CCS 123

Politics and Policy of Climate Change

Dr. Corey J. Gabriel

cjgabriel@ucsd.edu

TA: Kelly White (kdwhite@ucsd.edu)

Office Hours: Monday 10:30-11:30 pm and by appointment (Zoom)

Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:20 pm 4 units

Optional discussion sessions 12:30-1:30 Thursdays 1/25, 2/1, 2/15 and 2/29, room TBD. Alternative time doodle poll. These are designed to be fun and will not impact your grade at all.

**Course Summary:** Climate change has forced decision makers in the public and private sector to develop and adopt policies to help facilitate a transition to a clean energy economy and avoid some of the worst consequences of climate change. In this course we will discuss state, federal and international policies related to climate change and the decarbonization imperative. Corporate climate and energy practices will also be covered as well as the interrelationship between the public and private sector. The political context in which these policy responses to the ongoing climate crisis have developed, and in which they will continue to evolve, will be emphasized throughout. Specific topics covered will likely include some review of key concepts related to the physical basis of global warming, an overview of the roles of federal and state government in matters related to climate, successful past and current policy responses to environmental threats, the exuberant recent involvement of the Judicial branch in constraining agency independence, including current efforts in California, the ongoing efforts of the global community, via the UNFCCC and other international policy instruments, to achieve international agreement on climate policy as well as the current domestic political and policy environment. The course will be partially discussion-based, with enthusiastic participation encouraged. There will be a short presentation rather than a midterm and a final presentation and paper in lieu of a final examination. Students are encouraged to keep up with current events and discussions will be tailored to best fit the current state of play and the group’s interests.

**Course Outline:**

| Date | Topic | Key topics |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tuesday 1/09/24 | Course overview | * Syllabus
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| Thursday 1/11/24 & Tuesday 1/16/24 | Physical basis of climate change & Essential Climate Terminology  | * Conceptual scientific perspective on the key mechanisms driving ongoing climate change
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| Tuesday 1/23/24 & Thursday 1/25/24 | California Energy Policy and Green New Deal | * \*Defining the best policy paths going forward based on market, political, technological and social context. Mindful of the time scale in which we need to change.
* <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/21/climate/green-new-deal-questions-answers.html>
* What Is the Green New Deal? A Climate Proposal, Explained
* <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/21/us/politics/green-new-deal.html>
* A Green New Deal Is Technologically Possible. Its Political Prospects Are Another Question.
* <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/31/opinion/green-new-deal-democrats.html>
* Hope for a Green New Year
* <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/14/climate/bernie-sanders-climate-change.html>
* Sanders’s Climate Ambitions Thrill Supporters. Experts Aren’t Impressed.
* <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2020/2/3/21116369/climate-change-scientists-policy-bernie-sanders-joe-biden>
* Climate scientists are not priests or prophets: Assessing climate policy requires much more than science.
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| Tuesday 1/30/24 & Thursday 2/1/24 | The federal system, How successful regulation works | * Source of regulatory power, Environmental Protection Agency, Air Quality in America
* Modern EPA, Key Supreme Court decisions, Obama and Trump executive actions pertinent to climate
* Tuesday: [Chevron Deference](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/chevron_deference#:~:text=The%20scope%20of%20the%20Chevron,made%20by%20the%20administrative%20agency.)
* Thursday: [‘Major Questions’? Supreme Court Decision in Climate Change Case Sends Ripple Across the Regulatory Landscape](https://www.akingump.com/en/news-insights/supreme-court-invokes-major-questions-doctrine-in-west-virginia-v-epa-to-limit-agency-authority-to-tackle-climate-change-with-implications-for-rulemakings-across-the-regulatory-landscape.html)
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| Tuesday 2/6/24 | Connection between business denial and policies of climate denial over time in US | * Nathaniel Rich NY Times Article Lecture and Summary
* [Losing Earth by Nathaniel Rich](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/01/magazine/climate-change-losing-earth.html?mtrref=undefined&gwh=B883E5C68E36782C1AC1038BC4F292E4&gwt=pay&assetType=PAYWALL)
* [Losing Earth (pdf version if above is paywalled)](https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/usys/ites/ecosystem-management-dam/documents/EducationDOC/Readings_DOC/Losing-earth.pdf)
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| Thursday 2/8/24 | Connection between business denial and policies of climate denial over time in US | * Nathaniel Rich NY Times Article Discussion
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| Tuesday 2/13/24, Thursday 2/15/24 & Tuesday 2/20/24**Midterm article presentations** | Short presentations followed by Q&ATime will depend on class size (~10 mins or less per person)Topic: List of 30-40 articles will be provided to select from | * One page brief introducing your short presentation is due 24 hours before by email to the entire class. This is an opportunity to inform the audience of what you want them to know before you present. This is a more realistic process.
* **Due 2/14**: Provide a one page discussion of a key takeaway from our NY Times article discussion).
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| Thursday 2/22/24  | Capitalism vs. climate discussion | * [Capitalism vs the Climate by Naomi Klein](https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/capitalism-vs-climate/)
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| Tuesday 2/27/24 & Thursday 2/29/24 | National security and Climate  | * Lawfare (Brookings Institute) articles:
* [Climate Change and National Security, Part I: What is the Threat, When’s It Coming, and How Bad Will It Be?](https://www.lawfareblog.com/climate-change-and-national-security-part-i-what-threat-whens-it-coming-and-how-bad-will-it-be)
* [Climate Change and National Security, Part II: How Big a Threat is the Climate?](https://www.lawfareblog.com/climate-change-and-national-security-part-ii-how-big-threat-climate)
* [Climate Change and National Security, Part III: The Problem of Political Will](https://www.lawfareblog.com/climate-change-and-national-security-part-iii-problem-political-will)
* **Due 2/28:** Capitalism vs. climate comments (open ended)
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| Tuesday 3/5/24 | A solution to a policy dilemma? | * Geoengineering
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| Thursday 3/7/24 | Regional and global energy politics  | * [Nordstream 2 discussion](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F3Xonq_RO1_GU-6i_8uAt6Fuj4Dp76opPjkhH6QC9Ls/edit?usp=sharing)
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| Tuesday 3/12/24 & Thursday 3/14/24 | **Final Presentations** | * **Due 3/14** Nordstream 2 discussion paper

PRESENTATIONS (12-15 minutes/person plus 3-5 minutes for questions)5 students Tuesday, 7 students Thursday(one or two may present dur ing discussion time slot) |
| Thursday 3/21/24 | **Final presentations** | PRESENTATIONS (12-15 minutes/person plus 3-5 minutes for questions)8 students |

**Extension Policy:**

If necessary, extensions will be determined on a case by case basis, and will generally only be given under extenuating circumstances. Please plan to have all of your work done on time.

**Grading:**

Discussion papers: 15% (3 one-page discussion papers, 5% each)

1. Due 2/14: Provide a one page discussion of a key takeaway from our NY Times article discussion).
2. Due 2/28: Capitalism vs. climate comments (open ended)
3. Due 3/9 Nordstream 2 discussion paper (will be excused if attendance of 3+ discussion sessions for undergrads)

Class participation (attendance required): 20%

Short Presentation (list of papers to select from provided by 1/31): 15%

Final Paper (3-4 single spaced pages, due 3/24 by 11:59pm): 20%

Final Presentation (Same topic as paper): 30%