



McMaster University  
Department of Political Science

**POLSCI 768 / GLOBALST 725**  
*Political Economy of Global Climate Change*  
Winter 2018, Term 2

Seminar: Tuesdays, 8:30 - 11:20  
Start term: January 9, 2018  
End term: April 3, 2018  
Classroom: KTH 709

Instructor: Dr. Robert O'Brien  
Office: KTH 519  
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays  
3:30 – 4:30 or by appointment  
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**Course Overview:**

This course provides students with an opportunity to investigate the global political economy of climate change. Key topics include conceptualizing climate governance, science and politics, climate change economics, pricing and taxing carbon, US and developing world climate politics, climate change infrastructure struggles, spiritual beliefs and climate politics, climate change and violence, and beyond the Paris Agreement. The focus will be on how political and economic factors shape responses to climate change.

**Learning objectives:**

1. Develop a critical understanding of the interaction of political and economic factors on climate change.
2. Pursue one climate change topic in depth through a research paper.
3. Students should be able to answer convincingly the following questions:
  - How has climate change become politicized and what are the implications of this?
  - What are the political obstacles to taking significant action on climate change?
  - What are the economics of climate change?

**Readings:**

This course presumes you are familiar with the basic science of climate change. If you are not, you should read:

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 'Summary for Policy Makers' Climate Change 2013: the Physical Science Basis' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013) available at: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1/#.Uk81jRaAew4>

## Seminars:

Students will be assigned to lead discussion of particular weeks.

All students will be expected to come to class with a one page document on the texts they have read. This document will contain:

1. A list of key concepts and terms.
2. A summary statement (four sentences maximum) of each author's main argument. This statement should be written in your own words as far as possible. It should not be borrowed directly from the text of the reading.
3. Three or four issues or questions in the readings that are important and merit some discussion and that you would like to be addressed in the seminar. Formulate these in the form of a question.

Summaries will be handed in at the end of the class.

Students will be expected to be active participants in class discussions. This involves leading discussions, highlighting points from the readings, engaging with the arguments of the texts, offering criticism of what you have read and asking questions about the text. Talking for the sake of talking or making irrelevant points does not contribute to your participation grade.

**Evaluation:** Final grades will be composed of the following parts:

Seminar Participation	30%
Critical Review	20%
Research Paper Proposal	5%
Research Paper	45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The *participation* grade covers seminar attendance and participation. I will take notes on the seminar discussions. General seminar participation is out of 15. Summary notes are graded as 10 x 1 = 10; leading a discussion is marked out of 5.

### *Critical review*

Students will write a critical review of one of the two books they have read for the class. The review is due one week after the book has been discussed in class. Class discussion should feed into your review. The review will evaluate the central arguments made in the chosen book. It should be **no longer than 1,500 words**.

*Research paper proposal* is due in class in **week six, February 13, 2018**. It should be three pages long and include:

- primary research question
- explanation of how it fits into course
- topics that will be addressed
- questions that need to be answered
- preliminary bibliography

*Research paper* is due **two weeks after the final class, April 17, 2018**. The paper should be **no longer than 4,000 words**, excluding bibliography. It must be based upon your paper outline and material beyond the course readings.

**Late Penalty:** Late papers and other marked assignments will be penalised at the rate of one grade point per day (a grade point is the interval between A+ and A, A and A-, etc.), including weekend days, except in the most extenuating of circumstances. It is your responsibility to make contingency plans for unforeseen problems such as computer and car failures.

## **McMaster University Policies**

### **Academic Dishonesty**

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. Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity). The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism (e.g. work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained).
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Special arrangements can be made for students with disabilities. If you need assistance because of a disability please consult with the Student Accessibility Services (SAS), MUSC Room B107, ext. 29652. Information is also available online, at <http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>. Once you have consulted with a program coordinator, you need to notify me as soon as possible with respect to your accommodation needs.

### **McMaster Statement on Electronic Resources**

In this course, we will be using the Avenue2Learn site ([avenue.mcmaster.ca](http://avenue.mcmaster.ca)). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with me.

### **Course Modifications**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The student is responsible for keeping up with the changes, which will either be announced in class or via Avenue to Learn. 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.

