

HS241533: The Politics of Climate Change Adaptation

Susanna Garside
susanna.garside@doz.unilu.ch

Masterseminar
University of Lucerne, Autumn 2024

Class Hours

Mi, 18.09.2024, 12:15 - 14:00 Uhr, HS 7 (Einführungsveranstaltung)
Fr, 08.11.2024, 09:15 - 17:00 Uhr, Inseliquai 10 220
Sa, 09.11.2024, 09:15 - 16:00 Uhr, 3.B55
Fr, 22.11.2024, 09:15 - 17:00 Uhr, 4.B51
Sa, 23.11.2024, 09:15 - 16:00 Uhr, 4.B54

I will hold in-person office hours in Lucerne on 7th and 21st November by appointment. Meetings via Zoom can be arranged at any time.

Course Description

This course is about the politics of survival. In a world where global warming has already risen beyond 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, communities in every corner of the world are exposed to increasingly frequent and severe episodes of extreme weather, including hurricanes, droughts, heatwaves, heavy rainfall, and flooding. How are societies adapting to this? And how are the dynamics of climate change adaptation shaping politics? This course offers an introduction to the politics of climate change adaptation. We conceptualise adaptation as a fundamentally political issue, both facilitated by policy and politics and in itself acting as a force for shaping political outcomes.

Where existing literature on the politics of climate change has overwhelmingly focussed on climate change mitigation in the Global North, this course draws attention to the growing body of work on the politics of climate change adaptation and takes a global perspective. It considers how adaptation challenges vary between countries of the Global North and Global South and encourages critical engagement with the research designs and methods being used to study the politics of climate change adaptation.

Course Organisation

This course is a block seminar, consisting of two two-day teaching blocks in November 2024. Each teaching day will consist of three or four sessions. Students are required to prepare in advance of each teaching block. It is expected that students will have studied the required readings in advance and come to class prepared to discuss them. Student presentations will take place in both the first and second teaching block. Presentation slots and discussant roles will be allocated via an online sign-up sheet which will be circulated on 1st October. You will *not* be disadvantaged in your grades if you sign up to one of the presentations in the first block. In other words, the fact you volunteer to present earlier in the course will be taken into consideration during grading.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. identify and describe ways in which actors at different levels (international, national, community and individual) adapt to climate change;
2. provide examples of how adaptation challenges differ between countries in the Global North and Global South;
3. analyse potential impacts of climate change adaptation strategies or policies on politics;
4. critically evaluate and reflect on research designs and methods used to study the politics of climate change adaptation.

Mandatory Requirements

To receive credits for this class, you are expected to fulfil the following criteria:

1. Attend all sessions

Students who miss more than two sessions without a justified absence will fail the course.

2. Prepare for class and participate actively

Students should come to class able to summarise the main points of the required reading for each session. If you can do this in a sentence or two, you have mastered the material. Studying the readings also implies thinking critically about them: What does the paper teach us? Should we trust the findings? What could have the authors have done differently or better? What questions remain unanswered? Engaging with the texts takes time, but does not require reading every word of the text: be strategic in your approach (see the advice section).

Active engagement in class involves intervening with questions, and participating in class discussion. Students are expected to share their reflections on the assigned readings.

3. Two AI Reviews

Students should write two "AI reviews". First, you must choose one starred (*) article from each teaching block, and ask an AI tool to summarise the article. You may not write an AI review about the article you choose for your presentation. The AI PDF plugin for ChatGPT is one example of a tool you can use for free, but you may use any tool of your choice. You should start your submission document with the complete citation of the article you are working with, the name of the AI tool you used, and a copy of your prompt and the chatbot's answer. Underneath you should write your critique of the chatbot's article summary. This should be a minimum of 500 words in length and answer the following questions:

- Did the chatbot accurately summarise the article? If not, why not? Did it miss any key points? Focus your answer on communicating the article's main argument and findings.
- Did the chatbot accurately identify the article's main contribution? If not, why not? Here you should be sure to clearly state what bigger problem or question the author is contributing to addressing.
- Did the chatbot identify any limitations of the paper? What would you add? Here, the objective is to engage with the paper's arguments from a critical perspective. You should identify the main limitations of the paper and propose ways in which these limitations could be addressed, either by the author or in future research.

Needless to say, you will not be graded on the quality of the chatbot's summary, but on the quality of your answers to these questions. As you work, make note of any reflections you have about the use of AI as a tool in academia.

AI reviews should be uploaded to the "Response papers" folder in OLAT. AI reviews for Block 1 are due by **Tuesday 5th November at 6pm**. For Block 2, they are due by **Tuesday 19th November at 6pm**. The file you submit should be a Word document, with the filename as your surname in capital letters followed by the block number, e.g. GARSIDE_1.docx or GARSIDE_2.docx.

4. Presentation

Presentations will be done individually or in groups of two to three students, depending on the number of students enrolled in the course. The presentation schedule will be decided via an online sign-up sheet which will be circulated on **1st October**.

