

Global Climate Politics and Policy

ENV 1003
Prof. Jessica Green
jf.green@utoronto.ca

Tuesdays 12-2PM
Spring 2025

Welcome to university in the age of COVID

Below you will find all the standard details about the class, but before that, some important things to think about.

- 1) Health and wellness are different now. Please think of others; if you are sick, please mask and/or consider not attending class.**
- 2) Communication will be essential to the success of the course. If you have concerns or issues, please let me know, and I will address any issues as quickly and as best I can.**
- 3) Your physical and mental health take priority over all else. Take care of yourself, and each other.**

Course Description

Though we tend to treat it as a technological or economic issue, climate change is fundamentally a political problem. This course provides much needed political science theory for understanding why we must consider the politics of climate change if we are to make progress on decarbonization.

This course will examine the political economy of climate change at the international and domestic levels. We will investigate four questions: 1) What are the different ways of conceptualizing the climate change “problem”? 2) How is climate change currently governed internationally? 3) What are the main policies to govern the climate? 4) How can industrial policy and global trade reform help promote rapid decarbonization?

This course will be student driven. This means you should come prepared: not just having completed the readings, but with some questions or responses to them. This is your opportunity to shape the direction of the discussions we have – take advantage!

Course Format and Delivery

This course will be taught in person, seminar style. You are expected to come to class having done the readings and prepared to discuss them.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should:

- (1) Understand how different conceptualizations of the climate change problem shape the politics and policies that arise from them.

- (2) Understand the current international approach to governing climate change, including the functioning of international carbon markets, and be able to assess its strengths and weaknesses.
- (3) Understand the basic contours of domestic climate policies of major emitters.
- (4) Identify policies and institutions at the international level that could provide leverage on decarbonization by building political coalitions that benefit from aggressive climate change policy.

Course Requirements and Assignments

For a full description of the assignments, see “Assignments” document in Quercus.

There will be five assignments for the class.

1) Term Paper (*DUE 10 April, 11.59PM*): 30%

There are two possible routes for the term paper. You may choose any topic related to *global* climate politics, OR you can write about a domestic Canadian policy relates to global trade issues. More information on the paper is detailed in the “Assignments” sheet, on Quercus.

The paper should be between 3500-4000 words, and a **preliminary topic** (ungraded) **is due no later than February 12th via Quercus.**

2) Rough draft of paper: 15% (*DUE 18 March*)

You will prepare a proto-rough draft of your term paper to share with a pre-assigned group from whom you will receive substantive and editorial comments. You should get your draft to your colleagues by 9 March, so they can provide comments in class on the 11th. The actual rough draft, which you will submit to me via Quercus by 18 March, should contain a rough sense of the argument and provide a good chunk of the evidence you will be using to support that argument. If you provide less material by the 10th, your peer comments will be less useful. Your mark is based on the quality of the comments you provide to your peers in addition to the draft you supply. *Suggested length: 1500 words*

3) Participation: 15%. (*DUE 12 Mar and 5 Apr*)

I have always found grading participation to be both somewhat arbitrary and biased towards those who feel more comfortable speaking in class – even when I adjust expectations for different types of personalities and participation. As such, I am evaluating participation in two ways this year.

First, you will be evaluated on the feedback that you give to your peers on their rough drafts. This will be in the form of written comments submitted on Quercus. These comments should offer **constructive criticism** of your colleagues’ work: what made sense to you, what didn’t, what directions you think the paper should go in, things to read, ideas to engage with, etc.

Second, by April 5, you will submit a 1-2 page reflection about your engagement in this course. In this memo, you will reflect on:

- how you learned most effectively for this class
- what barriers you faced
- what ways you enjoy and do not enjoy engaging with the course material and discussions in the class

- what insights about your process of learning you will take to other parts of your education.
- Note: This is not an exercise in talking about course material, but rather, how you *engaged* with that material.

4) **Video summary and critique (2):** 20% (various due dates, depending on sign up)
Each of you will be responsible for reading, summarizing and critiquing **two articles** that we read. In order to encourage you to be concise, these will be **video summaries with PowerPoint**. In 3-5 minutes, you should:

- Summarize the key arguments of the paper (1-2 slides)
- Where applicable, summarize the key evidence used in support of the arguments (1 slide)
- Provide 1-2 critiques of the paper. (1 slide). Critiques can include (but are not limited to): things that are missing from the paper, over- or under- emphasis of certain issues or ideas, failure to take into account other perspectives (perhaps ones that we have already examined).

Your summary should be uploaded by 7PM Monday before class in the Video Summaries discussion on the Discussions link in Quercus. **Please also upload your PowerPoint into the Assignments page.**

Also: Make sure you read the “Tips for a good powerpoint presentation” on Quercus.

