

ENVS 3360, Climate Change: Philosophy, Politics, and Economics

Spring 2020

Monday/Thursday: 12:30-1:50, LBR 248

Course Information

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Office hours: Prof. Delon: Thur. 1-3pm or by appointment; Prof. Paul: Monday & Thursday, 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

Course Description

This is an intermediate-level course covering the philosophy and economics of climate change. The climate crisis represents an existential threat to humanity, yet the global community has failed to act swiftly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to date. If humans are to limit global warming to 1.5-2°C, rapid action must be taken to drive emissions towards zero. But is decarbonizing economically viable? Can it be done equitably? What types of policies are needed to efficiently cut emissions? Should we prioritize mitigation or adaptation? How can we understand the ethical issues associated with a warming world? What will it mean for us and our children to live in a warmer world? These are the types of questions we will address across the semester.

Prerequisite: Intro to Environmental Studies or Environmental Ethics, and at least one other philosophy or one economics course. Enrollment is limited to 15.

Course Objectives

1. To understand the issues associated with climate change, including the broad mechanisms of global warming, the greenhouse effect, sea-level rise, ice melt, albedo, etc., and their anthropogenic causes, including fossil fuel consumption, agriculture, deforestation, etc.
2. To communicate effectively about the issues associated with climate change through writing and in-class discussion.
3. To appreciate both the interdisciplinary nature of any inquiry into the topic of climate change and the specific disciplinary perspectives of philosophy and economics.
4. To gain a more nuanced and complex understanding of climate change, its causes and consequences, beyond what you would encounter in the popular media.

Readings

All required readings will be made available on Canvas.

Course Expectations

- You are expected to contribute thoughtfully and respectfully to discussions with classmates, having read the assigned material prior to class
- Please be mindful that our goal is to investigate questions together and sometimes challenge one another, but not to win arguments or 'be right'
- We expect you to generally help to create a safe, supportive, and intellectually stimulating classroom environment

- **Attendance** is required, both for your benefit and that of the classroom community. If you do miss a class, please submit any assignment before class and consult a classmate to find out what you missed. Please never hesitate to reach out to us or your peers for help if class is missed. More than three absences without prior permission will be grounds for an unsatisfactory evaluation. Please email us before missing class whenever possible (if not, ASAP after class). You are solely responsible for catching up with missed materials and pertinent information.
- **Late work is strongly discouraged.** Deadlines are not 'soft' or optional. Out of fairness to other students and out of concern for our schedules, plan ahead and discuss the situation with us early if you anticipate that you will be unable to complete an assignment in time. Extensions will only be granted in *exceptional* circumstances. Please make sure you communicate with us *in advance* if there are any problems in completing the work in the allotted time. As a rule, do not count on extensions as they will only be granted on a case-by-case basis. Technical issues will not be accepted as excuses (again, plan ahead). Each day an assignment is late, ten percent will be subtracted from the assignment. Assignments that are more than a week late are not excepted. If you miss an assignment for a college sanctioned reason please be sure to provide us with proper documentation. *Communication is key.*
- **Laptops.** No, thank you. Unless you have a relevant accommodation for note taking, or we have asked you to bring it to class for an activity, please refrain from using your laptop in class (if recording class meetings can help, that's fine). Cell phones must be kept on silent mode in your bag, unless again, otherwise indicated. That said, you will be expected to have access to a computer for the completion of assignments and some group activities.
- **Etiquette.** Please be in class on time. We will start class promptly and may turn away students who casually come to class significantly late without prior notice. Please be mindful of others and of building rules: wear shoes and attire that you would wear if you were to take the bus, walk in public, go to the DMV or to your day job, etc. This leaves plenty of room for eccentricity, but this rules out pajamas, bathrobes and, obviously, lack of clothes. If you are late and carrying breakfast and coffee, you probably could have been on time. Do not leave class early unless previously authorized. Take bathroom breaks between classes if you can, otherwise be quiet and respectful.

Course Structure

Each week you are expected to have read the required readings prior to attending class.

1. **Reading:** Students *must* prepare for each class by doing the assigned reading. This is a discussion based class, so reading and engaging with the material is critical.
2. **Class Participation:** We will meet twice a week. Class time will consist primarily of discussion amongst the class. Active participation in these discussions is critical.
3. **Online Participation:** All students will be expected to post short responses to the readings (comments, questions) the day before class (9 PM the night before). Missing three of these responses may be grounds for an unsatisfactory evaluation. Each week, one student will briefly summarize the readings and lead the discussion. We will circulate a sign-up sheet for students to choose topics and dates for their discussion lead.

4. Papers (X2): Students are expected to write two papers, one for each instructor: i.e. at the end of each Mod. See schedule for deadlines. The paper should engage with one of the mod's issues, including at least two of the readings and two other sources.
5. Group Project: The final two classes will be dedicated to presentations of group projects. Later in the semester we will assign you to small groups (roughly 3 students per group) to work together exploring an important climate change topic of your choice. The topic should not be one we covered at length in the course. Presentations should be approximately 15-20 minutes. Additional details will be provided later in the semester.

Evaluation

- **20% of grade – Participation.** This is based on your attendance and active participation in class. You will be expected to attend class regularly, contribute to discussions, and turn in work on time.
- **40% of grade - 2 papers (20% each)**
- **20% of grade - Weekly responses and discussion lead**
- **20% of grade - Group project**

A satisfactory evaluation will be based on obtaining at least a 70% overall average *and* completing both papers and the group project.

