

SYLLABUS

Climate Change Ethics and Policy NRSM 349E

Course Information:

- Autumn 2019
- MWF, 12:00-12:50
- RM: LA 204
- Instructor: Dane Scott
- Office: CHCB 406
- Phone: 243-6632
- Email: dane.scott@mso.umt.edu
- Office hours: By appointment, MWFs 2:00-4:00
- TA: Nate Bender
- Office: TBA
- Email: TBA
- Office hours: By appointment

Course Objectives:

Students will:

- Demonstrate comprehension of key concepts, ideas and approaches to moral reasoning that compose several influential theories of distributive justice
- Demonstrate a depth of understanding of various roles moral and political philosophy can contribute forming and critiquing climate change policie

Readings and Resources:

- Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?*
- All additional required readings, videos and podcasts will be posted or linked on the course Moodle page
- Much supplemental materials will be posted on the course Moodle page

Tests & Assignments:

- Participation (Short Writing Assignments & Attendance): 20 pts
- Essay #1: 20 pts
- Essay #2: 20 pts
- Exam #1: 20 pts
- Exam #2: 20 pts

Grading Scale: 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 88-89 = B+; 83-87 = B; 80-82 = B-; 78 - 79 = C+; 73 - 77 = C; 70 - 72 = C-; 69 -68 = D+; 67 - 62 = D; 61-60 = D-; Below 59 = F

Late Work and Make-up Policies

- Make-up tests will only be allowed if the instructor is informed *prior* to the test.
- Late papers will be penalized 3 pts/day after the time due.

Schedule:

Part I: Some Basic Ethical and Philosophical Issues Driving the Climate Debate

Week 1

- 8/26: Course Introduction: An Overview of Ethics and Climate Change Policy

Issue #1: Ethics, Risk and Climate Change

- 8/28: Spat & Dunlop, “Existential climate-related security risks: A scenario approach”
- 8/30: Steffen, et al. “Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene”

Week 2

- 9/2 Labor Day, No Class
- 9/4: Matthew Rendall, Pascalian Wagering and Catastrophic Risk: The Weitzman-Nordhaus Debate
- 9/6: Dyson, “The question of global warming” & Yale 360, “Interview with Freeman Dyson, reluctant global warming skeptic” & Dyson, “Our Biotech Future”

Week 3:

Issue #2: Intro to political philosophy and climate change: Debating Klein’s thesis

- 9/9: Video, Frontline: “A Climate of Doubt”
- 9/11: Klein, “Capitalism vs. the Climate”
- 9/13: Mann, “How to talk about climate change so people will listen”

Week 4:

- 9/16: McKibben, “*Honey and Oil*” excerpt & Podcast, On Being: “Interview, Bill McKibben, The Moral Math of Climate Change”
- 9/18: Bruckner, “Against environmental panic”
- 9/20: Class canceled

Week 5

- 9/23: Lecture/discussion on Mann, McKibben & Bruckner continued.
Essay #1 Assigned, Due 10/2
- 9/25: Various reviews of Nordhaus’, *The Climate Casino*
- 9/27: Group discussions of *First Reformed* and [Intelligence-Squared Debates, “Engineering Solar Radiation is a Crazy Idea”](#)

Part II: Moral & Political Philosophy and Climate Change Policy

Week 6

- 9/30: Sandel, Chapter 1, “Do the Right Thing”
- 10/2: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism”
- **Essay #1 Due**
- 10/4: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism” (continued)

Week 7

- 10/7: **Exam #1 (covers weeks 1-5)**

- 10/9: Video: [Singer, “The Ethics of Climate Change”](#) and Singer, “One atmosphere”
- 10/11: Sandel, Chapter 3, “Do We Own Ourselves /Libertarianism”

Week 8

- 10/14: Sandel, Chapter 3, “Do We Own Ourselves /Libertarianism” (continued)
- 10/16: Adler, “A conservative’s approach to combating climate change”
- 10/18: Sandel, Chapter 4, “Hired Help / Markets and Morals”

Week 9

- 10/21: Sandel, Chapter 4, “Hired Help / Markets and Morals” (continued)
- 10/23: Climate Leadership Council, “The conservative case for carbon dividends” & [Halstead, “A climate solution where all sides win”](#) (video)
- 10/25: Discussion/debate and short writing assignment on the ethics and politics of revenue neutral carbon tax proposals

Week 10

- 10/28: Sandel, Chapter 6, “The Case for Equity / John Rawls”
- 10/30: Pogge, “Rawls and global justice”
- 11/1: Sandel, Chapter 8, “Who Deserves What? / Aristotle”

Week 11

- 11/4: Mike Hulme, “Climate change and virtue: An apologetic”
- 11/6: Caney, “Climate change, Human Rights and moral thresholds” & [Robinson, “Why climate change is a threat to Human Rights”](#) (video)
- 11/8: Nussbaum, “Women’s Capabilities and social justice”

Week 12

- 11/11: Veterans Day, No Class
- 11/13: Holland, “Justice and the environment in Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach”
- 11/15: Sen, “Global warming is just one of many environmental threats that demand our attention”

Week 13

- 11/18: Exam #2 (covers weeks 6-12)

Part III, Ethical Analyses of climate change policy proposals

- 11/20: Climate-Focus, “The Paris Agreement summary”
 - 11/22: President Obama’s, “Climate Action Plan” & President Trump’s “‘America First’ Energy Plan”
- Policy Brief Assigned, due no later than 12/9, 5:00 PM**

Week 14

- 11/25: “The Green New Deal”
- 11/27: No Class, Travel Day
- 11/29: No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15

- 12/2: Discussion/Debate on the ethics leading Democratic candidates’ climate change proposals, focusing on energy, transportation and conservation
- 12/4: Discussion/Debate on the ethics of leading Democratic candidates’ climate change proposals, focusing on food, agriculture and biodiversity loss
- 12/6: Presentations and discussions of policy briefs in small groups

Week 16

- 12/9: Policy Brief, due no later than 5:00 PM

UM Policies

- Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction for students with disabilities in collaboration with instructors and Disability Services for Students, which is located in Lommasson Center 154. The University does not permit fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.
- All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#).