

THE POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

ENV/PUBPOL 290S – Fall 2018

Instructor: Emily Pechar

Time: Tues/Thurs 11:45am-1pm

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Place: LSRC A211

Office hours by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Climate change has become one of the defining issues of modern politics. Beyond simply a question of science, climate change has become a central part of mainstream political debates, defining part of what it means to be a Democrat or a Republican, and acting as both a unifying and a divisive issue in international politics. Most scientists agree that emissions need to be reduced in order to limit serious global impacts, but governments are not in agreement about whether, or how, to do this.

In this course we will analyze the political dynamics of climate change by focusing on the *problem*, the *politics*, and the *policies* at a domestic (U.S.) and an international level. In the first unit, we will focus on the problem of climate change. We will evaluate the scientific consensus established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the dynamics between science and society as studied in the political science literature. We will also look at the issue of climate change from an economic lens: why are global emissions a problem, and what does the economics literature tell us about how to solve it?

Next, we will launch into the politics of the issue. Why is climate change such a politically difficult issue to solve? Using theories of political attitude formation, we will explore how values, identities, and information inform environmental policy preferences in the mass public and among elites. We will explore the interplay between different actors and interest groups in the climate change debate, and how these interactions have evolved over time. We will also evaluate the ethical questions related to climate justice.

Having gained a deeper understanding of the political forces behind the issue of climate change, the final unit explores the policy solutions at the local, national, and international levels. What are the key policy proposals designed to address climate change, and how do they compare on features such as emissions reduction, cost, and ethical implications? We will pay special attention to the political viability of different policy proposals through an in-depth analysis and feasibility report for the final project.

Through this course, students will:

- Understand the scientific basis of climate change and the need for policies to address it
- Evaluate how and why politics has hindered the implementation of climate change policies
- Analyze the political viability of real-life climate change policies at the domestic and international levels.

COURSE POLICIES

As an upper-level undergraduate seminar, this course is primarily discussion-based. I will begin each class with a short lecture to set up the key questions that we will grapple with in our discussions and class activities.

Active Participation

I recognize that each student has a significant contribution to make to our understanding of climate change politics. You can learn just as much from each other as you can from me. Because of this, group discussions of and learning comprehension exercises on the readings will make up a significant portion of each class. Students are expected to complete all the readings and actively participate in every class discussion. Class participation makes up a 25% of your grade.

My goal is not to catch you off guard with your participation grade. Twice during the semester, I will send a check-in email to each student with an assessment of your class participation thus far. Each student will receive a grade from 1-5 on their level of participation for these check-ins. This will serve as a way for you to gauge if you need to increase your class participation, or start a conversation with me on any concerns you have about your level of engagement.

Discussion Guidelines

This classroom will encourage a supportive and open discussion environment to make sure every student feels comfortable contributing to the discussions. To ensure this environment, each student is expected to demonstrate the utmost respect for others' opinions.

Technology

Laptops, cellphones, and other electronic devices that take your attention away from the class discussion are not permitted. You should take notes on the readings and bring them to class. If you have a legitimate need for access to technology or to take notes on your laptop, please let me know and we can discuss any exceptions to this policy.

Attendance

Attendance in the course is mandatory since the readings are designed to inspire, but not answer, the key questions of the day. Because some absences are inevitable, each student is allowed 3 absences. If you do need to miss class, you must email me as soon as possible (at least one hour before class) letting me know you will be using one of your absences – I do not need to know the reason. Each absence beyond 3 will result in a 1% reduction in your final grade (except in extenuating circumstances approved by the instructor).

Student Needs

If you have a disability or believe you need special accommodations, please see me as soon as possible. In addition, contact the Student Disability Access Office at (919) 668-1267 to better ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, please visit the following web page: <http://www.access.duke.edu/students/index.php>

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESMENT

1. **Class Participation: 25%**

Active participation is extremely important and is worth 25% of your final grade. This is made up of both serving as a **Reading Captain** twice during the semester (preparing and leading discussions on the readings), and actively participating in discussions during the other sessions.

2. **Unit Reflections: 30% (3x 10% each)**

In addition to active discussion in each class, students will demonstrate what they learn in each unit by completing a two-page (double spaced) reflection at the end of each unit. Each reflection is worth 10% of your grade. These reflections should respond to the following questions:

- What were the key themes I learned in this unit?
- How did this unit help me better understand the political dynamics of climate change?
- What about this topic do I still want to know more about?

