

SYLLABUS

Climate Change and Public Policy in Europe and the US

PS-1364

Spring 2017

Posvar 5200 – M/W 9-10:15am

INSTRUCTOR : Dr. Michaël Aklin
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OFFICE HOURS : Wed 10:30am-12pm

Course Objectives

This is a course on climate policymaking. Climate change is one of the most difficult problems faced by humankind. We are all causing and suffering from it to varying degrees. As a result, some have labeled it a “super wicked problem.” The politics underlying climate change are complex and therefore particularly interesting.

In the first part of this course, we will analyze what policymaking really is: how does it work? How are policies designed? What determines whether a country adopts policy *A* or *B*? Where is policymaking the most effective? What does it mean for a policy to be effective?

In the second part, we will study the determinants of climate policy in Europe and elsewhere. Specifically, we will investigate the role played by public opinion, political leaders, bureaucracies, scientists, and interest groups. Each of these contribute to policymaking both in domestic settings and in international relations. By the end of this first part, we will have a clearer sense of why we are where we are.

The last part of this course evaluate the effectiveness of actual policies designed to solve climate change. We will examine a broad range of policies ranging from carbon taxes to technology transfers. We will examine the obstacles that they have faced and still face nowadays. Some climate policies, such as investments in clean technology, are somewhat innocuous. Others, such as carbon markets or geo-engineering, are much more controversial. We will analyze what these policies have done, what they could do, and why they have not solved climate change (yet). We will conclude by making conjectures about the future of climate policymaking.

Learning Goals

1. Understand how policymaking works in Europe, the U.S., and elsewhere.
2. Learn how to evaluate policies.
3. Identify successful climate policies and explain why they performed well.

Requirements

The requirements for this class are the following:

1. Policy Report: 65%, divided in two assignments. The first part (30%) is a *policy proposal*. This is a memo for a European MEP or a U.S. Senator that compares the political feasibility of various climate policies and explains which one is the most likely to be implemented. The second part (35%) is a *policy evaluation*. Here, you have to explain to the same policymaker whether the policy you picked has been successful elsewhere. More details will be given in class.

2. Exam: 30%. Closed books. You can bring one sheet of handwritten notes (both sides).

3. Participation: 5%. This grade is based on regular attendance, active participation in and outside the class.

In summary:

	Policy report
30%	Policy Proposal
35%	Policy Evaluation
30%	Exam
5%	Participation
100%	Total

Important: late submission of any requirement leads to a loss of 2% (of your final grade) per day. I do not give extensions except if the student has a medical issue.

Grade summary:

Below 60%	F					
60-62%	D-	70-72%	C-	80-82%	B-	90-92% A-
63-66%	D	73-76%	C	83-86%	B	93% and above A
67-69%	D+	77-79%	C+	87-89%	B+	

Textbooks & Readings

All readings will be uploaded online on CourseWeb. We will not be using a textbook.

Misc.

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, from the February 1974 Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom reported to the Senate Council, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz or exam will be imposed.

View the complete policy at www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html.

Class Schedule

PART I: BASIC CONCEPTS

Introduction (Jan 8)

Optional: goo.gl/gPdbpb.

Topic 1: A Brief History of Climate Change (Jan 10, 17)

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Topic 2: The Study of Public Policy (Jan 22, 24)

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- Chapter 1 and 2:

PART II: WHY WE ARE WHERE WE ARE

Topic 3: Public Opinion (Jan 29, 31)

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Topic 4: Political Leaders and Institutions (Feb 5, 7)

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Topic 5: Bureaucracy (Feb 12)

- TBD

Topic 6: Special Interests (Feb 14, 19)

- Chapter 1:
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Topic 7: International Climate Policymaking (Feb 21, 26)

- Chapter 3:

Midterm: February 28

PART III: POLICYMAKING AND SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Topic 8: Greenhouse Gas Policies (March 12, 14)

March 14: Policy proposal due in class (email+hard copy).

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- Background: Chapter 1 and 2:

Topic 9: Energy Policies (March 19, 21)

- A Guide to EU Renewable Energy Policy (chapter 2 by Bocquillon)
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Topic 10: Transportation Policies (March 26, 28)

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Topic 11: International Policies (Apr 2, 9)

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Topic 12: Geo-engineering (Apr 11, 16)

April 16: Final report (policy proposal and policy evaluation) due in class (email+hard copy).

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- Chapter 6: