

# Law & Politics of Global Climate Change

**Political Science 179**  
**International Studies 179**

University of California, Irvine  
Summer I, 2008

**Day/Time: MW 4-6:50**

**Location: SSL 145**

**Course Website – [www.asteback.com/GCC](http://www.asteback.com/GCC)**

**Instructor:** P. Brian Fisher

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**Office Hours:** By Appointment

## Course Background

This course examines the relationship between global political and legal mechanisms, institutions and forces and climate change. The focus is on the implications of local-global interactions for addressing global climate change problematique. The course will address the issue of global climate change by engaging various topics and a diverse set of political and legal lenses. The class will examine several global climate change case studies using analytical frameworks of human rights, international environmental law, environmental ethics and politics, and environmental justice.

## Class Format

The class sessions will consist of four main components:

**I. An Orientation to Global Climate Change:** This section will include a short review of the context of environmental problems at the global level and the players involved.

**II. Background of Global Climate Change:** This section will review the science of global climate change as well as the impacts (both direct and indirect, physical and socioeconomic) of climate change.

**III. International Environmental Law and Agreements:** This section will focus on principles of international environmental law and specific international agreements on climate.

**IV. Climate Economics and Justice:** This section will explore the economics of global climate change as well as the paradigms of climate justice such as human security and human rights.

**V. UN Conference and Future of Climate:** This section will entail a Mock Climate Summit by students representing different aspects of the international system, and the class will conclude with possible pathways forward on equitably addressing global climate change.

## Grading

The following weight will be given to coursework in the determination of final grades:

COURSEWORK	VALUE
Course Exam	30 %
Team Presentation/Paper 1	10 %
Team Presentation/Paper 2	10 %
UN Mock Conference	15 %
Final Analysis Paper 3	20 %
Emissions Source Analysis	10 %
Attendance	5 %
Participation	++

## Course Materials

The following *required texts* will be available in the UCI Bookstore

GEG = James Speth and Peter Haas, *Global Environmental Governance*, Island Press, 2006.  
CC = DiMento and Doughman (2007). *Climate Change: What it Means for Us, Our Children, and our Grandchildren*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

*Highly Recommended Texts* (on Reserve at Library):

CI = Bjorn Lomborg (2007). *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming*. New York: Knopf.

## Readings

Each week's readings are broken down into two categories: **Priority One** and **Priority Two**. For **priority one** readings, you should read it thoroughly as you are responsible for all material within them. For **priority two** readings, you should (thoroughly) skim them, and you are responsible for core concepts and themes within them.

## Course Website

All students are responsible for visiting the "schedule" section of the course website on a regular basis. The attached reading list provides a general guide to the course readings; however, the actual assignment list and regular updates will be posted on the course website.

## Final exam

The final exam will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, short answer/identification (based on concepts, historical and contemporary events, places, and people), and a longer essay question(s). You will be graded on practical knowledge and analytical abilities. Remember the difference in responsibility for priority one and two readings.

# CLASS SCHEDULE

## Part I: Orientation to Global Climate Change

<b>Class 1 CLASS ORIENTATION</b>
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**Monday, June 23**

- Shape and Define the Syllabus
- Discuss Hopes/Dreams

### Priority One Readings

- Emma Duncan, "[The Heat is On: A Special Report on Climate Change](#)", *The Economist*, September 9, 2006 (series of articles)

<b>Class 2 HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS</b>
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**Wednesday, June 25**

- **DUE:** One News Article on Climate Change (to explain to class)
- FILM: The Eleventh Hour

### Priority One Readings

- GEG, pp. 1-20; 43-51; Chapter 3, pp. 52-81.
- CC, Chapter 1, Introduction, pp. 1-9.
- Garrett Hardin (1968) "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162:3859, pp. 1243-48.
- J. R. McNeill (2000), *Something New Under the Sun*, [Chapter 1 – Prologue: Peculiarities of a Prodigal Century](#), pp. 3-17 (R)

### Priority Two Readings

- [Dr. John Houghton's Lecture](#) (IPCC) on Global Climate Change

## Part II: Global Climate Change Background

<b>Class 3 SCIENCE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE</b>
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**Monday, June 30**

- **DUE: EMISSIONS SOURCES ANALYSIS**
- **For Emissions Source Analysis:**
  - Complete Environmental Scorecard
  - Take Ecological Footprint Quiz
  - Determine Your Electricity Profile (from EPA)
  - Personal Carbon Counter
- FILM: The Eleventh Hour (Part II)

### **Priority One Readings**

- CC (2007) Chapter 2, "A Primer on Global Climate Change and Its Likely Impacts," pp. 11-43.
- CC (2007) Chapter 4, "The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change: How do we Know We're Not Wrong," pp. 65-93.
- CI (2007) Preface & Chapter 1, "Polar Bears: Today's Canaries in the Coal Mine?," pp. 3-9.
- IPCC 4th Assessment (2007), Working Group I, The Physical Science Basis of Climate Change, Summary, pp. 2-17.

### **Priority Two Readings**

- CI (2007) Chapter 2, "It's Getting Hotter," pp. 10-52.
- IPCC 4th Assessment Report Summary, Union of Concerned Scientists

<b>Class 4 CLIMATE EFFECTS AND IMPACTS</b>
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**Wednesday, July 2**

- FILM: An Inconvenient Truth

### **Priority One Readings**

- CC (2007) Chapter 3, "Climate Change Effects: Global and Local Views," pp. 45-64.
- IPCC 4th Assessment (2007), Working Group II, [Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#), Summary, pp. 8-20.
- IPCC 4th Assessment (2007), Working Group III, [The Mitigation of Climate Change](#), Summary, pp. 3-22.
- Mark Lynas, "Peru's Melting Point," High Tide: The Truth About our Climate Crisis, pp. 199-252.
- Stern Report, "[How Climate Change will Affect People Around the World](#)," pp. 56-84.

