

**Climate Justice  
Fall 2019  
College of the Atlantic**

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**Pronouns:** she/her/hers

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**Pronouns:** she/her/hers

**Course meeting times and places**

This course meets twice a week:

Tuesday and Friday, 11:10-12:35 in the Zoology Lab.

All class meetings are mandatory. Please email me in advance if you are unable to attend class due to illness or other unavoidable reason.

To enable smaller group discussions and give us all adequate time to process the complexities of the course material, we will add a discussion section to the course. Those sections will meet on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in Witchcliff 2, beginning week 3 and continuing through week 8, with no meetings week 7 because of faculty retreat. The Tuesday and Thursday sections will be in the 2:35-4:00 pm time slot and the Wednesday section from 4:10-5:35 pm. Attendance at one of the sessions each week is mandatory, so please arrange your schedule accordingly. Ideally to build a discussion cohort you should attend the same discussion section for the entire term, but if necessary you can visit an alternate section.

We will also add an additional meeting class meeting on Thursday during weeks 1 (6 -7:30 pm) and 2 (4-5:30 pm). During that time, we will meet jointly with two other classes - **Transforming Food Systems** and **Strangers and Performance** - to learn about and interact with the group [Complex Movements](#), who will visit COA on Thursday-Saturday of week 2.

**Course description**

Climate change is one of the biggest and most difficult challenges faced by contemporary societies. The challenge has multiple facets: environmental, social, political, economic - each with its own complexities. This course focuses primarily on the social, political, and economic elements of the climate problem, framed by the concept of climate justice. We will learn about the latest findings of climate science and potential impacts and explore the global politics of climate change, principally in the context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Climate justice and its operationalization is the principal organizing theme for work over the term, addressing questions such as: how the costs of climate change impacts and efforts to address climate change are felt now, and could or should be distributed between rich and poor, global north and global south; and what are the possible means whereby those costs might be addressed through collective action at various levels: local, national, and global.

There is a heavy emphasis in the course on reading critically, writing, and discussion - all key skills for being an engaged observer of and participant in politics.

## Objectives

In this course, students will:

- develop their own conceptions of climate justice through reading, listening to, engaging with, and discussing the ideas of leading thinkers and writers and their fellow classmates
- further develop their knowledge of climate change: science, impacts, actors, politics, futures, transformations
- gain an introduction to global climate politics and diplomacy

## Required books and readings

Sze, Julie. 2020. *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*. UC Press: Berkeley, CA.  
Daniel Macmillen Voskoboynik. 2018. *The Memory We Could Be*. New Society Publishers: Gabriola Island, B.C., Canada.

Other readings as indicated. pdfs of all additional readings will be posted on the course portal.

## Evaluation

Your grade in the course will be based on:

- **Attendance and presence.**
- **Class participation.** The course will consist of lectures, full-class discussions, small-group discussions, and smaller discussion section discussions. You are expected to have done the readings prior to class and be prepared to actively engage in class discussions and small-group work. Your grade will reflect your state of preparation as well as your in-class contribution.
- **Daily assignments.** Short answer questions that will usually take no more than a page of writing, based on the readings for the upcoming class. These will always be due by 5 pm the day before our class meeting.
- **Two essays: an 800-word reflective essay due the first week of the term and a final essay on climate justice due the last week of the term.** As part of the evaluation of the final essay, you will submit a zero-order draft at the end of week 8. You will be evaluated based on the quality of your thought and your ability to effectively and compellingly articulate your ideas. You will also be assessed on attention to detail in grammar, syntax, sentence structure, coherence of paragraphs, and thorough copy-editing to remove typographical or grammatical errors.
- **Two problem sets.** Problem sets will be short-answer, take-home assignments that will require review of readings, course notes, and may also involve additional outside research.
- **Final group climate justice conversation.** In groups of 3-4 students will identify a topic they would like to explore further. Each group will identify a reading or readings for the rest of the class and lead a conversation on those readings for half a class period during the last week of the term. Students should identify their group and topic by 22 October.

## Further course details, rules, and expectations

- Students should expect to spend at least 12 hours a week outside of the 3 hours of scheduled class time on readings, preparation for class discussions, and assignments, for a total of at least 150 hours over the term devoted to this class. As a rough estimate, for each class you should be spending several hours in preparation: reading, note-taking,

reviewing your notes, identifying topics and ideas you want to discuss in class, and preparing the daily assignment.

