

**CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN GLOBAL POLITICS  
CLIMATE POLITICS AND POLICY  
POLSCI 4GG3  
Winter 2023 Term 2**

**Instructor:** Dr. Roomana Hukil  
**Email:** hukilr@mcmaster.ca  
**Lecture:** Monday, 7pm-10pm  
**Room:** Virtually via Zoom

**Office:** Virtually (Zoom Room)  
**Office Hours:** By appointment only

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## **Course Description**

This course seeks to understand the political dimensions of global environmental change offering critical debate and thought about merging climate analyses with ethical considerations. The main aim is to focus on the implications of political power struggles, institutions, and discourses for global sustainability and justice. What are the theoretical foundations of the global ecological system's most pressing challenges? How can the global community address these problems with the given resources they possess? What is the role of states, multinational corporations, environmental advocacy groups, among others in solving the global environmental crisis? To answer these questions, this course analyses topics such as the causes and consequences of unsustainable development, the ecological shadows of consumption, the contradictions of technology, the effectiveness of international negotiations and agreements, the eco-business of multinational corporations, and the value of certification and eco-consumerism.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Explain key themes, concepts, and issues in global environmental politics.
- Support a position on the central issues examined throughout the course.
- Develop research, writing and analytical skills through the submission of various written material such as an argumentative essay as well as a critical response paper on one self-selected reading.
- Gain verbal communication and presentation skills through seminar leadership and participation in class.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

There is no textbook required for this course. The required readings are listed in the course schedule below that will consist of 2-3 journal articles, book chapters, and/or newspaper articles each week. All the reading material will be available through the McMaster library website and the course page on Avenue to Learn (A2L). Completing the required readings before class is an important element of your participation grade and in preparation for the final research paper.

## **Class Format**

Seminar classes are scheduled to take place every week virtually through Zoom. Since this course is a fourth-year seminar course, it is expected that students take active participation which means regularly attending the classroom sessions and participating in all the group discussions.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Seminar Participation (20%), over the course of the term.
2. Presentation (10%), over the course of the term
3. Critical Response Paper (30%), due February 13, 2022.
4. Research Paper (40%), due April 11, 2022

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Seminar Participation (20%), due over the course of the term.**

Seminar participation includes participation in all seminar discussions. The participation grade will come from an evaluation of how much a student has contributed to the seminar and the quality of his/her points raised. This includes initiating topics/questions, offering positive/critical reactions or responses, synthesizing, or summarizing part of the discussion and providing examples. A good way to prepare for this is to think about what the author's main argument is and then draw connections to the other references the author's used to support his/her claims.

### **Presentation (10%), due over the course of the term.**

Each student is expected to deliver a short presentation (10-12 minutes long) about one of the assigned readings and prepare discussion questions for that week's assigned reading list for the rest of the class to engage in. The presenter is required to select one reading out of the ones assigned for that particular week and deliver a brief presentation including the main argument of the reading (thesis statement/hypothesis of the piece) and the student's interpretation/assessment of the argument's raised. The presenter should then lead the class into a discussion about each of the readings encouraging others to discuss by posing relevant questions. The presenter should take a lead role in guiding the class conversation by pursuing the questions, themes, and main arguments raised by classmates.

### **Critical Response Paper (30%), due February 13, 2023.**

Write a short critical analytical paper that is a reaction/response to one of the weekly readings of your choice between weeks 2 and 5. This entails selecting any one of the weekly readings and demonstrating your knowledge by critically evaluating its significance for understanding global environmental change and the future of global politics. The minimum word count for this assignment is 1000 words and the maximum is 1200 words. Anything submitted beyond this range, or which inaccurately represents the word count will be subject to 2% deduction (meaning if the grade is 85%, it will be reduced to 83%).

### **Research Paper (40%), due April 10, 2023**

You are challenged to develop your own research question — in close cooperation with me. You may choose a topic of interest associated with global environmental change. The research question can be of theoretical or empirical nature. An excellent essay

demonstrates detailed knowledge of the readings and uses this knowledge in novel, insightful and creative ways. Research papers should be a minimum of 10 pages and a maximum of 11 pages excluding bibliography. Anything submitted beyond this range, or which inaccurately represents the word count will be subject to 2% deduction (meaning if the grade is 85%, it will be reduced to 83%).

