

# Spring 2015 Syllabus: GEOG 6900

## Climate and Society: The Human Dimensions of Climate Change



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Office hours: Wednesday 1 – 3 pm or by appointment  
Office: Natural Resources (NR) 218

Classroom: Biology & Natural Resources (BNR) 360  
Schedule: Wednesday, 9:00–11:30 am

### Course description

This 3-credit graduate seminar will explore current research on human impacts and responses to global climate change from a geographic perspective. Topics will include: defining and framing the issue of climate change; climate change perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs; climate change mitigation policy and behavior; climate change impacts and vulnerabilities; adaptation planning and policy; and societal resilience. The course will be of interest to students who are new to this area of study and to those who are already engaged in human dimensions research.

The course will engage with current empirical and theoretical literature on the human dimensions of climate change. Although readings will draw from a broad set of social science literatures, the course will emphasize geographic dimensions of these issues, focusing on how processes of climate change and efforts to address these processes occur at local and regional levels.

The course will be a seminar format with emphasis on readings and discussion of assigned materials. Students will complete a term paper and presentation on a topic related to climate change and society.

### Course objectives

1. Learn fundamental principles of social science and geographic theory and methods as applied to the human dimensions of climate change.
2. Develop skills in written and oral expression.
3. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

### Course expectations

This is a reading-intensive seminar course. You will be expected to read all assigned texts before each class session. Much of the class will be devoted to critically analyzing and discussing the assigned texts. You should

read critically: question the authors' assumptions, the questions they ask or issues they raise, their methodology, and the conclusions they draw.

All secondary sources must be properly cited and referenced using a standard author-date style for in-text citations and references, such as APA or Chicago style. A helpful guide to style can be found at the Purdue writing lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). I strongly recommend using citation management software such as Zotero (free: <https://www.zotero.org/>) or EndNote to streamline the process of including citations and references in your papers.

## Course materials

### REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Hulme, Mike. Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction, and Opportunity. First Edition. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
2. Additional required readings will be posted online on Canvas.

### CANVAS

We will use Canvas ([usu.instructure.com](https://usu.instructure.com)) throughout the course for announcements, distributing materials, submitting assignments, and grade reporting. It is your responsibility to use the Canvas system. Questions about Canvas can be directed to the USU IT service desk ([it.usu.edu](mailto:it.usu.edu), [servicedesk@usu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@usu.edu), 435-797-4357).

## Assignments and Grading

### WEEKLY DISCUSSION NOTES (30%)

In preparation for each class you will be asked to provide written notes for the discussion, formatted as a brief paper. Discussion papers (2-3 pages) should be emailed to the instructor before class each week. Papers are to be completed every week in response to each week's reading assignment.

The discussion papers are intended to make you think critically about the content of the readings. For example, they may include specific questions you have about the material (and possible answers), topics to raise during discussion, or critical remarks on the material. They are intended as a way for you to articulate your ideas about the readings and to help you to identify questions or issues that you would like to pursue during the class discussion. Credit for the discussion papers will be pass/fail.

### ATTENDANCE AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION (20%)

Active participation in seminar discussions is necessary to obtain a satisfactory grade. During each weekly meeting, each participant should contribute at least one questions or issue based on the readings to structure the discussion for the class session.

One participant will facilitate the discussion each week. Facilitation assignments will be arranged during the first class meeting. The facilitator will be responsible for providing a brief summary of the readings and leading the discussion.

### SEMINAR PAPER AND PRESENTATION (50%)

Students will work with the instructor to select a paper topic and will work on the paper throughout the semester. We will devote some regular class time to discussion of progress on the papers.

- A ½ page proposal for the paper topic with at least 5 references will be due on Feb. 11
- A detailed outline or rough draft of the paper will be due on March 18. The instructor will provide comments and suggestions on the draft at this stage.
- Papers will be presented in class on April 15.
- Final papers are due on April 23.

The paper should be approximately 20 pages in length (double spaced). Details on the assignment will be discussed in class.

## GRADING SCALE

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
%	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	60-69	< 60

## Course policies

### COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

The best way to contact me is during my office hours, via e-mail, or via a Canvas message. I will try to respond to e-mails on the same day during the week.

### LATE WORK

It is your responsibility to turn in all work on time. Grades for assignments will be reduced by 10 percent for each day late. No late work will be accepted more than 2 weeks after the due date.

### CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Everyone has the right to feel comfortable in the classroom. We are all adults in a college classroom, and we must be open to critical and academic discussion on topics that we may or may not agree with. I will treat you with respect, and I expect you to extend respect to me as well as to your classmates.

### ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to produce original work. Plagiarism or falsification of any kind will be subject to disciplinary action. Offences will be referred to Utah State University Admissions office. The USU policy for academic honesty can be found at [usu.edu/student-services/studentcode/article6.cfm](http://usu.edu/student-services/studentcode/article6.cfm). Please review this document to understand the Utah State University policy on academic honesty. If you have questions or concerns about the policy, please contact your instructor or academic advisor.

### PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism includes knowingly “representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged used of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.” The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, and denial or revocation of degrees.

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure equal participation within the program. If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the Disability Resource Center (435-797-2444), preferably during the first week of the course. Any request for special consideration relating to attendance, pedagogy, etc., must be discussed with and approved by the instructor.

## Course schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Jan 7	Introduction and course overview	
Jan 14	Geography and the human dimensions of climate change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Adger et al. 2013)</li> <li>2. (O'Brien 2011)</li> <li>3. (Hulme 2008)</li> <li>4. (Leiserowitz 2012)</li> </ol>
Jan 21	The state of climate science; social and policy dimensions of climate change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National Climate Assessment ch. 1 (Melillo, Richmond, and Yohe 2014, 1–59)</li> <li>2. IPCC AR5 WGII Summary for Policymakers (IPCC 2014)</li> <li>3. (Goldenberg 2014)</li> </ol>
Jan 28	Scientific discourses and framing of climate change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hulme book, preface &amp; chs. 1-3</li> <li>2. (Hackmann, Moser, and Clair 2014)</li> </ol>
Feb 4	Markets and governance of climate change  <i>No class — prof at conference. Readings and discussion paper still required this week</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hulme book, chs. 4, 8, 9</li> <li>2. (Liverman 2009)</li> </ol>
Feb 11	Public engagement  PAPER PROPOSALS DUE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hulme book, chs. 5-7</li> <li>2. (Corner, Markowitz, and Pidgeon 2014)</li> </ol>
Feb 18	Perceptions and beliefs I	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Brulle, Carmichael, and Jenkins 2012)</li> <li>2. (Marx et al. 2007)</li> <li>3. (McCright and Dunlap 2011)</li> <li>4. (Kahan, Jenkins-Smith, and Braman 2011)</li> </ol>
Feb 25	Perceptions and beliefs II	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Weber 2010)</li> <li>2. (Howe and Leiserowitz 2013)</li> <li>3. (Leiserowitz et al. 2013)</li> <li>4. (Gifford 2011)</li> </ol>
Mar 4	Perspectives on risk and vulnerability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Füssel and Klein 2006)</li> <li>2. (Stern et al. 2013)</li> <li>3. IPCC SREX report chs. 1-2 (IPCC 2012, 25–96)</li> </ol>
Mar 11	<i>No class — Spring Break</i>	
Mar 18	Adaptive capacity and vulnerability to multiple stressors  PAPER OUTLINE/DRAFT DUE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (O'Brien and Leichenko 2000)</li> <li>2. (Grothmann and Patt 2005)</li> <li>3. (Pelling and High 2005)</li> </ol>
Mar 25	Adaptation, resilience, and development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IPCC AR5 WGII, ch. 16 (Klein et al. 2014) &amp; ch. 20 (Denton et al. 2014)</li> <li>2. (Adger et al. 2009)</li> <li>3. (Pielke et al. 2007)</li> </ol>
Apr 1	Climate change communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Shaw et al. 2009)</li> <li>2. (Boykoff and Yulsman 2013)</li> <li>3. (Corner and Groves 2014)</li> <li>4. (Center for Research on Environmental Decisions and ecoAmerica 2014) - SKIM</li> </ol>
Apr 8	Mitigation behavior and policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Bulkeley 2010)</li> <li>2. (Dietz et al. 2009)</li> <li>3. IPCC AR5 WGIII Summary for Policymakers (Edenhofer et al. 2014)</li> </ol>
Apr 15	PAPER PRESENTATIONS	
Apr 22	<i>No class — AAG Conference in Chicago.</i> PAPERS DUE	

## REFERENCES FOR READINGS

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