### **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.

## Seminar Weekly Topics and Readings

<b>Week 1: January 9, 2018</b>	Intro
<b>Week 2: January 16, 2018</b>	Conceptualizing Climate Governance
<b>Week 3: January 23, 2018</b>	Science, Politics and Climate Change
<b>Week 4: January 30, 2018</b>	Climate Change Economics
<b>Week 5: February 6, 2018</b>	Doughnut Economics
<b>Week 6: February 13, 2018</b>	Pricing and Taxing Carbon
<b>Week 7: February 20, 2018</b>	NO CLASS / Mid-Term Recess
<b>Week 8: February 27, 2018</b>	US Climate Politics
<b>Week 9: March 6, 2018</b>	Infrastructure Politics
<b>Week 10: March 13, 2018</b>	Religion, Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change
<b>Week 11: March 20, 2018</b>	Developing World Climate Politics
<b>Week 12: March 27, 2018</b>	Violent Conflict and Climate Change
<b>Week 13: April 3, 2018</b>	Paris Agreement and Beyond

### **Week 1: January 9, 2018**      **Introduction**

Overview of the course.

### **Week 2: January 16, 2018**      **Conceptualizing Climate Governance**

We begin our readings by considering the ways in which people conceptualize climate governance. What are the key actors and how should we think about their interaction?

Marcel J. Dorsch and Christian Flachs 'A Polycentric Approach to Global Climate Governance' *Global Environmental Politics* 2017 17:2, 45-64.

Thomas Bernauer, 'Climate Change Politics' *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 16 (2013): 421-48.

Hamish van der Ven, Steven Bernstein, and Matthew Hoffmann, 'Valuing the Contributions of Nonstate and Subnational Actors to Climate Governance' *Global Environmental Politics* 2017 17:1, 1-20.

Marcel Hanegraaff, 'Transnational Advocacy over Time: Business and NGO Mobilization at UN Climate Summits' *Global Environmental Politics* 2015 15:1, 83-104.

**Week 3: January 23, 2018****Science, Politics and Climate Change**

A remarkable aspect of climate change is the degree to which climate science has become politicized. This week we want to understand why and how this has happened.

Rolf Lidskog and Göran Sundqvist, 'When Does Science Matter? International Relations Meets Science and Technology Studies,' *Global Environmental Politics* 2015 15:1, 1-20.

Hannah Hughes, 'Bourdieu and the IPCC's Symbolic Power' *Global Environmental Politics* 2015 15:4, 85-104.

Stephan Lewandowsky et al., 'Science and the Public: Debate, Denial, and Skepticism' *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* Vol 4 (2) 2016: 537-553.

Peter J. Jacques and Claire Connolly Knox, 'Hurricanes and hegemony: A qualitative analysis of micro-level climate change denial discourses' *Environmental Politics* Vol 25 Iss. 4, 2016 831-852

Jeremiah Bohr 'The 'climatism' cartel: why climate change deniers oppose market-based mitigation policy' *Environmental Politics* Vol. 25, Iss. 5, 2016 812-830.

*Other:*

Lisa Vanhala and Cecilie Hestbaek, Framing Climate Change Loss and Damage in UNFCCC Negotiations *Global Environmental Politics* 2016 16:4, 111-129.

**Week 4: January 30, 2018****Climate Change Economics**

This week we turn our attention to one of the most prominent economists who sees climate change as an immediate and immense threat to humanity. Nicolas Stern is presently chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate and the Environment at the LSE. He was formerly Chief Economist at the World Bank and Permanent Secretary of HM Treasury (UK). His 2006 government report *The Economics of Climate Change* was a landmark call to action. However, it was criticized for its modification of key economic approaches (discounting the future) by economists such as Yale's William Nordhaus. Our goal in reading Stern's more recent book is to determine what he sees as the key economics issues surrounding climate change.

Nicolas Stern *Why Are We Waiting? The LOGIC, URGENCY and PROMISE of tackling CLIMATE CHANGE* (Cambridge: MIT Press 2015).

*Other readings:*

Terry Barker, 'The Economics of Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change' *Green Economy Reader* (Springer, Online, 2017), pp. 237-63.

William Nordhaus, *The Climate Casino: Risk, Uncertainty and Economics for a Warming World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

Nicholas Stern, *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007).

**Week 5: February 6, 2018****Doughnut Economics**

Kate Raworth is a senior visiting research associate at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute. She is a former co-editor of the UNDP *Human Development Report* and was the Senior Researcher at Oxfam for a decade. Raworth's policy work has led her to question the

assumptions of mainstream economics, leading to the publication of *Doughnut Economics*. This week we will be considering the critique of economic approaches from an environmentalist perspective.

Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics: 7 Ways to Think Like a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economist* (Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing 2017).

### **Week 6: February 13, 2018                      Pricing and Taxing Carbon**

Economists tend to agree that the best way to deal with climate change is to put a price on carbon. However, the mechanics and politics of pricing carbon are far from clear.

Jonas Meckling & Steffen Jenner, 'Varieties of market-based policy: Instrument choice in climate policy' *Environmental Politics* Vol. 25, Iss. 5, 2016 853-874.

