

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

The impacts of climate change fall disproportionately on frontline communities, including the Global South, communities of color, the poor, women, and the young, including college students. How should the impacts and burdens of climate change be distributed? How do environmental loss, damage, and danger transform issues of diversity and oppression in the 21st century? What kind of response to climate change would be fair? How much must each of us change in order to make a fair response possible? This course offers an accessible, in depth introduction to ethical problems about climate justice, with attention to environmental racism, indigenous rights, gender, age, and other aspects of diversity, and to the role of individual behavior in climate justice.

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Course requirements: About 50 pages of reading each week (all available for free—most on Canvas, except when web addresses are given below)

Four in-class reading quizzes (20%)

Class participation (15%)

Three 3-page reflection papers (30%)

6-8 page term paper (35%)

Course goals: This course offers an opportunity for students to:

- (1) Become familiar with ethical issues concerning climate change and climate justice in a local, national, and global context.
- (2) Better understand contemporary forms of racism and other oppressions.
- (3) Build their ability to question, develop, and defend their views on complex, interdisciplinary topics.
- (4) Build their skills and experience in communication and civic engagement.

These goals align with the GenEd program-wide competency goals of critical thinking, contextualized learning, interdisciplinary thinking, communication skills, scientific & quantitative reasoning, civic engagement, information literacy, and lifelong learning, and with the GenEd Race & Diversity area goals (<https://bulletin.temple.edu/undergraduate/general-education/gd/>).

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

I. A First Look at the Issues

An introduction to climate change as racial injustice; climate denial and the difficulty of looking directly at the impacts of climate change; then a brief introduction to recent scientific findings about climate change and some interpretive issues about that science.

1. M 8/26: **Introduction: Why Talk about Climate Change?**

2. W 8/28: **Why is Climate Change a Racial Issue?**

Reading: Elizabeth Cripps, *What Climate Justice Means and Why We Should Care*, Ch.2: “The Same Storm, but not the Same Boat”

3. F 8/30: **Discussion; reflection papers assignment.**

(No class on Labor Day, M 2/2.)

4. W 9/4: **Looking Away**

Reading: Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*, Introduction

5. F 9/6: **Are We All Climate Deniers?**

Reading: Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*, Ch. 5: “Beyond Extractivism: Confronting the Climate Denier Within”

6. M 9/9: **The Science of Climate Change**

Reading: Eric Winsberg, *Philosophy and Climate Science*, Chs. 1-2, “Introduction” and “Data”

7. W 9/11: **Motivated Doubt**

No reading. In class film screening: *Merchants of Doubt*.

8. F 9/13: **Continued film screening; discussion.**

9. M 9/16: **Interpreting the Science**

Reading: Eric Winsberg, *Philosophy and Climate Science*, Ch. 13, “Social Epistemology”

10. W 9/18: **The Scale of Climate Change**

Reading: David Wallace-Wells, “The Crisis Here and Now”

Browse or read the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2021 report summary

11. F 9/20: **Discussion**

Reflection Paper 1 (Interview) due Friday, 9/20 by 11:59pm.

II. Climate Change and Racial Justice

An introduction to environmental racism in the context of climate change, including disproportionate environmental impacts on the Global South, African-American communities in

Philadelphia, and growing populations of climate refugees. Indigenous rights and perspectives on climate change.

12. M 9/23: **The Importance of Environmental Racism, I: Philadelphia in Context**

Reading: Justin Worland, “Why the Larger Climate Movement is Finally Embracing the Fight Against Environmental Racism” (<https://time.com/5864704/environmental-racism-climate-change/>)

13. W 9/25: **The Importance of Environmental Racism, II: Destroying the Global South**

Reading: Abrahm Lustgarten, “The Great Climate Migration” (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/23/magazine/climate-migration.html>)

14. F 9/27: **Discussion**

15. M 9/30: **Indigenous Perspectives, I**

Reading: three short pieces— The People’s Agreement of Cochabamba (<https://pwccc.wordpress.com/support/>); Kyle Whyte, “Why the Native American Pipeline Resistance in North Dakota is about Climate Justice” (<https://theconversation.com/why-the-native-american-pipeline-resistance-in-north-dakota-is-about-climate-justice-64714>); Kyle Whyte, “Indigenous Climate Change Studies”

16. W 10/2: **Indigenous Perspectives, II**

Reading: Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, pp. ix-x and 341-7.
In-class film screening of Lav Diaz, *Storm Children*.

17. F 10/4: **Discussion**

18. M 10/7: **Talking to White People**

Reading: Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility”

19. W 10/9: **Building a Multiracial Movement**

Reading: Myisha Cherry, “Solidarity Care”

(No class F 10/11— it’s Fall Wellness Day, take a break!)

III. Race, Gender, Wealth, and Age

The intersection of climate justice with other key aspects of diversity, including gender, wealth, and differences in age and generation, with attention to intersections of these issues with race.

20. M 10/14: **Disproportionate Impacts on Women and Girls of Color**

Reading: Filomina Chioma Steady, “Women, Climate Change and Liberation in Africa”
Reflection Paper 2 (News Reflection) due Monday, 10/14 by 11:59pm.

21. W 10/16: **The Role of Gender in Combating Climate Change**

Reading: Ambassador Melanne Verweir, “The Role of Women in Combating Climate Change” (<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/12/19/role-women-combatting-climate-change>); UNFCCC, “Introduction to Gender and Climate Change” (<https://unfccc.int/gender>)

22. F 10/18: **Discussion**

23. M 10/21: **Privilege and Responsibility**

Reading: Simon Caney, “Climate Change and the Duties of the Advantaged”

24. W 10/23: **What if the Wealthy do not Want to Help?**

Reading: Elizabeth Cripps, “Climate Change, Collective Harm and Legitimate Coercion”

25. F 10/25: **Discussion**

26. M 10/28: **The Burdens on Young People**

Reading: Varshini Prakash, “The Adults in the Room”; “Organize. Vote. Strike.”

