

SYLLABUS

(Corrected 8/26)

Climate Change Ethics and Policy

NRSM 349E

Autumn 2020

Course Information:

- Online & schedule in-person meetings, MW, 12:00-12:50
- RM: FOR106
- Instructor: Dane Scott
- Office: CHCB 406
- Phone: 243-6632
- Email: dane.scott@mso.umt.edu
- Office hours: By appointment
- TA: Dylan White
- Office: TBA
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- Office hours: By appointment

Course Objectives:

Students will:

- Identify, define and evaluate basic concepts and forms of reasoning associated with influential ethical theories.
- Identify, describe and evaluate basic scientific, ethical and policy issues and concepts associated with various climate change policies
- Write two concise, clearly written, well research and carefully organized assignments, an argumentative essay and a policy brief.

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
- Supplemental materials will also be posted on the course Moodle page

Requirements and Grading

- Quizzes and short essay questions: 40%
- Discussion forums: 20%
- Policy Brief: 20%
- Essay: 20%

Expectations

Student should plan for weekly graded, assignments in the form of quizzes, short essay questions and/or discussion forums. These assignments will have due dates. The online quizzes and short essay questions are not listed on the course schedule, so it important for students keep pace with the course material and plan for weekly assignments. There will be no midterm or final.

The due dates for the two essay assignments are listed on the schedule below. These assignments are designed to satisfy the learning outcomes UM's, general education writing requirement:

- Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources

- Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate
- Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline
- Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work
- Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline
- Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy

UM policies and safety measures for classrooms are listed at the end of this syllabus

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

Course Outline & Schedule

Part I: Some basic ethical and political issues and the climate debate

Week 1

- 8/19: Course Introduction: An Overview of Ethics and Climate Change Policy (PowerPoint slides with audio) & Stephen Gardiner, “Why climate change is an ethical problem” (PDF)
- 8/21: Sandel, Chapter 1, “Do the Right Thing”
- Video: Michael Sandel, “The lost art of democratic debate”

Week 2

- 8/24: Steffen, et al. “Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene”
- 8/26: Spat & Dunlop, “Existential climate-related security risks: A scenario approach”
- 8/28: Matthew Rendall, “Pascalian wagering and catastrophic risk: The Weitzman-Nordhaus debate” & Video: Rendall, “Discounting, aggregation and the ecological fallacy”

Week 3

- 8/31: Video, Frontline: “A Climate of Doubt”
- *Group A: In-person, review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/2: Klein, “Capitalism vs. the Climate”
- *Group B: In-person, review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/4: Dyson, “The question of global warming” & Yale 360, “Interview with Freeman Dyson, reluctant global warming skeptic”
- *Group C: Online review & discussion session (Zoom)*

Week 4:

- 9/7: Labor Day
- 9/9: Mann, “How to talk about climate change so people will listen”
- 9/13: McKibben, “*Honey and Oil*” & podcast, On Being: “Interview, Bill McKibben, The Moral Math of Climate Change”
- Video: 350.org, “Do the Math”
- **Quiz & Short Essay Questions**

Week 5

- 9/14: Pascal Bruckner, “Against environmental panic”
- *Group A: In-person, review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/16: Bill Gates, “We Need an Energy Miracle” & Dyson, “Our Biotech Future”
- *Group B: In-person, review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/18: Various reviews of Nordhaus’, *The Climate Casino*

- *Group C: Online review & discussion session (Zoom)*

Week 6

- 9/21: Nicholas Stern, “Ethics, Equity and the Economics of Climate Change”
- 9/23: David Keith, various writing on climate engineering & Michael Hulme, various writing on climate engineering
- 9/25: [Intelligence-Squared Debates, “Engineering Solar Radiation is a Crazy Idea”](#)
- *Group C: Online discussion & review session (Zoom)*
- **Quiz & Short Essay Questions**
- **Essay assigned, due 10/2**

Part II: Political philosophy and climate change policy

Week 7

- 9/28: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism”
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/30: Video: [Singer, “The Ethics of Climate Change”](#) and Singer, “One atmosphere”
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/2: Sandel, Chapter 3, “Do We Own Ourselves /Libertarianism”
- *Group C: Online discussion & review session (Zoom)*
- **Essay due by 5PM**

Week 8

- 10/5: Adler, “A conservative’s approach to combating climate change”
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/7: Sandel, Chapter 4, “Hired Help / Markets and Morals”
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/9: Climate Leadership Council, “The conservative case for carbon dividends” & [Halstead, “A climate solution where all sides win”](#) (video)
- *Group C: Online discussion & review session (Zoom)*

Week 9

- 10/12: Sandel, Chapter 6, “The Case for Equity / John Rawls”
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/14: Discussion/debate on the ethics and politics of carbon tax proposals
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/16: The Paris Agreement
- *Group C: Online discussion & review session (Zoom)*
- **Quiz & Short Essay Questions**
- **Policy brief assigned, due 10/30**

Part III, Ethical analyses of climate change policy proposals

Week 10

- 10/19: President Obama’s, “Climate Action Plan”
- President Trump’s “‘America First’ Energy Plan”
- 10/21: The Green New Deal
- 10/23: Presidential candidates’ climate plans

Week 11

- 10/26: Presidential candidates’ climate plans, cont.
- 10/28: Other important climate change policy initiatives,
- 10/30: Other important climate change policy initiatives, cont.

- **Policy brief due by 5PM**

Part IV, Climate change, virtues, human rights & capabilities

Week 12

- 11/2: Sandel, Chapter 8, "Who Deserves What? / Aristotle"
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 11/4: Mike Hulme, "Climate change and virtue: An apologetic"
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 11/6: [Robinson, "Why climate change is a threat to Human Rights"](#) (video)
- *Group C: Online discussion & review session (Zoom)*

Week 13

- 11/9: Caney, "Climate change, Human Rights and moral thresholds"
- 11/11: Veterans Day, No Class
- 11/13: Nussbaum, "Women's Capabilities and social justice"

Week 14

- 11/16: Holland, "Justice and the Environment in Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach"
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 11/18: Film: *Snowpiercer*
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- *Group C: Online discussion & review session (Zoom)*
- **Quiz & Short Essay Questions**

UM Safety Measures for Classrooms

- Mask use is required within the classroom
- Each student is provided with a cleaning kit. The expectation is that students will clean their personal work space when they arrive for class, and before they leave the classroom
- Classrooms may have one-way entrances / exits to minimize crowding
- Students should be discouraged from congregating outside the classroom before and after class
- Specific seating arrangements will be used to ensure social distancing and support contact tracing efforts
- Class attendance will be recorded to support contact tracing efforts
- Drinking liquids and eating food is discouraged within the classroom (which requires mask removal)
- Information on the nearest "refill" stations for cleaning supplies/hand sanitizer if applicable
- If the class is being recorded, students must be notified of the recording
- Stay home if you feel sick and/or if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms
- If the student is sick or displaying symptoms, please contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330
- Up-to-Date COVID-19 Information from the University of Montana
- [UM Coronavirus Website](#)
- [UM COVID-19 Fall 2020 website](#)
- Strongly encourage students to remain vigilant outside the classroom in mitigating the spread of COVID-19

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](#)