Katja Biedenkopf, Patrick Müller, Peter Slominski, and Jørgen Wettestad, 'A Global Turn to Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading? Experiments, Actors, and Diffusion' *Global Environmental Politics* 2017 17:3, 1-11.

Robert MacNeil, 'Death and Environmental Taxes: Why Market Environmentalism Fails in Liberal Market Economies' *Global Environmental Politics* 2016 16:1, 21-37.

Kathryn Harrison, 'International Carbon Trade and Domestic Climate Politics' *Global Environmental Politics* 2015 15:3, 27-48.

Romain Felli, 'Environment, not planning: the neoliberal depoliticisation of environmental policy by means of emissions trading' *Environmental Politics* Vol. 24, Iss. 5, 2015 641-660.

### **Week 7: February 20, 2018                      NO CLASS / Mid-Term Recess**

### **Week 8: February 27, 2018                      US Climate Politics**

With the election of US President Donald Trump, the US stands alone as the only country to not support the Paris Agreement on climate change. What accounts for the distinctive nature of climate change politics in the country that is the second largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2017 and has historically been the largest emitter?

Elizabeth Bomberg 'Environmental politics in the Trump era: an early assessment' *Environmental Politics* Vol. 26, Iss. 5, 2017 956-963.

James Everett Hein & J. Craig Jenkins, 'Why does the United States lack a global warming policy? The corporate inner circle versus public interest sector elites' *Environmental Politics* Vol. 26, Iss. 1, 2017 97-117.

Doug McAdam, "Social Movement Theory and the Prospect for Climate Change Activism in the United States' *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 30 (2017): 189-208.

Wanyun Shao, 'Weather, climate, politics, or God? Determinants of American public opinions toward global warming' *Environmental Politics* Vol. 26, Iss. 1, 2017, 71-96.

#### *Other reading:*

Patrick J. Egan and Megan Mullin, "Climate Change: US Public Opinion' *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 30 (2017): 209-227.



**Week 9: March 6, 2018****Infrastructure Politics**

At the level of particular industries a fierce fight is being waged between fossil fuel and renewable energy sectors for the future shape of national and global economies. What are the contours of this struggle?

Christian Downie, 'Fighting for King Coal's Crown: Business Actors in the US Coal and Utility Industries' *Global Environmental Politics* 2017 17:1, 21-39.

Kacper Szulecki, 'Conceptualizing energy democracy' *Environmental Politics* 1-21 Online 2017

Oksan Bayulgen & Jeffrey W. Ladewig 'Vetoing the future: political constraints and renewable energy' *Environmental Politics* Vol. 26, Iss. 1, 2017 49-70.

S. Jacobsson and V. Lauber, 'The politics and policy of energy system transformation-explaining the German diffusion of renewable energy technology' *Energy Policy* 34 (3) February 2006 pp.256-276.

Leah C. Stokes 'The politics of renewable energy policies: The case of feed-in tariffs in Ontario, Canada' *Energy Policy* 56 May 2013 pp.490-500.

**Week 10: March 13, 2018****Religion, Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change**

Spiritual beliefs are one of the factors influencing people's response to climate change. This week we consider the role of a diverse set of beliefs and their engagement with climate change.

Julian Brave Noisecat, 'Slaying the Carbon-Consuming Colonial Hydra: Indigenous Contributions to Climate Action' *Development* Vol 59 Iss 3-4 (2016): 199-204.

Todd A. Eisenstadt and Karleen Jones West Indigenous Belief Systems, Science, and Resource Extraction: Climate Change Attitudes in Ecuador *Global Environmental Politics* 2017 17:1, 40-58.

Michael Lowy, 'Laudato Si – the Pope's Anti-Systemic Encyclical' *Monthly Review* 67 7 (2015): 50-4.

E. Keith Smith, Lynn M. Hempel and Kelsea MacIlroy, 'What's 'evangelical' got to do with it? Disentangling the impact of evangelical Protestantism on environmental outcomes' *Environmental Politics* Pages 1-28 | Published online: 02 Oct 2017

Chaudoin, S., Smith, D. T., & Urpelainen, J. (2014). 'American evangelicals and domestic versus international climate policy.' *The Review of International Organizations*, 9(4), 441-469.

**Week 11: March 20, 2018****Developing World Climate Politics**

Climate change poses a particular set of challenges and threats to developing countries. This week we are interested in discovering how climate change is playing out in some key developing countries and how it impacts their international position.

