

PubPol 475.011 Climate Change: Politics for the Anthropocene

Winter 2024

“We live in a big science fiction novel we are all writing together” - Kim Stanley Robinson

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30–3:50 a.m., 1210 Weill Hall

Instructor: Devin Judge-Lord, judgelor@umich.edu, 715-204-4287

Office hours: Wednesdays 3–4 p.m., 3215 Weill Hall

[Subscribe to the course calendar here](#)

Syllabus updated: [January 14 2024](#). The current version is [here](#).

This is a small upper-level reading- and writing-intensive seminar that requires coming to class prepared to discuss the reading. There are no quizzes or exams. Assessment is based on your thoughtful engagement with the ideas in the reading and with my feedback on your writing.

Objectives

In the past century—the blink of an eye in ecological time—a small portion of humans concentrated in wealthier and more industrialized countries began to radically transform the ecology of our planet at an unprecedented scale.¹

This class aims to help you develop your own critique of various policy fights over what to do about our new relationship with our biosphere.

Experts increasingly see the slow policy response to climate science as having less to do with climate science and more to do with politics. That is, climate change is increasingly seen as a problem for the social sciences to address. Thus, this class is about politics. “Politics” can mean many things, and a core objective of this class is understanding different forms of

¹OK, sure, cyanobacteria were [similarly transformative](#), but that was billions of years ago, and cyanobacteria cannot reflect on their actions. They make oxygen, but neither politics nor policy.

politics—different ways of having and resolving debates about who our community is and what we will do together about the challenges we face.

The core readings are mostly drawn from political science, political theory, and law. They are accompanied by op-eds and podcasts from advocates and journalists covering climate policy debates. Both the theories of politics and political arguments cover a wide range of perspectives. We will read a range of critiques based on different visions of good politics—from left to right, religious to utilitarian, populist to technocratic—with the aim of recognizing and critiquing these forms of politics when we see them in the wild. While we will mainly focus on policy debates in the United States, the underlying political struggles can be seen everywhere.

The assignments for this class are motivated by the observation that politics is fundamentally an organized activity. Thus, the critiques we develop in this class will target organizations. In your opinion, are they choosing the right battles? Are they taking the right positions? Are they framing the issues in the most effective way? Is their theory of change (or resistance to change) realistic?

It is easy to critique those with whom we severely disagree, but they are also the least likely to listen to you. Thus, the critiques you develop in this class will be aimed at the organizations you see as having the best chance of making a positive difference in the world—specifically, the organizations for whom you hope to work. You may have no idea what your future career looks like; that is fine. Perhaps you will find an organization or cause that inspires you in this class. Or perhaps you have a very clear idea of your future career. In that case, this class will challenge you to think about how organizations in your intended field of work engage in politics and policymaking—and how they might do so differently. It is not a requirement that the organizations you address are activist organizations. Indeed, activist organizations may be the most difficult to critique because they already have a well-developed approach to politics and policy. You may even see yourself working for an organization that is currently strongly opposed to most proposed climate policies; that is fine. For example, if you aim to work at Exxon-Mobil, you might look to Business School scholarship to formulate a critique like [this one](#).

As practice for developing your skills in both effective writing and constructive criticism, peer critiques of your colleagues' writing are a major part of this class and 10% of your grade.

Learning Environment

Learning from each other is only possible if we show the respect due to our fellow citizens of this class.

To realize this goal, I expect us to respect our colleagues and cultivate inclusive discussions. This means that we must be careful not to mislead, degrade, interrupt someone who does not speak as much, or enforce hierarchies based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender expression, sexual orientation, or ability.

Ford School and University of Michigan Policies

Ford School Inclusivity Statement: Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community, we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford - classes and across the UM community

Being a constructive member of a diverse community is always a learning process. The University has many resources to help us in this endeavor, including a [glossary of terms](#).

Ford School Public Health Protection Policy. In order to participate in any in-person aspects of this course—including meeting with other students to study or work on a team project—you must follow all the public health safety measures and policies put in place by the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, the University of Michigan, and the Ford School. Up-to-date information on U-M policies can be found on the [U-M Health Response website](#). It is expected that you will protect and enhance the health of everyone in the Ford School community by staying home and following self-isolation guidelines if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing. The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, both those relating to the pandemic and other issues such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, can directly impact students' academic performance and overall wellbeing. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available.

You may access the Ford School's embedded counselor Paige Ziegler (pziegler@umich.edu) and/or counselors and urgent services at [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) and/or [University Health Service \(UHS\)](#). Students may also use the Crisis Text Line (text '4UMICH' to 741741) to be connected to a trained crisis volunteer. You can find additional resources both on and off campus through the [University Health Service](#) and through [CAPS](#).