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1: Monday, January 9, 2023.**

Course overview.

### **Week 2: Monday, January 16, 2023.**

#### **IR Theories of Climate Change**

- Clapp, Jennifer, and Peter Dauvergne. 'Peril or Prosperity? Mapping Worldviews of Global Environmental Change.' *Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2011): 1-16.
- Steven Bernstein, 'Liberal Environmentalism and Global Environmental Governance' *Global Environmental Politics* Vol. 2:3 (August 2002), pp. 1-16.
- Stephen M. Gardiner, 'A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics and the Problem of Moral Corruption,' *Environmental Values* Vol. 15:3 (August 2006), pp. 397-413.

### **Week 3: Monday, January 23, 2023.**

#### **The Optimistic Environmentalist**

- Wallace-Wells, David. "[The Uninhabitable Earth](#)," The New York Times, 9 July 2017 (11 Pages).
- Mooney, Chris. "[Scientists Challenge Magazine Story about 'Uninhabitable Earth'](#)," *The Washington Post* 10 (2017).
- Boyd, David. "The Importance of Being Optimistic," *The Optimistic Environmentalist: Progressing towards a Greener Future* (ECW Press, 2015), pp XI-XXV, or pp. 1-16.

### **Week 4: Monday, January 30, 2023.**

#### **State Governance and Climate Change**

- Dimitrov, Radoslav S. "The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Behind Closed Doors." *Global Environmental Politics* 16 (3) (2016): 1-11.
- Keohane, Robert O., and Michael Oppenheimer. "Paris: Beyond the Climate Dead End through Pledge and Review?" *Politics and Governance* 4 (3) (2016): 142-151.

**Week 5: Monday, February 6, 2023.**

**Problem of Consumption**

- Maniates, Michael F. "Individualization: Plant a tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?." *Global Environmental Politics* 1, no. 3 (2001): 31-52.
- Dauvergne, Peter. "The Problem of Consumption." *Global Environmental Politics* 10, no. 2 (2010): 1-10.

**Week 6: Monday, February 13, 2023**

**Eco-Business and Power**

- Humes, Edward. "[Walmart's Biggest Green Feat: Putting Sustainability on the Corporate Agenda](#)," *Grist*, 9 February 2012 (pp. 1-6).
- Bader, Christine. "[Why Corporations Fail to Do the Right Thing](#)," *The Atlantic*, 21 April 2014 (pp. 1-7).
- Magdoff, Fred, and John Bellamy Foster. "What Every Environmentalist Needs to know about Capitalism," *Monthly Review* 7 March (2010): 1-30.

**Week 7: Monday, February 20, 2023**

**Mid-term recess, NO CLASS**

**Week 8: Monday, February 27, 2023**

**The Power of Ideas and Norms**

- Alger, Justin, and Peter Dauvergne. "The Politics of Pacific Ocean Conservation: Lessons from the Pitcairn Islands Marine Reserve." *Pacific Affairs* 90, no. 1 (2017): 29-50.
- Clapp, Jennifer, and Linda Swanston. "Doing Away with Plastic Shopping Bags: International Patterns of Norm Emergence and Policy Implementation." *Environmental Politics* 18, no. 3 (2009): 315-332.

**Week 9: Monday, March 6, 2023**

**Ecomodernism and Ingenuity**

- Nicholson, Simon, and Jesse L. Reynolds. "Taking Technology Seriously: Introduction to the Special Issue on New Technologies and Global Environmental Politics," *Global Environmental Politics* 20 (3) (2020): 1-8.
- Pearce, Fred. "New Green Vision: Technology as our Planet's Last Best Hope," *Yale Environment* 360, 15 July, 2013 (7 pages).
- Szerszynski, Bronislaw. "Getting Hitched and Unhitched with the Ecomodernists," *Environmental Humanities* 7 (2015): 239-244.
- Brand, Stewart. "De-extinction Debate: Should we Bring Back to Wolly Mammoth," *Yale Environment* 360, 13 January 2014 (6 pages).

