Course description
This course will help explain how governments at the international, national, and regional levels are addressing – or not addressing – the extraordinary challenge of climate change. To simplify our focus we will narrow our scope in two ways: by concentrating on the challenge of mitigating, rather than adapting to, climate change; and by concentrating on emissions from fossil fuels, rather than from agriculture, forestry, or land use.

Recorded lectures will be posted online at class time (Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:30) and must be viewed within the next 30 hours. Students must also participate in discussion sections, which will be synchronous.

Learning objectives
This course will teach you about some of the key problems, concepts, events, actors, and institutions, in the analysis of climate politics. It should also help you become more skillful listeners, thinkers, writers, and speakers. It presumes no special knowledge about the science of climate change.

We will address three broad questions.

First, how will climate change affect the governance and economies of countries around the world? To address this question we’ll cover research on the projected impact of climate change on economic growth, inequality, migration, and violent conflict.

Second, why have governments made so little progress in reducing carbon emissions? To help answer this question we’ll discuss the problem of governing common pool resources, the challenge of issues that have long-term and irreversible effects, the reasons why the fossil fuel industry is so influential, the role of public opinion and climate denialism, and the unequal economic effects of climate change on different populations.

Finally, what policies should governments adopt? In the final unit we will consider alternative policy options, including carbon pricing, cap-and-trade, renewable energy portfolios, geo-engineering, technological innovation, and the role of international agreements. You will also be introduced to some of the tools used to evaluate alternative pathways, such as integrated assessment models.

On completing the course, you should better understand the causes, likely consequences, and policy implications of climate change, and hence be able to speak and write more
intelligently about it. You should also grow more sophisticated in your ability to evaluate evidence, and to distinguish between scientifically-based reasoning and conjecture, popular beliefs, and magical thinking. Finally, you should gain a better understanding of how research on climate change – in both the natural and social sciences – is carried out, and grow more comfortable reading articles in scientific journals.

Format
This class will combine recorded lectures with synchronous discussion sections. I have underlined the activities below that will be the basis of your grade.

- I will post recorded lectures twice a week, near the beginning of each “class period” (Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:30 pm). The lectures will be broken up into three or four 15-30 minute videos, so you can more easily absorb them.
- After each lecture, you must take a short quiz to make sure you’ve watched and paid attention to it. Once you begin the exam, you’ll have 5 minutes to answer three multiple choice questions. You must take the quiz within 30 hours of the time the lecture is posted (9:30 pm Pacific Time the day after class).
- The sections will be conducted synchronously – you must attend them in real time through Zoom. Attendance is mandatory and you’ll be graded on your participation. If you are living in a time zone far from the West Coast (e.g., in Europe, Africa, or Asia), make sure you are enrolled in a section you can join.
- Within the sections, you’ll be divided into smaller “working groups” of 4 or 5 people each. Working groups will have group assignments that are due before each week’s section, so you will want to meet or communicate separately. Your TAs will assign you to groups, explain how they’ll work, and give you the assignments.
- There will be open-book midterms and final exams, each made up of both timed exams and a short essay.

Grades
There will be a short quiz after each lecture, which will be graded on a P/NP basis. The lecture quizzes must be completed within 30 hours after posting – that is, by 9:30 pm (Pacific) the next day. You’ll have to answer three questions in five minutes, and you won’t be able to pause the exam, so make sure you’re ready. Before or during the quiz you can consult your notes or the lecture slides (which will be posted).

Quizzes will be graded on a pass/fail basis: if you answer two out of three questions correctly, you will pass. They are easy to do (if you have watched the lecture and taken notes). Their purpose is to help you follow the lectures and stay on track. If you are ill or just having a bad week, don’t worry: you can skip or drop three of the quizzes without penalty. Moreover, there is a chance to earn extra credit: at the end of the quarter, two bonus points will go to the student(s) with the highest number of correct quiz answers before dropping any quizzes.

