

SIO 296 "The Oceans and Climate Negotiations: The Big Blue Hole"

Course Instructors: Lisa Levin and John-O Niles, TA Natalya Gallo
Course Time: Thurs: 1:30-3:30pm Credit: 2 Units Grade: Pass/Fail
Vaughan Hall 328, SIO

Course Description:

SIO 296 is a two-unit seminar course designed for graduate or qualified senior undergraduate students interested in the intersection between ocean science and international climate policy. While the oceans cover 71% of the world and are essential to the climate regulation of the planet, they are severely underrepresented in international climate negotiations. In fact, neither the Kyoto Protocol nor the current text of the Paris Alliance that is being negotiated at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conferences mention the oceans. This course will explore: how international climate agreements get made, why the oceans are underrepresented in this process, and avenues for including ocean impacts within the framework of the UNFCCC process. Class will meet for two hours each week and will consist of a brief lecture on navigating international diplomacy by John-O Niles, director of the Carbon Institute and previous director of WWF's Climate Change Program, followed by student led presentations and discussions.

Class Discussion Themes:

- 1) The importance of the ocean as a global climate regulator and impacts sustained from climate change: Overview of IPCC Ocean Systems Chapter
- 2) Background on the UNFCCC Process and the Players at the Table: How different decisions get made within the UNFCCC framework and who decides
- 3) Kyoto Protocol VS the Paris Alliance: Nature of the agreement, the mechanisms, and accounting
- 4) Addressing the Big Blue Hole in the Climate Negotiations: Implications for technology transfer, mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage funds
- 5) An analysis of documents that are being negotiated/written during the COPs (ADP, et al.) with focus on how oceans can be included and strengthened
- 6) An analysis of documents that are being negotiated/written during the COPs (SBSTA, et al.) with focus on how oceans can be included
- 7) Role of NGOs at the COP. Case Study: How did the REDD+ program become so successful?
- 8) What would an Ocean Mechanism look like: Exploring Different Mechanisms/Pillars that have been enacted at previous COPs to close the blue gap
- 9) Evaluating successes and failures of the UNFCCC process and the COPs (Why was Copenhagen a failure?) Strategies for COP21 in Paris and beyond.
- 10) Beyond the COP: Connecting national level policies on climate change that include the ocean to the international level, a look at different geo-engineering technologies in discussion and implication for the ocean.