

Gov 94GM

## Politics of Climate Change

Fall 2020

Meeting Time: Thursdays from 3:00-5:45 p.m. EST

Meeting Zoom: TBA

Instructor: Alexander Gard-Murray

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This course will explore the political problems involved in mitigating and adapting to global climate change. We will draw on both the empirical and normative political literatures, as well as climate science and economics, to approach key questions about climate politics. What will happen if we do not act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? What do we owe to the future and to people elsewhere? What are the costs of different policy options, and how should they be distributed? How have different governments responded, and what factors shape their responses? What role do international treaties, social movements, and public opinion play? And what can or should be done to change our current trajectory?

The focus of the course is not on simply discussing the problem, but on discussing solutions. Most of the readings are from the last five years, so that we can engage with the latest thinking and action on climate change. Active learning is integrated into the course, so you will not only be asked to read and discuss and write for class, but also to engage with people and organizations outside of class.

### Course Policies

#### Admissions

Admission to this course is through a lottery run by the Undergraduate Program Office of the Department of Government. The deadline to enter the online lottery is **5:00 pm on Friday, August 21, 2020**. The lottery form is available at [undergrad.gov.harvard.edu/gov-94-seminars](https://undergrad.gov.harvard.edu/gov-94-seminars).

#### Respectful Discourse

This course will deal with issues that are relevant to current politics, and many of them are the subject of intense controversy. No particular set of views on climate change or the

appropriate response to it are required to take this course. All students are, however, expected to treat their fellow classmates and their views with respect, even if they disagree with them, and to participate in civil discussion. If you have concerns about your ability to do this, or about any of the material we are covering in the course, feel free to e-mail me so we can discuss it.

### **Accessibility**

If you are registered with the Accessible Education Office, please send me your letter within the first two weeks of term, so I can make the appropriate accommodations. For more information, see <http://aeo.fas.harvard.edu>. If you have preferences about your name or pronouns that are not reflected in the University's databases, feel free to e-mail me so I can address you correctly.

### **Collaboration**

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in the discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts from peers or others), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

### **Attendance**

Like any discussion-based course, attendance is crucial. Emergency absences must be accompanied by a formal note written by a medical professional or your Resident Dean. If there is an anticipated scheduling conflict, the student will be able to write an extra response paper in lieu of attendance for one class only, if agreed in advance. Unexplained absences will reduce your grade for the course.

### **Preparation**

The readings for this course are designed to be manageable: you will be expected to read all the assigned texts and be ready to discuss them during class. As discussed below, your participation in discussion will form part of your evaluation. However, you do have one "get out of jail free" card. Once during the semester, you are welcome to e-mail me before class to say that you have not been able to do the readings, and your participation grade will not be affected.

In addition to the assigned readings, you are encouraged to pay special attention to climate-related articles in the news. If there has been significant climate news in a week, it is likely to come up during class discussion.

## Assignments and Grades

Your grade consists of five elements: participation, attendance at two virtual check-ins, weekly active learning assignments, one short paper, and one final paper.

1. **Class Participation (20%):** since this is a seminar, your participation in discussion is crucial to the success of the course. Everyone is expected to attend all the sessions and contribute actively. That said, I know everyone has “off” days, and your performance will be evaluated holistically across the meetings.
2. **Two Virtual Check-ins (5%):** these are short one-on-one meetings to chat about your goals for the course, your progress, or anything else you want to talk about. They’re informal: you get the credit just for showing up. One should take place in the first three weeks of class. You’re welcome to schedule office hours beyond this.
3. **Weekly Active Learning Assignments (10%):** each week you will have a small assignment that pushes you to go beyond the readings and gain some active experience of climate politics. Some of them will require you to post writing on Canvas: these write-ups should be short, in the 100-300 word range. If there is something to hand in, the deadline is 12 hours before class begins. These assignments are intended to have low stakes. They don’t need to be highly polished: you can get full credit for showing honest effort.
4. **Short Paper (15%):** you will write one short paper of 3-4 pages on a question related to the material in a week of your choice. The paper will critically analyze the week’s material, and potentially draw on other sources to complement or critique the assigned readings. I will discuss the structure of the short papers and provide a rubric for their grading in class.
5. **Capstone Paper (50%):** the final project will consist of a long paper (of approximately 15 pages) on a topic of your choosing related to climate politics. You have two options for this paper: it can be a traditional academic research paper, or it can be a policy analysis and proposal paper. The options will be discussed more in class. As part of writing this paper, you will also be asked during the course of the class to produce 1) an initial proposal, 2) an annotated bibliography, 3) an outline, and 4) a presentation for the class. These will each be worth 5% of your total grade, and the final paper itself will be worth 30%. The final paper will be due on the examination date for the course.

