

PS M152/IDS M150: The Politics of Climate Change

Tuesday-Thursday 3:30-4:45

Kaplan A51

Fall 2021

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[online office hours](#): Fridays 1-2:30

Course description

This course will help explain how governments at the international, national, and regional levels are addressing – or not addressing – the extraordinary challenge of climate change.

The lectures and sections will both be in person. Unless you are under quarantine or have another valid reason, you must attend both. I will also post the slides from the lectures and audio recordings so you can review them after class. If you have to be quarantined, this will help you keep up with course.

Learning objectives

This course will teach you about some of the key problems, concepts, events, actors, and institutions, in the complex world of climate politics. It should also help you become more skillful listeners, thinkers, writers, and speakers. It presumes no special knowledge about the science of climate change.

We will address three broad questions.

First, *how will climate change affect the governance of countries, and the livelihoods of people, around the world?* To address this question we'll cover research on the projected impact of climate change on economic growth, inequality, migration, and violent conflict. We'll pay special attention to the problem of climate justice – how the damage of climate change falls most heavily on those who are already marginalized, have fewer resources to adapt, and have made little or no contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

Second, *why is it so hard for governments to take strong measures to reduce emissions?* To help answer this question we'll discuss the problem of governing common pool resources, the challenge of issues that have long-term and irreversible effects, the direct and indirect influence of the fossil fuel industry, the role of public opinion and climate denialism, and the role of climate justice.

Finally, *what policies should governments adopt?* We will consider this question by first discussing the ethical principles that should guide policy decisions, and then discussing a wide range of policy options: carbon pricing, cap-and-trade, renewable energy portfolios, geo-engineering, technological innovation, and the role of international agreements. You

will also be introduced to some of the tools used to evaluate alternative pathways, such as integrated assessment models.

On completing the course, you should better understand the causes, likely consequences, and policy implications of climate change, and be able to speak and write more intelligently about it. You should also grow more sophisticated in your ability to evaluate evidence, and to distinguish between scientifically-based reasoning and conjecture, popular beliefs, and magical thinking. Finally, you should gain a better understanding of how research on climate change – in both the natural and social sciences – is carried out, and grow more comfortable reading both public documents and articles in scientific journals.

Format and grading

There will be two lectures a week and one section. Attendance for both is mandatory. Your grades will be based on an in-class midterm, a take-home midterm, an in-class final, and section participation. Grades will be calculated as follows:

In-class midterm:	20%
Take-home midterm:	20%
Final Exam:	40%
Section Participation:	20%

Numeric scores will be translated into letter grades 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		

The in-class midterm will be held on **Thursday October 28**. The take-home midterm will be handed out at the end of that class, and will be due at 5 pm on **Saturday October 30**. Both will cover all readings and lectures to that point. The final exam is scheduled for **Friday, December 10 from 3 to 6 pm**.

To get full credit for your sections you must both attend and actively participate by speaking at least twice during each section. Half of your section grade comes from attendance, and half from participation.

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. 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.

All lectures will be available on podcasts, in case you miss class or want to review the material. I'll also post the lecture slides *after* the lectures. Podcasts can be obtained through the website of the Office of Instructional Development.

No Laptops Policy

The class will be a laptop-free zone. Studies show that using laptops 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 and section attendance are both mandatory. Still, there will be times when some of you cannot attend – due to illness or unavoidable conflicts – and the TAs and I will accommodate any reasonable absences. You will nonetheless be responsible for making up for missed classes and sections, and learning all the material covered in your absence.

Readings

Everyone should complete the week's readings before attending section. *You do not need to buy any readings:* everything is available on the [course web site](#) or through links on this syllabus.

Teaching Assistants

We have three outstanding Teaching Assistants who will lead the sections; working with them is an integral part of the course. They are also available to help you understand the course material, answer questions, and help you with any logistical or grading problems. They are:

Julian Michel	julianmichel@ucla.edu
Lorena De La Puente Burlando	loredlpb@g.ucla.edu
David Soper	soperd@ucla.edu

If you have questions about your grades, exams, sections, or need to notify us about a missed class or section, please contact your TA. If you're not satisfied, you are welcome to then reach out to me.

