

Societal and Personal Relationships with Climate: Looking Behind the Curtain

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IPCC Working Group 1 report is a code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse-gas emissions from fossil-fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk.

UN Secretary-General, 9 August 2021

Are the human consequences of climate change of interest to you? This interactive series picks up on the Secretary-General's recent statement that frames climate change as a far-reaching 'wicked' issue (that is, an issue that is complex, dynamic and difficult to resolve). Together with Mike Brklacich, you will start with a climate science primer and then explore personal and societal relationships with climate processes through multiple lenses. Canadian and international examples will be used throughout the series to illustrate both challenges and opportunities stemming from human interactions with climate processes.

Each week will start with an interactive *Climate in the News* discussion (up to 20 minutes) with participants. Topics will be identified one day in advance of each session. These discussions will help illustrate how our day-to-day activities collectively interact with climate processes, as well as reinforce the long-term importance of short-term decisions. This will be followed by an exploration of a major theme such as Human Interactions with Climate Systems, Framing the Issues, Canadian Perspectives, Food Security and Food Systems, and so on.

Series Schedule:

Week 1: *The Anthropocene: Human Interactions with the Climate Systems*

The Anthropocene denotes the epoch when human activities alter major earth system processes. This session explores the natural climate system, how human activities have altered it as well as future climates.

Week 2: *Climate and Society: Framing the Issues*

Wicked societal issues have many faces and this session reviews climate and society from numerous legitimate perspectives such as:

- Climate change vs climate emergency vs climate crisis.
- Adaptation and mitigation
- Security and conflict.
- Justice and intergenerational equity

Week 3: Canadian Perspectives

This session will delve into the full gamut of climate-related issues faced by Canadians, including past and future climates across Canada, regional impacts and opportunities across various economic sectors, and Indigenous perspectives.

Week 4: Food Security and Food Systems: From the Farm Gate to the Kitchen Table

Food security is about having access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in support of healthy lives. This session will unpack relationships between climate and food systems, and illustrate food security issues extend well beyond crops that can be grown locally.

Week 5: International Perspectives

Two perspectives will be explored. One will focus on international science and its attempt to provide well-rounded assessments of the issues. The other will centre on international policy and track advances as well as stumbling blocks between the signing of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1994 through to the most recent UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in Scotland in 2021.

Week 6: Climate Solutions and Course Wrap Up

The past decade has been characterized by a transition from understanding of climate issues to the search for climate solutions. This session will investigate technical aspects as well as the practicality of potential decarbonization options such as geoengineering, carbon pricing and carbon trading. The session will wrap up with synthesis of topics covered during the course.