

Climate Politics

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1. Description

Climate change has become one of the most pressing and conflictual issues of our times as evidenced by large-scale social movements such as the Fridays for Future protests or the Yellow Vests in France. We employ an analytical perspective on how countries and individuals are trying to address climate change. Our focus is on understanding the relationships between environmental conditions and policy choices by states and non-state actors. We cover key topics such as global climate negotiations, public opinion on climate policy, policy design, climate fairness, environmental inequality, and issue linkage.

2. Prerequisites

Students should have taken a first course in comparative politics, international economics, public economics, international law, public law, or political economy and should have basic research design and quantitative methods skills.

3. Requirements

Enrollment: This course requires enrollment on a credit basis.

Climate politics surveys: Students may be asked to take several surveys to enhance engagement and improve learning.

Participation: The value of this course crucially depends on students' preparation and participation. Therefore, students have to complete all mandatory readings and be prepared to answer questions and defend or criticize arguments on which the readings elaborate.

Presentations: Each student (or group of students) has to present the article/s marked with an asterisk in the reading list. The presentation should 15 minutes and should:

- inform the audience about the article's key motivation and contribution
- briefly explain the theoretical argument and the main predictions
- summarize the research design
- highlight the key finding(s)
- identify ways in which one could improve the article
- offer two discussion questions
- identify one other presentation/reading to which your presentation/reading is related and explain how.

Case study: There will be one case study that students will work on in groups. Each group prepares a report (five pages). Students will work on a case study that analyzes the connection between global climate cooperation and conflict in Brazil in the context of the Paris Agreement (Stanford GSB Case P-98: "Global Climate Cooperation and Conflict: Brazil and the Paris Agreement"). Your report should identify the possible policy choices and the associated costs and benefits. Based on an evaluation of these factors, provide an explicit answer to the questions on p. 15:

"Do you exit the Paris Agreement? Provide a clear policy recommendation, along with an analysis to support your decision. If you choose to stay in Paris, then please outline specifically how Brazil should go about meeting the goals of the agreement. If you choose to leave, then explicate how Bolsonaro can mitigate potential blow-back from international actors, public opinion dynamics, etc."

Case Study groups are: see ILIAS.

The case study is due one week before our final meeting. Send one copy of your report per group to the instructor via email. Confirm that this you are submitting your own work.

Formatting rules for all written work: Times New Roman, 12pt, single spacing, 1in margins (top, bottom, left, right), Harvard citation system.

Final grade and grade components: The final grade is computed as the average of the following:

- presentation (50%)
- case study (50%)
- participation (it will be possible to gain bonus points for active participation – more details in the first session)

Course evaluation

To encourage students to take the evaluation survey for this class, each student will receive

- 1% extra credit on their final grade if 80% of all enrolled students participate in the survey
- 2% extra credit on their final grade if 90% of all enrolled students participate in the survey
- 3% extra credit on their final grade if 100% of all enrolled students participate in the survey.

4. Time and Room

Room 3.40, IBW-Building (Herbert-Lewin-Str. 2), 3rd floor

Monday, 16.10.2023, 16:00 – 19:15

Monday, 30.10.2023, 16:00 – 19:15

Monday, 13.11.2023, 16:00 – 19:15

Monday, 20.11.2023, 16:00 – 19:15

Monday, 04.12.2023, 16:00 – 19:15

Monday, 11.12.2023, 16:00 – 19:15

Monday, 29.01.2024, 16:00 – 19:15

5. Aims of the Course

The specific aims of this course are as follows:

- to familiarize students with key topics in climate politics, international relations, political economy, and political behavior
- to provide students with knowledge about climate issues and how they relate to politics, fairness, and inequality
- to provide an intellectual basis for studying phenomena from different viewpoints
- to improve students' research skills.

6. Key Skills

The course seeks to develop or enhance the following key skills:

- Communication: writing clearly and to the point, writing to deadlines, presenting ideas and arguments orally
- Working with others: making/challenging contributions, listening to others, exchanging interpretations
- Improving learning and performance: discriminating reading, essay preparation, accepting and responding to criticism, developing own opinions
- Information technology: word processing, library searches, use of the internet
- Problem solving: conceptualization of issues, identification and evaluation of research designs, analysis and synthesis of evidence and argumentation, evaluation of the credibility of evidence, assessing the validity of conclusions.

7. Textbooks

Abate, Randall S. 2019. *Climate Change and the Voiceless: Protecting Future Generations, Wildlife, and Natural Resources*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Giddens, Anthony. 2011. *The Politics of Climate Change*. Cambridge: Policy Press.