3. **Climate Negotiations Simulation Preparation and Reflection: 10%**

In Class 25, we will do a simulation of the international climate change negotiations. Your grade will be based on your active preparation and participation in the simulation, and a 2-page reflection of the exercise, due the following class period.

4. **Group Policy Feasibility Report & Presentation: 35%**

The final assignment for this course is a 20-30 page (double spaced) political feasibility group report for a proposed climate change policy. You will select a local, state-level, national, or international policy that has been recently proposed to address the impacts of climate change (including reducing emissions, adapting to climate change, addressing concerns of environmental justice, etc). Your report will include a detailed description of the policy and its stated goals, an evaluation of its likely effectiveness in achieving these goals, and an analysis of the political dynamics surrounding the passage and implementation of this policy. The report should be able to answer the questions: Should government officials pursue this policy to combat climate change? Is it likely to succeed? If not, what changes to the policy would you recommend? To answer this question, you will use both primary and secondary research that should include direct interactions with policymakers and other stakeholders involved in the policy process. **In-class presentations will take place during the last week of class, and the report is due by 5pm on Dec. 13th, 2018.** Each group member will receive an individual grade based on the finished product and both self- and peer-evaluations.

Late Policy

Late submissions will be penalized one-third letter grade (e.g., from A to A-) for each 24 hours late. Please contact me if you have extenuating circumstances.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS (subject to change with at least one week's notice)

Class 1 (8/28): Introduction to Climate Change

Come to class prepared to discuss what you already know about climate change, what you want to know, and one reason you think that climate change politics is challenging.

NOTE: No class 8/30

Unit 1: The Problem

Class 2 (9/4): The Science of Climate Change

What is the scientific basis behind climate change? Is there a scientific consensus? What are the core scientific concepts behind the issue?

- Maslin, M. (2014). *Climate Change: A Very Short Introduction*. OUP Oxford. **Chapters 1-3, 5 (76 pp)**

Class 3 (9/6): The Interplay between Science and Politics

How do the policy world and the science world interact? How does science inform public policy? What role has science played in the climate change policy debate?

- Hulme, M. (2009). *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity*. Cambridge University Press. **Ch 3 (35 pp)**
- IPCC. (2014). *Climate Change 2014 Summary for Policymakers*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. **(Executive Summary only - skim)**

Class 4 (9/11): Public Opinion and Science

How does the public use scientific information when making policy decisions? What role does trust in science play in guiding public support for climate change policies?

- Gauchat, G. (2012). Politicization of Science in the Public Sphere A Study of Public Trust in the United States, 1974 to 2010. *American Sociological Review*, 77(2), 167–187. (20 pp) **OR** Nisbet, E., K. Cooper, R. K. Garrett. (2015). The Partisan Brain: How Dissonant Science Messages Lead Conservatives and Liberals to (Dis)Trust Science. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 658(1), 36-66 (30 pp)
- Funk, Cary and Lee Raine. (2015). Public and Scientists' Views on Science and Society. Pew Research Center: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/29/public-and-scientists-views-on-science-and-society/>
- Dastagir, A. (2017, April 20). People trust science. So why don't they believe it? USA Today. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/04/20/science-march-war-truth-political-polarization/100636124/>

Class 5 (9/13): The Economic Need for a Political Solution

Why is a political solution to climate change necessary? What is a public goods problem and how do you solve it? Could it be possible to address the issue without government involvement?

- Hardin, G. (2009). The Tragedy of the Commons. *Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research*, 1(3), 243–253. (10 pp)
- Nordhaus, W. (1999). Global Public Goods and the Problem of Global Warming. Annual Lecture, IDEI. (Sections I and II only)

Unit 2: The Politics

Class 6 (9/18): Why is a Political Solution So Hard?

With the premise that government policies are needed to combat climate change, why has it been so hard to implement such policies? What characteristics of the problem make it hard to solve with politics?

- Gardiner, S. M. (2006). A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics and the Problem of Moral Corruption. *Environmental Values*, 15(3), 397–413. (18pp)
- Victor, D., N. Obradovich, D. Amaya (2017). Why the wiring of our brains makes it hard to stop climate change. Brookings: Planet Policy.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2017/09/18/why-the-wiring-of-our-brains-makes-it-hard-to-stop-climate-change/>

Class 7 (9/20): The Political Psychology of Climate Change – Guest Lecture, Jack Zhou

(Unit 1 Reflection due before class)

Why is climate change such a divisive issue? How does it function psychologically? How can psychology help us understand about the politics of climate change? What are ways that social scientists have found to effectively communicate on climate change?

