The Politics of Climate Change

Class code: POL-UA-9994.007

Instructor Details
Prof. Francisco Seijo
fsm3@nyu.edu
Mon. / Wed. 5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Class Details
The Politics of Climate Change

Prerequisites
N/A.

Class Description
This course examines the interaction between two coupled systems, the Earth system and Humanity’s political systems. Beginning with an analysis of the effects of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions on the climate and biosphere, as derived from the scientific evidence, this course attempts to understand the reaction of the global, European and Spanish political institutions to this crucial Earth system transformation. In order to understand this we must analyze, therefore, how the United Nations and the European Union are responding to climate change since the Spanish state’s adaptation and mitigation policies are largely determined by their responses.

To achieve these goals this course is divided into three parts. Part one examines climate science, its findings and uncertainties. Part two, studies the two international governmental organizations (IGOs) that have the most influence on the conformation of the Spanish political state’s response to climate change-the United Nations and the European Union-as well as the interest groups and political movements that attempt to influence their policy making. Finally, part three analyzes the Spanish state’s response to climate change and its impact on certain aspects of the Earth system’s carbon cycle in the Spanish territory.

The course will combine classroom lectures, discussions on selected topics and student presentations.

Desired Outcomes

- Understanding basic climate science and landscape ecology theory and vocabulary in order to be able to follow scholarly debates on climate change.

- Analysis of the potential implications for human systems of natural system transformations provoked by climate change.

- Understanding scientific and political uncertainty about climate change.

- Define and identify the different political levels of analysis of human/natural system interactions.

- Study the implications of climate change for Spain particularly with regards to the its forests and forest policy.
Assessment Components

- Midterm take home exam: 25%
- Oral presentation: 25%
- Final paper (5-7 page paper due the next to last session): 25%
- Attendance and participation: 25%

Grading Policy

**Reading** is essential for successful participation in the course. Assigned readings must be completed before each session. Failure to do so will affect the attendance and participation percentage of the grade.

**Participation** in debates is a requisite for this course. Students will be expected to contribute actively to class discussions as well as introduce the readings and source materials discussed in the course. Participation in debates will reflect heavily on the final grade.

**Assignments.** Students will be evaluated on the basis of a mid term exam, a short 5-7 page (double space) research paper and an oral presentation.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. More than three unjustified absences will result in the grade being lowered.

Late Submission of Work

No late submissions of assigned will be admitted without an administratively validated medical reason.

Plagiarism Policy

At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community.

**Plagiarism:** presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one’s own. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own. Some examples of plagiarism:

- a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks
- an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work
· the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one’s own
· submitting evaluations of group members’ work for an assigned group project which misrepresent the work that was performed by another group member
· altering or forging academic documents, including but not limited to admissions materials, academic records, grade reports, add/drop forms, course registration forms, etc.
For further information, students are encouraged to check www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Text(s)</th>
<th>None.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Supplemental Texts available via BB | All readings are available on blackboard as pdf files. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>January 17</th>
<th>Climate change science: findings</th>
<th>IPCC Report Executive Summary p. 1-41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>Climate change science: findings</td>
<td>Hobbs. “Landscape ecology”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Climate change science: findings</td>
<td>Mackay. “Sustainable energy without the hot air” p. 2-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Economic and political consequences of climate change</td>
<td>Stern Review Executive Summary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EU. “Climate change impact on security”.

| Session 6 | February 2 | Economic and political consequences of climate change | Burke et al. “Warming increases the risk of civil war in Africa”.
Battisti et al. “Historical warnings of future food insecurity with unprecedented seasonal heat”.
UK Government “The impact of a 4 degree Celsius temperature rise” (http://www.actoncopenhagen.decc.gov.uk/en/ambition/evidence/4-degrees-map/) |
| Session 7 | February 7 | Scientific Uncertainty | Chapin et al. “Changing feedbacks in the climate-biosphere system”
Liu et al. “Coupled Human and Natural Systems” |
| Session 8 | February 9 | Working with scientific uncertainty in the political process. | Agrawal et al. “Changing governance of the world’s forests”.
Science. “The real holes in climate science” |
| Session 9 | Mid term exam | YOUTUBE “THE GREAT GLOBAL WARMING SWINDLE” |
**February 14**  
*YOUTUBE “THE TEMP LEADS CARBON CROCK”*

**Part II: Climate Change Mitigation and Levels of Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 10</th>
<th>February 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Levels of analysis in international relations: the individual, the state and relations between states (basic definitions). | Simmel. “The web of group affiliations”.  
Weber. “Politics as a vocation”.  
Waltz. “Man, the state and war”. p. 16-26, 80-85, 159-165. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 11</th>
<th>February 21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural system changes individual level: the rise of consumerism</td>
<td>Google videos BBC documentary, “THE CENTURY OF THE SELF”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 12</th>
<th>February 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| International governance for managing climate change: The UN and the EU | The UN  
Kyoto Protocol |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 13</th>
<th>February 28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The UN | Stern Review International Collective Action  
Ecological footprint atlas 2009  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 14</th>
<th>March 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The EU</td>
<td>Susana Aguilar. “Corporatist and statist designs in EU Environmental Policy”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 15</th>
<th>March 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The EU</td>
<td>Elizabeth Bomberg. “Green issues and environmental policy-making in the EU”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 16</th>
<th>March 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nation-states | Garrett Hardin. “The Tragedy of the Commons”  
Elinor Ostrom. “Governing the commons”. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 17</th>
<th>March 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 18</th>
<th>March 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The individual | Jianguo Liu. “Effects of household dynamics on resource consumption and biodiversity”  
Tina Fawcett. “Making the case for personal carbon rationing”. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 19</th>
<th>March 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 20</th>
<th>March 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 21</th>
<th>March 27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 22</td>
<td>PRESENTATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Session 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part III: Spain

#### Session 23
**April 10**
**Climate Change: Projected Effects in Spain**  
Informe para el Presidente de Gobierno. “El Cambio Climático en España”

#### Session 24
**April 12**
**Climate Change: Projected Effects in Spain**  
Informe CLIVAR. Chapters 0, 1, 5.

#### Session 25
**April 17**
**Complexities of political responses: the Spanish political system**  
MMA. “Perfil ambiental de España 2009: Prologo”

#### Session 26
**April 19**
**Complexities of political responses: the Spanish political system**  
Heywood. “The autonomous communities”.

#### Session 27
**April 24**
**An example of the complexities of effective political responses to climate change: the global carbon cycle, Spanish forest policy and the politics of landscape fires in Spain.**  
Bowman et al., “Fire in the Earth System”.

#### Session 28
**April 26**
**Spanish forest policy and the politics of landscape fires in Spain**  

#### Session 29
**April 30**
**Spanish forest policy and the politics of landscape fires in Spain**  
Francisco Seijo. “Who framed the forest fire?”

#### Session 30
**May 3**
**Spanish forest policy and the politics of landscape fires in Spain**  
Francisco Seijo. “RIAPIs”

### Required Co-curricular Activities
We will be organizing a field trip to an afforestation project to examine the impacts of land use changes on albedo and fire regimes.

### Suggested Co-curricular Activities
To be announced.