POLI 4380 / 5380 Politics of Climate Change
Dalhousie University
Wednesdays, 2:35 – 5:25 p.m.
McCain 2190

Instructor: Dr. Anders Hayden
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., Thursdays 11:00 a.m. to noon, or by appointment, Henry Hicks, Room 358
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Course Description

This course examines the interactions between politics and climate change, including the emerging political responses that aim to limit greenhouse gas emissions and stabilize the climate as well as the impacts of a changing climate on political life. Among the key questions we will consider throughout the course: What are the key sources of disagreement in the political debate over how to respond to climate change? What does climate change mean for various political, social, and economic projects? What could be done politically to enable stronger responses to the challenge of climate change?

Topics include:

- the relationship between science and climate politics
- the controversial role of economic analysis in creating a basis for climate politics
- the emergence of a new climate capitalism that aims to link emissions reductions to economic expansion and business strategy
- demands for more politically-challenging alternatives that question economic growth, consumerism, and capitalist imperatives while emphasizing “climate justice”
- Canada’s climate record and reasons why climate change is a particularly difficult political challenge for this country
- the potential and limits of climate politics at the personal level through lifestyle and behaviour change

1 – DRAFT – Readings for January 30 and later may be revised
• international climate negotiations and the key sources of conflict among nations
• the growing acknowledgement of climate change as a security issue
• geo-engineering as a potential climate response and its political implications

The course emphasizes the political and social aspects of climate change. We will draw on understandings from the natural sciences where necessary for an informed analysis of the issues, but a natural sciences background is not necessary to take the course.

It is highly recommended that undergraduates take 3385 Politics of the Environment prior to this course.

Course Format

The course will combine seminar discussion with some interactive lecturing, along with student presentations and the occasional use of short videos.

Expectations and Grading

| Attendance and Participation | 20% |
| Weekly “QIPs” | 20% |
| Presentation | 20% |
| Research Paper | 40% |

Attendance and Participation 20%

You are expected to attend every class, having completed the assigned readings before class. (We only meet once a week, so each time you miss a class, you miss about 8 percent of the total class time.)

You are expected to participate actively and respectfully in group discussions without dominating the discussion. A good participant also demonstrates knowledge of the assigned readings and asks probing questions to the instructor and to fellow students.

Students will be assigned a participation mark for each class in accordance with the following guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Absent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Present, not disruptive. Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them. Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class). Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. Demonstrates sporadic involvement.</td>
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2 – DRAFT – Readings for January 30 and later may be revised
Your overall attendance and participation grade will be based on the following formula:
Attendance (one point per day, maximum of 12) + (average participation grade out of 4 x 2) = maximum of 20.

Weekly “QIPs” 20%
Starting in week 2, before the beginning of class, you will submit a reflection on the week’s readings. The reflection will be 400-500 words in length for undergraduate students and 600-750 words for graduate students. The weekly QIPs must be submitted on brightspace before the beginning of the class in question; you cannot catch up later on QIPs that you have missed.

One possible model to follow in your reflection is to identify at least one Question (Q), Interesting or Important Point (I), and Problem (P) that you identified in the readings (or had with them)—hence the acronym QIP. However, if you find that model too constraining, you are not required to follow it, as long as you show that you have done the reading and reflected on it.

The main goal of the QIPs is to encourage you to think about the readings and the issues that you would like to discuss before coming to class. They also give the instructor an opportunity to identify any common questions or problems, which will then be discussed in class.

You will receive one point for each QIP you submit, up to a maximum of 10, over the semester. You will also receive an additional qualitative grade out of 10 on your QIPs throughout the semester. The qualitative grade will be based on three main grading categories: excellent (0.8 points), satisfactory (0.6 points), and less than satisfactory (0.3 to 0.5 points). Therefore if you submit a satisfactory QIP, you will receive 1 + 0.6 = 1.6 points, equivalent to an A-minus grade. An excellent QIP will earn 1.8 points, equivalent to an A-plus, while a less than satisfactory QIP could earn as little as 1.3 points, equivalent to a C. (In rare cases of particularly poor work, I reserve the right to give a lower grade.)