COVID-19 Protocols

The following classroom policies will be in effect:

- Keep your mask on at all times in class – both during lectures and in sections. If you're not properly wearing a mask, I will tell you to leave. No exceptions.
- Don't remove your mask to eat or drink in class. If you need to hydrate during lecture, keep your mask on and use a straw.
- Maintain social distancing by leaving an empty seat between you and your neighbors whenever possible.
- Do not come to lecture or section if you have any symptoms of illness, test positive for COVID-19, or have recently been exposed and asked to quarantine. You'll be able to catch up or make up any absences without penalty.

Intellectual property notice

All of the course materials that I have prepared, including the lectures, videos, slides and exams, are my property alone and protected by state common law and federal copyright law. This includes all of the video lectures, tests and quizzes, which are for your use in this course only and shall not be shared or distributed without my written consent. Students shall not sell or distribute notes, or receive remuneration for taking notes, without my written consent.

Academic Integrity

As a student and a member of the University community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. Accordingly, all work you do will be held to the highest ethical and professional standards.

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions, or facilitating academic dishonesty. If you are unsure of what any of these entail, please consult the university guidelines below or ask me or your TA. *If you are even suspected of violating these standards, I am obliged to refer your case immediately to the Dean of Students, who will carry out an investigation.*

Please carefully review the university guidelines regarding academic dishonesty. They are at <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf>.

Accommodations Based on a Disability

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310)825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit www.cae.ucla.edu.

UCLA Resources

- **Academic Achievement Program:** AAP advocates and facilitates the access, academic success, and graduation of students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education; informs and prepares students for graduate and professional schools; and develops the academic, scientific, political, economic, and community leadership necessary to transform society. Learn more at <http://www.aap.ucla.edu/>
- **Academics in the Commons at Covel Commons:** (310) 825-9315 free workshops on a wide variety of issues relating to academic & personal success www.orl.ucla.edu (click on “academics”)
- **Bruin Resource Center:** Includes services for transfer students, undocumented students, veterans, and students with dependents. <http://www.brc.ucla.edu/>
- **Career Center:** Don’t wait until your senior year – visit the career center today! <http://www.career.ucla.edu/>

- **Center for Accessible Education (Formerly Office for Students with Disabilities):** A255 Murphy Hall: (310) 825-1501, TDD (310) 206-6083; <http://www.cae.ucla.edu/>
- **College Tutorials at Covel Commons:** (310) 825-9315 free tutoring for ESL/math & science/composition/and more! www.college.ucla.edu/up/ct/
- **Counseling and Psychological Services Wooden Center West:** (310) 825-0768 www.caps.ucla.edu
- **Dashew Center for International Students and Scholars 106 Bradley Hall:** (310) 825-1681 www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu
- **Dean of Students Office; 1206 Murphy Hall:** (310) 825-3871; www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center Student Activities Center, B36:** (310) 206-3628 www.lgbt.ucla.edu
- **Letters & Science Counseling Service:** A316 Murphy Hall: (310) 825-1965 www.college.ucla.edu
- **Library:** Get help with your research, find study spaces, attend a workshop, rent a laptop, and more. Learn more: <http://www.library.ucla.edu/>
- **Students in Crisis:** From the Office of the Dean of Students: [Faculty and Staff 911 Guide for Students](#), commonly known as the “Red Folder.” This tool is intended to provide you with quick access to important resources for assisting students in need.
- **Student Legal Services; A239 Murphy Hall:** (310) 825-9894; www.studentlegal.ucla.edu
- **Undergraduate Writing Center:** Peer learning facilitators (PLFs) are undergraduates who understand the challenges of writing at UCLA. Scheduled appointment and walk-in options are available, see www.wp.ucla.edu/uwc for more information about writing programs and to get assistance with your writing.
- **Undergraduate Research Portal:** The Undergraduate Research Portal helps students and faculty connect over research opportunities. It’s available now under the Academics tab on MyUCLA and can be directly accessed at, urp.my.ucla.edu
- **UCLAONE.com:** UCLA ONE is UCLA’s interactive, online gateway for mentorship, professional networking, peer driven career advice and exclusive job leads. (Similar to LinkedIn for the UCLA community)

September 23: Introduction to the course

September 28: Key facts about fossil fuels, energy, and climate change (I)

