

POLI SCI 3GC3 / ENVSOCY 3EG3 GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Autumn 2020

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Lecture: Mondays 9:30-11:20,
Thursdays 10:30-11:20
Room: Online

Office: Online
Office Hours: TBA

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Course Description

This course leads students in an examination of the politics that is steering humanity to the brink of catastrophic climate change and planetary mass extinction. Its purpose is to explore the politics that generates, and is generated by, a dying planet. How have we reached our present state of affairs? What kinds of politics do we see as humans struggle with the world they have created? We begin by considering what is meant by a 'dying' planet through a review of the dual crises of climate change and species extinction. We then look at the historical factors that have led us to create societies that devour the earth's resources. This is followed by consideration of the major ethical and political dilemmas we face (intergenerational, global and inter-species justice). The remainder of the course explores three possible political trajectories – Barbarism, Adjustment, and Transformation. We see evidence of each of these responses today, but it is uncertain which one or combination of responses will characterize our future.

Course Objectives

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

- Develop an understanding of the severity of the threats posed by climate change and species extinction.
- Analyse the politics that has led to our present state of affairs.
- Evaluate possible political and economic trajectories in the face of climate change and species extinction.

Required Materials and Texts

- Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior* (Harper Collins 2012).
- Articles and films as assigned below.

Class Format

The course is divided into 6 sections or themes. Class time will follow two formats. There will be 19 lectures which will be recorded and posted during the scheduled class hours. Students can view them when it is convenient. There will also be 5 small group discussions (max 17 students) over the term. The lectures and discussions are supplemented with a novel, several articles and three films / documentaries.

Course Evaluation – Overview

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Book review | 20% |
| 2. Mid-term paper | 35% |
| 3. Final paper | 35% |
| 4. Discussion participation | 10% |

Course Evaluation – Details

Assignment 1: Book review (20%), due Monday Oct. 26 4pm

Write a 1500 word (maximum) critical review of *Flight Behaviour*. Make sure you address the following questions:

- How does climate change reveal itself in the novel?
- What are people's reactions to climate change?
- What does the novel tell us about climate change?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a novel to understand climate change?

Assignment 2: Mid-term paper (35%), due Monday 9 November 4pm

Drawing upon the lectures and readings from sections 1-3 explain why we are in the present situation and what are the most serious challenges we face. Maximum 2400 words excluding references.

Assignment 3: Final paper (35%), due 14 December 4pm

Drawing upon lectures, reading and films from sections 4-6 explain which of the three scenarios or combination of scenarios you believe are most likely for the future and why. Maximum 2400 words, excluding references.

Assignment 4: Participation (10%), Throughout the term.

Participate in the 5 groups discussions. 1pt for confirmed attendance of a session. 1 pt for contributing to the discussion.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Section 1: The Dying Planet

Goal: Determine in what ways the planet is 'Dying'

Sept. 10 – Lecture 1 (LIVE)

Intro and Addressing Death

Sept. 14 – Lecture 2 (Recorded)

Climate Change

Sept. 14 – Lecture 3 (R)

Mass extinction

Readings:

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, '[Summary for Policy Makers' Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report](#) (IPCC 2014), SPM 1.3 'Impacts of Climate Change' to SMP 2.3 'Future Risks', pp. 6-16.
- IPBES '[Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented' Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'](#)' Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services, Monday 6 May 2019

Sept. 17 – Discussion 1: Group 1, Content: Section 1 (LIVE)

Content: Section 1

Sept. 21 – Discussion 1: Group 2, 9:30 (LIVE)

Content: Section 1

Sept. 21 – Discussion 1: Group 3, 10:30 (LIVE)

Content: Section 1

Section 2: The Political Economy Of Planet Killing

Goal: Discover the historical forces and processes which have led us to this point

Sept. 24 – Lecture 4 (R)

Rise of fossil fuels / fossil fuel capitalism

Sept. 28 – Lecture 5 (R)

Human and ecological imperialism

Sept. 28 – Lecture 6 (R)

Colonialism and sacrifice zones

Oct. 1 – Lecture 7 (R)
Consumption

Readings:

- Peter Dauvergne, “An Unbalanced Global Political Economy” *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), pp. 3-17.

