

Climate Change, Power, & Money (IAPA 1701Y)

Fall 2023

Brown University

Course Time: Tuesday, 4pm-6:30pm

Location: 111 Thayer St, Watson Institute, 138

Instructor: Dan Driscoll

Pronouns: he / his

Email: daniel_driscoll@brown.edu

Office Hour: Wednesday, 3pm-4pm

280 Brook Street, Room 201

Or by availability (Talk with me in person or email me to find a time that works.)

Course Resources: Canvas

Course Description: Fossil fuel energy allowed for development, but now we're cooking the planet. Some want to keep burning carbon, some want to halt capitalism itself, and most are somewhere in between. This course is about the political economy of decarbonization. It begins by evaluating the state of affairs; how we became dependent on carbon, the current stakes, and the key actors and stakeholders. It then goes straight to the core problem of our future; what are the trade-offs that come with futures with carbon, green growth, and degrowth? The course then examines some of the most prominent solutions and challenges for considering rapid decarbonization. Throughout the course, we will pay particular attention to - you guessed it - power and money. At the end of the day, those two forces make the world go round and will make or break decarbonization.

WRIT Designation: This is a WRIT designated course, which means that the assignments (and especially the final paper) is designed to incorporate peer- and instructor-feedback and revision on writing. You will receive substantive feedback on certain writing assignments, which you will use to help you revise your work or to complete subsequent writing assignments.

Note on Pre-requisites: While there are no official pre-requisites for this course, as a Junior Seminar for the IAPA concentration, preference will be given to students who are juniors and concentrating in IAPA.

Course Goals:

- You will learn in-depth about the current system of climate governance, policy solutions, and key actors.
- You will learn about how to apply the latest insights from the field of political economy to the problem of climate change.
- You will learn how to ask about and debate the tough questions and trade-offs regarding decarbonization paths and solutions.
- You will learn in-depth about a particular region of interest to you through course research and writing assignments. You will have a chance to research the region, which will offer you a case study to think through course readings and concepts.

- You will develop your analytic skills to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an intellectual position. You will work to synthesize a variety of research evidence to support a coherent intellectual position.

About the Readings:

All readings are **required** and must be completed **before** the class listed on the syllabus. During class, please have available either a hard copy or electronic access to each reading assigned for that class meeting. Please also bring your notes, whether handwritten or electronic, on the readings.

Research shows that we learn best when we read actively. If you can, take notes. In your notes, you should try to identify the main argument that runs throughout the reading and some specific examples that support the argument. You also should try to identify and define the key concepts.

Most weeks typically center around two or three journal articles with occasional blog posts, newsletters, and other short readings.

Required Book:

Eric Lonergan and Corinne Sawers, *Supercharge Me: Net Zero Faster* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2022).

Optional Book:

Kevin P. Gallagher and Richard Kozul-Wright, *The Case for a New Bretton Woods*, 1st edition (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2022).

A note regarding expenses and financial concerns: The combined cost of both books is roughly thirty dollars. Many of these texts are available for free through Brown's library. If you have concerns about the non-tuition costs related to this course, you may apply to the Dean of the College Academic Emergency Fund to learn about options for financing these costs.

Please follow this link to learn more:

<https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/advising/financial-advising/e-gap-funds>

All other course readings will be available as electronic files on the course page on Canvas.

Course requirements:

Overview:

- 15% Attendance, participation, and group discussion
- 20% Reading responses / Discussion lead
- 25% Future climate debate
- 15% Climate TikTok PSA
- 25% Region report

Course Time Allocation

This course will require that student's commit to 180 hours for the semester. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 39 hours in class sessions. I expect students to spend at least 7 hours per week reading and preparing course material for class session (77 hours total). I also expect students to spend at least 5 hours reflecting and writing the short response papers (for a total of 10 hours). I expect students to spend 14 hours preparing from the debate (at least 14 hours total). The course

concludes with a final paper and social media PSA, which I expect roughly 30 and 10 hours for respectively.

1. Attendance, participation, and group discussion (15%)

Please come to class and be prepared to participate and engage with your classmates and with me. It is expected that you will complete all the reading before class. Our class is a seminar—its purpose is to explore together the ideas and themes we are reading about. Each of you is an important member of the seminar. For a seminar to work well, it is important that every person complete the reading before class, share your thoughts and ideas with the group, help keep the discussion on track, and monitor the flow of conversation to help produce a discussion where everyone has a chance to speak and no one person dominates the discussion. In the discussion, we will seek to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each argument, its contribution to the field, the nature of the empirical work, and the relationships of the reading to other course materials.