Incropera, Frank P. 2015. *Climate Change: A Wicked Problem. Complexity and Uncertainty at the Intersection of Science, Economics, Politics, and Human Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Luterbacher, Urs, and Detlef F. Sprinz. 2001. *International Relations and Global Climate Change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Maslin, Mark. 2014. *Climate Change: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Neuhoff, Karsten. 2011. *Climate Policy after Copenhagen. The Role of Carbon Pricing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shepsle, Kenneth and Mark S. Boncheck. 1997. *Analyzing Politics. Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

8. Reading List and Schedule

	<p>Topic and Readings All students read all texts * marks mandatory readings for student presentations (one per group)</p>
1)	<p><u>Introduction</u> * Cao, Xun, Helen V. Milner, Aseem Prakash, and Hugh Ward. 2013. Research Frontiers in Comparative and International Environmental Politics, in: Comparative Political Studies 45(9): 1075-1103.</p>
2)	<p><u>Climate Change and Climate Objectives</u> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): “Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policy Makers”</p> <p>*Schnellhuber, Hans Joachim, Stefan Rahmstorf, and Winkelmann, Ricarda. 2016. “Why the right climate target was agreed in Paris”, in Nature Climate Change 6: 649-653.</p> <p>“How Climate Migration Will Reshape America”, <i>New York Times Magazine</i>, Abraham Lustgarten, last accessed on Sep 15, 2020.</p> <p>*Armstrong et al. 2022: “Exceeding 1.5°C global warming could trigger multiple climate tipping points“, https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abn7950.</p>
3)	<p><u>The Politics of Climate Change</u> *Dolšak, Nives and Aseem Prakash. 2018. The Politics of Climate Change Adaptation, in: Annual Review of Environment and Resources 43: 317-314.</p> <p>Javeline, Debra. 2014. The Most Important Topic Political Scientists Are Not Studying: Adapting to Climate Change, in: Perspectives on Politics 12 (2): 420-434.</p> <p>Keohane, Robert O. 2015. The Global Politics of Climate Change: Challenge for Political Science, in: PS: Political Science and Politics 48 (1): 19-26.</p> <p>Young, Oran R. and Olav Schram Stokke. 2020. Why is it hard to solve environmental problems? The perils of institutional reductionism and institutional overload, in: International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics 20: 5-19.</p>
4)	<p><u>Climate Agreements I</u> *Putnam, Robert D. 1988. Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games, in: International Organization 42 (3): 427-460.</p> <p>Underdal, Arild. 2017. Climate Change and International Relations (After Kyoto), in: Annual Review of Political Science 2017 20 (1): 169-188.</p>
5)	<p><u>Climate Agreements II</u> *Aldy, Joseph E./Krupnick, Alan J./Newell, Richard G./Parry, Ian W. H./Pizer, William A. 2010. Designing Climate Mitigation Policy, in: Journal of Economic Literature 48 (4): 903-934.</p> <p>Keohane, Robert O. and David Victor. 2016. Cooperation and Discord in Global Climate Policy, in: Nature Climate Change 6: 570-575.</p> <p>Fearon, James D. 1998. Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation, in: International Organization 52 (2): 269-305.</p>