Section 3: Ethical and political dilemmas

Goal: Familiarize ourselves with moral and political dilemmas.

Oct. 5 – Lecture 8 (R)
Intergenerational issue

Oct. 5 – Lecture 9 (R)
Global issue

Readings:

- 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.

Oct. 8 – Lecture 10 (R)
Speciesism

Oct. 12 – 16: Reading Week

Oct. 19 – Discussion 2: Goup 1, 9:30-10:20 (LIVE)
Flight Behaviour

Oct. 19 – Discussion 2: Group 2, 10:30-11:20 (LIVE)
Flight Behaviour

Oct. 22 – Discussion 2: Group 3 (LIVE)
Flight Behaviour

Oct. 26 – Lecture 11 (R)
EU, US, Canada

Oct. 26 – Lecture 12 (R)
China, India, Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa

Note: Book review due in Avenue by 4pm.

Oct. 29 – Discussion 3: Group 1 (LIVE)
Content from Sections 2 & 3

Nov. 2 – Discussion 3: Group 2, 9:30-10:20 (LIVE)

Content from Sections 2 & 3

Nov. 2 – Discussion 3: Group 3, 10:30-11:20 (LIVE)

Content from Sections 2 & 3

Section 4: Barbarism

Goal: Consider where and why barbarism is emerging

Nov. 5 – Lecture 13 (R)

Conservatism, anti-environmentalism and fossil fuels

Readings:

- Lockwood, Matthew. 'Right-wing populism and the climate change agenda: exploring the linkages' *Environmental Politics* Vol. 27:4 (2018), pp. 712-732

Note: Film *Age of Consequences (Apple or Amazon)*, on your own time

Nov. 9 – Lecture 14 (R)

Barbarism, fascism and border politics

Note: Mid-term assignment due (sections 1-3).

Section 5: Adjustment

Goal: Understand the liberal response to environmental crisis

Nov. 9 – Lecture 15 (R)

Liberal environmentalism and market failures

Nov. 12 – Lecture 16 (R)

Pricing carbon

Readings:

- Mark Jaccard, 'We must price carbon emissions' *The Citizen's Guide to Climate Success: Overcoming myths that hinder progress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020), pp. 95-127.

Note: Film: *Before the Flood (McMaster University Library)* on your own time.

Nov. 16 – Lecture 17 (R)

International agreements

Nov. 19 – Discussion 4: Group 1 (LIVE)

Content Sections 4 & 5

Nov. 23 – Discussion 4: Group 2, 9:30-10:20 (LIVE)
Content Sections 4 & 5

Nov. 23 – Discussion 2: Group 3, 10:30-11:20 (LIVE)
Content Sections 4 & 5

Section 6: Transformation

Goal: Explore the possibilities of alternative futures

Nov. 26 – Lecture 18 (R)
Green New Deal and ecological economics

Readings:

- Naomi Klein, 'One Way or Another Everything Changes' This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate (Toronto: Vintage 2015), pp. 1-30.

Note: Film: This Changes Everything (McMaster University Library) on your own time.

Nov. 30 – Lecture 19 (R)
Southern, Indigenous and Youth movements

Dec. 3 – Discussion 5: Group 1 (LIVE)
Content from Section 6

Dec. 7 – Discussion 5: Group 2, 9:30-10:20 (LIVE)
Content from Section 6

Dec. 7 – Discussion 5: Group 3, 10:30-11:20 (LIVE)
Content from Section 6

Note: Final Assignment (Sections 4-6) due Dec. 14 by 4pm on Avenue.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Assignment to be submitted in appropriate dropbox in the Avenue to Learn course shell.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B

MARK	GRADE
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

Unless **prior** permission has been secured for a late submission, late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 1/3rd letter grade per day (e.g. B+ one day late becomes a B).

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.

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](#), 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 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.

Last revision 28 July 2020