

# Capstone: Climate Change

POLI 405

FALL 2020

ONLINE

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🗨 **Office hours:** [By appointment](#) (on Zoom)

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## Course Description

For this course we will be examining the issue of **climate change**. Specifically, we will use the issue of climate change to examine the policymaking process in the United States, explore how politics impacts policymaking, and examine why the United States has been unable, at the federal level, to development policy approaches to address climate change.

The capstone seminar in Political Science is designed to be a culminating experience. Therefore, you will be expected to draw upon the ideas and skills you have gained thus far in your major to explore a specific topic within the field of Political Science. The major focus of the course is on the development of an original research project centered around addressing the climate crisis. The readings in this course are designed to provide you with the theoretical and conceptual background needed to develop a project in this area.

Additionally, this course is a **sustainability-focused** course, which means that we will apply concepts of sustainability such as systems thinking and the “triple bottom line” of economic, environmental, and social systems to the problem of climate change. For more on CofC’s sustainability educational efforts see the [Sustainability Literacy Institute website](#) and the [Center for Sustainable Development website](#).

## Content Modules

**OAKS**, including Gradebook, will be used for this course throughout the semester to provide the syllabus and class materials and grades for each assignment, which will be regularly posted. Course content will be delivered in weekly modules on **OAKS**. *The course will be asynchronous, meaning that you will work through the material in each module each week on your own and at your own pace.* Each module will contain assigned readings, one or a few short lectures on VoiceThread, assignments, and a one or a few discussion questions that will be posted on a Discussion Board on **OAKS**. **The modules will become available every Wednesday morning, starting on August 26, at 7:00 AM Eastern and all assignments will be due the following Tuesday by 11:59 PM Eastern.**

## Office Hours

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I will not be able to meet with you in person and all office hours appointments will be on Zoom. To schedule an appointment go here: <https://calendly.com/nowlinmc/meetings>. You need to book an appointment 24 hours in advance. Note that if the times available do not work for you, I am happy to work with you to find a time. Just [email](#) me. **I strongly encourage you to take advantage of office hours.**

## Course Goals and Learning Objectives

### Political Science Learning Outcomes

After taking this course:

- Students will develop an understanding of the major policymaking institutions including the Congress, the President, Executive Agencies, the Courts, and their role in climate policymaking.
- Students will develop an understanding of the process of policymaking in the U.S. with regard to climate change.
- Students will develop an understanding of the climate crisis.
- Student will produce a policy recommendation to address one aspect of climate change.
- Students will demonstrate mastery of the independent research process.
- Students will display skills in critical analysis and effective communication.

### Sustainability-Focused Learning Objectives

After taking this course:

- Students can synthesize knowledge from two or more systems to address a sustainability problem
- Students can demonstrate the impact of production/consumption practices on social, economic, and/or ecological systems
- Students can design a solution to a given sustainability problem

These objectives will be achieved through critically reading the course readings, by writing two essays, four article summaries, through completing an independent research project, and course engagement.

## Required Materials

The following materials are **required**.

*Readings:*

- **Book:** Matthew C. Nowlin. *Environmental Policymaking in an Era of Climate Change*. Routledge, New York, NY, 2019.<sup>1</sup>
- *Other required readings will be provided on OAKS*

## Course Requirements and Grading

Performance in this course will be evaluated on the basis of your research project, two short essays, four article summaries, and class engagement. *Instructions for each assignment will be placed on OAKS*. Due dates are in the schedule below. Points will be distributed as follows:

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Assignment	Possible Points
Short essays (2)	100 points total
Journal article summaries (4 at 25 pts each)	100 points total
Research project	600 points total
Course engagement	200 points
Total	1000 points

There are **1000** possible points for this course. Grades will be allocated based on your earned points and calculated as a percentage of **1000**. All grades will be posted on [OAKS](#) throughout the semester. A: 94 to 100%; A-: 90 to 93%; B+: 87 to 89%; B: 83 to 86%; B-: 80 to 82%; C+: 77 to 79%; C: 73 to 76%; C-: 70 to 72%; D+: 67 to 69%; D: 63 to 67%; D-: 60 to 62%; F: 59% and below.