Presenters must critically re-examine one of the starred (*) readings to locate a troubling or unsatisfactory element, then propose a solution including a theoretical motivation and a feasible research design. A discussion of the proposal will follow the presentation. Presenters must upload the slides of the presentation **at least 24 hours before the presentation** to the Presentations

folder in OLAT to allow the discussant to prepare. The file with the presentation slides can be in the preferred format of the presenter. The title should include the session's number followed by the student's (or students') surname(s) in capital letters e.g. 01_GARSDIE. The presentation should last around 15 minutes.

A good presentation should include the following:

1. A brief summary of the readings, including their main argument, methodology, and contribution. It should focus on those aspects of the text that the student(s) aim to focus on later. It should never be a full summary of the content.
2. **Option 1:** A critique of the argument or the research design. Some examples are an inconsistent logic, flawed conceptualisations (e.g., concepts that do not travel well across contexts), limited external validity (e.g., results that do not apply in other contexts), limited internal validity (e.g., poorly identified causal relationship, for example, due to omitted variables). **Option 2:** Identify an important research question which was outside the scope of the original paper, but warrants further investigation.
3. Propose a feasible research design. **For Option 1**, the research design should help to overcome the limitation(s) you have identified. Some examples include: building a better theoretical argument with testable implications, a more effective research design for answering the same question, a design that tests whether the results hold in a different (or more generalised) context, or a design that controls for potential confounders. **For Option 2:** You should choose a design which is well-suited for your question. You should also reflect carefully on what your contribution to the academic literature would be. In both cases, you are free to imagine that you have an unlimited research budget.

The presentation will be evaluated based on its clarity, the understanding of the original reading's concepts, the depth of critical evaluation, congruency between the critique made and the research proposal's aim to solve it (or new question and chosen research design), the argumentation, and the presenter's ability to respond to the discussant's points. For further guidance, refer to the departmental guidelines on [how to do research](#). If you would like to meet to discuss your ideas with me before your presentation, do not hesitate to send me an email.

5. Discussant role

Each student should sign up as a discussant for another student's presentation. The discussant's role is to prepare and deliver comments on the presentation. You should familiarise yourself with the slides which will be uploaded to OLAT 24 hours before the presentation, and before/during the presentation, prepare some comments and questions for the presenter. The discussant should speak for around 2-3 minutes and their intervention should be constructive, aimed at clarifying or furthering the ideas put forward in the presentation. The discussant's comments should initiate the discussion between the presenter and the rest of the audience. The rest of the audience can (and should) join the discussion by raising their own questions.

Grade Structure

Component	Percent of Grade
In-class participation	15%
AI Reviews	40%
Presentation	40%
Discussant role	5%

Optional Seminar Paper

Students can opt to write a seminar paper for extra credits. After making an appointment with me to agree a topic, you will first be asked to write a paper outline of 1-2 pages consisting of the following elements: 1) Introduction of the topic; 2) Research question; 3) Theory and hypotheses; 4) Approach and structure of the paper (including a tentative empirical design). The final paper should be 5,500 - 6,500 words.

Advice

- Re-read the departmental guidelines on [how to do research](#).
- See Macartan Humphrey's advice on how to [how to read](#), and [critique](#) an academic paper. This will help you to read more effectively, and will save you time.
- If you are an auditory learner, you may find that an AI text-to-speech reader could help you get through the readings. In my experience, this [this one](#) is great and well worth the investment.

Other Resources of Interest

- Reliable English-language climate news sources: [Carbon Brief](#), [The Guardian](#), [Politico Europe](#), [The New York Times](#), [The Washington Post](#), [HEATED](#).
- The Environmental Politics and Governance Network's archive of [Deep Climate Conversations](#).
- [EarthWeb.info](#) is curated primarily for a US audience, but contains a wealth of useful and interesting resources.

Course Structure and Reading List

Stars (*) indicate readings you can choose from for your AI reviews and presentations.

BLOCK 1

Day 1: Friday 8 November, 09:15-17:00

Session 1: Introduction (09:15 - 10:45)

How are countries in the Global North and Global South affected differently by climate change? Do they adapt in different ways?

Recommended reading:

- Kala, Namrata, Clare Balboni, and Shweta Bhogale. 2023. 'Climate Adaptation'.

Session 2: Adaptation as Politics (11:00 - 12:30)

What makes adaptation political?

Required reading:

- Javeline, Debra. 2014. 'The Most Important Topic Political Scientists Are Not Studying: Adapting to Climate Change'. *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (2): 420–34.
- Dolšák, Nives, and Aseem Prakash. 2018. 'The Politics of Climate Change Adaptation'. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43 (1): 317–41.

Session 3: International Politics of Climate Change Adaptation (13:30 - 15:00)

What does international co-operation on climate change adaptation look like?

Required reading:

- Colgan, Jeff D., Jessica F. Green, and Thomas N. Hale. 2021. 'Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change'. *International Organization* 75 (2): 586–610.
- Dolšák, Nives, and Aseem Prakash. 2022. 'Three Faces of Climate Justice'. *Annual Review of Political Science* 25 (1): 283–301.