As you will see, the majority of the points are given for simply showing that you are doing the reading, understanding key themes, and reflecting thoughtfully upon them. If you do that every
week, you will get a grade in the A-minus range on this component of the course. Higher grades may be assigned to QIPs that show strong insights, particularly thoughtful commentary on key themes that cut across the readings for the week—rather than focusing on secondary details or looking at the readings in isolation—or an ability to make relevant links to wider issues in debates over climate politics beyond those specifically addressed in the readings. Lower grades may be assigned to QIPs that do not illustrate an adequate effort in having completed the week’s readings or in identifying and commenting upon relevant themes.

Presentations 20%
Each student will make a 10 minute presentation during the semester on a specific issue of their choice related to climate politics. (It should not be a presentation on climate science, although it can be about the political or policy issues related to the science.) Afterwards, they will lead a class discussion based on questions that they have prepared in advance. Further details on the content of presentations will be posted on brightspace.

Note that presentations do not have to be directly related to the topic of the class for that day. Students are encouraged to use their presentation as an opportunity to develop ideas for their research papers. Guidelines indicating how the presentations are to be graded will be distributed in class.

Research Paper 40%
Undergraduate students will write a paper of 4,000 words, while graduate student papers should be 6,000 to 8,000 words. Papers are due on the last day of class, April 10.

In previous years, some students have left the work on their papers to the last minute and received a lower grade than they were capable of. If you see that you will have a very busy end-of-semester (e.g. with an honours thesis to complete), I suggest that you either aim to complete work on your paper well in advance of the deadline or you ask for an extension well in advance. I will consider requests for extensions if you plan ahead and ask by February 26.

A list of possible paper topics will be distributed in class. You are also free to propose your own topic, subject to approval of the instructor. The main criterion is that it must be related to the politics of climate change.

You have the option of submitting a 1-2 page proposal, plus an initial bibliography, by February 26. You will not receive a grade for the proposal, but this is an opportunity to receive feedback as you develop your paper. This will also help to ensure that you begin work on your paper early in the semester and help avoid a last-minute rush.

Additional Information for Graduate Students

As this is a cross-listed class, the requirements for graduate students are somewhat different from those for undergraduates. The number of and types of assignments are the same, but the expectations for these assignments are considerably higher:

1. In all assignments, graduate students are expected to show a deeper analytical ability when evaluating readings, to show familiarity with a wider variety of sources, and to illustrate greater sophistication of thought in both verbal and written forms.
2. The writing style for graduate students should illustrate greater sophistication, both in the construction of the argument and in the clarity of writing.

3. While all students are expected to be prepared for each seminar, graduate students are expected to be particularly able to identify and critically discuss key themes in the week’s readings. Graduate students are expected to be particularly active in discussions.

4. At the graduate level, students should show greater understanding of the nuances of criticism, e.g. how to provide intellectually incisive criticism in a respectful and constructive manner.

5. Graduate students will be expected to write longer research papers and weekly “QIPs” (see details above). Graduate students may choose to tailor their research papers to their thesis work, but this should be discussed with the instructor in advance.

**Late Penalties**

Research papers received after the due date will be subject to a late penalty of 1% on the first day, an additional 2% on the second day, an additional 3% on the third day ... and an additional 5% on the fifth and every subsequent day, unless appropriate written documentation such as a doctor’s note is provided. (For example, a paper submitted six days late will receive a penalty of 20%, i.e. 1+2+3+4+5+5%). Please plan your work well ahead of time to avoid late penalties. The late penalties are phased in gradually to give you some extra flexibility. For example, if you need one more day to finish your paper, you may decide it is worth taking the small penalty to have a little extra time, but the penalties increase substantially as the delay grows longer.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on plagiarism and academic honesty referenced in the Policies and Student Resources sections of the [plagiarism.dal.ca](http://plagiarism.dal.ca) website. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations.