Your TAs will explain the Working Groups and how their work will be graded.
The open-book midterm and final exam will feature both timed multiple-choice exams about the readings, and a short essay. The midterm will be held on November 5. The final exam will be given during finals week at a time to be determined.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Midterm: 30%
Final Exam: 30%
Lecture quizzes: 10%
Working groups: 10%
Section Participation: 20%

Numeric scores will be translated into letter grades as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>&gt;98.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>91.5-98.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0-91.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88.5-90.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>81.5-88.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.0-81.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78.5-80.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70.0-71.5</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>68.5-70.0</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60.0-68.5</td>
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I do not grade on a curve. Research on higher education suggests that grading on a curve creates unproductive levels of stress and competition without fostering greater learning. What matters is not how you do relative to your peers – I expect everyone to do well – but how well you master the material. If you ever feel like a test or assignment is unfair, please come speak with me so I can address your concerns as soon as possible. I’m committed to assessing all students in a fair, inclusive, and comprehensive way.

You are welcome to take this course either for a letter grade or on a P/NP basis. Also, you now can switch from a letter grade to P/NP as late as 10th week without a petition, and take multiple P/NP courses in a single quarter. I encourage you to begin the course on a letter grade basis, and switch later to P/NP if you wish to.

**Absences**

Section attendance is part of your participation grade. Still, there will be times when some of you cannot attend due to illness or unavoidable conflicts. With your TA’s permission, you can still receive credit for that week by submitting a short (2-3 page) essay reflecting on the week’s readings.

**Readings**

Everyone should complete the week’s readings before attending section. *You do not need to buy any readings:* everything is available on the course web site or through posted links.

**TAs**

We have four Teaching Assistants who will lead the sections; working with them is an integral part of the course. They are:
**Intellectual property notice**

All of the course materials that I have prepared, including the lectures, videos, slides and exams, are my property alone and protected by state common law and federal copyright law. This includes all of the video lectures, tests and quizzes, which are for your use in this course only and shall not be shared or distributed without my written consent. Students shall not sell or distribute notes, or receive remuneration for taking notes, without my written consent.

**Academic Integrity**

As a student and a member of the University community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. Accordingly, all work you do will be held to the highest ethical and professional standards.

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions, or facilitating academic dishonesty. If you are unsure of what any of these entail, please consult the university guidelines below or ask me or your TA. *If you are even suspected of violating these standards, I am obliged to refer your case immediately to the Dean of Students*, who will carry out an investigation.

Please carefully review the university guidelines regarding academic dishonesty. They are at [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf).
October 1: Introduction to the course

October 6: Key facts about fossil fuels, energy, and climate change (I)


*Recommended:*

October 8: Key facts about fossil fuels, energy, and climate change (II)

The Royal Society (2017), “Climate updates: What have we learnt since the IPCC 5th Assessment Report?”


October 13: Climate Ethics and Inequality


Michael F. Maniates (2001), "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" *Global Environmental Politics* 1(3).

*Recommended:*
* David Foster Wallace (2004), "Consider the Lobster," *Gourmet.*

October 15: How does climate change affect economic welfare?


October 20: How does climate change affect conflict?

Recommended:

October 22: How does climate change affect migration?


October 27: Why have governments done so little to limit carbon emissions?


Recommended:

October 29: Why is the fossil fuel industry so influential?

John Cook et al. (2019), America Misled: how the fossil fuel industry deliberately misled Americans about climate change, George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication.

Recommended:

November 3: How can we make a difference locally?

November 5: Midterm

November 10: What do people believe about climate change and why?

Dave Roberts (2016), “This one weird trick will not convince conservatives to fight climate change,” Vox.


Recommended:

November 12: What are the main decarbonization policies?


November 17: How should we evaluate these policies?


Carbon Brief (2019), “Q&A: How ‘integrated assessment models’ are used to study climate change.”

Recommended:

November 19: What policies have been tried in the US?

November 24: Can carbon taxes work?


December 1: How much can international agreements help?


December 3: Can geoengineering save us?


December 8: Why do governments subsidize fossil fuels?


Dave Roberts (2018), “We now have a dollar value for one of the world’s biggest subsidies,” Vox, September 21.

December 10: What is the best path forward?


Final exam: TBD