Acceptable attendance will include coming to every class (unless you have an excused absence). Here's some examples of what acceptable class participation might include:

- Speaking in class, particularly by engaging with other students' comments (You might simply ask questions for discussion. You might summarize what others say and raise a tension or conflict that has surfaced in the discussion. You might offer a different view or a critique of the readings.)
- Corresponding with/chatting with the instructor
- Engaging with other students in and outside of class
- Alerting the class to interesting events, attending them, starting conversations about them

I realize that as a student, life also happens. If you are an athlete and miss classes, you or a family member is in the hospital, you have a death in the family, or you have a period of over a week where you are not sleeping or having a life crisis, **please let me know**. We can make adjustments. In such cases, please let me know in advance that you will not be able to make it to class. You will still be responsible for material covered that day, and it is up to you to get class notes from a classmate.

2. Reading Responses / Discussion Lead (20%)

Discussion leader assignment: Week 2

DUE: By 5pm the night before each course meeting

Every week during the semester, you will submit a 250-500 word **reading response via Canvas**. These responses papers are intended to help you dig deeper into readings, come up with discussion questions, and support the discussion leader who will draw from them.

In the response papers, you will first briefly summarize the major points of the readings. Then you will offer an analysis or interpretation of themes. Ideally you should organize your discussion around the broader theme raised by the readings of the week. You can draw on material from outside of class, but it is not necessary. Finally, you should **list at least three questions or issues** for us to discuss in class.

For class, be prepared to share key insights from your response paper and to pose your discussion questions to the class.

The responses are graded by completion with selective writing feedback.

You will each also lead a group discussion on the readings for at least one class

We will assign dates in-class during Week 2. An acceptable discussion leader will:

- Provide an overview of the central argument in each of the class readings.
- Analyze the readings together: do they provide competing arguments or complementary? How do they build on each other?
- Prepare discussion questions for the class to consider from the reading responses
- Facilitate the discussion as the class considers your questions

3. Future Climate Debate (25%)

Groups assigned: Week 5

DUE: Week 7

We will explore three ideal visions of how to engage with future climate change; doubling down on *carbon*, supercharging *green growth*, or shutting down capitalism with *degrowth*. There are challenges and trade-offs that come with each future. The class is tasked with debating those trade-offs and exposing the pros and cons of each path. Debate groups will be assigned in Week 5.

The debate will have 3 rounds.

- (1) **Main arguments** – each team will prepare a five-minute presentation outlining the merits of their ‘future.’ Make arguments, claims, and marshal evidence; you are selling your group’s future.
- (2) **Rejoinder & Critique** – after a 10-minute break to meet, each team will have four minutes to critique and evaluate the arguments of the opposing groups.
- (3) **Concluding remarks** – after a 10-minute break to meet, each team will have two minutes to offer concluding remarks.

The final part of the day we will split into new groups with (ideally) at least one member from each ‘future’ group. The mixed groups will then discuss and reflect on the debate. Which ‘future’ was the most compelling? Which ‘future’ was the least compelling? If you disagreed with your ‘future,’ what was it like arguing for it? How have your views changed? Does your new group have a favored future path?

4. Climate TikTok PSA (10%)

Topic choice: Week 5

DUE: Week 13

For years, climate science and solutions have been poorly communicated. This project is an opportunity for you to get creative and advance your ideas about something important to you regarding climate change. It can be as small as advocating for a lifestyle consumption shift or as large as a global policy.

TikTok dominates social media and is how a shocking number of people source their information. For this assignment you are to make a TikTok (or Tik Tok adjacent) video on your chosen climate

topic. It could be an evidence-based argument for becoming vegan through a day-in-the-life vlog. It could be an explainer video on why banning all cars will save humanity. It could showcase a sustainable fashion or an EV car company. The only requirement is that it is evidence-based education showcasing a climate issue/solution between 30 and 45 seconds.

The class will view all PSAs on the final day. You will be graded on the quality of the information, evidence, and communication. I encourage each of you to come to meet with me during after class or office hours to discuss your topic more in-depth.

5. Region report (40%)

Region choice: Week 5

Report workshop: Week 10

DUE: Week 13

You have been hired by the World Bank to report the levels of emissions, climate impacts, and capacity to decarbonize of a specific region. This ‘region’ is of your choice; it can be a city, state, or country.

The World Bank requires that the report is **5 single-spaced pages**, in 12-point Times New Roman font, and with 1-inch margins. Chicago Manual of Style.