Leah C. Stokes, Amanda Giang, and Noelle E. Selin, 'Splitting the South: China and India's Divergence in International Environmental Negotiations' *Global Environmental Politics* 2016 16:4, 12-31.

Kathryn Hochstetler and Genia Kostka 'Wind and Solar Power in Brazil and China: Interests, State-Business Relations, and Policy Outcomes' *Global Environmental Politics* 2015 15:3, 74-94.

Alex Y. Lo and Michael Howes 'Power and Carbon Sovereignty in a Non-Traditional Capitalist State: Discourses of Carbon Trading in China' *Global Environmental Politics* 2015 15:1, 60-82.

Saul, B. (2012). 'The security risks of climate change displacement in Bangladesh' *Journal of Human Security*, 8(2), 5-35.

*Other:*

Bhavnani, R. R., & Lacina, B. (2015). The effects of weather-induced migration on sons of the soil riots in India. *World Politics*, 67(4), 760-794.

### **Week 12: March 27, 2018                      Violent Conflict and Climate Change**

Some see climate change as increasing the level of violent conflict within and between states. Is this a justified fear and what might be done about it?

Ken Conca, Joe Thwaites, and Goueon Lee, 'Climate Change and the UN Security Council: Bully Pulpit or Bull in a China Shop?' *Global Environmental Politics* 2017 17:2, 1-20.

Nardulli, Peter, Buddy Peyton, and Joseph Bajjalieh. 'Climate Change and Civil Unrest: The Impact of Rapid-Onset Disasters.' *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59.2 (2015): 310-35. Web. 11 Oct. 2017.

Dumaine, C., & Mintzer, I. (2015). Confronting climate change and reframing security. *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, 35(1), 5-16.

Smith, P. J. (2007). Climate change, weak states and the "war on terrorism" in south and southeast Asia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 29(2), 264-285.

*Other:*

Purdy, M., & Smythe, L. (2010). From obscurity to action. *International Journal*, 65(2), 411-433.

### **Week 13: April 3, 2018                      Paris Agreement and Beyond**

We conclude the course by reflecting upon the 2015 Paris Agreement and its implications for the future.

Radoslav S. Dimitrov, 'The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Behind Closed Doors' *Global Environmental Politics* 2016 16:3, 1-11.

Thomas Hale, "'All Hands on Deck": The Paris Agreement and Nonstate Climate Action' *Global Environmental Politics* 2016 16:3, 12-22.

Isabel Hilton & Oliver Kerr 'The Paris Agreement: China's 'New Normal' role in international climate negotiations' *Climate Policy* Vol. 17, Iss. 1, 2017 48-58.

Patrick Bond, 'Who wins from "climate apartheid"?: African climate justice narratives about the Paris COP21'. *New Politics*, 15(4), (2016): 83-90.





## Interesting books on:

### Thinking

George Marshall, *Don't Even Think about it: Why our Brains are Wired to Ignore Climate Change* (London: Bloomsbury 2014).

Amitav Gosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2016).

### History

Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: the Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (London: Verso 2016)

Brian Fagan, *The Great Warming*, Bloomsbury US; 2009.

Anthony J. McMichael, *Climate Change and the Health of Nations: Famines, Fevers, and the Fate of Populations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

### Violence

Christian Parenti, *Tropic of Chaos; Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence* (New York: Nation Books 2012).

Gwynne Dyer, *Climate Wars: The Fight for Survival as the World Overheats* (Toronto: Vintage 2009).

### Morality

Stephen M. Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011).

### Politics

Michael E. Mann and Tom Toles *The Madhouse Effect: How Climate Change Denial is Threatening Our Planet, Destroying our Politics and Driving Us Crazy* (New York: Columbia University Press 2016)

Michael E. Mann *The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars* New York: Columbia University Press 2012)

Harriet Bulkely and Peter Newell *Governing Climate Change 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (London: Routledge 2016).

### Environmentalism/ Consumption

Peter Dauvergne, *Environmentalism of the Rich* (Cambridge; MIT Press, 2016)

Peter Dauvergne *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment* (Cambridge; MIT Press, 2010).

### Capitalism

Peter Newell and Matthew Paterson *Climate Capitalism: Global Warming and the Transformation of the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010).

Naomi Klien, *This Changes Everything Climate vs. Capitalism* (Knoph: Toronto: 2014).

### North South

Roberts, Tim and Bradley Parks. *A Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Politics, and Climate Policy* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press 2006.

Patrick Bond, *Politics of Climate Justice: Paralysis Above, Movement Below* (Kwazulu-Natal: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012).

### Future

Imre Szeman. *After Oil* (West Virginia University Press, 2016) available at:

<http://afteroil.ca/resources-2/after-oil-book/>