- **You are required to have your own copy of the course books and readings.** You may choose to acquire a digital version of the readings, for example by scanning the text. Regardless of source, you should always have a hard copy of the readings with you in class, along with reading notes, as these are our primary resource for class discussions. ***Failure to regularly bring readings and notes with you will be reflected in your class participation grade.***
- **You are expected to be an active participant in class discussions.** Be sure that you thoroughly review the readings and your notes before class. Active participation entails contributions such as:
  - initiating a topic or question
  - providing information and examples to clarify a point
  - trying to synthesize or summarize a part of the discussion
  - seeking clarification where one is unsure
  - adding to and amending what others have said
  - respectfully offering positive and negative reactions to others' points
  - seeking the positions (or clarification of positions) from other students
- If you know you don't speak very much in class, I am happy to discuss options with you on how you can regularly and actively contribute to class in other ways.
- All assignments are due by email to me by the time and date indicated on the syllabus. Please do not ask me for an extension for an assignment except in exceptional circumstances.
- **No wireless devices in the classroom, please.** Ideally you will take notes in a notebook rather than on a computer. If you want to use a computer for notetaking, you will need to have a conversation with me about it first and ALWAYS disable wireless. ***Cell phones are not permitted in class.***
- **I take plagiarism very seriously.** Plagiarism is the theft of someone else's ideas or words and the passing off of those words/ideas as one's own. It is the use of another's production without crediting the sources. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize>. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and may result in failing the course or expulsion from the college. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me, the writing center, a librarian, or search for examples on the Internet. ***Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not grounds for avoiding penalty.***

### **Reading and writing**

Critical reading and writing are central to this course. These are skills that one must practice and you will do just that. Here is some beginning advice on reading smart. You might also find useful a short piece on [How to Read Political Science by Amelia Hoover Green](#).

#### ***Read Smart***

(Excerpted from **International Relations**, edited by Steven McGlinchey. E-international Relations Publishing, 2017)

- Try to set aside time to read. You will need to put your devices on silent, close your internet browsers and find a quiet space to work.
- Reading for scholarly purposes is not the same as reading for pleasure. You need to adopt a reading strategy. Everyone has their own way of doing this, but the basic tip is this: take notes as you read. If you find that you don't have many notes or your mind goes a little blank, then you might be reading too quickly or not paying enough

attention. If this happens, don't worry: just go back and start again. Often, reading something a second time is when it clicks.

- Best practice is to make rough notes as you read through each chapter. When you get to the end of a chapter, compile your rough notes into a list of 'key points' that you would like to remember. This will be useful when you come to revise or recap an issue because you won't necessarily have to read the entire chapter again. Your notes should trigger your memory and remind you of the key information.
- By making notes you will form a reading strategy that will allow you to retain the most important information and compress it into a smaller set of notes integral to revision. You should adopt this approach with everything you read during your studies.

## Land Acknowledgement

We are in the homeland of the Wabanaki, the People of the Dawn. We extend our respect and gratitude to the many Indigenous people and their ancestors whose rich histories and vibrant communities include the Abenaki, Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Nations and all of the Native communities who have lived here for thousands of generations in what is known today as Maine, New England, and the Canadian Maritimes. We make this acknowledgement aware of continual violations of water, territorial rights, and sacred sites in the Wabanaki homeland.

Abbe Museum

<https://www.abbemuseum.org/>

Naming is an exercise in power. Who gets the right to name or be named? Whose stories are honored in a name? Whose are erased? Acknowledgment of traditional land is a public statement of the name of the traditional Native inhabitants of a place. It honors their historic relationship with the land. A Land Acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories."

Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group, Ontario, Canada

<http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/>

"What is land acknowledgement? Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action. But this beginning can be an opening to greater public consciousness of Native sovereignty and cultural rights, a step toward equitable relationship and reconciliation. Join us in adopting, calling for, and spreading this practice."

U.S. Department of Arts and Culture, a grassroots action network

<https://usdac.us/nativeland/>



## Draft reading and assignment schedule

Date	Theme	Readings	Assignments <b>Nota bene:</b> Daily assignments are due by 5 pm on the previous day to the day noted here
F 13 September	Introduction to the course	<a href="#">Asad Rehman lecture and Q&amp;A, starting at 37:30 min.</a> <a href="https://www.redpepper.org.uk/an-open-letter-to-extinction-rebellion/">https://www.redpepper.org.uk/an-open-letter-to-extinction-rebellion/</a>	Watch the talk again and read the open letter to Extinction Rebellion. What do you think climate justice is? What questions did Asad and the open letter provoke for you? Write an 800-word reflective essay on his talk, including the Q&A, and the open letter. The essay is due <b>20 September at midnight.</b>
<b>Justice and Environmental Justice</b>			
T 17 September	Theories of justice	J.L. Harrison, <i>Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice</i> , pp 1-18; 117-121; 138-143; 161-166; 183-186. <a href="#">Complex Movements video</a>	<b>Daily assignment:</b> In your own words, define communitarianism, egalitarianism, libertarianism, and utilitarianism.
R 19 September	Beware of the Dandelions	<a href="#">Complex Movements' Beware of the Dandelions</a>	Showing begins at 6:00 pm in Gates.
F 20 September	Global climate strike		Meet at the gathering on the Village Green from 12-1. <b>Reflective essay due at midnight</b>
T 24 September	Environmental justice; UN Global Climate Action Summit	L.W. Cole and S.R. Foster, <i>From the ground up: environmental racism and the environmental justice movement</i> , pp. 1-33; R. Figueroa and C. Mills, "Environmental Justice"	<b>Daily assignment:</b> In your own words, explain equity, distributive justice, and participatory justice. Problem set 1 handed out
<b>The Memory We Could Be</b>			
R 26 September	Conversation with Complex Movements	adrienne marie brown, <i>Emergent Strategy</i> , pp. 13-29; 41-50	Class meets in Gates from 4:10-5:30 pm Complex Movements at COA Thursday-Saturday
F 27 September	Groundings	<i>The Memory We Could Be</i> (TMWCB), foreword, Chs. 1-3;	<b>Daily assignment:</b> In your own words, define ontology.
T 1 October	Colonialism	TMWCB Ch. 4; J.T. Roberts and B.C. Parks, "Ecologically unequal exchange, ecological debt, and climate justice: and implications of three related ideas for a new social movement"	<b>Daily assignment:</b> In your own words, define unequal exchange and ecological debt. How do developing countries define climate justice according to the article by Roberts and Parks?