5) **Think piece:** 20% (*DUE NO LATER THAN 12 Apr, 11.59PM*)
Write a 1000 word essay that answers the following question: What is the most promising avenue for tackling climate change? Obviously, there is no right answer to this question. The idea of this assignment is to pick an avenue for political progress that you feel is promising and elaborate on *why* and *how* it could be successful in generating change. You must refer to a minimum of three readings in your response. This is not meant to be a final exam, so you may complete this any time during the semester.

Deadlines and late penalties

All deadlines are final. For each day an assignment is late, there will be a 3% reduction in your grade. I may make exceptions under extenuating circumstances, such as illness or family emergency. However, these will require documentation, which is to complete the ACORN self-declaration and send me a screen shot as confirmation. If there are other issues that you think may affect your ability to turn in assignments on time, I suggest you contact me *as early as possible*. I am **not** inclined to give extensions to those who ask the night before.

Accessibility

Students who require special arrangements should contact the Student Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060. Their email is accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. Some students find that they must wait to contact and secure approval from Accessibility Services: in these cases, **you should still contact me in advance**, to let me know you might require accommodations for assignments.

Email and communication

I will hold weekly office hours on Friday from 2-4PM, and I will be very glad to meet with you at those times to discuss readings, lectures, assignments, essays, and more. **You must sign up for office hours using the course calendar on Quercus.** There will be a link in Quercus to zoom for the meeting. In general, I prefer to meet in person; please specify when you book whether you would like to meet online or in person.

I have also listed my email address in the contact information at the start of the syllabus; however, please consider several things when reaching out to me by email:

- **Please check (and double-check) that the answer to your query is not in the syllabus before you contact me with questions.**
- You are expected to write from your University of Toronto email account. If you write from another email account (Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, etc.), I might not answer;
- I generally use email to address simple yes/no questions and to make arrangements about logistics; if you have any substantive concerns, please come to my office hours;
- I will do my best to respond to your messages, but please don't expect a rapid response. I will not be responding daily to emails about the class and will not check my email on evenings and weekends. As such, please plan ahead if you need to reach out to me.
- If you write to request an extension or accommodation the night before an assignment is due, I am unlikely to accommodate your needs or offer assistance.

Legal

Please read the policy on [academic integrity](#). Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that can result in loss of credit, suspension, and possibly expulsion from the university. *All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department.*

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult [this page](#) from the Writing center. You can also make an appointment with me to discuss.

Plagiarism includes:

- copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes and references
- not citing a source used in your papers
- citing internet information without proper citation
- presenting someone else's work as your own
- *inadvertently* copying verbatim from any source.

Policy on Children and Childcare (adapted from Prof. Guy Grossman, University of Pennsylvania)

- Babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support breastfeeding.
- For older children, minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving them with someone you or the child doesn't feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-

term childcare solution, occasionally, bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.

- I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity including diversity in parenting status.
- Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your courses once you become a parent is fatigue. The struggles of balancing school and childcare are exhausting!! I hope that you will feel comfortable disclosing your student-parent status to me, so that I may be able to accommodate any special needs that arise.

Use of Generative AI

In general, I think human brains are superior to machine brains. One point of a university education in the social science is to learn skills like critical reading, evaluating evidence, and constructing arguments. When you use automated technologies, you are foregoing part of the process of learning skills.¹

Also, using AI is [terrible for climate](#). However, I will not penalize you for using generative AI (GAI), ***provided that you follow the guidelines below.***

- 1) **Disclosure.** You **must disclose** that you have used GAI (and which tool) in an assignment, and include the prompt *and* a screenshot of the output at the end of the assignment. If you use GAI and claim this as your own work, this is called plagiarism.

If you don't submit these two items, you are giving me your word of honor that you did not use GAI *at all* on that submission. Please don't create false impressions: you might earn a grade of 0 and face an academic misconduct charge.

- 2) **Limits.** You may use GAI for critiquing and editing an assignment for purposes of revision, but the first draft must be original work produced by the you alone.

Any new ideas introduced by GAI during the critique or editing process must be appropriately cited as generated by the AI tool

You may NOT use AI tools for taking tests or actual drafting of the research paper (see #1). You may NOT use them in the video summaries.

- 3) **A word of caution:** You should note that GAI is not necessarily based on peer-reviewed work. Thus, it can (and does!) produce incorrect facts and citations. You will be responsible for any inaccurate content you submit regardless of whether it originally comes from you or from GAI. In other words, you can't blame it on ChatGPT.

¹ Thanks to Wendy Wong for the formulation of the prose in this paragraph.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1: Introduction (7 Jan)

- ASSIGNMENT:
 - Please post one recent news article related to climate change to Quercus.
 - Come to class prepared to discuss a) why you chose it; b) what it tells you about the current state of climate policy; c) what questions it raises for you.
- Please read: IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, Synthesis Report, [Summary for Policy Makers](#).
 - Focus on: Sections B.3, B.6, C.1-C.3, C.6, C.7
 - Focus on the figures – we will discuss some of them in class.
- Questions to consider:
 - What are the key things that you already know about climate change?
 - What do you want to learn about climate change?