Session 4: Disaster Preparedness and Relief (15:30 - 17:00)

Why do governments underspend on disaster preparedness?

Required reading:

- *Healy, Andrew, and Neil Malhotra. 2009. 'Myopic Voters and Natural Disaster Policy'. *American Political Science Review* 103 (3): 387–406.
- *Anderson, Sarah, Rob DeLeo, and Kristin Taylor. 2023. 'Legislators Do Not Harness Voter Support for Disaster Preparedness.' *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy* 14(1): 68–88.

Day 2: Saturday 9 November, 09:30 - 15:30

Session 5: Wildfires (09:30 - 11:00)

Does experience of wildfires lead to better risk reduction?

Required reading:

- *Anderson, Sarah E, Andrew J Plantinga, and Matthew Wibbenmeyer. 2023. 'Inequality in Agency Response: Evidence from Salient Wildfire Events'. *The Journal of Politics* 85 (2): 357–794.

Recommended reading:

- Hazlett, Chad, and Matto Mildenerger. 2020. 'Wildfire Exposure Increases Pro-Environment Voting within Democratic but Not Republican Areas'. *American Political Science Review* 114 (4): 1359–65.
- Pianta, Silvia, and Paula Retzl. 2022. 'Global Harms, Local Profits: How the Uneven Costs of Natural Disasters Affect Support for Green Political Platforms'.

Session 6: Drought (11:30 - 13:00)

In unequal societies, do the rich and poor adapt differently?

Required reading:

- *Abajian, Alexander, Cassandra Cole, B Kelsey Jack, Kyle C Meng, and Martine Visser. 2024. 'Dodging Day Zero: Drought, Adaptation, and Inequality in Cape Town'.

Session 7: Agriculture (14:00 - 15:30)

What role can governments play in helping farmers adapt to climate change?

Required reading:

- *Duchoslay, Jan, Edwin Kenamu, and Jack Thunde. 2023. 'Targeting Hunger or Votes? The Political Economy of Humanitarian Transfers in Malawi'. *World Development* 165 (May): 10617.

BLOCK 2

Day 3: Friday 22 November, 09:15 - 17:00

Session 8: Flooding (09:15-10:45)

Can disaster relief become a form of preparedness?

Required reading:

- *Pople, Ashley, Ruth Hill, Stefan Dercon, and Ben Brunckhorst. 2021. 'Anticipatory Cash Transfers in Climate Disaster Response'. CSAE Working Paper WPS/2021-07.

Session 9: Sea Level Rise (11:00 - 12:30)

Managed retreat: is it politically feasible?

Required reading:

- Hino, Miyuki, Christopher B. Field, and Katharine J. Mach. 2017. 'Managed Retreat as a Response to Natural Hazard Risk'. *Nature Climate Change* 7 (5): 364–70.
- *Freihardt, Jan, Mark T Buntaine, and Thomas Bernauer. 2024. 'Choosing to Protect: Public Support for Flood Defense over Relocation in Climate Change Adaptation'. *Environmental Research Letters* 19 (10).

Recommended reading:

- Hsiao, Allan. 2023. 'Sea Level Rise and Urban Adaptation'. Unpublished.

Session 10: Migration I (13:30 - 15:00)

Migration as a form of adaptation: how do individuals make decisions about whether to migrate?

Required reading:

- *Koubi, Vally. 2016. 'Environmental Stressors and Migration: Evidence from Vietnam'. *World Development*.

Session 11: Migration II (15:30 - 17:00)

How will climate-related migration shape politics?

Required reading:

- *Arias Sabrina B., and Christopher W. Blair. "In the Eye of the Storm: Hurricanes, Climate Migration, and Climate Attitudes." *American Political Science Review*, 2024, 1–21.
- *Gaikwad, Nikhar, and Gareth Nellis. 2021. 'Do Politicians Discriminate Against Internal Migrants? Evidence from Nationwide Field Experiments in India'. *American Journal of Political Science* 65 (4).

Day 4: Saturday 23 November, 09:30 - 15:30

Session 12: Conflict (09:30 - 11:00)

Does climate change increase the risk of conflict?

Required reading:

- Koubi, Vally. 2019. 'Climate Change and Conflict'. *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (1): 343–60.

Session 13: Conflict II (11:30 - 13:00)

How are adaptation, migration and conflict related?

Required reading:

- McGuirk, Eoin F and Nunn, Nathan. 2024. 'Transhumant Pastoralism, Climate Change, and Conflict in Africa'. *Review of Economic Studies*.

Session 14: Conclusion (14:00 - 15:30)

(How) can loss and damage be compensated?

Required reading:

- *Calliari, E., O. Serdeczny, and L. Vanhala. 2020. 'Making Sense of the Politics in the Climate Change Loss & Damage Debate'. *Global Environmental Change* 64 (September): 102133.