27. W 10/30: **Future Generations**

Reading: Stephen Gardiner, “A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics, and the Problem of Moral Corruption”; “How Will We Be Remembered?”

28. F 11/1: **Discussion**

IV. The Individual and the Global

A concluding turn to individual behavior in the context of climate change, with attention to individual environmental impact and to the ethics of participation in collective action.

29. M 11/4: **Our Common Home**

Reading: Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter “Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home,” selections (Optional: Read or browse the rest of the Encyclical Letter); https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

30. W 11/6: **The Ethics of Collective Action**

Reading: Lemons and Brown, “Global Climate Change and Nonviolent Civil Disobedience”

31. F 11/8: **Discussion**

32. M 11/11: **The Role of Young People**

Class visit by young climate activists.

Reading: the Sunrise Movement and Extinction Rebellion websites and tabs

(<https://www.sunrisemovement.org/>, <https://extinctionrebellion.us/>); The Green New

Deal resolution (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text>)

33. W 11/13: **The Role of the University**

Reading: Eugene Chislenko, “The Role of Philosophers in Climate Change”

34. F 11/15: **Discussion**

35. M 11/18: **Taking Action**

Reading: Naomi Klein, *How to Change Everything*, Ch.9: “A Toolkit for Young Activists”

36. W 11/20: **Final Paper and Research Methods**

No new reading. Visit by Temple librarian Fred Rowland.

37. F 11/22: **Discussion**

Reflection Paper 3 (Event Reflection) due Friday, 11/22 by 11:59pm.

No class 11/25-29. Happy fall break!

38. M 12/2: **Students’ Choice I: Geography and Animal Extinction**

Reading: Martin Armstrong, “Threatened with Extinction?”; beginning of Wikipedia, “Holocene Extinction”; Undammed (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoZKMTqK8u4>)

39. W 12/4: **Students’ Choice II: Climate Justice at Temple**

Reading: Rob Kuper and Meredith Hegg, “Temple Must Decarbonize”; many authors, “Teaching Climate Change and Sustainability for the Future of Work and the World”

40. F 12/6: **Discussion**

41. M 12/9: **Discussion**

Final paper due Wednesday, December 11 by 11:59pm.

COURSE POLICIES

Office Hours: Come to office hours often! Talking one-on-one or in small groups is one of the best ways to get a handle on the material and methods of the course. You’ll probably get more out of it if you come with specific questions, but coming to talk about the issues in a more general way is fine too. If you have friends in the class, feel free to come as a small group.

Quizzes: There will be four short reading quizzes, usually at the beginning of class. This is a way of keeping attendance, holding you accountable for doing the readings, and reflecting how you are doing in the course. You will not know in advance which day there will be a quiz. Each quiz will be graded as an A, B, C, D, or F (no plus or minus grades). There will also be two makeup quizzes; only the best four out of six count, so you can miss two quizzes or get two Fs with no penalty. Your answer does not need to be perfect in every detail to get an A; if you read the assigned reading a few times and take some notes on the main ideas, you should have no trouble. Each quiz will be on one question drawn from the Reading Questions on Canvas.

Class Participation: You will get much more from the course if you participate actively in class! Active participation means showing up prepared, having done the readings more than once and coming in with questions and reactions. But it also means more than that. It means taking responsibility for the class going well for everyone, including you. That can include: pointing to an interesting passage; asking a clarificatory question; emphasizing the importance of someone else's comment; raising a problem; directing discussion in a productive direction; and making suggestions that help the class go well, either in class, in office hours, or over email.

You are expected to attend class consistently and participate actively in class. If you are struggling to participate, feel free to talk to your instructor or TA.

Electronic Devices: Electronic devices tend to interfere with student engagement. Please do not use laptops or other electronic devices in class! If you need to text or call, please step outside. In return, handouts will be provided for most lectures, so that you do not have to take extensive notes.

Plagiarism: *All* written work for the course must be your own. Be sure to cite any works you use, including web sites, books, and articles. Presenting *anyone* else's work (or AI work) as your own is considered plagiarism. Please follow this link to see Temple University's Policy on Student Conduct Code, which includes academic honesty: policies.temple.edu/PDF/398.pdf. The Philosophy Department Plagiarism Policy mandates an "F" grade, and reporting to the Chair and the CLA Undergraduate Affairs Office, for plagiarized work.

Disabilities: Any student who has a need for accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability or medical condition should contact Disability Resources and Services (DRS) in the Howard Gittis Student Center South, 4th Floor at drs@temple.edu or 215-204-1280 to request accommodations and learn more about the resources available to you. If you have a DRS accommodation letter to share with me, or you would like to discuss your accommodations, please contact me as soon as is practical. I will work with you and with DRS to coordinate reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities. All discussions related to your accommodations will be confidential.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02) which can be accessed at policies.temple.edu.

Resources for Students: For help with papers, try the [Temple Student Success Center](#). [Tuttleman Counseling Services](#) offers counseling to Temple students. If you are experiencing food insecurity or financial struggles, Temple University's [Cherry Pantry](#) and [Student Affairs Emergency Fund](#) can help, and the [Division of Student Affairs](#) offers other resources.