### Assignments

**Specific instructions for the following assignments are posted on OAKS. All work must be turned in through the dropbox on OAKS, and is due at class time: 5:30 PM Eastern.**

**Short essays:** You will write two short essays.

- **Essay 1: Policy approaches to climate change:** You will write a short, 3 to 4 page, essay examining how the US ought to respond to climate change. Specifically, you will read and summarize the three articles that I provide and then provide your own view. **Essay 1 is worth 75 points and is due 📅 September 22 by 11:59 PM.**

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<sup>1</sup>I am happy to refund to you my portion of the proceeds from buying a new paperback version of the book, which is about \$2.00. Additionally, I will donate my proceeds to a charity that the class chooses at the end of the semester.

- **Essay 2: The political science major:** You will write a short, 1 to 2 page, essay about the skills and knowledge you have gained as a political science major at the College of Charleston. **Essay 2 is worth 25 points and is due 📅 December 4 by 11:59 PM.**

**Journal article summaries:** You will summarize four peer-reviewed journal articles using the worksheet I provide on [OAKS](#). I will provide three peer-reviewed articles and you will choose one of the three to summarize. **Article summaries will be due on September 8, September 29, October 13, and October 27 by 11:59 PM.**

**Research Project:** Over the course of the semester, you will undertake an independent research project that deals with a specific aspect of climate change. The following pieces of the research project will be due throughout the semester and then combined into the final paper.

- **Draft research question:** Due 📅 **September 14 by 11:59 PM**
- **Topic selection and bibliography:** Due 📅 **October 6 by 11:59 PM**
- **Research design:** Due 📅 **October 20 by 11:59 PM**
- **Progress report:** Due 📅 **November 3 by 11:59 PM**
- **Data collection and analysis:** Due 📅 **November 17 by 11:59 PM**
- **Final paper:** Due 📅 **December 4 by 11:59 PM**

### Late Work

Due to the fact that the world seems to be falling apart, I will be very flexible with accepting work past the due dates. But, late work must be the exception not the rule. Also, you must be in contact with me about when to expect to complete the work. I reserve the right to adjust this policy if needed.

### Course Engagement


Significant engagement with the course material, the professor, and your classmates is essential to learning. However, COVID-19 is making traditional forms of engagement (e.g., class attendance, office hours) difficult. As a result, I am offering multiple ways to engage with the material and each other including group work and peer-review; required discussion board posts that includes replying to a classmate's post; and contacting me through email / meeting with me on Zoom, among others. There will be flexibility in terms of engagement points so, if you miss a discussion board post or two your engagement grade will not be negatively impacted. Additionally, I will not count one type of engagement as more important than another in terms of "points." Note that the professor has final say over what does or does not count as adequate engagement.

### Course Schedule


**Subject To Change.** Changes will be announced through email and on the [OAKS](#) course page. **Expect changes.**

**All readings listed under *Readings* below are required.** Apart from the book, additional readings will be made available on [OAKS](#) or as external links. Readings can be found under Readings for each module. I recommend doing the readings in the order listed below and on the module guide.


## Book

 **Nowlin:** Nowlin, Matthew C. 2019. *Environmental Policymaking in an Era of Climate Change*. New York, NY: Routledge.

## Articles

 You will be reading several peer-reviewed academic journal articles. *These will be made available as pdfs on OAKS.* In addition, you will be required to find several journal articles on your own related to your research project.

## Links

 I also provide several links to web based sources. You can access these sources through the links on the syllabus or through [OAKS](#).

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### Aug 24-Aug 26: Course introduction and overview

 Javeline, Debra. 2014. “The Most Important Topic Political Scientists Are Not Studying: Adapting to Climate Change.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(02): 420–34.