It is to be formatted into 6 sections:

1. Executive Summary
2. Region introduction
3. Emissions sources and profile
4. Potential climate impacts / risks
5. Decarbonization capacity
6. Recommended interventions

The object of this task is to marshal and sift through evidence to find the most crucial points to help relevant policymakers. Thus, the assignment requires a combination of synthesis, presentation, and analysis.

You will **read approximately 8 academic research articles for the paper**. Each article should have a methods section and include original data. No more than **3-4 of these articles/books can be from the class**. The additional articles may be **external articles** (Or, you may read a book, not on the class syllabus, which would count as three or so articles.)

In addition to these academic research articles, most of you will also use at least few (2-3 or more) news articles, and reports from NGOs.

I’m happy to discuss the report in office hours.

Late Work:

For all assignments, unless you have extenuating circumstances and have talked with me about needing an extension, I will deduct one full grade (e.g., from an A to an A-, or from an A- to a B+) for each day the assignment is late. I understand that extensions are occasionally necessary, and if you fear you may not be able to meet a deadline, please contact me (ideally, at least 48 hours before the deadline)

to see if we can arrange for an extension. If you are experiencing an emergency, please see me as soon as possible so I can help you not fall behind in this and your other courses.

Contacting the Instructor

If you have simple questions about the course (that are not on the syllabus), please feel free to e-mail me. Emails should be formal and concise. You can reach me by email at daniel_driscoll@brown.edu. I will check my email regularly and you can expect a response within 24 hours on weekdays. For broader questions, come by my drop-in hours listed at the top of this syllabus or email me to set up an appointment to meet. All else being equal, I much prefer that you come to office hours over sending emails.

Writing Center

Because this class is writing intensive, I expect that you make a commitment to visit the writing center during the semester. The Writing Center requests that (in most cases) you book a two-hour appointment. You can book an appointment here: <https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/programs-services/writing>

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an integral part of being a student, a scholar, and a knowledge producer. You must do your own work, please do not plagiarize or cheat. If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me or inquire further. You must maintain academic integrity as outlined in the Honor Code. Please read the Honor Code carefully. The Honor Code applies to all assignments related to this course.

Accessibility and Accommodations Statement:

Please inform me if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of course procedures. You may also contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services for more information about accessibility and accommodations (401-863- 9588 or SEAS@brown.edu). Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact a dean in the Dean of the College office. Students seeking psychological support should contact Counseling and Psychological Services.

Course Calendar and Readings

To be completed the before class.

Week 1. Introduction to the Course (9/12)

We will review the syllabus and discuss our goals and expectations for the semester and have an in-class introduction to the current refugee crisis.

Week 2. Emissions and economies co-evolved (9/19)

1. Vaclav Smil, "Energy (r)Evolution Takes Time," *World Energy* 44, no. 10–14 (2019): 10–15. <https://vaclavsmil.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WE2019.pdf>
2. Watch: Martin Wolf, "Can Capitalism Sustain a Green Revolution?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q118nBUILVI>.
3. Michaël Aklın and Matto Mildenberger, "Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change,"

Global Environmental Politics 20, no. 4 (November 1, 2020): 4–27,
https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00578.

4. Jeff D. Colgan, Jessica F. Green, and Thomas N. Hale, “Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change,” *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (ed 2021): 586–610, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000296>.

Week 3. The Carbon Coalition (9/26)

1. Gregor Semieniuk et al., “Stranded Fossil-Fuel Assets Translate to Major Losses for Investors in Advanced Economies,” *Nature Climate Change*, May 26, 2022, 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-022-01356-y>.
2. Riley E. Dunlap and Aaron M. McCright, “Challenging Climate Change: The Denial Countermovement,” in *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 300–332.
3. Thomas Oatley and Mark Blyth, “The Death of the Carbon Coalition,” *Foreign Policy*, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/02/12/carbon-coalition-median-voter-us-politics/>.
4. J. J. Anselmi, “The Rise and Fall of a Fracking Boom Town: An Oral History,” *The New Republic*, December 21, 2020, <https://newrepublic.com/article/160689/rise-fall-fracking-boom-town-oral-history>.

Week 4. The Green Coalition (10/3)

1. Jonas Meckling et al., “Winning Coalitions for Climate Policy,” *Science* 349, no. 6253 (September 11, 2015): 1170–71, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aab1336>.
2. Jonas Meckling and Jonas Nahm, “Strategic State Capacity: How States Counter Opposition to Climate Policy,” *Comparative Political Studies* 55, no. 3 (March 1, 2022): 493–523, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140211024308>.
3. Doug McAdam, “Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, no. 1 (2017): 189–208, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052615-025801>.
4. Heglar, Mary Annise. 2019. “I Work in the Environmental Movement. I Don’t Care If You Recycle.” *Vox*, May 28. <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/28/18629833/climate-change-2019-green-new-deal>

Week 5. Critical Minerals: Thea Riofrancos - Guest Speaker (10/10)

Come prepared with three questions based on the assigned readings for the speaker.

