Geography Seminar
Climate and Society
Fall 2011

This course is open to graduate students and advanced undergraduates

Course title and number:
Graduate: Geography Seminar – Climate and Society
16:450:605:03, Index 32618

Undergraduate: Geographic Problems – Climate and Society
01:450:491:04, Index 37414

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office hours: Mondays 11am-1pm or by appt.

Time and location: Fridays: 9:30am – 12:30pm
B-120 Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus.

Course overview
This seminar course will explore current geographic research on societal causes, impacts and responses to climate change. Topics of study include: framing the issue of climate change, evaluating how physical impacts associated with climate change will affect society, identifying sectors, regions, and population groups that are most vulnerable to climate change, and investigating steps to adapt and build resilience to climate change. Course readings will draw from a broad set of literatures with an emphasis on studies that address social and spatial dimensions of climate change impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation. The course will follow a seminar format including weekly reading and discussion of assigned materials. Students will also complete a term research project on a topic related to climate change and society.

Grading
Evaluation of grades will be based on weekly preparation (50%) and a term paper (50%)

Weekly preparation (50% total)
(1) Written reaction notes. Reaction notes (one page minimum; two page maximum) should be emailed to me prior to class or brought to class each week. Notes must be completed every week in response to each week’s reading assignment. The reaction notes are intended to make you think critically about the content of the readings. They do not need to be structured as formal papers. They are intended as a way for you to get your ideas about the readings down
on paper and to help you to identify questions or issues that you would like to pursue during our class discussion. Credit for the reaction notes will be given as pass (you did it) or fail (you didn’t do it).

(2) Active participation in seminar discussions. At the beginning of each weekly meeting, each seminar participant will contribute a question or issue pertaining to the readings. These questions and issues will help to structure discussion for the week.

**Term Project (50% total)**
We will work on term projects throughout the semester. Undergraduate students will complete projects on climate change impacts and vulnerabilities in an area of their choosing in New Jersey or in another location in the U.S. Graduate students will have the option of either doing a project along the same lines as the undergraduate project, or selecting another topic of interest on climate change and society. We will devote some class time approximately every third week to discussion of progress on student projects.

Final papers based on the projects will be due on the last day of class.

Papers will be presented in class on the due date.

The paper should be approximately 15 pages for undergraduates and 20 pages for graduate students.

**Policy regarding late papers and incompletes**
Extensions of the due date for the final paper will not be granted except in the event of a documented family or personal emergency. Incompletes will not be granted in this class except in the event of a documented family or personal emergency.

**Readings**
Readings for the course will include books, articles, and policy reports. All readings must be completed prior to the class discussion of the material.

**Books**

Hulme, Mike. 2009. Why We Disagree About Climate Change. Cambridge University Press.


Articles and reports (These will be posted on the course sakai website).


Weekly Schedule and Readings

Tentative Schedule – subject to revision

Readings in italics will be posted on Sakai. Readings in plain text are from the assigned books.

Assigned Readings are required; Optional Readings are mainly intended for grad students.

Week 1  (Fri Sept 2) Introduction and course overview

Week 2 (Fri Sept 9) Human geography and climate change
Readings: O’Brien 2010; Wainwright 2010; Shove 2010
Optional Reading: Jasonoff 2010; Brace and Geoghagan (2011)

Week 3  (Fri Sept 16) Framing the issue of climate change I
Readings: Hulme book (preface, chapter 1, 2, 3); IPCC 2007 executive sum. (skim)

Week 4  (Fri Sept 23) Framing the issue of climate change II
Readings: Hulme book (chapters 4, 8, 9);
Optional reading: Knox 2010; Liverman 2009

Discuss term paper assignment

Week 5 (Fri Sept 30) Framing the issue of climate change III
Readings: Hulme book (chapters 6, 7, 10), Yale University, Six Americas Report (2011)

Discuss term paper topic ideas

Week 6 (Fri Oct 7) Vulnerability

Week 7 (Fri Oct 14) Vulnerability and Multiple Stresses I
Readings: Leichenko and O’Brien book (chapters 1-4)

Week 8 (Fri Oct 21) Vulnerability and Multiple Stresses II
Readings: Leichenko and O’Brien book (chapters 5-8)

Term paper progress discussion

Week 9 (Oct 28) Resilience
Readings: Adger 2000; Adger et. al. 2005; Folke 2006; Leichenko 2011
Optional readings: Sapountzaki 2007; Pike et al. 2010

Week 10 (Nov 4) No Class Meeting. Intensive work on term paper draft
Week 11 (Nov 11) Adaptation and Resilience I
Readings: Pelling book (chapters 1-2); Adger 2009
Term paper progress discussion.

Week 12 (Nov 18) Adaptation and Resilience II
Readings: Pelling book (chapters 3-5, 7-9)

Week 13 (Dec 2) Case studies: Readings to be decided

Week 14 (Dec 9) In-class presentations
Term papers due