To ensure that you understand what plagiarism is, I suggest you take the following online quiz: [http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/quiz.html](http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/quiz.html). You might find some surprises.

**N.B. I typically have to penalize at least one student for plagiarism each semester.** In some cases, the violations appeared to be unintentional as the students did not understand the rules for the proper citation of others’ work. **Don’t let it happen to you**—or me (it’s no fun for anybody).

If you have any questions about academic integrity and plagiarism, please ask.

**Required Book**


**WEEKLY THEMES AND READINGS**

*N.B. You can find the readings either in the required book on the course website on brightspace, unless otherwise indicated. Class schedule is subject to change.*

5 – DRAFT – Readings for January 30 and later may be revised
Since the politics of climate change is evolving rapidly, the instructor may choose to replace some scheduled readings if relevant new readings become available. Any changes in assigned readings will be announced in class and on Brightspace.

The reading list below from January 30 to April 3 is in draft form. It will be revised and a new version of the syllabus will be distributed by January 23.

January 9: Introduction

Required:

Gough, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 11-52.


Focus on the key points in bold and the big picture; you can skim over the more technical details. You may want to refer to the glossary near beginning of the report for explanation of terms and abbreviations (e.g. NDCs).

Recommended:


January 16: Science and Climate Politics

How wide is the scientific consensus on climate change? Does the extent of consensus matter politically?

Why have some political actors continued to resist the findings of mainstream climate science?

Why is there such a wide gap between scientific understandings of climate change and public opinion about the state of the science? And between scientific understandings and the degree of political action?

What role have climate science “doubters” played in questioning/undermining the basis for political action on climate change?

What different forms can climate science “denial” take? Is such denial largely confined to the conservative side of the political spectrum or does it appear, in various forms, across the political spectrum?
Required:


Highly Recommended:


Recommended


January 23: Economics and Climate Politics

How do we determine how much effort to make to combat climate change? Is the economic tool of cost-benefit analysis the right way to decide? Is strong action to address climate change a “win-win” scenario that also produces economic benefits? Is it feasible to reconcile the continued pursuit of economic growth with stabilization of the climate?
Required:


Highly Recommended:


Recommended:


9 – DRAFT – Readings for January 30 and later may be revised


For the full Stern Review, see: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview_index.htm


**January 30: Climate Capitalism & Ecological Modernization (I)**

How is contemporary capitalism beginning to respond to the challenge of climate change?

How are some countries trying to link climate policy to economic strategy?

Does the carbon market offer a viable path to a low-carbon economy?

Can carbon markets be reformed to address their initial problems or should they be abandoned?

*Required:*


**Recommended:**


11 – DRAFT – Readings for January 30 and later may be revised


February 6: Climate Capitalism & Ecological Modernization (II)

Required:

Gough. Chapter 6, “Decarbonising the economy and its social consequences.”


Recommended:


12 – DRAFT – Readings for January 30 and later may be revised


Skocpol, Theda. 2013. “Naming the Problem: What It Will Take to Counter Extremism and Engage Americans in the Fight against Global Warming.”


**February 13: Alternatives to Climate Capitalism (I)**

Are “climate capitalism” and “ecological modernization” the only politically viable options to achieve deep emissions cuts?
Do we need to question the growth economy, consumerism, capitalism?
Do political movements focused on climate justice and resisting extractivism offer more hope for solutions than “climate capitalism?”

**Required:**

Gough, chapters 7-9.


**Recommended:**


Klein, Naomi. 2014. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.


February 20: No Class, Study Break

February 27: Alternatives to Climate Capitalism (II)

Required:


Recommended:


March 6: Making it Personal: Climate Politics, Lifestyle, and Behaviour Change

What does a low-carbon lifestyle look like?