Student/Faculty Interaction Best Practices. We strive to ensure a safe learning environment free from gender-based and sexual harassment, sexual violence, retaliation, and a

hostile environment based on discrimination and intimidation. We make the following commitments:

- To conduct office hours with the door open unless the student requests a closed-door meeting;
- To document meeting times with students so that this record can be reviewed;
- To meet students individually only at university venues;
- To conduct off-campus meetings only at places where alcohol is not served;
- To communicate electronically with students only on university platforms and not on social media, text, or non-university apps.
- For more information on resources for reporting sexual misconduct, please see [the faculty senate best practices for faculty interactions](#) and [U-M's page on Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The University of Michigan recognizes disability as an integral part of diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment for students with disabilities. Students who are experiencing a disability-related barrier should visit the Services for Students with Disabilities website. They can be reached at 734-763-3000 or ssdoffice@umich.edu. For students who are connected with SSD, accommodation requests can be made in Accommodate. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your SSD Coordinator or visit SSD's Current Student webpage. SSD considers aspects of the course design, course learning objects, and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SSD, instructors, and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

! Important

If you require accommodations from SSD, please start that process quickly because it takes time.

Academic Integrity: The Ford School academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. We hold all members of our community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the Ford School promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and misconduct. Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. Plagiarism involves representing the words, ideas, or work of others as one's own in writing or presentations, and failing to give full and proper credit to the original source. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates academic integrity and ethical standards will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action. The Ford School's policy of academic integrity can be found in the [MPP](#), [BA](#), and [Ph.D. Program](#) handbooks.

Additional information regarding academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and misconduct and their consequences is available at [U-M's academic-policies page](#).

Use of Technology: Students should follow instructions from their instructor as to acceptable use of technology in the classroom, including laptops, in each course. All course materials (including slides, assignments, handouts, pre-recorded lectures, or recordings of class) are to be considered confidential material and are not to be shared in full or part with anyone outside of the course participants. Likewise, your own personal recording (audio or video) of your classes or office hour sessions is allowed only with the express written permission of your instructor. If you wish to post course materials or photographs/videos of classmates or your instructor to third-party sites (e.g., social media), you must first have informed consent. Without explicit permission from the instructor and, in some cases, your classmates, the public distribution or posting of any photos, audio/video recordings, or pre-recordings from class, discussion section, or office hours, even if you have permission to record, is not allowed and could be considered academic misconduct.

Please review additional information and policies regarding [academic expectations and resources](#) at the Ford School of Public Policy.

See the end of the syllabus for information about our commitment to best practices of instructor/student interactions.

Technology in Class

No screens in class (unless I give permission). Research shows that they inhibit learning and distract your colleagues. Out of respect to the instructor and your fellow students, put your cell phone away for the duration of class.

Tools That Generate Text

You learn by doing work, and I assess your learning by the work you do. You may use tools to help craft your writing, but you must learn the crafts of constructive critique and persuasive writing to succeed in class. To add value to any employer or cause, you must craft arguments and recommendations that are significantly better than they would get by asking a [SALAMI](#). I expect the same.

Text extruded by large language models (LLMs) is, by construction, derivative of patterns of words already linked together on the internet. In some sense, everything we do is derivative of our experiences, but the generative process is very different for thinking subjects (you) than for a pre-trained language model. Language models are incapable of producing original critiques. If they produce something that sounds insightful, it is only because we are able to assign meaning to the strings of words they extrude. (It also probably sounds right because it resembles things already written by a human on the internet.) Language models have no sense

of meaning and cannot judge the consistency, coherence, or logic of an argument. I expect the critiques you produce to be yours and for you to stand by them as intellectual projects. No LLM can help you justify your thought process and reasoning. LLMs have no thought process and do not reason.

I am not yet sure if LLMs are a helpful tool for the craft of persuasive writing or learning this craft. I worry that they may constrain creativity by focusing our attention on problems and solutions that already exist and have already been frequently linked in the source material on which the LLMs are trained. Additionally, in many fields, including political science, rich White men are disproportionately the authors of the source texts. Uncritically using LLMs trained on biased source material risks reproducing those biases.

Good policy and political strategy rests on good evidence. Many LLMs fabricate evidence. Work submitted with fake sources or made-up facts will get a 0 for similar reasons that other forms of academic dishonesty make work worse than worthless. Thus, **references must be hyperlinked** whenever possible; I will be checking to make sure sources of evidence are used appropriately.

If you use people or tools other than your brain and spelling/grammar checkers to string words together, you should be prepared to comment on what you used them for, what it got right, and what it got wrong.

I reserve the right to discuss your papers in length with you if I have concerns.

Assignments

Credit hours will be earned by attending two classes of 1.33̄ hours each, reading and preparing written work outside of class for 6 to 9 hours per week, and a series of incremental assignments building to a highly-polished op-ed style critique of an organization's approach to climate policy. A key part of the process will be critiquing the writing of others. Detailed instructions for each assignment are available in the [assignment guide](#).

All assignments are to be submitted on Canvas.