- Spence, A., W. Poortinga, N. Pidgeon (2011). The Psychological Distance of Climate Change. *Risk Analysis*, 32(6):957-972 (15 pp)
- Center for Research on Environmental Decisions. (2009). The Psychology of Climate Change Communication: A Guide for Scientists, Journalists, Educators, Political Aides, and the Interested Public. New York. (Skim)
- Zhou, Jack. (2016). Boomerangs versus Javelins: How Polarization Constrains Communication on Climate Change. *Environmental Politics*, 25(5): 788-811. (23pp)
- **Podcast:** Speaking of Psychology: Understanding Climate Change. (13 min) <http://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/climate-change.aspx>

Class 8 (9/25): Public Opinion on Climate Change: The Theory

How do members of the public form attitudes on political issues? What role does information play in this process? Are human brains set up to make good or poor decisions on political issues?

- Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York City: Cambridge University Press. **Chapter 3.** (12 pp)
- Nisbet, Matthew C. 2011. “Public Opinion and Participation.” in *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, Eds. John S. Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Schlosberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (10 pp)

Class 9 (9/27): Public Opinion on Climate Change: The Reality

What are public attitudes on climate change? What factors determine support for environmental policies? What motivates opposition to these policies?

- Egan, P. and M. Mullin (2017). Climate Change: US Public Opinion. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20:209-227(18pp)
- Leiserowitz et al: Global Warming's Six Americas. Yale/George Mason Program on Climate Change
Communication: <http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/about/projects/global-warmings-six-americas/>
 - Read the overview on the site above and choose one of the reports to read. Come to class prepared to summarize key points from the report that you read.

Class 10 (10/2): Climate Change Denialism

What is the nature of climate change denial? What are the frames most relevant to the climate denial movement? Do facts matter?

- Dulap, R. and A.M. McCright (2011). Organized Climate Change Denial. In the Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society.
- Cann, H. and L. Raymond (2018). Does climate denialism still matter? The prevalence of alternative frames in opposition to climate policy. *Environmental Politics*, 27(3):433-454 (21pp)
- Aschwanden, C. (2012). The anatomy of denial: Why truth doesn't always win. Grist: <http://grist.org/climate-skeptics/the-anatomy-of-denial-why-truth-doesnt-always-win/>

Class 11 (10/4): Interest Groups

What are interest groups, and how do they contribute to the political dynamics of climate change and the environment? Should interest groups have a role in government?

- Hrebenar, R.J. 1997. *Interest Group Politics in America*. Routledge: New York. Chapter 1 only (23pp)
- Grossmann, Matt. 2006. Environmental Advocacy in Washington: A Comparison with Other Interest Groups. *Environmental Politics* 15: 628-638. (10pp)
- Delmas, Magali. 2016. Research: Who's Lobbying Congress on Climate Change. Harvard Business Review <https://hbr.org/2016/10/research-whos-lobbying-congress-on-climate-change>

NO CLASS 10/9: FALL BREAK

DUE 10/11: Proposed policy for the Policy Feasibility Report & individual meetings

Class 12 (10/11): The Role of the Media

How does the media contribute to climate change politics? Are there standards in the media industry that contribute to division on climate change? How do scientists need to evolve to respond to a new media environment?

- Prior, Markus (2005) News v. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout. *American Journal of Political Science* 49: 594-609. (15pp)
- Boykoff, M. and J. Boykoff (2007). Climate change and journalistic norms: A case-study of US mass-media coverage. *Geoforum*, 38(6):1190-1204. (14pp)
- Read, Rupert (2018). I won't go on the BBC if it supplies climate change deniers as 'balance'. *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/02/bbc-climate-change-deniers-balance>
- Brossard, Dominique, and Dieram Scheufele (2013) Science, New Media, and the Public. *Science* 339: 40-41. (2pp)

Class 13 (10/16): Climate Change as an Ethical Issue

How does climate change impact communities differently? What kinds of policies do we need to consider to ensure an ethical response? When may climate change policies actually increase injustices and ethical issues?

- IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (2014) – Chapter 3: Social, Economic and Ethical Concepts and Models. **Only pages 211-225** (14pp)
- Broome, J. (2008). The Ethics of Climate Change. *Scientific American*, 298(6):96-100 (4pp)
- Lynn, W. (2015). The ethics of climate change: what we owe people - and the rest of the planet. *The Conversation*, 12/8/15. <https://theconversation.com/the-ethics-of-climate-change-what-we-owe-people-and-the-rest-of-the-planet-51785>

Unit 3: The Policies

Class 14 (10/18): The Regulation Approach

Why were command-and-control regulatory approaches favored as responses to environmental issues for so long? What are their good and bad attributes as climate change policies?

- The Environmental Literacy Council. Regulatory Policy vs Economic Incentives. <https://enviroliteracy.org/environment-society/economics/regulatory-policy-vs-economic-incentives/>
- Robert Stavins, “Carbon-pricing and technology R&D initiatives: Both are necessary, but neither is sufficient” (November 20, 2010), at <http://grist.org/article/2010-11-19-carbon-pricing-technology-initiatives-necessary-not-sufficient/>

- Harrington, W. and R. Morgenstern (2004). Economic Incentives versus Command and Control. Resources for the Future. (17pp)

Class 15 (10/23): Climate Change Regulations in the U.S. (*Unit 2 Reflection due before class*)

What regulations have been used to address climate change at the U.S. federal level? Have they been successful? What is the future outlook for US climate change regulations?

- Chon, J. (2017). Clean Power Plan. Environmental Justice Journal, 105: 105-129 (24pp)
- C2ES: Federal Vehicle Standards: <https://www.c2es.org/content/regulating-transportation-sector-carbon-emissions/>
- Roberts, D. (2018) Trump is freezing Obama’s fuel economy standards. Here’s what that could do. Vox: <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2018/5/3/17314000/trump-epa-cars-trucks-fuel-economy-cafe-standards>

Class 16 (10/25): The Market Approach

Why use the market to respond to climate change? What is a cap and trade system? Has it been successful? What is a carbon tax?

- Ian Parry & William Pizer, (2007) “Emissions Trading vs. CO2 Taxes vs. Standards,” Issue Brief #5 in William Pizer and Ray Kopp, eds., Assessing U.S. Climate Policy Options
- Meredith Fowle, “Is Cap and Trade Failing Low Income and Minority Communities?” October 2016, at <https://energyathaas.wordpress.com/2016/10/10/is-cap-and-trade-failing-low-income-and-minority-communities/>
- Janet Peace & Robert Stavins, (June 2010) "In Brief: Meaningful and Cost-Effective Climate Policy: The Case for Cap and Trade," *Pew Center on Global Climate Change*
- Brian Murray and Nicholas Rivers, (2015) “British Columbia’s revenue-neutral carbon tax: A review of the latest ‘grand experiment’ in environmental policy,” *Energy Policy* 86: 674-683 (9pp)
- The Basics of Carbon Fee and Dividend. (n.d.). Retrieved October 17, 2017, from <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/basics-carbon-fee-dividend/> (**Also watch video**)

Class 17 (10/30): Environmental Federalism

What options are there for a local or state-level climate change solution? Could it be enough? What are the potential consequences of relying on environmental federalism?

- Lutsey, Nicholas, and Daniel Sperling. 2008. “America’s Bottom-up Climate Change Mitigation Policy.” *Energy Policy* 36(2): 673–85. (12pp)
- Rabe, B. (2006). Race to the Top: The Expanding Role of U.S. State Renewable Portfolio Standards Sustainable Energy. *Sustainable Development Law & Policy*, 7, 10–16. (6pp)
- Bulkeley, H. (2010). Cities and the Governing of Climate Change. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 35(1), 229–253. (24pp)

Class 18 (11/1): International Governance

How has climate change been addressed in international diplomacy? Why is an international solution necessary? What are the roadblocks and successes of international climate change politics?

- Keohane, Robert O., and David G. Victor. 2011. "The Regime Complex for Climate Change." *Perspectives on Politics* 9(01): 7–23. (16pp)
- Najam, Adil. 2015. "The View from the South: Developing Countries in Global Environmental Politics" in *The Global Environment: Institutions, Law and Policy, 4th Edition*, Eds. Regina S. Axelrod, and Stacy D. VanDeveer. Washington DC: CQ Press, pp. 213-233. (20pp)
- Biermann, Frank. 2011. "New Actors and Mechanisms of Global Governance." in *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, Eds. John S. Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Schlosberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (15pp)

Class 19 (11/6): History of the International Climate Negotiations I: Rio to Copenhagen

How and why did the international community come together to address climate change? What are the key points of the UNFCCC Convention? Were attempts such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Copenhagen negotiations effective at addressing climate change?