*Assignments:*

[Calculate your carbon footprint](#)

### Aug 31-Sept 2: What is climate change and how bad is it?


*Readings:*

 **Skim:** [Introduction to Climate Science](#)

 **Look around:** [The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)

 Wayne, G. P. 2013. [The Beginner’s Guide to Representative Concentration Pathways](#). *Skeptical Science*

 VoosenJul, Paul. 2020. [After 40 Years, Researchers Finally See Earth’s Climate Destiny More Clearly](#). *Science*

 Schlosberg, David, and Lisette B. Collins. 2014. “From Environmental to Climate Justice: Climate Change and the Discourse of Environmental Justice.” *WIREs Climate Change* 5(3): 359–74.

*Assignments:*

[Energy policy simulator](#)

## Sept 7-Sept 9: Scientists agree, why don't we?

### Readings:

📖 Cook, John et al. 2016. "Consensus on Consensus: A Synthesis of Consensus Estimates on Human-Caused Global Warming." *Environmental Research Letters* 11(4)

📖 **Nowlin:** Chap 4, *Value Systems and Environmental Policy*

### Assignments:

📖 **Pick one for article summary 1**

- Brulle, Robert J., Jason Carmichael, and J. Craig Jenkins. 2012. "Shifting Public Opinion on Climate Change: An Empirical Assessment of Factors Influencing Concern over Climate Change in the U.S., 2002–2010." *Climatic Change* 114(2): 169–88.
- Feldman, Lauren, and P. Sol Hart. 2018. "Climate Change as a Polarizing Cue: Framing Effects on Public Support for Low-Carbon Energy Policies." *Global Environmental Change* 51: 54–66.
- van der Linden, Sander L., Anthony A. Leiserowitz, Geoffrey D. Feinberg, and Edward W. Maibach. 2015. "The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change as a Gateway Belief: Experimental Evidence." *PLoS ONE* 10(2).

## Sept 14-Sept 16: Environmental (and climate) policymaking

### Readings:

📖 **Nowlin:** Chap 2, *A Framework for Environmental Policymaking*, (pgs 15-40)

### Assignments:

**Draft research question / policy problem**

## Sept 21-Sept 23: Climate policy design

### Readings:

📖 **Nowlin:** Chap 2, *A Framework for Environmental Policymaking*, (pgs 40-50)

📖 Aldy, Joseph E., and Robert N. Stavins. 2012. "The Promise and Problems of Pricing Carbon Theory and Experience." *The Journal of Environment & Development* 21(2): 152–80.

### Assignments:

**Essay 1: Approaches to climate change**

## Sept 28-Sept 30: Climate policy history

### Readings:

📖 **Nowlin:** Chap 3, *The Green State and the Climate Change Era*

🔗 [A brief history of climate targets and technological promises](#)

📖 Lizza, Ryan. 2010. "As the World Burns: How the Senate and the White House Missed Their Best Chance to Deal with Climate Change." *The New Yorker*

*Assignments:*

 **Pick one for article summary 2**

- Falkner, Robert. 2016. “The Paris Agreement and the New Logic of International Climate Politics.” *International Affairs* 92(5): 1107–25.
- Fankhauser, Sam, Caterina Gennaioli, and Murray Collins. 2015. “The Political Economy of Passing Climate Change Legislation: Evidence from a Survey.” *Global Environmental Change* 35: 52–61.
- McCright, Aaron M., and Riley E. Dunlap. 2003. “Defeating Kyoto: The Conservative Movement’s Impact on U.S. Climate Change Policy.” *Social Problems* 50(3): 348–73.