Example op-eds

[Humanity Is Facing a Great Injustice. The World Bank Must Respond](#) by the NYT Editorial Board

[Exxon Mobil's Pioneer Acquisition Is a Direct Threat to Democracy](#) by Jeff Colgan via [proquest](#)

[The Climate Solution That's Horrible for the Climate](#) via [proquest](#)

[I'm a Scientist Who Spoke Up About Climate Change. My Employer Fired Me.](#)

Rumble at the Sierra Club via [proquest](#)

[The Pope's Journey to Climate Outrage](#) by David Wallace-Wells via [proquest](#)

And here's a piece by two climate activists trying to influence policy:

[Will Lawmakers Sacrifice Our Health and Safety to Get a Debt Ceiling Deal?](#) via
[proquest]

Due dates

Discussion posts are due Mondays and Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

All other assignments and critiques are due Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

! Important

There is an incremental assignment building to your final op-ed due **every** Tuesday.

💡 Tip

[Subscribe to the due dates calendar here.](#)

Below is the schedule of due dates.

On all but three weeks, the assignments are incremental steps to one larger assignment. On weeks 5, 9, and 13, we will practice civic engagement by writing to a public official or agency. Post 100-200 words about it and a link to the opportunity on Canvas. For example, you might [Comment on a proposed federal agency policy](#), [Comment on a proposed state agency policy](#) (sort by Filing Date to see pending rules), Recommend a course of action to one of [your elected representatives](#))

Find your voice - 15% of final grade

- Week 1: Introduce yourself to the class—e.g., in a few sentences, a short video, links to some things you find interesting or are passionate about, and/or some other means—feel free to be creative (1%)

- Week 2: A list of the top twenty organizations for whom you would like to work and a one-sentence summary of how they engage (or avoid engaging) in climate politics or policy. If the organization has more than 100 employees, specify a unit within the organization. (1%)²
- Week 3: Ten op-ed-style headlines (in-class peer workshop for headlines) (1%)
- Week 4: Five revised headlines + first 200 words - no longer than 2 pages + annotated bibliography (10%)
- Week 5:
 - Meet with me about your op-ed ideas (part of previous assignment grade)—[schedule a meeting here](#).
 - Civic engagement (1%)
- At some point during the first half of the semester, pitch one of your critiques to the class. Two students will pitch their ideas each week. This will give you practice testing out your argument and presentation skills (1%)

Craft your critique - 25% of final grade

- Week 6: Three first 400 words + annotated bibliographies (9%)
- Week 7: peer critique of first 400 words (5%)
- Week 8: Two revised first 400 words + annotated bibliographies (10%)
- Week 9:
 - My feedback on your first 400 words
 - Civic engagement post (1%)

Hone your critique - 36% of final grade

Through multiple rounds of revision, you will hone your critique, improving your logic and writing (writing can always be improved).

! Important

I am mostly grading on how you respond to feedback. If you would like, you can include revision comments (200 words max) on the document in Canvas addressing any points where you feel context is needed for me to understand how you incorporated feedback.

- Week 10: One 750-800 word op-ed + annotated bibliography (10%)
- Week 11: Peer critique of op-ed (5%)

²Most organizations have an email list—I suggest signing up, both for the assignments in this class and your future career.

- Week 12: Revised op-ed (10%)
- Week 13:
 - My feedback on op-ed
 - Civic engagement post (1%)
- Week 14: Final due (10%)

Participation 24% (26 class periods X 1% per class - 2 pass days)

- Post a discussion question about the readings to Canvas by 7 p.m. every Monday and Wednesday weeks 2-14 (see the course calendar above). Late posts are not counted. Please keep posts under 100 words.
- Participate in class discussion. Attendance is required. You must let me know *ahead of time* if you must miss.

You get two days to take a pass on posting a discussion question and/or participating in class. Even if you are taking a pass on participation, I hope you will still come to class. If you are taking a pass and don't want me to call you into the conversation, just let me know ahead of time.

Late Submissions

Because nearly all assignments are either revised versions of previous submissions that someone else must review on a tight timeline or peer-reviews that your peers depend on in order to make revisions on a tight timeline, late work is not an option.

- If you do not submit a revised version of your op-ed(s) on time, I will re-submit your previous version for review on your behalf. This will make sure you still get feedback on your work. If you submit by the end of the week, I will award partial points, but your reviewer is not expected to wait for the revised version to submit their review.
- Late reviews are unfair to your classmates. If you do not submit a peer review on time, I will submit a review on your behalf, and you will not receive points for that review.

Under extenuating circumstances, I will attempt to work out some alternative review cycle.

Materials

Each week's required readings are indented and marked with a grey sidebar. I also often note "resources" or "further readings" with bullets—these are not required readings.

I call on students during class and expect you to do all assigned readings for each week before Tuesday's class (discussion posts are due Monday evening).