## Readings

All readings will be available digitally, either through Canvas or through links in the syllabus. *N.B.: these readings and assignments are subject to change.*

### Session 1: Making Sense of Science (September 3, 2020)

Have a conversation with someone you know about climate change (ideally someone you suspect you might disagree with). Write 100-300 words on the conversation, their views, and whether either of you changed your positions.

“Global Warming 101: The past, present and future of climate change” (Sept. 2019). In: *The Economist*. URL: <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2019/09/21/the-past-present-and-future-of-climate-change>

David Wallace-Wells (July 2017). “The Uninhabitable Earth”. In: *New York Magazine*. URL: <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/07/climate-change-earth-too-hot-for-humans-annotated.html>

Ayana Elizabeth Johnson (Feb. 2016). “The key to halting climate change: admit we can’t save everything”. In: *The Guardian*. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/commmentisfree/2016/feb/17/climate-change-admit-we-cant-save-everything>

Sen. James M. Inhofe (July 2008). *The Science of Climate Change*. Senate Floor Statement. URL: <https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2003/7/post-8070bc3a-6070-4bc1-8cc7-da6afe3e4740>

Myles Allen (Apr. 2019). “Why protesters should be wary of ‘12 years to climate breakdown’ rhetoric”. In: *The Conversation*. URL: <https://theconversation.com/why-protesters-should-be-wary-of-12-years-to-climate-breakdown-rhetoric-115489>

### Session 2: Collective Action (September 10, 2020)

Identify an example of a collective action problem that you have personally experienced, or that has taken place in your community. Can you match it to one of the problem types in Hindmoor? In your experience, has this problem been solved? If so, how? If not, what stands in the way? Answer in 100-300 words.

Andrew Hindmoor (2006). “Mancur Olson and the Logic of Collective Action”. In: *Rational Choice*. Palgrave Macmillan. Chap. 5, pp. 103–128

Garrett Hardin (Dec. 1968). “The Tragedy of the Commons”. In: *Science* 162.3859, pp. 1243–1248. URL: <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243>

Matto Mildemberger (2019). “The Tragedy of The Tragedy of the Commons”. In: *Scientific American*. URL: <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/the-tragedy-of-the-tragedy-of-the-commons>

Elinor Ostrom (2014). “A Polycentric Approach for Coping with Climate Change”. In: *Annals of Economics and Finance* 15.1, pp. 97–134. URL: <http://aeconf.com/Articles/May2014/aef150103.pdf>

### Session 3: Costs and Distribution (September 17, 2020)

Identify a local “loser” from climate action. Write 100-300 words on how climate change policy could negatively impact them.

Frank Ackerman and Lisa Heinzerling (2002). “Pricing the Priceless: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Environmental Protection”. In: *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 150.5, pp. 1553–1584. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3312947>

Simon Evans, Roz Pidcock, and Sophie Yeo (2017). *Q&A: The social cost of carbon*. Carbon Brief. URL: <https://www.carbonbrief.org/qa-social-cost-carbon>

Jeff D Colgan, Jessica F Green, and Thomas N Hale (2020). “Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change”. In: *International Organization* June, pp. 1–22

Don Fullerton (2011). “Six Distributional Effects of Environmental Policy”. In: *Risk Analysis* 31.6. URL: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1539-6924.2011.01628.x>

### Session 4: Developing Countries (September 24, 2020)

In class you will pick a developing country that you don’t live in. Write 100-300 words briefly summarizing the risks the country faces from climate change, what they’re doing to mitigate or adapt to climate change, and any special challenges they face in doing so.