6)	<p><u>Climate Justice</u> Lane, Melissa. 2016. Political Theory on Climate Change, in: Annual Review of Political Science 19: 107-123.</p> <p>Klinsky, Sonja, Dowlatabadi, Hadi, and Timothy McDaniels. 2012. Comparing Public Rationales for Justice Trade-offs in Mitigation and Adaptation Climate Policy Dilemmas, in: Global Environmental Change 22: 862-876.</p> <p>Diffenbaugh, Noah S. and Mashall Burke. 2019. Global Warming Has Increased Global Economic Inequality, in: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 116 (20): 9808-9813.</p> <p>*Makov, Tamar, George E. Newman, and Gal Zauberaman. 2020. Inconsistent Allocations of Harm Versus Benefits May Exacerbate Environmental Inequality, in: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 117 (16): 8820-8824.</p>
7)	<p><u>Firms and Climate Change</u> Kennard, Amanda. 2020. The Enemy of My Enemy: When Firms Support Climate Change Regulation, in: International Organization 74 (2): 187-221.</p> <p>*Malhotra, Neil, Benoit Monin, and Michael Tomz. 2019. Does Private Regulation Preempt Public Regulation?, in: American Political Science Review 113 (1): 19-37.</p>
8)	<p><u>Domestic Climate Politics</u></p> <p>Bechtel, Michael M., Scheve, Kenneth F. and Elisabeth van Lieshout. 2020. Constant carbon pricing increases support for climate action compared to ramping up costs over time, in: Nature Climate Change 10: 1004-1009.</p> <p>* Bechtel, Michael M., Mannino, M. 2023: Ready When the Big One Comes? Natural Disasters and Mass Support for Preparedness Investment, in: Political Behavior 45: 1045-1070.</p> <p>Egan, Patrick J. and Megan Mullin. 2012. Turning Personal Experience into Political Attitudes: The Effect of Local Weather on American’s Perceptions about Global Warming, in: Journal of Politics 74 (3): 796-809.</p> <p>Bergquist, Parrish and Christopher Warsaw. 2018. Does Global Warming Increase Public Concern about Climate Change?, in: Journal of Politics 81 (2): 686-691.</p> <p>Gaikwad, Nikar, Federica Genovese, and Dustin Tingley. 2022. “Creating Climate Coalitions: Mass Preferences for Compensating Vulnerability in the World’s Two Largest Democracies“, in: American Political Science Review 116 (4): 1165-1183.</p>
9)	<p><u>Global Climate Politics</u> *Aklin, Michael and Matteo Mildemberger. 2020. Prisoners of the wrong dilemma: Why distributive conflict, not collective action, characterizes the politics of climate change, in: Global Environmental Politics 20 (4): 4-27.</p> <p>Bechtel, Michael M., Scheve, Kenneth F. and Elisabeth van Lieshout. 2022. Improving public support for climate action through multilateralism, in: Nature Communications 13, 6441.</p> <p>Bechtel, Michael M. and Kenneth F. Scheve. 2013. Mass Support for Global Climate Agreements Depends on Institutional Design, in: Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences 110 (34): 13763-13768.</p>

	Tingley, Dustin and Mike Tomz. 2014. Conditional Cooperation and Climate Change, in: Comparative Political Studies 74 (3): 344-368
10)	<p><u>Climate Governance</u></p> <p>Bayer, Patrick and Michaël Aklin. 2020. The European Union Emissions Trading System Reduced CO2 Emissions Despite Low Prices, in: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 117 (16): 8804-8812.</p> <p>*Obradovich, Nick, Dustin Tingley, and Iyad Rahwana. 2018. Effects of Environmental Stressors on Daily Governance, in: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 115 (35): 8710-8715.</p>
11)	<p><u>Climate Change and Elections</u></p> <p>*Stokes, Leah C. 2016. Electoral Backlash against Climate Policy: A Natural Experiment on Retrospective Voting and Local Resistance to Public Policy, in: American Journal of Political Science 60 (4): 958-974.</p> <p>Hazlett, Chad and Matteo Mildemberger. 2020. Wildfire exposure increases pro-environment voting within Democratic but not Republican areas, in: American Political Science Review (forthcoming).</p> <p>Kammerlander, Andreas and Günther G. Schulze. 2021. Political-Economic Correlates of Environmental Policy, in: Environmental Research Letters 16: 1-10.</p> <p>Bechtel, Michael M. and Jens Hainmueller. 2011. How Lasting Is Voter Gratitude? An Analysis of the Short- and Long-Term Electoral Returns to Beneficial Policy, in: American Journal of Political Science 55 (4): 852-868.</p> <p>Tyson, Alec, “How important is climate change to voters in the 2020 election?”, Pew Research Center, 6th Oct 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/06/how-important-is-climate-change-to-voters-in-the-2020-election/</p>
12)	<u>Case Study Presentations</u>
13)	<u>Case Study Presentations II/Debriefing</u>
14)	<u>Review and Feedback</u>

* Marks readings for student presentations.

9. Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating, fabrication of data and records, and other types of dishonesty and misconduct constitute breaches of academic integrity. For violations such as cheating on an exam, the grade penalty is failure of the course.

10. Instructor Short Bio

[Michael Bechtel](#) (1978) is Professor of Political Economy at the University of Cologne and Director of the Institute of Political Science and European Affairs. His research explores how countries can address global economic and environmental policy problems. Current projects analyze mass support for international climate cooperation, the politics of natural disasters, and policy responses to economic crises. Much of his scholarly work uses original survey data, experimental designs, and causal inference techniques. Bechtel’s articles have appeared in journals such as *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Politics*, *International Organization*, *Nature Climate Change*, and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. His research has been featured in media outlets in the United States and Europe and in [animated movies](#).