Required Books

We will read large portions of two books:

- *After Nature* by Jedediah Purdy (2015, Harvard University Press) — available on reserve, ~\$8 used, \$19 new
- *All We Can Save*, edited by Anyana Elizabeth Johnson & Katharine K. Wilkinson (2021, One World/Penguin Random House) — available as an [ebook](#) and [audiobook](#) from the library! (but the number of people who can have them checked out at a time is limited, so be conscientious of your classmates.)

The other readings will be available for free online (you may need to go through the library website for journal articles) or on Canvas.

Recommended Books

We will read smaller portions of the following books, which will be available on Canvas:

- *The Politics of Common Sense: How Social Movements Use Public Discourse to Change Politics and Win Acceptance* by Deva Woodly (2015, Oxford University Press)
- *Politics: The Central Texts* by Roberto Mangabeira Unger (1997, Verso Books)
- *The Big Fix: Seven Practical Steps to Save Our Planet* by Hal Harvey and Justin Gillis (2022, Simon & Schuster)
- *Merchants of doubt: How a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming* by Oreskes & Conway (2011, Bloomsbury Publishing)
- *Charleston: Race, Water, and the Coming Storm* by Susan Crawford (2023, Simon & Schuster) — available on reserve, \$19 new

Other books you may find useful:

- *Politics is for Power* by Eitan Hersh
- *Governing the Commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action.* Cambridge University Press. by Elinor Ostrom. Available electronically through the library!
- *Uncertain Futures: How to Unlock the Climate Impasse* by Alexander Gazmararian and Dustin Tingley. Cambridge University Press
- *Rules for Radicals* by Saul Alinsky
- *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* by Deborah Stone
 - Scans of the following chapters from an older edition: [1](#), [all](#)

Resources

American Government Module

If you are looking for more foundation in how government works, the Ford School organized an Intro to American Government Module taught by Political Science Ph.D. candidate Ciera Hammond:

- [Day 1](#)
- [Day 2](#)
- [Day 3](#)
- [Day 4](#)

Reading by Week

Most weeks include audio content, either in addition to or as an alternative to required reading.

(Canvas) means that the reading is in the “/Files/Reading” folder on Canvas.

There are many “further” readings, and some required readings (especially the longer academic articles) say “skim.” Here is advice on [how to read political science from Amelia Hoover Green](#) and [how to skim from Jessica Calarco](#).

Week 1: Hope

...in an unequal and chaotic world.

Thursday: Syllabus review and in-class discussion [best-practices exercise](#)

Home is Always Worth It - Mary Annaïse Heglar (Medium, 2019) (Canvas)

But the Greatest of These is Love - Mary Annaïse Heglar (Medium, 2019) (Canvas)

Further reading:

- [Temple, James. 2021. “The rare spots of good news on climate change”](#)

Week 2: Policy

Tuesday: The State of US Climate Policy:

[Interview with Matto Mildenberger \(SSN, 2023\)](#) (minutes 2-13)

[An insider's view of the Biden years in clean energy policy: A conversation with Sonia Aggarwal \(Volts, 2023\)](#) (minutes 1-54)

[Climate Bidenomics by Alyssa Battistoni and Geoff Mann in *New Left Review*](#) (5 pages)

[2023 Year in Review: Energy and Environmental Policy, with Karen Palmer and Joseph Majkut \(Resources Radio, 2023\)](#) (35 min)

[All We Can Save: Litigating in a Time of Crisis \(51-59\) and The Politics of Policy \(85-91\)](#)

[The Farm Bill is the most important climate bill this Congress will pass \(Volts, 2023\)](#) (59 min)

Skim: [Modernizing America with Rebuilding to Kickstart the Economy of the Twenty-first Century with a Historic Infrastructure-Centered Expansion Act or the MARKET CHOICE Act](#)

- [Summary from Citizens Climate Lobby](#)

Skim: [H.R.5744 - Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2023](#) (A carbon tax with the revenue going to households as a monthly cash dividend)

- <https://energyinnovationact.org/>
- [Summary from Citizens Climate Lobby](#)

Thursday: The State of Michigan Climate Policy

[Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer might notch a big climate win](#)

[Clean energy package policy changes earn a mixed response from environmental advocates](#)

The State of Ann Arbor Climate Policy:

Skim: [Carbon Neutrality — A²ZERO — Building a just transition to community-wide carbon neutrality by 2030.](#)

Further reading on state-level policy:

- [The Battle Over Clean Energy with Leah C. Stokes \(SSN 2019\) \(25 min\)](#)
- [It's up to states to implement IRA. Are they ready? A conversation with Sam Ricketts of Evergreen Action](#)
- [Washington state now has the nation's most ambitious climate policy](#)
- [Washington Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon on the Evergreen State's excellent new climate laws](#)
- [Will Toor on Colorado's burst of clean energy policy](#)
- [Illinois' brilliant new climate, jobs, and justice bill](#)
- [Rabe, B. G. \(2004\). Statehouse and greenhouse: The emerging politics of American climate change policy. Brookings Institution Press. Chapter 1. \(Canvas\)](#)
- [David Hsu on the grassroots policy that lets communities control their own energy supply](#)