Discussion sections - T, W, R			
F 4 October	Epistemologies	TMWCB Chs. 5-6; <a href="#">N. Klein, "Dancing the world into being: A conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson."</a>	<b>Daily assignment:</b> In your own words, define epistemology.
T 8 October	Outside speaker - Asad Rehman		<b>Problem set 1 due by midnight</b>
Discussion sections - T, W, R	Introduction to the UNFCCC	<a href="#">Chee Yoke Ling on UNFCCC basics</a>	
F 11 October	Emissions, temperatures, budgets, and targets	TMWCB Chs. 7-8; <a href="#">Matthew Stilwell, "Climate debt - A primer"</a> ; Video: <a href="#">"The other debt crisis: climate debt"</a>	<b>Daily assignment:</b> In your own words, define atmospheric space, climate debt, and historical responsibility. And, in a short paragraph, describe the justice principles that you can identify in how Matthew Stilwell, Chee Yoke Ling, and Angelica Navarro articulate what might be a fair share of climate action.  Problem set 2 handed out
T 15 October	1°C, 1.5°C, 2°C, 4°C?	TMWCB Chs. 9-10; <a href="#">K. Anderson, "Climate change going beyond dangerous - Brutal numbers and tenuous hope."</a>	<b>Daily assignment:</b> write a short paragraph or two of reflection on Kevin's title - are the numbers really brutal? Is the hope really tenuous?
Discussion sections - T, W, R	Carbon budgets and fair shares	Climate Equity Reference Calculator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>problem set questions</b></li> <li>• <b>preparations for final student-led discussions</b></li> </ul>
F 18 October	Models and scenarios mid-term review	TMWCB Chs. 11-12; <a href="#">Bina Venkataraman TED talk</a>	<b>Daily assignment:</b> Look at the Tellus Institute page on a taxonomy of the future. Which one of the six scenarios seems most likely to you and why?
T 22 October	Scenarios and visions	TMWCB Ch. 13; Tellus Institute Exercise; Stuart Candy, <a href="#">Whose future is this?</a>	<b>Daily assignment</b> Chapter 13 contains a mosaic of alternatives. Pick an idea from this chapter that inspires you. Write a short paragraph about the idea and why you chose it.  <b>Groups and topics identified for final student-led discussions</b>

Discussion sections		<b>Required:</b> Keri Facer, <a href="#">All our futures?</a> Climate change, democracy & missing public spaces <b>Recommended:</b> Keri Facer, <a href="#">Learning to live with a lively planet</a>	What could be the roles of our own educational space - COA - in addressing climate change?
F 25 October	Foundations for climate justice	Climate justice statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Bali Principles of Climate Justice</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Climate Justice Now! statement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The People's Test on Climate 2015</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Leap Manifesto</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Green New Deal</a></li> </ul>	<b>Daily assignment:</b> What do you think are the core or foundational principles that should be in any statement of climate justice?
S 27 October			<b>Problem set 2 due by midnight</b>
T 29 October	Outside speaker - Daniel Voskoboynik	TMWCB Chs. 14-15; <a href="#">Video: "A message from the future with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez"</a>	<b>Daily assignment:</b> What is the one question you want to ask Daniel and why?
<b>Climate Justice Voices</b>			
F 1 November	No class - faculty retreat	<b>Watch:</b> When the levees broke, parts 1 and 2	
T 5 November	When the levees broke	<b>Watch:</b> When the levees broke, parts 3 and 4 <b>Read:</b> <a href="#">Emily Raboteau, Climate signs</a>	<b>Daily assignment:</b> How does the experience from Hurricane Katrina expand your understanding of what is climate justice?
Discussion sections and TA hours			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• input on essay draft</li> <li>• preparations for final student-led discussions</li> </ul>
F 8 November	Outside speaker - Lidy Nacpil	<a href="#">Southern movements: perspectives and demands towards CPOP21</a>	<b>Zero order draft of your climate justice essay due - 1500-2000 words</b>
<b>Your Voices</b>			
T 12 November	Climate justice conversations		Student-led discussions
F 15 November	Climate justice conversations		Student-led discussions
T 19 November	Climate justice conversations		Student-led discussions
F 22 November	Climate justice conversations		Student-led discussions
			<b>Climate Justice final essay due at midnight.</b>

