

## THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

### Course Outline

#### Part I

<b>Programme Title</b>	: Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education for Sustainability
<b>Programme QF Level</b>	: 5
<b>Course Title</b>	: The Politics of Climate Change
<b>Course Code</b>	: SSC3187
<b>Department</b>	: Social Sciences
<b>Credit Points</b>	: 3
<b>Contact Hours</b>	: 39
<b>Pre-requisite(s)</b>	: Nil
<b>Medium of Instruction</b>	: EMI
<b>Course Level</b>	: 3

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#### Part II

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):

- Professional Excellence;
- Ethical Responsibility; &
- Innovation.

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:

1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills
- 4a. Oral Communication Skills
- 4b. Written Communication Skills
5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

## 1. Course Synopsis

Climate change is arguably the greatest threat facing humankind in the long term, and its effects are already being felt in many places. Although science is central to our understanding of the problem, the world's responses are at least as much a function of politics and the struggle over how best to respond to the problem within countries and in cooperation among them. Many local governments will have to learn to adapt to climate change impacts, national governments will have to decide whether and how to respond to it, and the international community will face growing challenges as climate change creates new problems for governance, development and security. With this in mind, this course explores the politics of climate change within and among countries, in the process examining how politics and governance is being brought to bear (and might be in the future) to respond to the problem, and looks at how climate change is in turn affecting national and international politics. The course outlines the politicization of the science of climate change; assesses the economic, security and political determinants of key states' domestic climate policies and their positions in international climate negotiations; reviews the history of climate negotiations and the structure of the international climate regime; and explores theoretical literature concerning cooperative action and the provision of global public goods.

While the course will include regular lectures, the primary pedagogy will be premised on problem-based learning. Students will be required to undertake outside reading and research, and to use the ideas gained as the basis for rich class discussions, debates and group work. Students will be asked to respond to a number of key questions including: How does the science of climate change interact with political processes? Why do the domestic politics surrounding climate change differ among countries? How have international negotiations on climate change changed national and local responses to the problem? Are governments treating climate change as an environmental, economic or security concern? Besides states, what are the key social forces and actors driving the politics of climate change?

## 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

*Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:*

- CILO<sub>1</sub> Be able to identify how climate change science has been politicized.
- CILO<sub>2</sub> Be able to apply conceptions of politics to domestic, regional and global climate change policies.
- CILO<sub>3</sub> Have a global understanding of climate politics that allows you to identify connections between local, regional and global responses.
- CILO<sub>4</sub> Be able to critically reflect on the transformations of politics and governance that are required to respond to climate change effectively.

## 3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
a. How and why is climate science being politicized?	CILO <sub>1,3</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• brief lectures (possibly including guest lectures)</li><li>• provocative questions followed by class discussions</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>group sharing of ideas from assigned readings</li> </ul>
b. Domestic climate politics: how are different states and regions responding to climate change? How do security, economic and environmental concerns influence policy making?	<i>CILO</i> <sub>2,4</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>brief lectures (possibly including guest lectures)</li> <li>provocative questions followed by class discussions</li> <li>group sharing of ideas from assigned readings</li> <li>preparing written answers to selected questions</li> <li>oral presentations</li> </ul>
c. Global climate governance: How has global community sought to manage climate change, and what are the major disagreements, and how have negotiations changed over time?	<i>CILO</i> <sub>2,3,4</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>brief lectures (possibly including guest lectures)</li> <li>provocative questions followed by class discussions</li> <li>group sharing of ideas from course journals and assigned readings</li> <li>preparing written answers to selected questions</li> <li>oral presentations</li> </ul>
d. Actors: what are the key actors in the politics of climate change, and how do individual choices interact local, regional and global outcomes	<i>CILO</i> <sub>2,3,4</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>brief lectures (possibly including guest lectures)</li> <li>provocative questions followed by class discussions</li> <li>group sharing of ideas from course journals and assigned readings</li> <li>preparing written answers to selected questions</li> <li>oral presentations</li> </ul>

#### 4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILOs
a) Participation in class discussions and debates	30	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1,2,3,4</sub>
b) Presentation and short written report	25	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1,2,3,4</sub>
c) Three essays (~1,000 words each)	45	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1,2,3,4</sub>

#### 5. Required textbooks:

Harris, P.G. (2021). *Pathologies of Climate Governance: International Relations, National Politics and Human Nature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Additional literature as assigned

## 6. Recommended Readings (indicative)

- Bulkeley, H., & Newell, P. (2010). *Governing Climate Change*. London: Routledge.
- FitzRoy, E. R., & Papyrakis, E. (2010). *An introduction to climate change economics and policy*. London: Earthscan.
- Hamilton, C. (2010). *Requiem For a Species: Why we resist the truth about climate change*. London : Earthscan.
- Hansen, J. (2009). *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity*, New York: Bloomsbury.
- Harris, P. G. (Ed.). (2009). *The Politics of Climate Change: Environmental Dynamics in International Affairs*. London: Routledge.
- Harris, P. G. (Ed.). (2009). *Climate Change and Foreign Policy: Case Studies from East to West*. London: Routledge.
- Harrison, K., & Sundstrom, L. M. (Eds.). (2010). *Global commons, domestic decisions: The comparative politics of climate change*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Helm, D., & Hepburn, C. (Eds.). (2009). *The Economics and Politics of Climate Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hoggan, J. (2009). *Climate Coverup: The Crusade To Deny Global Warming*. Vancouver: Greystone Books.
- Newell, P. (2000). *Climate for Change: Non-state actors and the global politics of the greenhouse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## 7. Related Web Resources

350.org: international campaign to promote just and scientifically grounded solutions to the climate crisis

[www.350.org](http://www.350.org)

Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs:

<http://www.cceia.org/index.html>

Climate Ethics:

<http://climateethics.org/>

The Climate Justice Project:

<http://www.climatejustice.org.uk/>

Encyclopedia of the Earth

<http://www.eoearth.org>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Human rights and climate change'

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/climatechange/index.htm>

Oxfam (2009), *The Right to Survive in a Changing Climate*:

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/climate\\_change/right-to-survive-changing-climate.html](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/climate_change/right-to-survive-changing-climate.html)

Oxford Institute for Energy Studies

<http://www.oxfordenergy.org/index.php>

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Website

[www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Climate Change and Sustainable Development

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/climate-change/index.shtml>

World Resources Institute

[www.wri.org/climate](http://www.wri.org/climate)

Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs:

[http://wvs.princeton.edu/news/megwalu\\_09/](http://wvs.princeton.edu/news/megwalu_09/)

## **8. Related Journals**

*Climate Policy*

*Development and Change*

*Environmental Politics*

*Global Environmental Change*

*Global Environmental Politics*

*Global Governance*

*International Environmental Agreements*

*Journal of Environment and Development*

*Nature Climate Change*

*Global Environmental Politics*

## **9. Academic Honesty**

The University adopts a zero-tolerance policy to plagiarism. For the University's policy on plagiarism, please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity with Specific Reference to the Avoidance of Plagiarism by Students*

(<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/modules/downloads/visit.php?cid=9&lid=89>). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

## **10. Others**

Newspaper articles and other media reports, including contemporaneous reporting, related to the course; recent related reports from scientific organizations and nongovernmental organizations; new video media and websites.

*Updated: August 2020*