CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
GEOG/ENST 2500A, WINTER 2015

CLIMATE CHANGE: SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVES

Instructor: Dr. Jamie Brownlee
Classroom: SA 520
Class Time: M&W 11:35-12:55
Office: Loeb B340
Office Hours: 11:30-12:30 Tuesday (or by appointment)
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Phone Number: 613-234-7833 (home)
Pre-requisites: GEOG 1020 or ENST 1020, or second-year standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

There is an overwhelming consensus among climate scientists that climate change poses a serious – and potentially grave – threat to human beings, ecosystems and other species. This course will use a social science perspective to look at the issue of global climate change, including its history, root causes and consequences. Throughout the course, we will discuss how the climate crisis is integrally related to global capitalism, systems of power and inequality, and the structure of the modern corporation. We will consider the specific role of social processes and institutions – such as politics, governments, capital accumulation, economic growth, the fossil fuel industry, consumer culture, the mass media, and the advertising and public relations industries – both in shaping climate change debates and accelerating the threat. We will also interrogate our own role as citizens and consumers in the global economy. Finally, this course will examine the efficacy of different responses and solutions to the problems associated with climate change, ranging from market reforms and ‘green capitalism’ to more radical social and economic transformations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Because this is a social science course, students will be encouraged to think critically about how social, economic and political arrangements underlie global climate change. How and why are dominant social institutions at the root of climate change and our current responses to it? What are the linkages between social and economic inequality and the policy-making process? More generally, this course will challenge students to identify their beliefs and assumptions about the social and the political world, and to identify opportunities for engagement with these issues beyond the boundaries of the classroom.
COURSE TEXT AND READING MATERIALS:

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

This book is available at Octopus Books, which is located at 116 Third Avenue.

Please note that all other assigned readings will be available through cuLearn.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

1. **Critical Reaction Paper, Due February 4th**  15%

   This assignment involves writing a critical reaction to all of the readings from one week of classes between weeks 2 and 5 (i.e., choose one of the weeks from week 2 to week 5). The paper should be approximately 5 double-spaced pages, and the only sources you should use are those assigned for the week. In the paper, briefly summarize some of the main arguments of each of the readings and then analyze and compare the arguments within them. The point of the paper is to allow you to engage with a particular topic and to develop your critical reflection and analysis skills. The paper is due in class on February 4th.

2. **Midterm Exam, February 11th**  25%

   The midterm exam will be some combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions (details forthcoming). It will cover material from both the assigned readings and the lectures (weeks 1-6). The exam will be held in class on February 11th.

3. **Final Paper, Due in Class April 6th**  30%

   Students can select their own paper topic, understanding that it must be relevant to the issues addressed in the course. While the paper can draw on some of the weekly readings, it must also reference additional academic sources. It should be approximately 12-15 double-spaced pages. Papers will be graded on the quality of your research and writing, strength of your analysis and arguments, and your ability to situate your arguments within existing debates. Students are encouraged to discuss paper ideas with me at any point during the course. Additional information will be provided in class.

4. **Final Exam**  30%

   The final exam will be some combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions (details forthcoming). It will cover material from both the assigned readings and the lectures, in the second half of the course only (weeks 7 through 12). The final exam will be scheduled by the university in the exam period.
GRADES

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p. 45), the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

- **A+ = 90-100**
- **A = 85-89**
- **A - = 80-84**
- **B+ = 77-79**
- **B = 73-76**
- **B - = 70-72**
- **C+ = 67-69**
- **C = 63-66**
- **C - = 60-62**
- **D+ = 57-59**
- **D = 53-56**
- **D - = 50-52**
- **F = Below 50**
- **WDN = Withdrawn from the course**

Final grades are subject to the Dean’s approval.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university’s website, here: http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**
The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable). The deadline for contacting the Paul Menton Centre regarding accommodation for final exams for the December 2014 exam period is November 7, 2014.

**For Religious Obligations:**
Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation
policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

For Pregnancy:
Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

For more details visit the Equity Services website: http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy (See http://www.carleton.ca/sasc/academic-integrity/).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as your own and is a serious academic offence. For the details of what constitutes plagiarism, the potential penalties and the procedures refer to the section on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar.

