you have any questions, please ask. Be informed and be careful. This class will use Turnitin software to detect plagiarized work.

**Grading Policy:**
Once a grade has been assigned, the student can only appeal it by contacting the instructor in writing. In writing, the student should justify why s/he feels that the grade should be modified.

You are strongly urged to hand in work on time. Late assignments will incur the following penalties: a full letter grade drop after 24 hours, or an automatic zero after 48 hours. If you have
a legitimate medical/personal reason for the lateness, an extension is possible with a doctor’s note or equivalent documentation.

**Office Hours:**
I will hold office hours in-person (see the start of this syllabus for hours and location). You do not need an appointment; it’s first come, first served. If no one appears in the first 20 minutes, I will sometimes leave my office, so come early if you want to talk. If you can’t make the beginning of my office hours, please email me to arrange a later time.

TAs will also hold their own office hours, at a time and location to be announced.

**Required Texts:**
Week-by-Week Topics

Week 1 - (Week of Sept 7)
1. [Wednesday] Course Introduction
   a. No assigned readings

Week 2 - (Week of Sept 12)
2. The science of climate change, Part I
   b. [Optional: *Economist* briefings – six short articles.]
3. The science of climate change, Part II
4. [Optional: watch *An Inconvenient Sequel* (2017)]

Week 3 - (Week of Sept 19)
5. [Mon] History of Climate Negotiations [CLASS DOES NOT MEET. Pre-recorded video]
   a. [Video is available on Canvas > Media Library]
6. [Wed] Basics of climate politics
7. [Friday: “Challenges and Lessons” for Climate Politics - *Pre-recorded Colgan lecture*]
   a. [Video is available on Canvas > Media Library]

Week 4 - (Week of Sept 26)
(PAPER TOPIC DUE THIS WEEK, SEPT 30 @11am)
8. [Mon] Public opinion on climate

9. [Wed] Why are solutions so hard?

10. [Friday]

**Part II: Climate Perspectives, Climate Solutions**

Week 5 - (Week of Oct 3)

11. [Mon] Designing solutions
    a. Harvey, Hal et al. *Designing Climate Solutions,* Introduction and Chapter 1 (p.1-33)

12. [Wed] Sustainable investing, Part I
    b. FT Lex, “Direct Air Capture,” 2022

13. [Friday] [Watch short video on systemic racism and video by MP David Lammy]
    a. https://www.ted.com/talks/david_lammy_climate_justice_can_t_happen_without_racial_justice?language=en#t-558680

Week 6 - (Week of Oct 10)
[NO CLASS MONDAY Oct 10 – Indigenous Peoples’ Day]
14. [Wed] Sustainable investing, Part II  

15. [Friday] Wind Power. Guest Lecturer: Paul Murphy, Ørsted. (*Meet in the classroom.*)  
a. No assigned readings.

Week 7 - (Week of Oct 17)

**FIRST INTERIM PAPER DUE THIS WEEK (Oct 21“)**

16. [Mon] From Green New Deal to Inflation Reduction Act  

17. [Wed] Critics of Climate Policy; and Review for Test  
b. FT Lex 2022, “Carbon capture costs”  

18. [Friday: independent studying, no classroom meeting]  
a. [No readings]

Week 8 – TEST (Week of Oct 24)

19. [Monday] In-Class TEST #1  
a. [No readings]

20. [Wed] Carbon assets  
Week 9 – (Week of Oct 31)
22. [Mon] Paths forward
   a. Harvey, Hal et al. Designing Climate Solutions, Chapter 3 (p.53-68)
      Executive Summary only.
   c. Bulkeley, Harriet et al. 2012. “Governing Climate Change Transnationally:
      Assessing the Evidence from a Database of Sixty Initiatives.” Environment and
   d. Watch this short video: https://www.choices.edu/video/why-is-activism-at-the-
      local-level-so-effective-in-addressing-climate-change/
23. [Wed] Transnational Climate Politics. Guest Lecturer: Dr. Nina Hall. (ON ZOOM.)
24. [Fri] Climate Justice (IN CLASSROOM.)
      the Fight Against Environmental Racism.” Time.

