

# **NRSM 426 Climate and Society**

## **Fall 2019, MWF 1-1:50 pm, FOR 305**

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Office hours by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course examines the social, economic, and political aspects of climate change, with a focus on both international and domestic examples. Students explore the social aspects of climate change at multiple scales, from individual behavior to land management to global governance. The course draws on multiple disciplinary perspectives within the social sciences to examine the socioeconomic impacts of climate change, and the social and political sides of mitigation and adaptation. The course provides a window into the complex interactions between scales, actors, society, and environment.

### **Course Objectives**

Students in this course will:

1. Understand the key social, economic, and political aspects of climate change.
2. Gain knowledge of the contributions of different social science disciplines to understanding and addressing the problem of climate change.
3. Improve writing, speaking, and analytical skills.

### **Course Readings**

All course readings are available on Moodle/UMOnline. Course readings will be posted at least two weeks prior to class.

Readings must be completed prior to class. To adequately prepare for class, students should be familiar with the “facts” outlined in the reading (who, what, when, where, how, etc.) and carefully analyze and critique the material presented. As you are reading, make notes about key points, questions you have, interesting issues raised, and connections to other topics being covered in the course.

### **Course Schedule**

#### Understanding the Climate and Society Interface

- 8/26 Course Introduction  
8/28 Climate Change as a Complex Social-Ecological Problem I  
8/30 Climate Change as a Complex Social-Ecological Problem II

#### Conceptualizing Social Impacts

- 9/4 Vulnerability, Resilience, Transformation I  
9/6 Vulnerability, Resilience, Transformation II

*Paper #1 Topic Due*

- 9/9 The Natural Disasters Lens
  - 9/11 Social Vulnerability on the Mekong Delta
  - 9/13 Considering Health Impacts
  
  - 9/16 Climate Impacts to Tourism in Montana
  - 9/18 The Natural Resources-National Security Nexus I
  - 9/20 The Natural Resources-National Security Nexus II
- Paper #1 Due*

Public Views of Climate Change

- 9/23 Public Views of Climate Change I
- 9/25 Public Views of Climate Change II
- 9/27 Public Views of Climate Change III
  
- 9/30 The Politics of Climate Change Denial
- 10/2 Climate Movements and Counter-Movements
- 10/4 Climate Change Communication

Mitigation at Multiple Scales

- 10/7 Changing Human Behavior I
  - 10/9 Changing Human Behavior II
  - 10/11 Changing Human Behavior III
- Paper #2 Topic Due*
- 10/14 UNFCCC – The Climate Treaty
  - 10/16 The Politics of Sea Level Rise and Pacific Islands I
  - 10/18 The Politics of Sea Level Rise and Pacific Islands II
- Paper #1 Revision Due*
- 10/21 U.S. Climate Politics and Policy I
  - 10/23 U.S. Climate Politics and Policy II

Envisioning Adaptation

- 10/25 Understanding Climate Adaptation
  
  - 10/28 Navigating Adaptation on Federal Lands
  - 10/30 Lessons from the Archeological Record
  - 11/1 Adapting Western Water Law and Policy
- Paper #2 Due*
- 11/4 The Climate Ready Process in Missoula County

11/6 Tools for Navigating Uncertainty  
11/8 REDD and Forest Peoples  
*Practice sessions for presentations*

11/13 Tribes and Climate Adaptation  
11/15 Agriculture and Drought in Montana  
*Practice sessions for presentations*

### Student Presentations

11/18 Student Presentations  
11/20 Student Presentations  
11/22 Student Presentations

11/25 Student Presentations

### Emerging Transitions and Solutions

12/2 Energy Transitions in the Western U.S.  
12/4 Climate Engineering and Global Governance  
12/6 Innovative Solutions I  
*Paper #2 Revision Due*

12/11 1:10-3:10 Innovative Solutions II

### **Evaluation**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage of Final Grade</b>	<b>Due Date and Time</b>
Attendance/participation	10%	
Paper #1 Topic Due	2%	9/6
Paper #1 Due	30%	9/20
Paper #1 Revision Due	*	10/18
Practice Presentation	5%	Weeks of 11/4 and 11/11
Presentation	20%	11/18, 11/20, 11/22, 11/25
Paper #2 Topic Due	3%	10/11
Paper #2 Due	30%	11/1
Paper #2 Revision Due	*	12/6

\* Improved grades on paper revisions will replace original paper grade. However, incomplete papers will not be graded (and thus not receive feedback).

