

PS 259: The Politics of Climate Change
Wed 6:00-8:50 pm, online synchronous
Spring 2021

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office hours: Fridays 12:30-2 or by appointment

Course description

This course will introduce graduate students to recent scholarship on the political dimensions of climate change. Although this is nominally a Comparative Politics course, it will pay equal attention to research in other subfields, notably American Politics and International Relations. The politics of fossil fuels is at the center of the course, and we will consider its significance from a variety of angles – as a source of undemocratic power and corruption in oil and gas producing countries, as a conduit for extraordinary corporate influence in oil and gas-consuming countries, and as a profound but often hidden impediment to climate action at all levels.

I do not expect students to have any special background in climate science, but I do expect those with little or no prior knowledge to catch up as quickly as possible. To that end, I have assigned some foundational readings for the first week of the course. *Please complete all of these readings before our first meeting on March 31.* We will go through each reading and consider their significance in the first class.

Learning objectives

Climate politics is a topic on the frontier of our discipline and the demand for high-quality scholarship and teaching is growing quickly. This course will teach you about some of the key problems, concepts, events, actors, debates, and institutions, in this area, and help prepare you to both teach courses and carry out research on this topic.

Format

This is a graduate seminar and will focus on the readings. Please come to class ready to discuss each of the books or articles. As a graduate course, we will scrutinize each authors' data, research methods, assumptions, and assessments, and not take the validity of any reported findings for granted. Questions are welcome at all times.

Each class will begin with a brief summary (two minutes), from *each* student, of a) something they learned from the readings and b) something they were puzzled by, did not understand, or simply would like to discuss further. This will usually be followed by a short lecture and an in-depth discussion.

Requirements

You must complete three assignments: two brief essays responding to a given week's readings, and either a formal presentation on a recommended reading or a research design.

The brief essays should not exceed five double-spaced pages and must be submitted by 10 p.m. the night before class. Each essay should focus on either the assigned book or one or two of the assigned essays, and offer a critical evaluation that:

- summarizes the main finding in a single paragraph;
- describes the data and methods;
- explains why the research is significant;
- evaluates its strengths and weaknesses, commenting on both its internal validity and external validity.

The third assignment can take one of two forms. The first option is a formal 15-20 minute presentation with slides on one of the recommended readings, similar to a paper presentation at an academic conference. You must present the author's work as though it were your own, and be ready to field questions and discuss the study's strengths and weaknesses. The second option is a research design (no more than 10 pages) for an original study on climate politics, explaining your question, methods, and data.

Grades will be based on the two brief essays (10 percent each), the presentation or research design (30 percent) and class participation (50 percent).

Intellectual property notice

All of the course materials that I have prepared are my property alone and protected by state common law and federal copyright law 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>.

March 31: Key facts about fossil fuels, energy, and climate change

IPCC (2018), *Global Warming of 1.5°*, “Summary for Policymakers” pp 3-26

The Hamilton Project and EPIC (2017), *Twelve Economic Facts on Energy and Climate Change*

Climate Action Tracker (2020), *Paris Agreement turning point*

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

Recommended:

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

April 7: Economic concepts for climate policy

Geoffrey Heal (2017), “The Economics of the Climate,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 55(3)

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

Gilbert Metcalf (2020), “How to set a price on carbon pollution,” *Scientific American*

April 14: What is distinctive about climate politics?

Michäel Aklin and Matto Mildenerger (2019), “Prisoners of the wrong dilemma: why distributive conflict, not collective action, characterizes the politics of climate change,” *Global Environmental Politics* 20:4

Jeff Colgan, Jessica Green, and Thomas Hale (2020), “Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change,” *International Organization*

Ole Martin Laegreid and Marina Povitkina (2018), “Do Political Institutions Moderate the GDP-CO2 Relationship?” *Ecological Economics* 145

Karen Seto et al. (2016), “Carbon Lock-In: Types, Causes, and Policy Implications,” *Annual Review of Environmental Resources*

Recommended:

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

* Robert Pollin (2018), "De-growth vs. a green new deal," *New Left Review* July-August

April 21: Climate politics in the US: national level

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

David Schlosberg and Lisette Collins (2014), "From environmental to climate justice: climate change and the discourse of environmental justice," *WIREs 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

April 28: Climate politics in the US: state level

Leah Cardamore Stokes (2020), *Short Circuiting Policy: interest groups and the battle over clean energy and climate policy in the American states*, MIT Press

Justin Farrell (2016), "Corporate funding and ideological polarization about climate change," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113:1