Is lifestyle and behaviour change a key element of climate politics, or a distraction from more important issues?
How much impact can individual change have without wider social and political change?

_N.B. A short assignment, which involves calculating your carbon footprint and analyzing an action plan to reduce it, will be distributed the week before this class._

**Required:**


Moser, Stephanie and Silke Kleinhuckelkotten. 2017. “Good Intents, but Low Impacts: Diverging Importance of Motivational and Socioeconomic Determinants Explaining Pro-Environmental Behavior, Energy Use, and Carbon Footprint.” *Environment and Behavior* 013916517710685. (N.B. You can skim the details in the “Method” section. If you are not familiar with some of the statistical procedures, that’s ok – focus on the big picture of the main findings.)


Southerton, Dale and Jo Mylan. 2016. “Are We Too Busy to Be Sustainable?” *Discover Society*, January 5. http://discoversociety.org/2016/01/05/are-we-too-busy-to-be-sustainable/


*Highly recommended if you didn’t read it already in POLI 3385:*


**Recommended:**


**March 13: Climate Politics in Canada**

How has Canadian climate policy evolved in recent decades?
Why is climate change such a difficult challenge for Canada?
What forces could potentially enable Canada to take stronger climate action?
Beyond the change in tone, how significant is the difference in approach between the Harper and Trudeau governments?
What policy and political choices should Canada take to enhance its level of climate action?

**Required:**


16 – DRAFT – Readings for January 30 and later may be revised

Recommended:


March 20: Governance of Climate Change (I): The Global Level

What have been the key issues and sources of conflict among nations in global climate negotiations?
What are the strengths and limits of the Paris climate agreement? What are its implications for climate action around the globe?
Do we need to rethink the approach to global climate negotiations and expectations of what they can achieve?

Required:

Recommended:
Harris, Paul G. 2013. Chapters 2 and 3 in What’s Wrong with Climate Politics and How to Fix It. Cambridge: Polity.
March 27: Governance of Climate Change (II): Alternative Visions

Do we need to rethink the approach to global climate negotiations and expectations of what they can achieve?
What roles can transnational networks play in accelerating climate action around the globe?
Does a polycentric approach help us understand and enhance climate governance?
Do forms of climate governance at the local and community level have the potential to fill the void left by inadequate action at the global and national levels?

Required:

Bulkeley and Newell. Chapters 3, 4, and 6. (Chapter 5 is optional).


Recommended:


Harris, Paul G. 2013. Chapters 5 and 6 in What’s Wrong with Climate Politics and How to Fix It. Cambridge: Polity.


N.B.: Climate Change as Security Issue

This class has 12 scheduled meetings compared to 13 in previous years. In the past, I have included a week on climate change and security. Although we likely won’t have time to talk about these issues in detail in class, if you have a strong interest in these issues, you can choose to write your QIP for March 27 on security-related readings. If you wish, you can consult with me about updating the set of readings below. (You also have the option of submitting two QIPs for each set of themes.)

What are the security implications of climate change?
What are the political implications of framing climate change in security or military terms?
Should climate change be reframed as a matter of human rights and human security?
Is the threat of climate change equivalent to the threat of war?

Required:


Recommended:


April 3: Geo-Engineering Our Way Out of Crisis? And Concluding Thoughts
If political action to date has not been adequate to address climate change, do we need to consider risky geo-engineering solutions? Or do we need to re-double political efforts to cut emissions?

Concluding Discussion:
What does climate change mean for our wider political, social, economic, and personal projects? Do any particular approaches to climate politics that we have covered stand out as having the most promise?
**Required:**


**Recommended:**


Klein. Pp. 256-290, “Dimming the Sun: The Solution to Pollution is … Pollution?” in This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate. Toronto: Knopf Canada.


21 – DRAFT – Readings for January 30 and later may be revised