- Maslin, M. (2014). *Climate Change: A Very Short Introduction*. OUP Oxford. Chapter 7 (22pp)
- Bodansky, Daniel. 1993. "The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, A Commentary." *Yale Journal of International Law*, 18(2): 451-558 (7pp)
- Bodansky, Daniel. 2010. "The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference: A Postmortem." *American Journal of International Law*, 104(2): 230-240 (10pp)
- Visual Resources:
 - Earth in Brackets (2013), "The Framework Convention on Climate Change: A Visual Introduction"
 - The Climate Group (2012), "Understanding the UNFCCC Negotiations"

Class 20 (11/8): History of the International Climate Negotiations II: Paris to Now

Why was the Paris Agreement more successful than previous UNFCCC negotiations? What are the key parts of the Agreement? Will the agreement succeed, even without the United States?

- 2015 Carbon Brief Interactive Map of the Paris outcome: <http://www.carbonbrief.org/interactive-the-paris-agreement-on-climate-change>
- Falkner, R. (2016). The Paris Agreement and the new logic of international climate politics. *International Affairs*, 92(5): 1107-1125. (18pp)
- Young, O. R. (2016). The Paris Agreement: Destined to Succeed or Doomed to Fail? *Politics and Governance; Lisbon*, 4(3). (9pp)
- Vidal, John (2015) How a typo nearly derailed the Paris Climate Deal. *Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2015/dec/16/how-a-typo-nearly-derailed-the-paris-climate-deal>

- Roberts, T. (2018). One year since Trump's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement. Brookings: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2018/06/01/one-year-since-trumps-withdrawal-from-the-paris-climate-agreement/>

Class 21 (11/13): Beyond Mitigation I: Adaptation and Loss and Damage

Why must we consider issues beyond mitigation? Where do these issues fit in the negotiations? What is the difference between adaptation and loss and damage?

- Javeline, Debra (2014). "The Most Important Topic Political Scientists Are Not Studying: Adapting to Climate Change." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(02): 420–34. (14pp)
- UNFCCC: What do adaptation to climate change and resilience mean? <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/the-big-picture/what-do-adaptation-to-climate-change-and-climate-resilience-mean#eq-2>
- Climate Policy Info Hub (2 short reports)
 - Climate Change Adaptation: Needs, Barriers, and Limits (6pp)
 - Climate Change Adaptation: Options and Mechanisms under the UNFCCC (6pp)
- Rowling, M. (2013, November 26). UN "loss and damage mechanism" born amid rising climate costs. <http://news.trust.org/item/20131126151023-43ne0/>

Class 22 (11/15): Beyond Mitigation II: Gender, Human Rights, and Equity in the Negotiations

Why must we consider issues beyond mitigation? Who is most vulnerable to these issues?

- UN Women Watch. (2009). Women, Gender Equality, and Climate Change (FactSheet). Retrieved from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Factsheet.pdf
- UNHRC Understanding Human Rights and Climate Change report (28pp)
- Aranoff, Kate. (2017). "COP23 Proved That Indigenous Peoples Still Don't Have a Real Voice in Climate Negotiations" In *These Times*: <http://inthesetimes.com/article/20710/cop23-proved-that-indigenous-peoples-still-dont-have-a-real-voice-in-climat>
- International Labor Office (2017). "Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change." (56pp, skim, focusing on sections 1, 2, 3)

Class 23 (11/20): International Climate Negotiations Simulation Preparation

During this class we will assign countries for each group to represent, go over the negotiations process, and begin guided preparations of how to best understand and represent the negotiating positions of each country.

Class 24 (11/27): International Climate Negotiations Simulation

In this class, we will be simulating a debate on a new climate change treaty. Your homework is to prepare yourself to represent the interests of your assigned country on the prompted international climate change issue. I will provide guidance on how to find the positions of your country in the activity prompt. More details will be provided two weeks before the simulation.

Class 25 (11/29): TBD

Class 26 (12/4): Group Policy Feasibility Report Presentations

Class 27 (12/6): Group Policy Feasibility Report Presentations

(Unit 3 Reflection due one week after Class 26)