All assignments (with the exception of in-class essays) should be submitted by email. Please submit as word documents with your last name in the title of the document.

### Paper #1: Societal Impacts

Students are required to write a 5-page paper describing a specific societal impact from climate change, geared toward a broad audience (i.e. the public). Attention to framing and compelling details is required. A detailed description of this assignment will be provided on the course Moodle page.

### Paper #2: Solutions Brief

Students are required to write a 5-page solutions brief focused on specific climate solution (e.g. a policy, management practice, technology). These are persuasive essays that use evidence to argue for a specific solution. The audience is the decision-makers who can adopt your solution (e.g. members of Congress, forest managers, farmers). A detailed description of this assignment will be provided on the course Moodle page.

### Topic Submissions

Students are required to write one-paragraph descriptions of the topics they intend to examine in their papers. Topic proposals are not graded, but failure to submit detailed proposals will result in a deduction of points and negatively impact a student's course grade. The purpose of the topic proposals is to get feedback on the topic before writing begins.

### Presentations

Students are required to provide one 3-minute presentations in class, focused on paper #2. All students will meet with the Teaching Assistant to practice their presentation and receive feedback. A detailed description of this assignment will be provided on the course Moodle page.

### Participation

Participation grades will be based on attendance, punctuality, coming to class prepared, active engagement during class, and in-class essays. Occasionally, students will be required to write short in-class essays based on the readings, as a prompt for discussion. Students will get full credit for in-class essays so long as they are thoughtful and demonstrate knowledge of reading material. Attendance will be taken at every class.

### Grading Scale

Final course grades will be determined based on the following 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-  
68-69 D+  
63-67 D  
60-62 D-  
59- F

## **Course Policies, UM Policies, and Important UM Deadlines**

### Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and wish to request reasonable accommodations for this course, contact me privately to discuss the specific modifications. Please be advised, I may request that you provide a verification letter from Disability Services for Students. If you have not yet registered with Disability Services, located in Lommasson Center 154, please do so in order to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at [Disabilities Webpage Link](#).

### Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

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](#). Please be aware that plagiarism is a violation of the student conduct code and will not be tolerated in this course. If a student plagiarizes, their course grade will be impacted and the UM Dean of Students will be notified. If you aren't entirely certain what constitutes plagiarism is, please see these excellent resources:

[Plagiarism Web Link](#)

[Writing Center Link](#)

[Owl English Purdue Link](#)

[Owl English Purdue Resource Link](#)

### Attendance and Late Papers

Late papers and absences will impact your grade. UM policy states that "Instructors may excuse brief and occasional absences for reasons of illness, injury, family emergency, religious observance or participation in a University sponsored activity. (University sponsored activities include for example, field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) Instructors shall excuse absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service." Two unexcused absences are allowed and will not impact your grade. If you miss class at any time, you are responsible for inquiring about any missed in-class essays. Points will be deducted for late papers (the later you turn them in the more points you will lose), but please note that better late than never definitely applies (i.e. it's better to get some credit for the paper rather than none at all). If you have an emergency or other legitimate reason to miss more than two classes or to submit assignments late, please talk with me as soon as possible. I will take your circumstances into account, but please know that I may ask for documentation.

### Grading Option

Please note that this class is offered for traditional letter grade only; it is not offered under the credit/no credit option.

## **Important Dates Restricting Opportunities to Drop a Course Fall 2019**

<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
To 15 <sup>th</sup> instructional day	Students can drop classes on CyberBear with refund & no “W” on Transcript	September 16, @5 PM
16 <sup>th</sup> to 45 <sup>th</sup> instructional day	A class drop requires a form with instructor and advisor signature, a \$10 fee from registrar’s office, student will receive a ‘W’ on transcript, no refund.	September 17 – October 28 @5 PM
Beginning 46 <sup>th</sup> instructional day	<u><i>Students are only allowed to drop a class under very limited and unusual circumstances.</i></u> Not doing well in the class, deciding you are concerned about how the class grade might affect your GPA, deciding you did not want to take the class after all, switching majors, and similar reasons are not among those limited and unusual circumstances. If you want to drop the class for these sorts of reasons, make sure you do so by the end of the 45 <sup>th</sup> instructional day of the semester. Requests to drop must be signed by the instructor, advisor, and Associate Dean (in that order) so if you pursue this request, <i>leave sufficient time to schedule meetings with each of these individuals</i> (generally this will take at least 3-5 working days). A \$10 fee applies if approved. Instructors must indicate whether the individual is Passing or Failing the class at the time of request.	October 28 – December 6 @5 PM