Further reading on federal policy:

- [Using DOE loan guarantees to accelerate clean energy, with Jigar Shah](#)

Further resources for understanding cap-and-trade (e.g., the Waxman-Markey bill):

- [Naming the Problem: What It Will Take to Counter Extremism and Engage Americans in the Fight against Global Warming by Theda Skocpol](#)
- [What Theda Skocpol gets right about the cap-and-trade fight by David Roberts](#)

Further resources for understanding the Inflation Reduction Act:

- [Our Green Transition May Leave Black People Behind](#)
- [“Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\) Summary: Energy and Climate Provisions” - Bipartisan Policy Center](#)
- [Breaking Down the Inflation Reduction Act. Program by Program. Incentive by Incentive. A sortable and filterable list for stakeholders big and small.](#)
- [Investments trackers](#)
- [Report detailing IRA's impact on US emissions + economy and public health](#)
- [“Emissions and energy impacts of the Inflation Reduction Act” *Science*](#)
- [Charged: EV Supply Chain Dashboard](#)

[-Retooling Old, Polluting Infrastructure for the Clean Economy \(Political Climate, 12/1/2022\)](#)

Week 3: Politics

...in the Anthropocene

Tuesday: World Views

Purdy, Prologue and Introduction (1-50)

[The trouble with net zero: A conversation with Holly Jean Buck](#)

Thursday: Public Opinion

[“Climate Change: US Public Opinion” by Patrick J. Egan and Megan Mullin, *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 20, 2017 \(14 pages\)](#)

[“Which Republicans are worried about global warming?” By Matthew Ballew, Jennifer Carman, Seth Rosenthal, Marija Verner, John Kotcher, Edward Maibach, and Anthony Leiserowitz \(5 pages\)](#)

[Global Warming’s Six Americas, Fall 2023 \(1 page\)](#)

Skim: Gaikwad, Nikhar, Federica Genovese, and Dustin Tingley. “Creating Climate Coalitions: Mass Preferences for Compensating Vulnerability in the World’s Two Largest Democracies.” *American Political Science Review* (2022): 1-19.

Further Readings:

- [“Introduction: Paths to Witnessing, Ethics of Speaking Out”, Nancy Lipton Rosenblum, *Daedalus* \(2020\)](#)
- [“Witnessing for the Middle to Depolarize the Climate Change Conversation”, *Daedalus* Fall 2020](#)
- [“Less Talk, More Walk: Why Climate Change Demands Activism in the Academy”, Jessica F. Green, *Daedalus* Fall 2020](#)
- [How climate activists can help get things built: A conversation with Jeff Ordower of 350.org](#)
- [Javeline, Debra, Tracy Kijewski-Correa, and Angela Chesler. 2019. “Does It Matter If You ‘Believe’ in Climate Change? Not for Coastal Home Vulnerability.” *Climatic Change* 155\(4\): 511–532.](#)
- [Garside, Susanna & Haoyu Zhai. 2022. If not now when? Climate disaster and the Green vote following the 2021 Germany Floods, *Research & Politics*, 9\(4\).](#)

Week 4: God and Nature

The religious, colonial, and mystic foundations of Western environmental law and politics:

Tuesday

Purdy, Chapter 1: An Unequal Terrain (51-70) and Chapter 2: God's Avid Gardeners (70-95)

Thursday

Purdy, Chapter 4: Natural Utopias (116-152)

The black church as a site of modern climate advocacy:

All We Can Save: Greens Are Just as Good as Kale by Heather McTeer Toney

Week 5: Justice

- What are some of the different ways environmental justice is defined?
- Where did these ideas come from?
- How are policies addressing environmental justice consistent or inconsistent with different definitions?
- How might past environmental justice activism be similar to different to future conflicts in the Anthropocene?

Tuesday

“Three faces of climate justice”, *Annual Review of Political Science* (2022) by Nives Dolšak and Aseem Prakash. Vol. 25:283-301 (14 pages)

“Race, Class, Gender, and American Environmentalism. US Forest Service General Technical Report PNW-GTR-534” (2002) by Dorceta Taylor (1-41)

Thursday

[Roosevelt Project Gulf Coast case \(2022\)](#) by Jason Beckfield et al. 1-30

[Executive Order on Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All](#)

Further reading:

- [Racism as a Motivator for Climate Justice](#), Mark A. Mitchell, *Daedalus* Fall 2020
- Bullard, R. D. (2005). *The quest for environmental justice: Human rights and the politics of pollution*
- [Putting more climate philanthropy toward economic and racial justice: A conversation with Abdul Dosunmu about the Climate Funders Justice Pledge.](#) (Volts, 2023) (48 min)
- [The Fight for Climate Justice](#) by Fernando Tormos-Aponte (SSN, 2020) (31 min)
- [Bringing Environmental Justice into Government Rulemaking](#), with Ann Wolverton (Resources Radio, 2023) (32 min)

Week 6: Utilitarianism and Technology

- How does utilitarian environmentalism differ from other kinds of environmentalism? On what assumptions do utilitarianism and managerialism rest? Under what circumstances are these assumptions more reasonable or less reasonable, in your opinion?
- What kinds of politics do different technologies create? Who do they empower and disempower? What kinds of policy fights do they inspire?