Kelly Sims Gallagher and Xiaowei Xuan (n.d.). *Titans of the Climate: Explaining Policy Process in the United States and China*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Umair Irfan (2018). “Climate Change is a Global Injustice: A New Study Shows Why”. In: *Vox*. URL: <https://www.vox.com/2018/9/26/17897614/climate-change-social-cost-carbon>

Kathryn Harrison and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom (Dec. 2007). “The Comparative Politics of Climate Change”. en. In: *Global Environmental Politics* 7.4, pp. 1–17. URL: <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2866/doi/abs/10.1162/glep.2007.7.4.1%B%5C#%7D.Vhe9DvIViko>

Steven Lee Myers (Feb. 2018). “In China’s Coal Country, a Ban Brings Blue Skies and Cold Homes”. In: *New York Times*. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/10/world/asia/china-coal-smog-pollution.html>

### Session 5: Designing International Policy (October 1, 2020)

This week we will conduct an international negotiation simulation in class. You will be assigned a country or coalition of countries to represent and provided with a short briefing. Study it.

- Radoslav S. Dimitrov (2016). "The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Behind Closed Doors". In: *Global Environmental Politics* 16.3. URL: [http://politicalscience.uwo.ca/people/faculty/full-time\\_faculty/GEP%20Paris%20Agreement.pdf](http://politicalscience.uwo.ca/people/faculty/full-time_faculty/GEP%20Paris%20Agreement.pdf)
- Robert O. Keohane and Michael Oppenheimer (2016). "Paris: Beyond the climate dead end through pledge and review?" In: *Politics and Governance* 4.3, pp. 142–151. URL: <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance/article/view/634>
- Chandra Bhushan (Dec. 2015). "Post-Paris Climate: the 'Historic' Agreement". In: *Down To Earth*. URL: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/climate-change/the-historic-paris-agreement-52183>
- Oren Cass (Nov. 2015). "Why the Paris climate deal is meaningless". In: *Politico*. URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/paris-climate-deal-is-meaningless-cop21-emissions-china-obama>

### Session 6: Designing Domestic Policy (October 8, 2020)

Find a climate policy that is currently being debated in your area. If there are none, find one that was debated previously. Write 100-300 words about its political prospects.

- David Roberts (Jan. 2019). "Climate change policy can be overwhelming. Here's a guide to the policies that work". In: *Vox*. URL: <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2018/11/16/18096352/climate-change-clean-energy-policies-guide>
- Jonas Meckling et al. (2015). "Winning Coalitions for Climate Policy: How Industrial Policy Builds Support for Carbon Regulation". In: *Science* 349.6256, pp. 1170–1171. URL: <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/349/6253/1170>
- Adele Morris (July 2016). *11 Essential Questions for Designing a Policy to Price Carbon*. Brookings. URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/11-essential-questions-for-designing-a-policy-to-price-carbon>
- Ian W.H. Parry and Lawrence H. Goulder (2008). "Instrument Choice in Environmental Policy". In: *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy* 2.2, pp. 152–174. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/reep/ren005>

### Session 7: Environmental Justice (October 15, 2020)

Identify an environmental justice issue in your area. It can be an issue from the past, present, or future. Who is affected? Who, if anyone, benefits? Is solving this issue on the political agenda? Summarize the situation in 100-300 words.