1. Riofrancos, Thea, “Shifting Mining From the Global South Misses the Point of Climate Justice.” *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/07/renewable-energy-transition-critical-minerals-mining-onshoring-lithium-evs-climate-justice/>
2. Riofrancos, T., Kendall, A., Dayemo, K. K., Haugen, M., McDonald, K., Hassan, B., Slattery, M., & Lillehei, X. (2023). “Achieving zero emissions with more mobility and less

mining,” *Climate + Community Project*. <https://www.climateandcommunity.org/more-mobility-less-mining>

3. (skim) IEA Report, The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions. <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions>

Week 6. Green Growth vs Degrowth (10/17)

1. Hickel, J. (2021). What does degrowth mean? A few points of clarification. *Globalizations*, 18(7), 1105–1111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2020.1812222>.
2. Coral Davenport, “Can Economies Rise as Emissions Fall? The Evidence Says Yes,” *The New York Times*, April 5, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/06/upshot/promising-signs-that-economies-can-rise-as-carbon-emissions-decline.html>.

Week 7. Debate Day (10/24)

Come prepared for your specific role: Carbon, Green Growth, or Degrowth.

Week 8. Fiscal and Monetary Policies (10/31)

1. Kathryn Harrison, “The Comparative Politics of Carbon Taxation,” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.lawsocsci.093008.131545>.
2. Daniel Driscoll, “Populism and Carbon Tax Justice: The Yellow Vest Movement in France,” *Social Problems* 70, no. 1 (February 1, 2023): 143–63, <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spab036>.
3. Robinson Meyer, “Carbon Tax, Beloved Policy to Fix Climate Change, Is Dead at 47,” *The Atlantic*, July 20, 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/07/obituary-carbon-tax-beloved-climate-policy-dies-47/619507/>.
4. Emanuele Campiglio et al., “Climate Change Challenges for Central Banks and Financial Regulators,” *Nature Climate Change* 8, no. 6 (June 2018): 462–68, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0175-0>.

Week 9. International institutions and green capitalism (11/7)

1. Bordo, M. D. (2017). The Operation and Demise of the Bretton Woods System; 1958 to 1971 (Working Paper 23189). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w23189>
2. Abrahm Lustgarten, “The Barbados Rebellion: An Island Nation’s Fight for Climate Justice,” *The New York Times*, July 27, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/07/27/magazine/barbados-climate-debt-mia-mottley.html>.
3. Levitz, E. (2022, March 15). Modern Capitalism Is Weirder Than You Think. *Intelligencer*. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2022/03/how-asset-managers-have-upended-how-modern-capitalism-works.html>

4. (skim) Daniela Gabor, “The Wall Street Consensus,” *Development and Change* 52, no. 3 (2021): 429–59, <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12645>.
5. (optional) Kevin P. Gallagher and Richard Kozul-Wright, *The Case for a New Bretton Woods*, 1st edition (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2022).

Week 10. Region report workshop (11/14)

Virtual: give and receive feedback on region papers outlines/drafts via email (cc Professor to receive credit)

Week 11. Inflation Reduction Act: Tim Sahay - Guest Speaker (11/21)

Come prepared with three questions based on the assigned readings for the speaker.

1. Evergreen Action: “The Climate Impact of the Inflation Reduction Act.”
<https://www.evergreenaction.com/documents/The-Climate-Impact-of-the-IRA.pdf>
2. Carey, Lachlan. 2023. “Green Industrial Strategy.” *Phenomenal World*.
<https://www.phenomenalworld.org/analysis/green-industrial-strategy/>
3. The White House, “Report: The Economics of Investing in America”
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Economics-of-Investing-in-America.pdf>

Week 12. Public Private Partnerships & Innovation (11/28)

1. Eric Lonergan and Corinne Sawers, *Supercharge Me: Net Zero Faster* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2022).
2. Listen: Jigar Shah, Odd Lots. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqHhBk_3-P8

Week 13. Region presentations (12/5)

Come prepared to informally present your (1) region paper and (2) climate PSA.

Week 14. Course wrap-up (12/12)

Complete any remaining presentations and wrap-up semester.