Tuesday: Utilitarianism and managerialism

Purdy, Chapter 5: A Conservationist Empire (153-187)

Thursday: Technology

Learning curves:

[The Big Fix: Seven Practical Steps to Save Our Planet](#) by Hal Harvey and Justin Gillis, Chapter 1: The Learning Curve (1-35) ([Canvas](#)) OR [Focusing on the climate actions that can make a real difference: A new book from Hal Harvey and Justin Gillis tries to clarify the choices](#)

Climate engineering:

[After Geoengineering: Climate Tragedy, Repair, and Restoration By Holly Jean Buck Introduction \(pages 1-49\)](#)

All We Can Save: A Handful of Dust by Kate Marvel

Further Reading:

- [Decarbonizing US transportation with an eye toward global justice: A conversation with Thea Riofrancos about reducing the need for lithium](#)
- [Learning curves will lead to extremely cheap clean energy: Doyne Farmer discusses the explosive implications of his new research](#)
- [How to think about solar radiation management: A conversation with Kelly Wanser of SilverLining](#)
- Chapter 5, *Ethics and Politics* in *A Case for Climate Engineering* by David Keith ([Canvas](#))
- *Under a White Sky: The Nature of the Future* by Elizabeth Kolbert
- [Dr. Ye Tao on a grand scheme to cool the Earth: Mirrors. Lots of mirrors.](#)
- [Why we shouldn't shut nuclear power plants — starts at minute 35](#)

Week 7: Ecological Critique

Tuesday

Purdy, Chapter 6: A Wilderness Passage into Ecology (188-227)

Thursday

Purdy, Chapter 7: Environmental Law in the Anthropocene (228-255), and Chapter 8: What Kind of Democracy (256-288)

Further reading:

- *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold (201-226) ([Canvas](#))

— SPRING BREAK —

Week 8: Indigenous and Feminist Critiques

Tuesday: Indigenous Critique

[Andrea Tunks, “Tangata Whenua Ethics and Climate Change”](#)

[Indigenous Environmental Justice, Renewable Energy Transition, and the Infrastructure of Sovereignty by Kyle Whyte in *Environmental Justice in North America*](#)

More TBD (including selections from *All We Can Save*)

Further reading:

- [Whyte, K., Bruscato, N., David-Chavez, D., Dockry, M., Johnson, M., Jones, C., and Leonard, K. 2023. Chapter 16, Tribes and Indigenous Peoples. U.S. 5th National Climate Assessment.](#)

Thursday: Eco-feminist Critique

[“Alive in the Sunshine” by Alyssa Battistoni](#)

More TBD (including selections from *All We Can Save*)

Week 9: Nationalist Critique

Tuesday: Great power competition, neo-Malthusian, and ethno-nationalist critique

[“Climate-Trap Diplomacy: The desire for climate cooperation with China undermines American strategic objectives.” by Jordan McGillis, City Journal \(1 page\)](#)

[“The Tragedy of the Commons” by Garrett Hardin in *Science*, Vol. 162, No. 3859 \(1968\), p. 1243-1248 \(6 pages\)](#)

[U.S. Immigration and the Environment from the Federation for American Immigration Reform \(30 pages\)](#)

Warning

The Southern Poverty Law Center designates [FAIR as a Hate Group](#) and [Hardin as an Extremist White Nationalist](#). While all assigned readings have a perspective, these views most starkly contrast the University of Michigan’s stated goals and policies. And

yet, these views are increasingly prominent in climate policy discourse, so it is important to understand them.

Also note that some factual claims in *U.S. Immigration and the Environment* contradict data from other sources like the [Congressional Budget Office](#) and the [PEW research center](#).