- Ehrlich, Paul R., and A. Ehrlich. "The Case Against De-extinction: It's a Fascinating but Dumb Idea." *Yale Environment* 360, 13 January 2014 (5 pages).

### **Week 10: Monday, March 13, 2023**

#### **NGOs and Transnational Movements**

- Matejova, Miriam, Stefan Parker, and Peter Dauvergne. "The politics of repressing environmentalists as agents of foreign influence." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 72, no. 2 (2018): 145-162
- Bloodgood, Elizabeth; Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken; Nina Hall; George E. Mitchell, Christopher Pallas and Hans Peter Schmitz. "The Future of Transnational NGO Advocacy," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, May 20, 2019.  
[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the\\_future\\_of\\_transnational\\_ngo\\_advocacy](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_future_of_transnational_ngo_advocacy)

### **Week 11: Monday, March 20, 2023**

#### **Global North-South Climate Politics**

- Mike Davis, "The Prevalence of Slums" and "Slum Ecology" in *Planet of Slums*, Verso, 2006, pp. 20-49 and 121-150.
- Eleanor Goldfield, "There is no such thing as a green war," *Roar Magazine*, July 5, 2019 (e-source)

### **Week 12: Monday, March 27, 2023**

#### **The Power of Social Justice**

- Patterson, James J., Thomas Thaler, Matthew Hoffmann, Sara Hughes, Angela Oels, Eric Chu, Aysem Mert, Dave Huitema, Sarah Burch, and Andy Jordan. "Political Feasibility of 1.5 C Societal Transformations: The Role of Social Justice." *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 31 (2018): 1-9.
- Bullard, Robert D., and Glenn S. Johnson. "Environmentalism and Public Policy: Environmental Justice: Grassroots Activism and its Impact on Public Policy Decision Making." *Journal of Social Issues* 56, no. 3 (2000): 555-578.

### **Week 13: Monday, April 3, 2023**

#### **Hope and Humility**

- Wapner, Paul. Humility in a Climate Age," *Tikkun* 25 (3) (2010), p. 34.

### **Week 14: Monday, April 10, 2023**

#### **Course wrap-up**

Criteria	80 – 100% A+, A, A- Excellent to Exceptional	70 – 79% B+, B, B- Good to Very Good	60 – 69% C+, C, C- Fairly Competent to Competent	50 – 59% D+, D, D- Marginally Passing to Passing
<p><b>Communication</b> Clarity, organization, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, citation of sources</p>	<p>Technically flawless Concise sentence structure and organization</p>	<p>Few technical errors Clear sentence structure and organization</p>	<p>Many technical errors Some sentence structure and organization is unclear</p>	<p>Significant technical errors throughout Unclear sentence structure and lack of overall organization.</p>
<p><b>Analytical Skills</b> Grasp of meaning and ability to concisely synthesize individual insights with the course readings</p>	<p>Original analysis of course material Author’s voice comes through clearly (research paper) Addresses all assignment requirements excellently</p>	<p>Demonstrates critical thinking skills applied to course material Addresses all assignment requirements with some errors</p>	<p>Descriptive rather than analytical writing Addresses most assignment requirements but with significant errors</p>	<p>No analysis or critical thinking skills demonstrated Substantial aspects of assignment requirements are not addressed</p>
<p><b>Application of Course Material</b> Understanding of the significance of authors’ arguments, key concepts and case studies presented in the assigned readings and research material</p>	<p>Exceptional application of concepts and case studies to demonstrate original insights about their significance for understanding the climate action and global politics</p>	<p>Definitions of concepts and descriptions of case studies in course material is evident however further analysis is needed to demonstrate understanding of the author’s main argument and/or demonstrate significance for climate action and global politics</p>	<p>Attempts to link course material to case studies however analysis and critical thinking are not demonstrated</p>	<p>No demonstration of ability to apply course concepts and case studies to other situations</p>



## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

All assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate assignments folder in A2L by 11:59 pm on the day they are due.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

Late papers and other marked assignments will be penalised at the rate of 3% per day (including weekends), except in the most extenuating of circumstances.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

### **Courses With An On-Line Element**

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms

## Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.