**Oct 5-Oct 7: Political institutions and climate change**

*Readings:*

 **Nowlin:** Chap 6, *Pathways and Pivots: Macro-Institutions and Climate Change Policy*

*Assignments:*

**Topic selection and bibliography**

**Oct 12-Oct 14: Agenda-setting, framing, and climate change communication**

*Readings:*

 **Nowlin:** Chap 5, *Agenda-Setting and Issue Definitions in Climate Change Policymaking*


*Assignments:*

 **Pick one for article summary 3**

- Akerlof, Karen L. et al. 2020. “Governmental Communication of Climate Change Risk and Efficacy: Moving Audiences Toward ‘Danger Control.’” *Environmental Management* 65: 678–688.
- Fisher, Dana R., Joseph Waggle, and Philip Leifeld. 2013. “Where Does Political Polarization Come From? Locating Polarization Within the U.S. Climate Change Debate.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 57(1): 70–92.
- Yusuf, Juita-Elena (Wie) et al. 2016. “The Sea Is Rising. . . but Not Onto the Policy Agenda: A Multiple Streams Approach to Understanding Sea Level Rise Policies.” *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 34: 228–43.

**Oct 19-Oct 21: Climate change policy regime**

*Readings:*

 **Nowlin:** Chap 6, *The Networked Subsystems, Institutions, and Actors of the Climate Change Regime*

*Assignments:*

**Research design**

## Oct 26-Oct 28: Climate Change, federalism, and polycentricity

### Readings:

📖 Ostrom, Elinor. 2012. “Nested Externalities and Polycentric Institutions: Must We Wait for Global Solutions to Climate Change Before Taking Actions at Other Scales?” *Economic Theory* 49(2): 353–69.

### Assignments:

#### 📖 Pick one for article summary 4

- Bromley-Trujillo, Rebecca, J. S. Butler, John Poe, and Whitney Davis. 2016. “The Spreading of Innovation: State Adoptions of Energy and Climate Change Policy.” *Review of Policy Research* 33(5): 544–65.
- Rabe, Barry. 2011. “Contested Federalism and American Climate Policy.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 41(3): 494–521.
- Sovacool, Benjamin K., and Thijs Van de Graaf. 2018. “Building or Stumbling Blocks? Assessing the Performance of Polycentric Energy and Climate Governance Networks.” *Energy Policy* 118: 317–24.

## Nov 2-Nov 4: Climate policy: regulation

### Readings:

📖 Glicksman, Robert L. 2017. “The Fate of The Clean Power Plan in the Trump Era.” *Carbon and Climate Law Review* 11(4): 292–302.

### Assignments:

#### Project progress report

## Nov 9-Nov 11: Climate policy: carbon pricing

### Readings:

📖 Baranzini, Andrea et al. 2017. “Carbon Pricing in Climate Policy: Seven Reasons, Complementary Instruments, and Political Economy Considerations.” *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 8(4): e462.

📖 Nowlin, Matthew C., Kuhika Gupta, and Joseph T. Ripberger. 2020. “Revenue Use and Public Support for a Carbon Tax.” *Environmental Research Letters* 15(8).

## Nov 16-Nov 18: Climate policy: Green New Deal

### Readings:

🔗 [The Green New Deal House Resolution](#)

🔗 [Supporting Frontline and Vulnerable Communities in a Green New Deal](#)

📖 Galvin, Ray, and Noel Healy. 2020. “The Green New Deal in the United States: What It Is and How to Pay for It.” *Energy Research and Social Science* 67: 101529.



*Assignments:*

**Data collection and analysis**

**Nov 23-Nov 25: Project consultations**

**Nov 30-Dec 2: Project consultations**

## **Important Information**

### **Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction**

If in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and Internet access. Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools.

### **Honor Code and Academic Integrity**

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration – working together without permission – is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the [Student Handbook](#)

### **Students with Disabilities**

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the [Center for Disability Services](#) located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me at least one week before any accommodation is needed.

## **Financial Challenges**

If a student has difficulty affording groceries or getting sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, please contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to assist with identifying available resources.

## **Counseling Center**

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Services are available, and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at the [Counseling Center](#).

## **Center for Student Learning**

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL [website](#) or call (843) 953-5635.

## **Religious Holiday Policy**

It is the policy of the College to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me immediately if you will need to miss class any time during this semester.