Thursday: Critiques of the neo-Malthusian and ethno-nationalist critiques

“The Tragedy of the Tragedy of the Commons” by Matto Mildernberger in *Scientific American*

“The Malthusians Are Back: Climate activists who worry that the world has too many people are joining an ugly tradition” by Alex Trembath and Vijaya Ramachandran in *The Atlantic* ([Canvas](#))

Climate denial is waning on the right. What’s replacing it might be just as scary

How fascism works. By Sean Illing interview with Jason Stanley for Vox

Further reading on great power competition:

- <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-case-for-us-cooperation-with-india-on-a-just-transition-away-from-coal/>

Further reading on climate migration: - [Climate Change Will Force a New American Migration](#) - Abrahm Lustgarten, ProPublica

Further critique of neo-Malthusian ideas:

[Neo-Malthusianism and Coercive Population Control in China and India: Overpopulation Concerns Often Result in Coercion](#) (Climate change is only discussed in the Introduction, the rest is not so relevant)

Further Research:

- [Information about climate-induced migration spurs negative attitudes about immigrants](#) by Kaitlin Raimi
- [‘Ecobordering’: casting immigration control as environmental protection](#) by Joe Turner and Dan Bailey
- [The origins of totalitarianism](#) by Hannah Arendt
- [H. Benveniste, M. Oppenheimer, M. Fleurbaey \(2020\). Effect of Border Policy on Exposure and Vulnerability to Climate Change. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 117 \(43\), 26692-26702.](#)

- [H. Benveniste , M. Oppenheimer, M. Fleurbaey \(2022\). “Climate Change Increases Resource-Constrained International Immobility.” *Nature Climate Change*, 12, 634-641](#)
- Black, Richard, Stephen R. G. Bennett, Sandy M. Thomas and John R. Beddington. 2011. Climate Change: Migration as Adaptation. *Nature* 478: 447-449.
- [H. Benveniste, J. Crespo Cuaresma, M. Gidden, R. Muttarak \(2021\). Tracing International Migration in Projections of Income Levels and Inequality across the Shared Socioeconomic Pathways. *Climatic Change*, 166 \(39\)](#)

Week 10: Institutions

Tuesday: Governance

Collective action

Ostrom, E. (2010). Beyond markets and states: polycentric governance of complex economic systems. *American Economic Review*, 100(3), 641-72.

Governing institutions

Politics: The Central Texts by Roberto Mangabeira Unger: Introduction (V-XVI) and Chapter 1 (1-18) ([Canvas](#))

- What is Unger’s critique of deep structure theorists (e.g., Marx)?
- What is Unger’s critique of modern social science?
- Why does Unger think that debates among critics and defenders of capitalism are incoherent?
- What does Unger mean by the “plasticity” of institutions?

Skim: [“The Climate Movement’s Impact on Technocratic Policymaking” by Devin Judge-Lord](#)

- What kinds of institutions do you see as most and least responsive to demands to address climate change? Why?

Thursday: Regulation and Electoral Institutions

[The wonky but incredibly important changes Biden just made to regulatory policy: A conversation with Sabeel Rahman](#)

Selections (TBD) from [The The Heritage Foundation’s *Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise*](#) that address climate change

- As discussed by Rahman, the Biden administration attempted to affect how agencies make and evaluate policy (e.g., through circular A4). How is the Heritage Foundation's plan different?

Electoral institutions:

Skim: “Legislative Staff and Representation in Congress” by Hertel-Fernandez, Alexander; Mildemberger, Matto; Stokes, Leah C. *The American Political Science Review*

Skim: “Institutions, Climate Change, and the Foundations of Long-term Policy-making.” Finnegan, Jared, 2022 *Comparative Political Studies*.

Further reading:

- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge University Press.
- [Doug Thompson defends the deep state](#)
- [The depthless stupidity of anti-ESG campaigns: A conversation with Kelly Mitchel](#)

Week 11: Movements

- To what extent have climate movements been effective, and why?
- To what extent are the underlying features of US climate politics outlined by McAdam in 2017 still true?

Tuesday: Structure

McAdam, Doug. 2017. “Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20:189–2008

[Building a movement that can take full advantage of the IRA](#)

[What the Hell Is Going On at the Sierra Club?](#) by Kate Aronoff

Thursday: Issue frames

Chapter 1. Deva Woodly. 2015. *The Politics of Common Sense: How Social Movements Use Public Discourse to Change Politics and Win Acceptance*, Oxford University Press. (Canvas)

Further reading:

- *The Real Culprits of Climate Change* with Matthew Todd Huber (SSN, 2022)

Week 12: Markets

Tuesday: New Keynesian, neoliberal, and libertarian economics

“Information” by Joseph E. Stiglitz (7 pages)

“The Use of Knowledge in Society” By Friedrich A. Hayek in *American Economic Review* (11 pages)

Gotham’s Airheaded Carbon Law (9 pages)

Research:

Building Political Support for Carbon Pricing (2 pages) and *Paying for Pollution* by Leigh Raymond (22 min)

Thursday: Market critics

Elizabeth Popp Berman on the “economic style of thinking” that consumed US policy OR *Thinking like an Economist: How Efficiency Replaced Equality in U.S. Public Policy* (Selections TBD) (Canvas)

Excerpts from “The Big Myth: How American Business Taught Us to Loathe Government and Love the Free Market”

Criticism of the critics:

The War on Economics by Idrees Kahloon (Washington bureau chief for The Economist)

Can we save the climate before we overthrow capitalism? Economist Josh Mason doesn’t think so. (minutes 6:10-44:55)

Further reading:

- [Subsidies really do matter to the US oil & gas industry](#)
- Peters, Glen P, Jan C Minx, Christopher L Weber and Ottmar Edenhofer. 2011. “Growth in emission transfers via international trade from 1990 to 2008.” *Proceedings of the national academy of sciences* 108(21):8903–8908.
- [Voluntary carbon offsets are headed for a crash: A conversation with veteran energy blogger Joe Romm](#)

Week 13: Incumbents

...as a force explaining action and inaction.

