

PO3A5-15 The Politics of Climate Change

22/23

Department

Politics & International Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Climate change has been widely identified as one of the most important challenges of the 21st century. Making the kinds of changes, in political, social and economic terms, necessary to meet global greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets is a monumental task. Climate change is a newly legitimised area of policymaking, the effects of climate change are uneven, whilst efforts to mitigate for climate change also have costs and benefits that are unevenly distributed. All this makes the politics of mitigating for climate change highly contested. This module provides an overview of the key debates, arguments and conceptual approaches within the global politics of climate change.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This is a timely module that addresses a highly complex political issue. By the end of the module students should be able to understand the main scientific arguments for climate change mitigation and how these relate to political action; the politics of mitigation in the main policy sectors: energy, agriculture, transport and buildings; and to have developed the ability to critically engage with a wide range of political approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions - at global,

transnational, national and sub-national levels.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1: Climate Science Meets Politics

Week 2: Actors, Institutions and Compromises

Week 3: Collective Action & Negotiations

Week 4: National Government Action

Week 5: Politics of sustainable change: Energy

Week 6: Reading Week

Week 7: Politics of sustainable change: Transport

Week 8: Politics of sustainable change: Buildings & Agriculture

Week 9: Sub-National & Transnational Action

Week 10: Where are we now? What can we do?

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand and explain the political and scientific debates behind the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Analyse the role of the main institutions and actors involved in climate change mitigation
- Engage critically with a range of different political approaches to climate change in key sectors such as: energy, agriculture, and transport
- Identify and explore links between global, national and local policies and politics

Indicative reading list

Carter, N. (2018) *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) (2014) *Fifth Assessment Report*. Geneva: IPCC. Available here: <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar5/>

Garner, R. (2011) *Environmental Politics: The Age of Climate Change*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapter 1: The Political Dimension of Environmentalism)

Newell, P.; Paterson, M. (2010) *Climate Capitalism: Global Warming and the Transformation of the Global Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chapters 1 & 2)

Arnell, N.W.; Brown, S.; Hinkel, J.; Linke, D.; Lloyd-Hughes, B.; Lowe, J.A.; Nicholls, R.J. Price, J.T.; Warren, R.F. (2015) *The global impacts of climate change under pathways that reach 2,3 and 4C above pre-industrial levels*. Report from AVOID2 project to the Committee on Climate Change. Available here: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AVOID2-2015-Global-impacts-of-climate-change-at-23-and-4K-above-pre-industrial-levels1.pdf>

Bernstein, S. (2002) *The Compromise of Liberal Environmentalism*. New York: Columbia

University Press. (Chapter 1)

Eckersley, R. (2004) *The Green State: Rethinking democracy and sovereignty*. MIT Press. (Chapter 1)

Giddens, A. (2009) *The Politics of Climate Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press (Chapters 1 & 3)

Gupta, J. (2014) *The History of Global Climate Governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 1)

IPCC (2002) *Historical Overview of Climate Change Science*. Geneva: IPCC. Available here: [Historical overview of climate change science: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/ar4-wg1-chapter1.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/ar4-wg1-chapter1.pdf)

Lipschutz, R.D. (2012) 'The sustainability debate: déjà vu all over again', in P. Dauvergne (ed.) *Handbook of Global Environmental Politics (Second Edition)*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Interdisciplinary

Students will engage with the science of climate change; as well as public policy, international political economy, and political geography concepts of how we can understand and explain global climate change politics.

International

The module covers international governance of climate change (UNFCCC and COP), as well as climate change policies in a wide range of countries.

Subject specific skills

Being able to link scientific claims about climate change with the politics of acting to mitigate
Understanding some of the complexities involved in the politics of climate change
Knowledge of, and ability to analyse, main political approaches to mitigating for climate change
Identify, and think critically in relation to, climate change policy at global, transnational, sub-national, national levels

Transferable skills

Specific knowledge, relevant to policymaking, about climate change
Communication skills - both written and oral
Critical analytical skills
Further development of the techniques of academic argument, writing and referencing
Working with others when undertaking a range of group exercises during seminars

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Students are expected to read, and assess, three core texts in preparation for each weekly seminar.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Summative Essay 3000 word essay	100%	150 hours

Feedback on assessment

Feedback form via Tabula, optional verbal consultation

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 4 of UHIA-VM14 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)

This module is Optional for:

- UECA-4 Undergraduate Economics 4 Year Variants
 - Year 4 of LM1H Economics, Politics & International Studies with Study Abroad
 - Year 4 of LM1H Economics, Politics & International Studies with Study Abroad
- UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
 - Year 3 of LM1D Economics, Politics and International Studies
 - Year 3 of LM1D Economics, Politics and International Studies
- UHIA-VM14 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 3 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 4 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics
- Year 4 of UPOA-M101 Undergraduate Politics (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M168 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese
- Year 3 of UPOA-M169 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese (3 year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M165 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Italian
- Year 3 of UPOA-M162 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods
- Year 4 of UPOA-M167 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list A for:

- UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies
 - Year 3 of M16A Politics and International Studies
 - Year 3 of M16A Politics and International Studies
 - Year 3 of M16A Politics and International Studies
- Year 4 of UPOA-M16B Undergraduate Politics and International Studies (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- Year 4 of UPOA-ML14 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M163 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and French
- Year 4 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 4 of UPOA-M166 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies
- Year 3 of UPOA-M16H Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies (3 year degree)

This module is Option list C for:

- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)

This module is Option list D for:

- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)