Week 2: What is the *political* climate problem? (14 Jan)

- Unruh, Gregory C. 2000. Understanding carbon lock-in. *Energy Policy* 28 (12): 817–830. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Green, Jessica. 2025. *Existential Politics: Why the Paris Agreement is Failing and How to Fix it*. Chapter 2. **Quercus**
- Hale, Thomas. 2020. Catalytic Cooperation. *Global Environmental Politics* 20 (4): 73–98. **Quercus**
- Stoddard, Isak et al. 2021. Three Decades of Climate Mitigation: Why Haven't We Bent the Global Emissions Curve? *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 46 (1): 653–689. **UofT-e, LRL**

Week 3: From Rio to Glasgow: A History of Global Climate politics (21 Jan)

- Green, Jessica F. 2022. “Climate Change Governance: Past, Present and (hopefully) Future.” In Michael Barnett, Jon Pevehouse and Kal Raustiala eds. *Global Governance in a World of Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Available [here](#)**
- Victor, David G. 2011. *Global Warming Gridlock: Creating More Effective Strategies for Protecting the Planet*, Chapter 1, pps 1-18 **ONLY**. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Allan, Jen Iris, Charles B Roger, Thomas N Hale, Steven Bernstein, Yves Tiberghien, and Richard Balme. 2021. Making the Paris Agreement: Historical Processes and the Drivers of Institutional Design. *Political Studies*. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Allan, Jen Iris. 2019. Dangerous Incrementalism of the Paris Agreement. *Global Environmental Politics* 19 (1): 4–11. **UofT-e**

Week 4: Domestic Climate Politics: States (28 Jan)

- Meckling, Jonas, Phillip Y. Lipsy, Jared J. Finnegan, and Florence Metz. 2022. Why nations lead or lag in energy transitions. *Science* 378 (6615). American Association for the Advancement of Science: 31–33.
- Lamb, William F., and Jan C. Minx. 2020. The political economy of national climate policy: Architectures of constraint and a typology of countries. *Energy Research & Social Science* 64: 101429.

- Kupzok, Nils, and Jonas Nahm. 2024. The Decarbonization Bargain: How the Decarbonizable Sector Shapes Climate Politics. *Perspectives on Politics*. 1–21.
- Dubash, Navroz K. 2021. Varieties of climate governance: the emergence and functioning of climate institutions. *Environmental Politics* 30 (sup1). Routledge: 1–25.

Week 5: Domestic Climate Politics: Firms (4 Feb)

- Breetz, Hanna, Matto Mildenberger, and Leah Stokes. 2018. The political logics of clean energy transitions. *Business and Politics* 20 (4): 492–522. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Vormedal, Irja, and Jonas Meckling. 2023. How foes become allies: the shifting role of business in climate politics. *Policy Sciences*. Available at <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-023-09517-2>>. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Meckling, Jonas. 2015. Oppose, Support, or Hedge? Distributional Effects, Regulatory Pressure, and Business Strategy in Environmental Politics. *Global Environmental Politics* 15(2): 19–37.
- Meckling, Jonas, and Jonas Nahm. 2018. When do states disrupt industries? Electric cars and the politics of innovation. *Review of International Political Economy* 25 (4). Routledge: 505–529.

Week 6: Carbon Pricing, Compliance Markets (11 Feb)

- Skim [this primer](#) on carbon pricing from the Union of Concerned Scientists
- World Bank. 2023. [State and Trends of Carbon Pricing](#). Read Executive Summary and Introduction and peruse the rest of the report, paying particular attention to the figures and graphs.
- Paterson, Matthew. 2012. Who and what are carbon markets for? Politics and the development of climate policy. *Climate Policy* 12 (1). Taylor & Francis: 82–97. **UofT-e**
- Rabe, Barry G. 2018. *Can We Price Carbon?* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, Chaps 1 and 7. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Green, Jessica F. 2021. [Does carbon pricing reduce emissions? A review of ex-post analyses](#). *Environmental Research Letters*.
- Raymond, Leigh. 2020. Carbon pricing and economic populism: the case of Ontario. *Climate Policy* 20 (9): 1127–1140. **UofT-e, LRL**

Recommended:

- Vormedal, Irja, Lars H. Gulbrandsen, and Jon Birger Skjærseth. 2020. Big Oil and Climate Regulation: Business as Usual or a Changing Business? *Global Environmental Politics* 20 (4): 143–166. **UofT-e, LRL**

Week 7: READING WEEK NO CLASS (18 Feb)

Week 8: Carbon Pricing, Voluntary Markets & UNFCCC (25 Feb)

Primer on Carbon Accounting (read this first!)