- Chukwumerije Okereke (2018). "Equity and Justice in Polycentric Climate Governance". In: *Governing Climate Change: Polycentricity in Action?* Ed. by Andrew Jordan et al. Cambridge University Press, pp. 320–337

Tony Birch (2016). "Climate Change, Mining and Traditional Indigenous Knowledge in Australia". In: *Social Inclusion* 4.1, pp. 92–101. URL: <https://ideas.repec.org/a/cog/socinc/v4y2016i1p92-101.html>

Justin Worland (July 2020). "Why the Larger Climate Movement Is Finally Embracing the Fight Against Environmental Racism." In: *Time*. URL: <https://time.com/5864704/environmental-racism-climate-change/>

Ayana Elizabeth Johnson (June 2020). "I'm a Black Climate Expert. Racism Derails Our Efforts to Save the Planet." In: *Washington Post*. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/03/im-black-climate-scientist-racism-derails-our-efforts-save-planet/>

### Session 8: Lobbying (October 22, 2020)

Draft a brief letter to one of your political representatives on a climate issue of your choosing. Consider what specific message you are trying to send, and how it fits in with their expressed agenda. You are not required to send it to your representative.

Kyra Bos and Joyeeta Gupta (2018). "Climate change: the risks of stranded fossil fuel assets and resources to the developing world". In: *Third World Quarterly* 39.3, pp. 436–453. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1387477>

Matto Mildemberger (2020). "Introduction". In: *Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Jonas Meckling (2015). "Oppose, Support, or Hedge? Distributional Effects, Regulatory Pressure, and Business Strategy in Environmental Politics". In: *Global Environmental Politics* 15.2, pp. 19–37. URL: <http://ideas.repec.org/a/tpr/glenvp/v14y2014i4p19-37.html>

Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway (2010). "The Denial of Global Warming". In: *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. Bloomsbury. Chap. 6, pp. 169–215

Soutik Biswas (Aug. 2020). "The environment law that mobilised two million Indians". In: *BBC*. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-53879052>

### Session 9: Opinion and Communications (October 29, 2020)

Draft a brief letter to the editor of your local paper on a climate issue of your choosing. You are not required to send it to the paper.

"If I just explain the facts, they'll get it, right?" (Jan. 2017). In: *Global Weirding with Katharine Hayhoe*. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkMljbDtdo0>

Justin Farrell, Kathryn McConnell, and Robert Brulle (Jan. 2019). "Evidence-based strategies to combat scientific misinformation". In: *Nature Climate Change* 9



Robert Gifford (May 2011). "The Dragons of Inaction: Psychological Barriers That Limit Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation". In: *American Psychologist*. URL: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3072/cff5697ebf90a237069a1c293cacb398f2c3.pdf>

Matt Motta et al. (June 2019). "Do most Americans believe in climate change? The answer is more complicated than you might think." In: *Washington Post*. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/05/do-most-americans-believe-climate-change-answer-is-more-complicated-than-you-might-think/>

Aseem Prakash and Nives Dolsak (n.d.). "Americans Say They're Worried about Climate Change – so Why Don't They Vote That Way?" In: *The Conversation* (). URL: <http://theconversation.com/americans-say-theyre-worried-about-climate-change-so-why-dont-they-vote-that-way-110874>

Adam Corner (July 2015). "12 Tools for Communicating Climate Change More Effectively". In: *The Guardian*. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/jul/06/12-tools-for-communicating-climate-change-more-effectively>

### **Session 10: Just Transitions and the Green New Deal (November 5, 2020)**

Because of the election, there is no active learning assignment this week.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez et al. (July 2019). *H. Res. 109, Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal*. 116th Congress. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text>

Rhiana Gunn-Wright and Robert Hockett (Feb. 2019). *The Green New Deal: Mobilizing for a Just, Prosperous, and Sustainable Economy*. New Consensus. URL: [https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/ncsite/new\\_conesnsus\\_gnd\\_14\\_pager.pdf](https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/ncsite/new_conesnsus_gnd_14_pager.pdf)

Kate Aronoff et al. (July 2019). "We Need a Global Green New Deal". In: *Tribune*. URL: <https://tribunemag.co.uk/2019/07/for-a-global-green-new-deal>

