

SYLLABUS

NRS389E.02 Climate Change Ethics & Policy
University of Montana
Franklin College of Forestry and Conservation
Spring 2023

Course Information

- Instructor: Ashley Preston
- Meeting times: MWF 9 – 9:50 a.m.
Groups meet on alternate Fridays per schedule
- RM: LA244
- Email: Ashley.Preston@umontana.edu
- Office: MC405/FOR103C
- Office hours: MC405 TuTh 10:30 – 11:30; or by appt.
FOR103C MW 10 -11; or by appt.

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 concise, clear, well researched and carefully organized assignments, and essay.

Required Texts and Course Materials

- Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (weblink and .pdf in Moodle)
- Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Ministry of the Future*
- Additional articles, videos and podcasts posted and linked on Moodle

Requirements and Grading

- Exams: 40%
- Questions & discussion forums: 40%
- Essay: 20%

Expectations and Requirements:

The course will meet face-to-face on Mondays and Wednesdays. Groups A and B (see Moodle post for groupings) will meet face-to-face on alternate Fridays (see the schedule) with the other group participating in an online discussion forum. Students are expected to attend class and to keep up to date on the course materials and assignments. Plan for weekly, graded assignments in the form of participation in the face-to-face discussion, questions and/or online discussion forums, or exams. These will be posted on the course's Moodle page. The three exams will be taken online. There is one essay assignment.

Late assignments are not accepted and there is no opportunity to make up missed assignments or quizzes without prior arrangement and approval.

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 and Schedule**Part I: How to think about climate change****Week 1**

- 1/16 No class
- 1/18 Course introduction
- 1/20 Groups A and B attend face-to-face
Stephen Gardiner, "Why climate change is an ethical problem"
Sandel, Chapter 1, "Do the right thing"

Week 2

- 1/23 Mann, "How to talk about climate change so people will listen"
- 1/25 Sandel, "The lost art of democratic debate" (video)
- 1/27 Group A face-to-face (f2f)
Group B online discussion forums 1 & 2 (OL)
--Robinson, *The Ministry of the Future*, Chapters, 1-6
--PBS, NOVA, "Can we cool the planet?" (video)

Week 3

- 1/30 Steffen, et al. "Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene"
- 2/1 Spat & Dunlop, "Existential climate-related security risks: A scenario approach"
Global Priorities Project 2017, "Existential risk: Diplomacy and governance"
- 2/3 Group A OL
Group B f2f
--Intelligence-Squared Debates, "Engineering Solar Radiation is a Crazy Idea" (video)
--Keith, "Let's talk about geoengineering"
--Hulme & Asayama, "Betting on speculative geoengineering..."

Week 4

- 2/6 The UNFCCC & The Paris Agreement
- 2/8 Berdinesen, "On Hans Jonas' 'The Imperative of Responsibility'"
- 2/10 Group A f2f
Group B OL
--Robinson, *The Ministry of the Future*, Chapters, 7-28

Week 5

- 2/13 Klein, "Capitalism vs. the Climate"
- 2/15 McKibben, "Honey and Oil"
On Being: "Interview, Bill McKibben, The Moral Math of Climate Change" (podcast)
- 2/17 Groups A and B: Online, Test #1

Week 6

- 2/20 No class
- 2/22 Pascal Bruckner, "Against environmental panic"
- 2/24 Groups A&B both face-to-face
 - Dyson, "The question of global warming"
 - Yale 360, "Interview with Freeman Dyson, reluctant global warming skeptic"
 - Robinson, *The Ministry of the Future*, Chapters, 61-80

Week 7

- 2/27 Dyson, "Our biotech Future"
- 3/1 Gates, "We need an energy miracle"
- 3/3 Group A OL
Group B f2f
 - Robinson, *The Ministry of the Future*, Chapters, 81-91
 - Gates and Dyson

Week 8

- 3/6 Nordhaus, "Climate change, our ultimate challenge" (video)
- 3/8 Krugman, "Gambling with civilization"
 - Essay assigned, due 5PM, 3/31
- 3/10 Group A f2f
Group B OL
 - Nordhaus' Climate Club
 - Robinson, *The Ministry of the Future*, Chapters, 91 - 106