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2021), *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis, Summary for Policymakers* (note: carefully read the sections in blue and the figures, and skim the rest)

Recommended:

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

September 30: Key facts about fossil fuels, energy, and climate change (II)

Yangyang Xu, Veerabhadran Ramanathan and David Victor (2018), "Global warming will happen faster than we think," *Nature* 564

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

Recommended:

* Noah Diffenbach and Marshall Burke (2019), "Global Warming has increased global economic inequality," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*

October 5: Climate Ethics and Justice

Tim Hayward (2012), "Climate Change and Ethics," *Nature Climate Change*

Adelle Thomas and Rueanna Haynes (2020), ["Black Lives Matter: the link between climate change and racial justice,"](#) *The Climate Analytics Blog* June 22

Listen to a podcast of your choice from [High Energy Planet](#) (from the Energy for Growth Hub). Available from their website or Spotify, Apple, or Sticher.

Recommended:

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

October 7: How does climate change affect economic welfare?

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

October 12: How does climate change affect conflict?

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

Recommended:

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

* 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

October 14: How does climate change affect migration?

Abraham Lustgarten (2020), "[The great climate migration has begun](#)," *The New York Times*, July 23, 2020

Recommended:

* 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 19: Why have governments done so little to limit carbon emissions?

Michaël Aklin and Matto Mildemberger (2020), "Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change," *Global Environmental Politics* 20:4

October 21: What do people believe about climate change? Why do some countries have Green Parties?

Dave Roberts (2016), "[This one weird trick will not convince conservatives to fight climate change](#)," *Vox*

Moira Fagan and Christine Huang (2019), "[A look at how people around the world view climate change](#)," *Pew Research Center*

Recommended:

* Chad Zanooco, 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

* 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 26: Why is the fossil fuel industry so influential?

John Cook et al. (2019), *America Misled: how the fossil fuel industry deliberately misled Americans about climate change*, George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication.

Recommended:

* Geoffrey Supran and Naomi Oreskes (2017), "Assessing ExxonMobil's climate change communications (1977–2014)," *Environmental Research Letters* 12:8

October 28: Midterm

November 2: What is UCLA doing about climate change?

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.

November 4: What are the most effective decarbonization policies?

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

Jose Felix Pinto-Bazurco (2020), "The Precautionary Principle," *IISD Bulletin*, October

Recommended:

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

November 9: Can carbon taxes work?

Climate Leadership Council (2019), "Economists' Statement on Carbon Dividends," *Wall St. Journal*

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

Recommended:

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

* *Carbon Brief (2019), "Q&A: How 'integrated assessment models' are used to study climate change."*

November 11: Carbon politics in California

Aimee Barnes et al. (2021), "[Learning from California's Ambitious Climate Policy](#)," Center for American Progress

See & browse the [California Climate Policy Dashboard](#) from Berkeley Law School

Read (and sign up for) Sammy Roth's [Boiling Point](#) newsletter, from the LA Times

Recommended:

* *Matto Mildenerger (2020), Carbon Captured: how business and labor control climate politics, (MIT Press), chapter 5*

* *California Green Innovation Index (2019)*

November 16: Do global agreements help?

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

Recommended:

* *Thomas Hale (2020), "Transnational Actors and Transnational Governance in Global Environmental Politics," Annual Review of Political Science 23*

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

November 18: 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

November 23: Troubled solutions? Fossil fuel subsidies, carbon offsets, and negative emissions technologies

Umair Irfan (2019), [“Fossil fuels are underpriced by a whopping \\$5.2 trillion,”](#) Vox, May 17

Grayson Badgley et al. (2021), [Systematic over-crediting of forest offsets](#), (carbon)plan

Recommended:

* Paasha Mahdavi, Cesar B. Martinez-Alvarez, and Michael L. Ross (2020), “Why Do Governments Tax or Subsidize Fossil Fuels?” Working paper.

November 30: Was COP26 a success?

TBA

December 2: What is the best path forward?

Dave Roberts (2020), [“How to drive fossil fuels out of the US economy, quickly,”](#) Vox, August 6.

Recommended:

* Saul Griffith (2020), [Rewiring America: A Field Manual for the Climate Fight](#)