

Fall 2020 CHC 231:

Facing Climate Change: Inequality and Action

T/Th 12:15-1:45, Remote

Instructor:

Prof. Leigh Johnson

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Email contact via Canvas

Office hours: Wednesday 1:30-3:30

*or by appointment

Office hours sign up at [Calendly.com/geoleigh](https://calendly.com/geoleigh)



Course Description

This course orients you to the challenges that climate change poses for human wellbeing and socioeconomic development in both the Global North and South and familiarizes you with some of the many avenues for taking informed action towards transformation. It is now obvious that the fossil-fuel intensive economic development that has characterized the last 200 years – and which have brought high standards of living to countries in the “Global North” – can no longer be pursued if the earth is to remain habitable for all its people. These historical pathways have created inequality and injustice: the populations and countries least responsible for historical emissions are those most vulnerable to the looming impacts of climate change such as sea level rise, extreme weather events, and heat-related disease and mortality. They have also created inter-generational injustice, as current and future generations are ecologically and financially burdened by the greenhouse gas emissions of past generations. In response, social movements of people – some just like you, and some vastly different from you – have organized and demanded action on the climate crisis.

Learning objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to...

Content oriented:

- Use the basic terminology of climate change policy to craft arguments
- Explain the social and economic drivers of greenhouse gas emissions

- Describe the geographical unevenness of past and present emissions and their relation to economic development
- Explain the causes and characteristics of climate vulnerability
- Evaluate strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation and identify robust options
- Evaluate key debates about decarbonization pathways
- Assess existing climate-related social movements
- Articulate your own vision of climate justice

Skills oriented:

- Access and interpret primary data about the world’s populations, economies, and environmental impacts
- Craft original written arguments and present and debate them publicly
- Describe and analyze contemporary political debates and social movements by drawing on a variety of sources, including new media and social media

Course materials

Required book for purchase (via Amazon or other booksellers):

Robin Leichenko and Karen O’Brien (2019) *Climate and Society: Transforming the Future*. Polity.

Canvas and UO Library: Readings will be drawn from a variety of reports, books, and academic journals. Some not available for you to download directly through the UO libraries or directly access on the web will be posted on Canvas.

Web Resources: We will rely heavily on web-based resources that you should familiarize yourself with. These include:

News updates from Climate Home News

In order to get a sense of the currency of these topics, you are required to subscribe to the Climate Home News updates at <http://www.climatechangenews.com/#>. Subscribing will sign you up for a newsletter with links to current journalistic accounts of climate change policy topics.

Climate Interactive’s simulator En-ROADS <https://en-roads.climateinteractive.org>

We will use EN-ROADS routinely to test out scenarios (“what would happen if”) and explore options, as well as dive in to some of the underlying assumptions in integrated models.

ND-GAIN Global Adaptation Initiative

The University of Notre Dame maintains a very useful website and datasets we will refer to frequently, including the:

- Country Index (Vulnerability and Readiness) <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>
- U.S. Urban Adaptation Assessment <https://gain-uaa.nd.edu/>

Assessment

As the university community adjusts to teaching and learning remotely in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, assessment elements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change.

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|---------------------------------|------|
| 1. Discussion comments | 10% |
| 2. Action log | 10% |
| 3. Papers (4) | 60 % |
| 4. Final Group Presentation | 10 % |
| 5. Attendance and Participation | 10% |

Assessment Elements

Discussion comments (pre-class) (10%)

- You will post a substantive, 100 to 150 word discussion comment, question, or critique to the whole class Canvas Discussion board by 9 pm the night before each class. We will use discussion questions to get a sense of which topics are most interesting, provocative, or confusing for you. You may engage with the posts of your peers, but you must demonstrate that you have actually read and considered the assigned material. On a few occasions, I may give you a set of structured tasks and questions to prepare before class. Discussion comments are marked "complete" when submitted. If you repeatedly submit questions that demonstrate a lack of genuine engagement with the material, they may be marked as incomplete.
- Because discussion posts are pre-class engagement to prepare you for class, *there are no make-up options for this assessment element if not completed before class*. If you cannot make it to class for whatever reason, you will still receive credit for your discussion post as long as it is submitted on time.

Action log (10%)

This course starts with the premise that action can take many forms, and that *informed* action builds a better foundation for transformation. Over the quarter, you will select and complete at least four actions relating to climate change from amongst a set of options that will be posted in the "Action Bank" on Canvas (or develop your own action idea!). You will write a short entry logging what you did that week and what you learned. Action logs are automatically marked "complete" when submitted. Though due dates are marked in the syllabus, you may complete and submit them at any time. Some of the actions in the Bank are repeatable for credit, others are not. When you submit each entry, you will note whether you want it to remain private, if it can be read to the class, or whether you wish to talk about it in class. You are expected to discuss at least one action with the class over the quarter.

Papers (60%)

You will produce four pieces of substantive written work during the course. Two of these will take a more conventional "essay" format, while two take a more closely structured format to generate evidence and reflection related to the United Nations simulation we will conduct in Week 5.

Prompts and detailed instructions will be given for each paper in advance, and assignments will be discussed in class. The final essay will be 5-6 pages long, and will require you to integrate primary and secondary sources to analyze a current climate movement. The final essay is due Wednesday Dec 9 at 11:59 pm on Canvas.