Student Accessibility

In order to ensure an inclusive classroom environment, any encountered or foreseen barriers should be discussed with me immediately. Adjustments or solutions may be agreed upon that do not compromise the objectives of the course.

If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, you are also welcome to initiate this conversation with the office of Student Disability Services (SDS). SDS works with students with disabilities and faculty members to identify reasonable accommodations. Please visit their website for additional information: <https://www.ncf.edu/student-disability-services/>. You may also contact Student Disability in-person (HCL3), via phone at 941-487-4496 OR via email at disabilityservices@ncf.edu. If you have already been approved for accommodations through SDS, please meet with me as soon as possible.

Equity, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity

New College's commitment to academic excellence can only be realized in a learning environment that is inclusive, characterized by openness to diverse perspectives, and marked by mutual respect. Anything short of this aspiration is inconsistent with our commitment. Equal access, and the opportunity to participate fully in all of our programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, political ideology, national origin, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, is essential to that commitment and will be the standard to which we expect all members of our learning community to adhere.

Title IX

New College of Florida is committed to equal access to education pursuant to Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. The law protects all individuals on our campus from gender-based discrimination or exclusion or instances of sexual misconduct. All full-time faculty, full-time staff, and resident advisors are Responsible Employees required to report any known instances of sexual misconduct or gender discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. Please contact our Title IX coordinator (titleix@ncf.edu) or see the website (<https://www.ncf.edu/campus-life/title-ix/>) for more information.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining a vibrant, healthy, and engaging learning environment for which we all must take responsibility. The New College faculty considers academic dishonesty to be a serious violation of community standards. Students are expected to refrain from acts of academic dishonesty, which may include:

- cheating and/or plagiarism (such as: presenting the intellectual work of others as one's own; failing to cite sources; improper paraphrasing via failing to use own words even if a citation is given; partial, incomplete, or inaccurate citation of work of others);
- unauthorized multiple submissions (submission of the same work for different academic activities, without the approval of the instructor);
- false citation (false citation of a source or knowingly attributing work to a source from which the referenced material was not obtained);
- falsifying data (fabricating or altering data to deliberately mislead; for example, changing data to get better experiment results is academically fraudulent);
- falsifying information, signatures, or initials on official and academic forms.

If you are in doubt about what practices are permissible in an examination, you should consult me prior to sitting for the exam. If you lack understanding of how, in a paper or other presentation, to distinguish your thoughts from those of others, the faculty can refer you to standard guidelines and discuss specific questions.

Religious observance

No student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time when s/he would normally be engaged in a religious observance or on a day or time prohibited by his or her religious beliefs. Students are expected to notify their instructors if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination, in accordance with this policy, prior to the scheduled meeting.

Schedule and Reading Assignments¹

Date	Topics	Reading	Coursework
Mon, Jan 27	Intro	Emanuel, <i>What We Know About Climate Change</i> ; review NASA and Skeptical Science Web sites	
Thurs, Jan 30		Parfit; Jamieson	
Mon, Feb 3		Cripps	Canvas responses
Thurs, Feb 6	The ethics of climate change	Sinnott-Armstrong; Jamieson; Nolt	Canvas responses
Mon, Feb 10		Weisbach and Gardiner	Canvas responses
Thurs, Feb 13	Global justice and future generations	Caney; Shue	Canvas responses / First paper topic due
Mon, Feb 17			Canvas responses
Thurs, Feb 20	The philosophy of climate science: expertise and democracy	Anderson; Kitcher; Oreskes and Conway; Jamieson et al.	
Mon Feb 24			Canvas responses
Thurs, Feb 27	The philosophy of climate science: models, prediction, uncertainty	Winsberg	First paper draft due
Mon, March 2	Climate change and animals	Palmer; McShane; Sebo	Canvas responses
Thurs, March 5	Geoengineering	Gardiner	Canvas responses
Mon, March 9	The economics of climate change I	Stern 2008	
Thurs, March 12	The economics of climate change II	Nordhaus 2019; Ackerman 2014	First paper due 3/14
March 16-20, Spring Break			
Mon, March 23	No class, watch online video [TBD]		Canvas responses/ Presentations topics due
Thurs, March 26	Discounting & Fat Tails	Climate Schock; David Roberts	Canvas responses
Mon, March 30	Power & Enviro Protection	Boyce 2002 PE of Enviro Chapters 4, 6, 8	Canvas responses / Second paper topic due
Thurs, April 2	Intro to Climate Policy	Harvey Designing Climate Solutions; TBD	Canvas responses
Mon, April 6	Cost-Benefit Analysis	Sen & Sunstein perhaps?	Canvas responses
Thurs, April 9	Carbon Markets	Newell et al. 2013; Femstad & Paul 2019	Canvas responses
Mon, April 13	Green New Deal (I)	Klien's <i>On Fire; A Planet to Win</i> by Aronoff et al.	Canvas responses

¹ Subject to change.

Thurs, April 16	Green New Deal (II)	Paul et al. 2019	Canvas responses / Second paper draft due
April 20-22, Baccalaureate/ Reading Days (No Class)			
Thus, April 23	Green Growth Paradox	Donut Economics; Pollin v Schor debate	Canvas responses
Mon, April 27	Politics of the Anthropocene	Purdy, <i>After Nature</i> ; O'Neil et al. 2018	Canvas responses
Thurs, April 30	Student Presentations		
Mon, May 4	Student Presentations		Second paper due