Green, Jessica. 2025. *Existential Politics*. Chapter 5, pp. 64-70.

Gillenwater, Michael. 2023. [Furnishing Definitions](#). *Note: this is highly technical. Read up to the Table “Forms of GHG Accounting” to give you a sense of the complexities of this issue.*

Article 6: Basic provisions and issues.

- The Nature Conservancy. 2023. [Article 6 Explainer](#). Pps. 1-11 and 16-22.
- This [one-pager](#) may also be helpful.

Recommended

- <https://www.carbonbrief.org/in-depth-q-and-a-how-article-6-carbon-markets-could-make-or-break-the-paris-agreement/>

The Voluntary Market

- Ecosystem Marketplace. 2024. *State of the Voluntary Carbon Market 2024*. Pp. 1-15. **Quercus**.
- Cullenward, Danny, and David G. Victor. 2020. *Making Climate Policy Work*. UK: Polity. Chapter 5. **UofT-e**
- Kreibich, Nicolas, and Lukas Hermwille. 2021. Caught in between: credibility and feasibility of the voluntary carbon market post-2020. *Climate Policy* 21 (7). Taylor & Francis: 939–957. **UofT-e**
- Green, Jessica F. 2023. The [False Promise of Carbon Offsets](#). *Foreign Affairs*
- Greenfield, Patrick. [The New Scramble for Africa](#). *The Guardian*, 30 Nov 2023
- Have a quick glance at this [CORSA list](#) of eligible offsets

Recommended (Both are very quick / enjoyable!)

- [Untangling Climate Finance podcast](#), Interview with Verra CEO, David Antonioli
- Blake, Heidi. [The Great Cash for Carbon Hustle](#). *New Yorker Magazine*. 16 October 2023.

Week 9: Net Zero (4 Mar)

- Net Zero Tracker, [Net Zero Stocktake 2024](#) Read Executive Summary, and Sections 1, 3 and conclusion. Read the sections on the net zero targets of Brazil, Canada, China, India.
- Rogelj, Joeri, Oliver Geden, Annette Cowie, and Andy Reisinger. 2021. [Net-zero emissions targets are vague: three ways to fix](#). *Nature* 591 (7850): 365–368.
- Fankhauser, Sam, Stephen M. Smith, Myles Allen, Kaya Axelsson, Thomas Hale, Cameron Hepburn, J. Michael Kendall, et al. 2021. The meaning of net zero and how to get it right. *Nature Climate Change*: 1–7. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Buck, Holly Jean, Wim Carton, Jens Friis Lund, and Nils Markusson. 2023. Why residual emissions matter right now. *Nature Climate Change* 13 (4): 351–358. **UofT-e, LRL**

Week 10: WORK WEEK (11 Mar)

- We will meet in groups (that I will assign according to topic) to discuss papers; you may also meet individually with me that day.

Week 11: NGOs and climate governance (18 Mar)

- Allan, Jen. 2021. *The New Climate Activism: NGO Authority and Participation in Climate Change Governance*. Chapter 5. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Hadden, Jennifer. 2015. *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*. Cambridge University Press. Chaps 3-4. **UofT-e, LRL**
- Green, Jessica. 2024. The Climate Establishment and the Paris partnerships. *Climatic Change* 177 (6): 84. **UofT-e, LRL**

Week 12: Green industrial policy (25 Mar)

- Read an overview of the [US Inflation Reduction Act](#)
- Rodrik, Dani. 2014. Green industrial policy. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 30 (3): 469–491. **UofT-e / LRL**
- Nahm, Jonas. 2021. *Collaborative Advantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 1-16. **UofT-e / LRL**
- Lewis, Joanna I. 2024. “[The Climate Risk of Green Industrial Policy](#).” *Current History* (2024) 123 (849): 14–19.
- [Industrial Policy Synergies](#): Reflections from Biden Administration Alumni. Read Chapters by Flegal and Harris (they’re short)
- China and the EV industry
 - US International Trade Commission: [Some data](#)
 - [Will China take over the auto industry?](#) *Council on Foreign Relations* blog
 - [How China became the world’s largest car exporter](#). *New York Times* (Note: the link is a gift link. If for some reason it doesn’t work, I have a .pdf version on Quercus, but it doesn’t include the interactive stuff).
 - Read about [Canada’s 100% tariff on Chinese EVs](#)

Week 13: The Future of Global Climate Policy (1 April).

- Green, Jessica F. 2025. *Existential Politics: Why global climate institutions are failing and how to fix them*. Chaps 6 and 8. **Quercus**
- Mann, Geoff and Joel Wainwright. 2018. *Climate Leviathan*. Chaps. 2 & 8 (only to p. 186; you can stop at the beginning of Section 3).
- **I will briefly review the course, and take any questions.**