### **Priority Two Readings**

- CI, Chapter 3, "Global Warming: Our Many Worries," pp. 53-112.
- Epoch Times, "[Inuit Culture, Frozen in Time, Now Melting Away](#)", Aug 18-25, 2005.
- Nature Magazine (2005). [Hurricane Intensity and Global Warming](#)
- "[The Sinking of Tuvalu](#)," Feb. 13, 2005 (with pictures)
- "[Uncertainty Grips the Arctic: Climate Change Impacting Northern Ecosystems](#)", Aug 27, 2005.
- Pielke, et al (2008) "Dangerous Assumptions (of IPCC 2007)," *Nature* 45:2/3.

## Part III: International Environmental Law and Climate Agreements

### Class 5 INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Monday, July 7

- DUE: 1<sup>st</sup> Team Presentation on Impacts of Climate Change

#### Priority One Readings

- GEG, Chapter 4, "Environmental Accord: Treaties and IEL", pp. 82-106.
- Guruswamy, Chapter 1, "Sources and Forms of International Environmental Law," *International Environmental Law*, pp. 1-29 (R).
- Sands, "General Principles and Rules of IEL," *Principles of International Environmental Law, 2d*, pp. 231-290 (R).
- Daniel Bodansky (2001), "International Law and the Design of a Climate Change Regime," *International Relations and Global Climate Change*, MIT Press, pp. 201-219 (R).

#### Priority Two Readings

- Review [Environmental Law Timeline](#)
- CI (2007) Chapter 4, "The Politics of Global Warming," pp. 113-48.

### Class 6 CLIMATE AGREEMENTS AND NEGOTIATIONS

Wednesday, July 9

#### Priority One Readings

- Guruswamy, Chapter 6, "Global Climate Change," *International Environmental Law*, pp. 174-225.
- United Nations Framework for Climate Change (1992), [UNFCCC Convention Treaty](#)
- United Nations (1997), [Kyoto Protocol](#)
- Najam, Huq, and Sokona, "[Climate Negotiations Beyond Kyoto: Developing Countries Concerns and Interests](#)," *Climate Policy*, 3, 221-31 (2003).
- Gardiner, Stephen, "[The Global Warming Tragedy and the Dangerous Illusion of the Kyoto Protocol](#)", *Ethics & International Affairs*, 18:1, pp. 23-39.
- Gwyn Prins and Steve Rayner, "[Time to Ditch Kyoto](#)", *Nature* 449:25, pp. 973-75.

#### Priority Two Readings

- UNFCCC (2003), [Caring for Climate: A Guide to the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol](#)
- For international policy background: [Beginners Guide to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#):
- Discussion on [Abandoning Kyoto](#)

## Part IV: Climate Economics and Justice

<b>Class 7 ECONOMICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE</b>
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Monday, July 14

### Priority One Readings

- Stern Review, [The Economics of Climate Change](#), Executive Summary, pp. 1-26
- Stern Review, [International Support for Adaptation](#), pp. 554-568.
- Pew Center for Climate, Addressing Cost: [The Political Economy of Climate Change](#)
- MaryBeth Long Martello (2005), "Vulnerability Analysis and Environmental Governance," Handbook of Global Environmental Politics (R).

### Priority Two Readings

- Richard Melford, "[The Economics of Climate Change: An Overview of the Stern Report](#)", International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development, 1(3): 260-2
- Full [Stern Report](#)

<b>Class 8 CLIMATE RIGHTS, SECURITY AND JUSTICE</b>
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Wednesday, July 16

- **DUE:** Team Presentation 2 on Economics, Technology and Justice

### Priority One Readings

- CC (2007) Chapter 7, "Climate Change and Human Security", pp. 161-180
- Fisher, PB (2008), "[Just Climate Governance: Human Security and Climate Change in Tuvalu](#)", pp. 1-21.
- Pew Center (2005), [Equity and Climate: In Principle and Practice](#)
- Sands, "International Human Rights and Environment," in *Principles of IEL*, pp. 291-307 (R)
- Neil Adger (2004) "[The Right To Keep Cold](#)," *Environment and Planning* 36:1711-15.
- Thomas and Twyman (2005) "[Equity and Justice in Climate Change Adaptation amongst Natural-Resource-Dependent Societies](#)", *Global Environmental Change* 15:115-24.

## Part V: UN Mock Climate Conference and Future of Climate Policy

<b>Class 9 UN CLIMATE CONFERENCE</b>
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Monday, July 21

- **DUE:** UN Climate Conference

### Priority One Readings

- No Readings – Prep for Mock Climate Summit

<b>Class 10 FUTURE OF CLIMATE CHANGE</b>
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Wednesday, July 23

- **Group Meetings on Analysis Papers**

### Priority One Readings

- CC (2007), Chapter 8, "Climate Change: What it means for Us, Our Children, and Our Grandchildren"
- CI (2007), Chapter 5, "Conclusion: Making Our Top Priorities Cool," pp. 149-64.
- Myles Allen (2003), "[Liability for Climate Change](#)," *Nature* 421:891-2.
- Timo Koivurova (2007) "[International Legal Avenues to Address the Plight of Victims of Climate Change](#)"

<b>Class 11 Final Exam</b>
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Monday, July 28

- **DUE: FINAL EXAM**

<b>Class 12 ANALYSIS PAPERS</b>
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Wednesday, July 30

- **CLIMATE ANALYSIS PAPERS DUE (send via email or meet me at class at 4pm)**