What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?

A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including: expulsion; suspension from all studies at Carleton; suspension from full-time studies; and/or a reprimand; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; academic probation; award of an FNS, Fail, or an ABS. The Policy is strictly enforced and is binding on all students.

What are the Procedures?

All allegations of plagiarism are reported to the faculty of Dean of FASS and Management. Documentation is prepared by instructors and/or departmental chairs. The Dean writes to the student and the University Ombudsperson about the alleged plagiarism. The Dean reviews the allegation. If it is not resolved at this level then it is referred to a tribunal appointed by the Senate.

ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS

Student Academic Success Centre (SASC): www.carleton.ca/sasc
Writing Tutorial Services: http://www.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/
Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS): www.carleton.ca/sasc/peer-assisted-study-sessions
COURSE CALENDAR

WEEK ONE – JANUARY 5TH & 7TH
INTRODUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE EVIDENCE: WHAT DOES THE SCIENCE SAY?

READINGS


WEEK TWO – JANUARY 12TH & 14TH
HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE ECOLOGICAL AND CLIMATE CRISIS

READINGS


WEEK THREE – JANUARY 19TH AND 21ST
CORPORATE PERSONHOOD, EXTERNALITIES AND THE MODERN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

READINGS


WEEK FOUR – JANUARY 26TH AND 28TH
CAPITALISM VERSUS THE CLIMATE: CAPITAL ACCUMULATION, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GLOBALIZATION

READINGS


WEEK FIVE – FEBRUARY 2ND AND 4TH
THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS, UNBURNABLE CARBON AND THE FATE OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Readings


• Klein, Naomi. 2014. “Public and Paid For: Overcoming the Ideological Blocks to the Next Economy” in This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 96-119.

• Klein, Naomi. 2014. “Planning and Banning: Slapping the Invisible Hand, Building a Movement” in This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 120-160.

WEEK SIX – FEBRUARY 9TH AND 11TH
GLOBAL WARMING IS GOOD FOR YOU: ADVERTISING, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CORPORATE ‘GREENWASH’

Readings


• Rampton, Sheldon and John Stauber. 2001. “Global Warming is Good for You” in Trust Us, We’re Experts! New York: Centre for Media and Democracy. pp. 267-283


MID-TERM EXAM – FEBRUARY 11TH

*Reading Week*

WEEK SEVEN – FEBRUARY 23RD AND 25TH
CONFRONTING CONSUMPTION ON A WARMING PLANET: SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND THE POLITICS OF CONSUMERISM


**WEEK EIGHT – MARCH 2**<sup>ND</sup> **AND 4**<sup>TH</sup>
**UNDERMINING ACTION ON THE CLIMATE FRONT: THE RECORD OF THE HARPER GOVERNMENT**

**READINGS**


**WEEK NINE – MARCH 9**<sup>TH</sup> **AND 11**<sup>TH</sup>
**“GAME OVER FOR THE CLIMATE”: THE TAR SANDS AND CANADA’S ENERGY FUTURE**

**READINGS**

• Nikiforuk, Andrew. 2009. “How the Tar Sands are Fueling the Global Climate Crisis.” Toronto: Greenpeace Canada. pp. 3-43.


**WEEK TEN – MARCH 16**<sup>TH</sup> **AND 18**<sup>TH</sup>
**UNDERSTANDING AND CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL**

**READINGS**

• Klein, Naomi. 2014. “The Right is Right: The Revolutionary Power of Climate Change” in *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 31-54.


WEEK ELEVEN – MARCH 23RD AND 25TH
SOLUTIONS TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS I: THE EFFICACY OF ‘GREEN CAPITALISM’ AND MARKET-BASED REFORMS

READINGS


- Klein, Naomi. 2014. “Dimming the Sun: The Solution to Pollution is … Pollution?” in This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate. Toronto: Knopf. pp. 256-268, 278-290.

WEEK TWELVE – MARCH 30TH & APRIL 1ST
SOLUTIONS TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS II: ARGUMENTS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

READINGS


WEEK THIRTEEN – APRIL 6TH

- Course Wrap-Up

- Final Paper Due