Michelle Cordero (2019). "The Green New Deal: What's in the resolution, how much would it cost, and would it even stop global warming?" In: *Heritage Explains*. Heritage Foundation. URL: <https://www.heritage.org/renewable-energy/heritage-explains/the-green-new-deal>

Michael Grunwald (Jan. 2019). "The Trouble with the 'Green New Deal'". In: *Politico*. URL: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/01/15/the-trouble-with-the-green-new-deal-223977>

### **Session 11: Movement-Building (November 12, 2020)**

Find a local group working on climate action. If you can interview someone in the group, do so. Write 100-300 words on their strategy and results.



- Mathieu Blondeel, Jeff Colgan, and Thijs Van de Graaf (2019). "What Drives Norm Success? Evidence from Anti-Fossil Fuel Campaigns". In: *Global Environmental Politics* 19.4, pp. 63–84. URL: [https://doi.org/10.1162/glep\\_a\\_00528](https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00528)
- Doug McAdam (2017). "Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States". In: *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, pp. 189–208. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052615-025801>
- Naomi Klein (2012). "Climate Rage". In: *The Global Warming Reader*. Ed. by Bill McKibben. New York: Penguin, pp. 239–250
- Ezra Klein (July 2019). "'No permanent friends, no permanent enemies': inside the Sunrise Movement's plan to save humanity. A conversation with Varshini Prakash, the activist leading the charge for the Green New Deal." In: *Vox*. URL: <https://www.vox.com/ezra-klein-show-podcast/2019/7/31/20732041/varshini-prakash-sunrise-movement-green-new-deal>
- John Lichfield (Feb. 2019). "Just who are the gilets jaunes?" In: *The Guardian*. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/09/who-really-are-the-gilets-jaunes>

## Session 12: Debating Alternatives (November 19, 2020)

The simulator at [us.energypolicy.solutions/scenarios/home](https://us.energypolicy.solutions/scenarios/home) models a wide range of potential climate policy options for the United States. Your job is to identify a combination of policies that bring the U.S. to net zero emissions by 2050.

By default, the Policy Scenario Selector in the top left is set to New Scenario, where you'll make your changes. You can look at the U.S. NDC option for comparison, but don't peek at the Net Zero Emissions scenario—we'll discuss it in class. Note that you can use the Graph Output Selector to look at outcomes besides emissions: in particular, we'll be looking at the Effects by Policy and Financial options as well as the Emissions ones.

Before noon on Thursday, use the Share the scenario menu option and Copy the link into the Discussion section on Canvas (you'll need to create a free account to do this).

- Matto Mildenberger and Leah C. Stokes (Sept. 2020). "The Trouble with Carbon Pricing". In: *Boston Review*. URL: <http://bostonreview.net/science-nature-politics/matto-mildenberger-leah-c-stokes-trouble-carbon-pricing>
- Dale Jamieson (Dec. 2013). "Some Whats, Whys and Worries of Geoengineering". In: *Climatic Change* 121.3, pp. 527–537. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-013-0862-9>
- Nives Dolšak and Aseem Prakash (2018). "The Politics of Climate Change Adaptation". In: *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43, pp. 317–341. URL: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-environ-102017-025739>

### Optional

Clive Hamilton (Mar. 2015). "Geoengineering Is Not a Solution to Climate Change".  
In: *Scientific American*. URL: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/geoengineering-is-not-a-solution-to-climate-change/>

Fred Shaia and Jeff Colgan (Oct. 2020). *Presidential Climate Action on Day One: A Foreign-Policy Guide for the Next U.S. President*. Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. URL: <https://watson.brown.edu/news/explore/2020/PresidentialClimateAction>

### Thanksgiving (November 26, 2020)

*No class meeting*

### Session 13: The Future / Research Symposium (December 3, 2020)

This week we will hold a symposium where you will present your research to the rest of the class. Prepare a short (5 minute) presentation (1 slide maximum).

*Readings TBD*