Final Group Presentation (10%)

In Week 8.1, our class will debate and select adaptation and decarbonization options that we want to learn more about. Working in groups of 3-4 students, you will conduct further research on these options and present your findings in class meeting 10.1. Detailed presentation guidelines, expectations, and resources will be posted on Canvas.

Participation and Attendance (10%)

- This class is designed to be as participatory as possible. Your learning will depend on a collective exchange of ideas and your engagement in class activities. You are expected to attend all class meetings except in the case of medical or personal hardship. If you know you will be absent for a school or work-related activity, please let me know as far in advance as possible.
- Participation includes logging in on time, with the assigned readings completed, and copies of the readings for the day readily available, and actively engaging in class discussion/activities.
- Missing three or more classes will result in a lower final grade, as will gratuitous tardiness.
- **Missed attendance and participation:** For [Fall 2020, the UO Academic Council](#) allows instructors to count attendance and participation as part of the grade provided they have reasonable ways for students to complete make-up assignments for missed class sessions or participation points without loss of credit. If you miss a class, you may complete and log any of the activities posted in the "Action Bank"; these may

be used **up to five times** by any student for any reason. Of course, the same action cannot count as both makeup attendance and as one of your four required “Action log” activities!

Course Policies

Plagiarism

By submitting material for this course, you are attesting that your written words are your own. If you are uncertain about what plagiarism is or how to avoid it, please see: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>.

Communication

Our class will communicate through our Canvas site. **Please use Canvas for all email communication with me.** It is much easier for me to find your message and follow the record of our conversation in Canvas. Announcements and emails are archived there and automatically forwarded to your UO email, and can even reach you by text. Check and adjust your settings under Account > Notifications. If you contact me with a question, I will try to respond within one business day (meaning Friday messages may wait until Monday).

Office Hours

I will host “live” office hours through Zoom each week. See the top of the syllabus for the hours and URL to schedule a slot. There is also a running discussion forum on our Canvas page called “Course Logistics Question and Answer” for the entire group to ask and answer. I am also available for meetings outside regular office hours, too; please Canvas message me to set a time.

Accessibility

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Technical Requirements

Access our class Zoom meeting through canvas.uoregon.edu. Log in using your DuckID to access our class. Click on the “Zoom” link on the left side of the page. If you have questions about accessing and using Canvas, visit the Canvas support page. Canvas and Technology Support also is available by phone or live chat: 541-346-4357 | livehelp.uoregon.edu

Zoom Netiquette

- All of us occasionally need to hide video, but know that seeing your faces is a joy to me and, I believe, enriches our ways of relating—when you can, I value video on.
- That said, please be mindful that others can see you and your surroundings if your video is on. Try to find a quiet setting without lots of noise or busy activities in the background. Please minimize distractions like eating or multitasking.
- Mute your audio when you are not actively contributing. When contributing, avoid making other noises such as typing or eating or having side conversations with others that might be present with you.
- Use chat to pose questions or offer insights “on the side” while others are contributing. The chat can be read by all and should reflect a high standard of respect for our class community. I have disabled “private chat” for our course.
- For help and troubleshooting with Zoom, visit the [UO Service Portal](#).

CHC 231 Facing Climate Change Weekly Topic Outline and Submissions

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments due this week (in addition to discussion comments)
What Next?			
1	Sept 29	Introduction: What does it mean to “face” climate change?	
	Oct 1	The social challenges of climate change, justice, and transformation	
2	Oct 6	Climate change: The physical basis, impacts, and future projections	
	Oct 8	Climate discourses and world views	Action log due Sun Oct 11
3	Oct 13	The History of Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Economic development and geographic inequalities	
	Oct 15	How much does population matter? <i>*Sign up for simulation/Paper 2 country today*</i>	Paper 1 due Sun Oct 18
4	Oct 20	What creates “vulnerability”?	
	Oct 22	The UN and international efforts at climate governance	
5	Oct 27	UN Simulation: Climate Interactive C-ROADS negotiations	Paper 2 due by class Tuesday
	Oct 29	UN Simulation continued, and debriefing	Action log due Sun Nov 1
What Next?			
6	Nov 3	Adaptation	
	Nov 5	Maladaptation and adaptation burdens	Paper 3 due Sun Nov 8
7	Nov 10	Decarbonization: Transforming energy and efficiency (and, What’s a Green New Deal got to do with it?)	
	Nov 12	Decarbonization: Negative emissions and landscape transformations	Action log due Sun Nov 15
8	Nov 17	The “third rail”: Geoengineering + Debating and selecting adaptation and mitigation pathways for further research <i>*Sign up for Group Presentation Topic today*</i>	
	Nov 19	Divesting from Fossil Fuels	Action log due Sun Nov 22
9	Nov 24	Youth Climate Movements	
	Nov 26	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving	
10	Dec 1	Group Presentations: Paths towards adaptation and decarbonization	Presentations
	Dec 3	Peer and self-review of paper outlines + Final collaborative discussion: What have we learned from our research on climate movements?	Outline for Paper 4 due in class Dec 3
11	Paper 4 due Wed Dec 9, 11:59 pm		