Part II: Political philosophy and climate change policy

Week 9

- 3/13 Sandel, Chapter 2, "The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism"
- 3/15 Sandel, Chapter 2, "The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism"
- 3/17 Groups A & B Online, Test #2

Week 10 spring break

Week 11

- 3/27 Singer, "One atmosphere" & Singer, "The Ethics of Climate Change" (video)
- 3/29 Sandel, Chapter 3, "Do We Own Ourselves /Libertarianism"
- 3/31 Group A OL
Group B f2f
 - LeGuin, "The One's Who Walk Away from Omelas"
 - Brooks, "The Child in the Basement"
 - Essay due by 5PM

Week 12

- 4/3 Sandel, Chapter 4, "Markets and Morals"
- 4/5 Alder, "A conservative's approach to combating climate change"
Baker-Schultz, Bipartisan Climate Roadmap
- 4/7 Group A f2f
Group B OL
--Halstead, "A climate solution where all sides win" (video)
--Skim weeks' other resources

Week 13

- 4/10 Sandel, Chapter 5, "What Matters is Motive/Immanuel Kant"
- 4/12 Sandel, Chapter 6, "The Case for Equity / John Rawls"
- 4/14 Group A OL
Group B f2f
--Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron"

Week 14

- 4/17 Caney, "Climate change, Human Rights and moral thresholds"
- 4/19 Robinson, "Why climate change is a threat to Human Rights" (video)
- 4/21 Groups A & B both face-to-face
Class wrap-up discussion on *The Ministry for the Future*...and everything else!

Week 15

- 4/24 Sandel, Chapter 8, "Who Deserves What? / Aristotle"
- 4/26 Mike Hulme, "Climate change and virtue: An apologetic"
- 4/28 Groups A & B both online
Extra credit/optional journal forum

Week 16

- 5/1 Nussbaum, "Women's Capabilities and social justice"
- 5/3 Holland, "Justice and the Environment in Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach"
- 5/5 Groups A & B Online, Test #3

UM Policies**Course Accommodations Statement (ODE)**

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Office of Disability Equity \[ODE\]](#). "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact ODE in Lommasson 154, call 243-2243 (voice/TDD), or see <http://www.umt.edu/dss/>. I will work with you and ODE to provide an appropriate modification.

Make an appointment or stop by (via Zoom) during office hours to talk about your accommodations and how to use them for this course. If you plan on using an accommodation for an assignment, you must let me know in advance. I will do my best to grant the accommodation if it does not undermine the objectives of the assignment. However, you must contact me prior to the due date—even better, prior

to the start of the assignment—to let me know if you will need to use an accommodation that allows for an extension on the deadline. I cannot grant a deadline extension retroactively.

Important Dates and Deadlines (Registrar's Office)

Click on <https://www.umt.edu/registrar/calendar.php> to see the calendar for important dates and deadlines about adding, dropping, payment, withdrawals, etc.

Student Conduct Code

In an effort to ensure that students are informed about the consequences of academic misconduct, the Academic Officers of The University of Montana have determined that the following statement must be present on every course syllabus. You will be held to these standards in this course.

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 [Student Conduct Code](#).

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The U of M's student Conduct Code defines plagiarism as "Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own or the student's own previous work as if it were the student's own original work." Students may be asked for their research or sources at any time. Plagiarism will be handled in strict accordance with the University of Montana Student Conduct Code.

Email policy at UM

According to the University email policy effective on 1 July 2007, an "employee must use *only* UMM assigned student email accounts for all email exchanges with students, since such communication typically involves private student information." This means that you *must* send any correspondence through your official UM student email account. For more information on setting up and using your official UM student email account contact tech support.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

Missoula College values the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff as an essential strength that contributes to our shared educational mission. Students of all backgrounds and perspectives are recognized and respected in this class. Course content and activities are intended to honor diversity of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, culture, religion, age, disability, socioeconomic status, and all dimensions of diverse human experiences and their intersection. Please notify your instructor if components of this course present barriers to your inclusion. Students can also reach out to Dr. Salena Beaumont Hill in the [Office of Inclusive Excellence for Student Success](#), which provides student support for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students and student groups. To explore making a formal report about discrimination or harassment, please visit the [Equal Opportunity / Title IX office](#). For counseling or advocacy related to discrimination, please visit [SARC](#).