Week 10 (Week of Nov 7)
25. [Mon] Climate Change and Human Rights (Lecture by Dr. Nina Tannewald)
   a. Readings TBA.
26. [Wed] Extractive Industries (Lecture by TA)
      assets and resources to the developing world.” Third World Quarterly 39 (3), 436-
      453
      and Climate Regulation: Business as Usual or a Changing Business?” Global
      Environmental Politics 10(Y): 1–23.
27. [Friday: Watch Video on Talking Climate by Dr. Kathryn Hayhoe]
   a. https://www.ted.com/talks/katharine_hayhoe_the_most_important_thing_you_can
      do_to_fight_climate_change_talk_about_it?language=en#t-1018007

Week 11 - (Week of Nov 14)
SECOND INTERIM PAPER DUE THIS WEEK (NOV 14th)
28. [Mon] China and energy investments

29. [Wed] COP27 update (Lecture by TA)
   d. TBA

30. [Friday: Watch Video on Climate Lobbying by Dr. Matto Mildenberger]
   a. Video: [on Canvas, under Media Library]

Week 12 - (Week of Nov 23)
31. [Mon] Assets & Finance
   c. The Economist. 2020. “Hotting up - How much can financiers do about climate change?”

Nov 23-25: Thanksgiving, NO CLASS.

Week 13 - (Week of Nov 28)
32. Humanitarian consequences & Test Review

33. In-Class TEST #2
   a. [No readings]

Week 14 – Conclusion (Dec 5)
34. Course wrap-up.
OPTIONAL READINGS


RESOURCES
2. NY Times Climate - https://www.nytimes.com/section/climate
3. Washington Post/Monkey Cage Topic Guide: Climate Change – https://docs.google.com/document/u/1/d/e/2PACX-1vSGX3e4RD5UhofZfaMEKTccee-NFqWaOwXrmoiY9DdSNYiIAUQ07ppgZAwYIlrWf0Z74P-PeQUdj6ecI/pub
4. HBS Impacted Weighted Accounts: https://www.hbs.edu/impact-weighted-accounts/Pages/default.aspx
6. Dawn King videos: https://www.choices.edu/scholar/dawn-king
Academic Administrative Statements

Privacy Notice
This course has combined sections. It is possible that students from other sections will be able to view who is enrolled in the course (from all sections).

Books, Supplies, and Materials
If your Brown undergraduate financial aid package includes the Book/Course Material Support Pilot Program (BCMS), concerns or questions about the cost of books and course materials for this or any other Brown course (including RISD courses via cross-registration) can be addressed to bcms@brown.edu. For all other concerns related to non-tuition course-related expenses, whether or not your Brown undergraduate financial aid package includes BCMS, please visit the Academic Emergency Fund in E-GAP (within the umbrella of "E-Gap Funds" in UFunds) to determine options for financing these costs, while ensuring your privacy.

Accessibility and Accommodations
Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you may require accommodations or modification of any of course procedures. You may speak with me after class, during office hours, or by appointment. If you need accommodations around online learning or in classroom accommodations, please be sure to reach out to Student Accessibility Services (SAS) for their assistance (seas@brown.edu, 401-863-9588). Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the academic deans in the College.

Class Recording and Distribution of Materials
I would like to record our discussion because some students may be in different time zones, have poor internet connections, or have health issues. This means that we will record all classes to make them available to all students that are enrolled but cannot be present. If you have questions or concerns about this protocol, please contact me so that we can talk through those to also ensure your full participation in this course.

Lectures and other course materials are copyrighted. Students are prohibited from reproducing, making copies, publicly displaying, selling, or otherwise distributing the recordings or transcripts of the materials. The only exception is that students with disabilities may have the right to record for their private use if that method is determined to be a reasonable accommodation by Student Accessibility Services. Disregard of the University's copyright policy and federal copyright law is a Student Code of Conduct violation.
Instructions for Final Paper

General
You may choose to do one of two types of papers:

1. Compare and contrast the behavior of climate “doers vs. deniers” within a category of actor, like cities, firms, or provinces/states

2. Create a “business plan” to solve some problem related to climate change (broadly conceived), inspired by the Hal Harvey textbook. In the plan, you would show how student/citizens (i.e., you) can address it. Identify all of the elements necessary to execute your plan: specific goals, strategy, required funding and resources, timeline, key actors, success indicators, etc.

Submission
Submit an electronic copy to your TA via Canvas.

Deadline, Formatting, Structure, Grading, etc.
See the document “Instructions on Final Paper”