- Why are groups effective at shaping policy?
- What industries will lose from climate policies, and could they pivot?
- What industries have most effectively obstructed policy? How do they work with/against political actors?

Tuesday: The global political economy of climate policy:

Skim: Colgan, Jeff D., Jessica F. Green, and Thomas N. Hale. 2020. “Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change.” *International Organization*

Skim: Aklin, M. and Mildemberger, M. 2020. “Prisoners of the wrong dilemma: Why distributive conflict, not collective action, characterizes the politics of climate change.” *Global Environmental Politics* 20(4): 4-27.

Thursday: US political economy of climate policy:

[Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics](#), Chapter 2: The Logic of Double Representation by Matto Mildemberger

[Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States](#), Chapter 3 An Institutional History of Electricity Politics and Climate Inaction

Further Reading:

- [Op-Ed: Yes, ExxonMobil misled the public by NAOMI ORESKES AND GEOFFREY SUPRAN](#)
- [Winners and Losers of Energy and Climate Policy – How Can the Costs Be Redistributed?](#)

Week 14: Planning for Change

Preparing our cities for the climate crisis: Geophysicist Klaus Jacob on how we can adapt our cities to live with rising seas and heavier rains. at 34:00-57:00

Charleston: Race, Water, and the Coming Storm by Susan Crawford (Select Chapters TBD) (Canvas)

Minnesota forces transportation planners to take climate change seriously

Further reading:

- Sommer, L. (2020, August 6). Why Sprawl Could Be The Next Big Climate Change Battle. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/06/812199726/why-sprawl-could-be-the-next-big-climate-change-battle>
- <https://legal-planet.org/2018/12/05/were-never-going-to-meet-our-ghg-transportation-goals-until-we-radically-rethink-our-cities/>
- 3 cities face a climate dilemma: to build or not to build homes in risky places
- The challenges of building transmission in the US, and how to overcome them, with Liza Reed
- What's up with Manchin's plan to reform energy permitting? Earthjustice president Abigail Dillen thinks it's a bad deal
- Charles Marohn on unsustainable suburbs: They can't pay for themselves

Week 15: Reflection

Tuesday: Wrap-up

- How has your understanding of the politics of policymaking changed since the start of the semester?
- Which reading stands out to us most and why?
- What connections do you see between your op-eds and the readings?

Thursday: No class

Ammendments

Because many topics we cover are subjects of ongoing discussion, I may make occasional changes to the course readings over the semester. I will notify you of any substantive changes. The full revision history is [on github](#).

More Information on Student Instructor Best Practices

We will conduct office hours with my door open unless you request otherwise.

Students who wish to have confidential conversations with me may schedule a private meeting via Zoom or may ask to have a closed-door meeting. But this closed-door meeting must be made on your request in writing, even on the spot. I will never suggest a closed-door meeting myself because of the power dynamic.

We will document all pre-scheduled meetings between the instructor and the student via Google Calendar (or other software) and/or university email.

Students who email to request an office hour appointment should expect to receive an email confirmation or a Google Calendar (or other software) invitation from me, or, upon my email confirmation and request, may send me a Google Calendar (or other software) invitation for this meeting. The purpose is to provide a permanent record of the meeting and to ensure that all class activities are documented and transparent. Students who choose to drop by for informal meetings are welcome to do so, but there will be no documentation provided. (See above for open-door policy.)

We will choose meeting locations and conduct meetings with student and instructor safety in mind.

We will ensure that all individual meetings between instructor/student will take place at university venues.

We will ensure that all off-campus meetings, trips, or events must engage with course material.

Off-campus meetings will not involve alcohol or take place at locations that serve alcohol. If the class goes out for a meal, it will be at a cafe or restaurant that does not serve alcohol. The location/day/time of any off-campus meetings between the instructor and students will be documented in Google Calendar (or other software).

We, the instructors, will conduct all individual communications using the University platforms of email, Canvas, Slack, or Piazza, with the caveat that we may use non-university platforms set up by students (such as GroupMe) only if they include all students in the class.

There will be no instructor-student private communications on any non-University platforms, such as social media, GroupMe, WhatsApp, etc.

For more information on resources for reporting sexual misconduct, please see [the faculty senate best practices for faculty interactions](#) and [U-M's page on Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct](#).