May 5: The Political Economy of Energy Transitions

Kathryn Hochstetler (2020), *Political Economies of Energy Transition: wind and solar power in Brazil and South Africa*, Cambridge University Press

Hannah Breetz, Matto Mildenerger and Leah Stokes (2018), "The political logics of clean energy transitions," *Business and Politics* 20 (4)

Recommended:

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

May 12: The fossil fuel producers

Michael L. Ross (2015), "What Have We Learned About the Resource Curse?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 18

Francesco Caselli and Guy Michaels (2013), “Do Oil Windfalls Improve Living Standards? Evidence from Brazil,” *American Economic Review* 5:1

JF Mercure et al. (2018), “Macroeconomic impact of stranded fossil fuel assets,” *Nature Climate Change* 8

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

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

Recommended:

* *Michael Ross (2012), The Oil Curse: how petroleum shapes the development of nations, Princeton University Press*

May 19: International cooperation and the Paris Accord

Jennifer Clapp and Eric Helleiner (2012), “International political economy and the environment: back to the basics?” *International Affairs* 88

Robert O. Keohane and David Victor (2016), “Cooperation and discord in global climate policy,” *Nature Climate Change*

Manjana Milkoreit (2019), “The Paris Agreement on Climate Change – Made in the USA?” *Perspectives on Politics* 17:4

Noah M. Sachs (2019), “The Paris Agreement in the 2020s: Breakdown or Breakup?” *Ecology Law Quarterly*

Jen Iris Allan (2019), “Dangerous Incrementalism of the Paris Agreement,” *Global Environmental Politics* 19:1

Recommended:

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

* *Thomas Hale (2020), "Catalytic Cooperation," Global Environmental Politics 20:4*

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

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

May 26: Climate and trade

Kathryn Harrison (2015), “International Carbon Trade and Domestic Climate Politics,” *Global Environmental Politics* 15:3

Daniel Yuichi Kono (2019), “The Politics of Trade and Climate Change,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*

Federica Genovese (2019), “Sectors, Pollution, and Trade: How Industrial Interests Shape Domestic Positions on Global Climate Agreements,” *International Studies Quarterly*

Joseph Shapiro (2020), “The Environmental Bias of Trade Policy,” NBER Working Paper 26845

Recommended:

* Jared Cory, Michael Lerner, and Iain Osgood (2021), “Supply Chain Linkages and the Extended Carbon Coalition,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 65:1

* Zhifu Mi, Jing Meng, Fergus Green, D’Maris Coffman and Dabo Guan (2018), “China’s ‘Exported Carbon’ Peak: Patterns, Drivers, and Implications,” *Geophysical Research Letters*

* Jason Bordoff (2020), “Everything you think you know about the geopolitics of climate change is wrong,” *Foreign Policy*

June 2: Carbon markets and politics

Danny Cullenward and David Victor (2020), *Making Climate Policy Work*, Polity

Matto Mildemberger and Leah Stokes (2020), “The Trouble with Carbon Pricing,” *Boston Review*, September 24

Additional sources

Thomas Bernauer (2013), "Climate Change Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science*

Thomas Bernauer and Liam McGrath (2016), "Simple reframing unlikely to boost public support for climate policy," *Nature Climate Change* 6:7

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.

Patrick Egan and Megan Mullin (2017), "Climate Change: US Public Opinion," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20:209-227.

Moira Fagan and Christine Huang (2019), "A look at how people around the world view climate change," *FactTank News in the Numbers*, Pew Research

Fergus Green (2018), "Anti-fossil fuel norms," *Climatic Change* 150

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

Garrett Hardin (1968), "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* (162).

Peter Howe, Jennifer Marlon, Matto Mildenerger, and Brittany Shield (2019), "How will climate change shape public opinion?" *Environmental Research Letters* 14

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.

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

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

Matto Mildenerger (2019), "The Tragedy of 'the Tragedy of the Commons,'" *Scientific American.to*

Jesse D. Jenkins (2014), "Political economy constraints on carbon pricing policies: What are the implications for economic efficiency, environmental efficacy, and climate policy design?" *Energy Policy* 69:467-477

Edward Parson (2017), "Climate policymakers and assessments must get serious about climate engineering," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(35):9227-9230.

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

Will Steffen, Wendy Broadgate, Lisa Deutsch, Owen Gaffney and Cornelia Ludwig (2015), "The trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration," *The Anthropocene Review*, 2(1):81-98.

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

UN Environment Programme (2019), *Emissions Gap Report 2019*, Executive Summary (pp. XIV-XXV).