

PO9G1-20 Politics of Governing for Climate Change (MA)

26/27

Department

Politics & International Studies

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Caroline Kuzemko

Credit value

20

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Over 140 countries, 280 cities, and 1,180 of the world's largest corporation are committed to delivering net zero emissions as part of the global effort to meet the United Nations Paris target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels. Setting targets and meeting them are, of course, two very different exercises. Climate policies have contributed significantly towards the rapid global rise of renewable forms of energy, electrification in heat and transport sectors, and the growth of the 'green' economy in many countries - but the emissions curve has not yet flattened and opposition to mitigation policy remains vocal.

This module explores the highly complex politics that sits behind increasingly varied attempts to mitigate for climate change. The implications of climate change are experienced in such an uneven manner, responsibility for historic and current emissions are concentrated in the Global North and BRICS countries, whilst, crucially, no administration, be it global, national, local or corporate, has all the answers regarding how to meet global targets.

As such, this module introduces students to:

The variety of policies currently in place to mitigate for climate change.

The main political actors responsible for climate policy making and reaching global agreement.

Orthodox and alternative political ideas about how to understand climate change and how to

address it.

The main themes that dominate political debates about climate change today.

In doing so, this module offers students the tools with which to think critically about current approaches to governing for climate change, to evaluate key challenges and opportunities, and, using this knowledge, think creatively about how to meet net zero emissions targets in a just and lasting manner.

Module aims

This main aim of this module is to equip students with an understanding of the different ways in which climate change is governed, by whom, why some choices are made and others sidelined, and what the key obstacles to, and opportunities for, meeting GHG emissions reduction targets are. By picking apart, exploring, and better understanding the ideational and interest-based foundations of climate change policies, and governing institutions, this module offers students an in-depth introduction to why governing for climate change is so complex and, at times, frustrating. Revealing political details and complexity is useful on its own terms, but doing so can also help us to identify that what needs to be overcome to improve current attempts to address climate change.

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: Why we Govern for Climate Change: Science Meets Politics

Week 2: Negotiating Climate Change Mitigation

Week 3: Governing for Climate Change: Global & Regional Scale

Week 4: Governing Climate Change: National Scale

Week 5: Governing Climate Change: Local & Transnational Scales

Week 6: Reading Week

Week 7: Key Theme 1: the Politics of Phase Out: Fossil Fuels, Incumbency, and Backlash

Week 8: Key Theme 2: the Politics of Low Emissions Alternatives

Week 9: Key Theme 3: Justice & Equity

Week 10: Key Theme 4: Growth, Green Growth & De-growth

Learning outcomes

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

- Identify the main political ideas, approaches to, and actors involved in current attempts to govern for climate change
- Critically evaluate climate change mitigation and adaptation policies
- Identify dynamic inter-relationships between climate change and other policy areas - such as energy, transport, agriculture, health, and economic policy.
- Understand the key obstacles to, and opportunities for, just and sustainable transformations
- Critically evaluate alternative political approaches to governing climate change

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Interdisciplinary

This module draws on international political economy; climate science; human geography and sociology to explain and explore the complex global politics of acting to address climate change.

International

This module takes an explicitly global view of the politics of climate change, and will cover politics and policy within a range of countries but also on the international and transnational scales. This includes non-Western views about what climate change means politically and how to solve it.

Subject specific skills

Develop an advanced knowledge of the political debates and struggles that influence political decisions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change

Gain tools to analyse the roles of the main political actors involved, at multiple scales, in climate change action

Develop knowledge of, and engage critically with, a range of different political approaches to climate change

Apply political concepts to reveal how climate change policy is shaped, constrained, and developed

Gain tools to identify climate solutions that take political debates, struggles, and approaches into account

Transferable skills

Specific knowledge, relevant to policymaking in governance and corporate situations, about climate change

Communication skills - both written and presentation

Critical analytical skills

Further development of the techniques of academic argument, writing and referencing

Working with others when undertaking group exercises

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (4%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (4%)
Private study	90 hours (45%)
Assessment	92 hours (46%)
Total	200 hours

Private study description

Reading (at a minimum) core reading materials in preparation for the seminar

Reflecting and preparing answers on pre-circulated questions/group work exercises for seminars

Extended reading for topics that students choose to focus on for assessment

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	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Essay	80%	70 hours	Yes (extension)
Essay - there will be nine questions to choose from and they will be distributed well in advance.			

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
Policy brief	20%	22 hours	Yes (extension)
A short policy brief outlining TWO different political approaches to solving ONE climate issue (i.e. emissions reduction; developing low emissions alternatives; fossil fuel phase out; loss and damage; adaptation of coastlines), and WHY the approaches differ.			

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Students will receive written feedback on both the policy brief and the final essay outlining both how well the student has understood relevant concepts, debates and issues, their ability to analyse and to engage critically, as well as suggestions for improvement. They will be encouraged to discuss feedback during advice and feedback hours with their tutors.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of TPOS-M1PD Postgraduate Taught the Politics of Climate Change

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PT MA in International Development
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9Q1 Postgraduate Politics, Big Data and Quantitative Methods
- Year 1 of TPOS-M1P3 Postgraduate Taught International Political Economy
- Year 1 of TPOS-M1P8 Postgraduate Taught International Politics and East Asia
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9P9 Postgraduate Taught International Relations
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PC Postgraduate Taught International Security
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PS Postgraduate Taught Political and Legal Theory
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PF Postgraduate Taught Public Policy