

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY 4471F-200 ('Sociology of Climate Change')

TERM:	Fall Term 2021
INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Michael E. Gardiner
OFFICE:	SSC 5424 (661-2111, ex. 85139; e-mail: megardin@uwo.ca)
CLASS TIME & LOCATION	Mondays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm (online)
OFFICE HOURS:	By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as *the* global issue of the 21st-century. Yet Sociology has been slow to address the social characteristics and ramifications of climate change. In helping to redress this oversight, this course seeks to explore a series of interlocking topics, including: the roots of the present crisis in the consolidation of 'fossil capital' and the modern techno-scientific world-view; possible effects of global warming (rising sea-levels, habitat destruction, agricultural collapse, mass migration, war), and how they might be assessed and mitigated; questions of environmental ethics and the emergence of such activist movements as Extinction Rebellion; different ways of conceptualizing human/nature relations (indigenous, feminist, 'alter-modern', etc.); cultural perceptions of climate change, including climate denialism and 'climate trauma'; the 'Anthropocene' vs. 'Capitalocene' debate; and approaches that connect climate breakdown to intensifying social inequalities and the rising danger of neo-fascism(s) (including 'eco-fascism'), such as arguments for transitioning to a post-carbon economy, prospects for a 'Green New Deal', and the relationship between pandemics and climate change.

Prerequisite(s):

Third or fourth year standing in a module in Sociology or Criminology.

Antirequisite(s): N/A

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will:

- * Have a deep and broad understanding of contemporary social thought as it relates to climate change and related environmental issues
- * Understand how social thought informs other branches of sociology
- * Significantly develop their critical and creative thinking & writing skills
- * Develop presentation skills (clearly express ideas and arguments orally & lead discussions)

MAIN TEXTS (ONLINE)

All readings online accessible via OWL/CT

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Class participation (synchronous)	15%
Asynchronous responses to readings	10%
Class presentation	20%
Term paper proposal	10%
Term paper	45%
Total	100%

REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. Synchronous virtual meetings (15% participation)

These being Covid times, seminars will be synchronous sessions via Zoom scheduled during the allotted time above, between 10 am – 12:15 pm weekly (transitional break 11:00 am – 11:15 am). Half the class will participate in the first hour (10-11 am), organized around one oral presentation (more on this below), the other half in the second hour (11:15 am – 12:15 pm). The goal is to try to overcome the limitations of the technology as much as possible and emulate a face-to-face seminar by having multiple smaller groups. **Web cameras must be turned 'on' at all times.**

2. Asynchronous responses to readings (10%)

10% of the final grade will be allotted to written responses to *one* of the class discussion questions pertaining to the readings posted each week (2 marks each, five per term), 200-250 words each post. Such postings cannot involve questions or readings student base their oral presentation on (see below). Students can respond to such postings for discussion purposes, but only in a respectful and scholarly manner.

3. Class presentation (20%)

Each student will be required to present orally on one of the readings assigned in a given week. This will be a critical précis that raises questions for class discussion. Prepare for a 15 minute presentation. The use of (very) short video clips or other materials is acceptable, but has to be approved by the Professor in advance. A week after the presentation, the student will submit a written version of the talk for grading (20% of final grade).

4. Term paper proposal (10%)

Term paper proposals will be due 25th Oct. by 4:00 pm. Two pages point form, single spaced, plus one page of references (minimum five). The Professor will comment on the proposal and provide feedback and additional references relevant for the writing of the final term paper.

5. Term paper (45%)

The final term paper (3000-3500 words, 12-15 pages, 12-scale font Times Roman), worth 45% of the final grade, will be due 7th Dec. by 12 noon. (Comments on major term papers will only be provided if requested in advance of submission, and late assignments will receive no written feedback.)

SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Sept. 13 - Orientation

Week 2 - Sept. 20 - What is Climate Change?

Naomi Klein, 'One Way or Another, Everything Changes', *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014, 1-25 (25 pgs.)

David Wallace-Wells, 'Cascades', *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming*, New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2019, 3-36 (33 pgs.)

Week 3 - Sept. 27 - The Sociological Imagination and Climate Change

Robert J. Antonio and Brett Clark, 'The Climate Change Divide in Social Theory', Riley E. Dunlap and Robert J. Brulle (eds.), *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*, 2015, 333-368 (26 pgs + 9 pgs. refs.).

Kari Marie Norgaard, 'The Sociological Imagination in a Time of Climate Change', *Global and Planetary Change*, 163 (April), 2018, 171-176 (5 pgs. + 2 pgs. refs.)

John Urry, 'Society Matters', *Climate Change and Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011, 1-17; 169-171 (refs.) (17 pgs.).

Week 4 – Oct. 4 - Anthropocene vs. Capitalocene

John Bellamy Foster, Hannah Holleman, and Brett Clark, 'Imperialism in the Anthropocene', *Monthly Review*, 71(3) (July-August), 2019, 70-88 (15 pgs. + 3 pgs. refs.).

Daniel Hartley, 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and the Problem of Culture', Jason W. Moore (ed.), *Anthropocene or Capitalocene: Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*, Oakland: PM Press, 2016, 154-165 (11 pgs.).

Andreas Malm and Alf Hornborg, 'The Geology of Mankind? A Critique of the Anthropocene Narrative', *The Anthropocene Review*, 1(1), 2014, 62-69 (8 pgs.).

Week 5 – Oct. 11 – Thanksgiving Holiday (no classes)

Week 6 – Oct. 18 - Climate trauma/catastrophism/pandemics

E. Ann Kaplan, 'Prologue: Climate Trauma and Hurricane Sandy', *Climate Trauma: Foreseeing the Future in Dystopian Film and Fiction*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, xiii-xix (7 pgs.).

Andreas Malm, 'Corona and Climate', *Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency*, 2020, London and New York: Verso, 1-29 (28 pgs.).

Susan Orbach, 'Climate Sorrow', *This is Not a Drill: An Extinction Rebellion Handbook*, London: Penguin Books, 2019, 65-68 (4 pgs.).

Roy Scranton, 'Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene', Imre Szeman and Dominic Boyer (eds), *Energy Humanities: An Anthology*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2017, 384-388 (4 pgs.).

Week 7 – Oct. 25 - Climate Denialism, Ecocapitalism, Ecofascism

Riley E. Dunlap and Aaron M. McCright, 'Challenging Climate Change: The Denial Countermovement', Riley E. Dunlap and Robert J. Brulle (eds.), *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 300-32 (24 pgs. + 7 pgs. refs.).

Adrian Parr, 'Climate Capitalism', *The Wrath of Capital: Neoliberalism and Climate Change*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012, 8-21 (13 pgs. + 150-153 refs.).

Blair Taylor, 'Alt-Right Ecology: Ecofascism and Far-Right Environmentalism in the United States', Bernhard Forchtner (ed.), *The Far Right and the Environment: Politics, Discourse and Communication*, London and New York: Routledge, 2020, 275-292 (14 pgs. + 5 pgs. refs.).

Week 8 – Nov. 1 – Reading Break (no classes)

Week 9 – Nov. 8 - Media, Infrastructure and Climate Change

James Bridle, 'Climate', *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future*, London: Verso, 2018, 47-76 (29 pgs. + 260-62 refs.).

Sean Cubit, 'Energy', *Finite Media: Environmental Implications of Digital Technologies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, 13-46 (33 pgs.).

Camilo Mora *et al.*, 'Bitcoin Emissions Alone Could Push Global Warming above 2°C', *Nature Climate Change*, 8(11), 2018, 931-933 (3 pgs.).

Week 10 – Nov. 15 - Activism, Climate Justice

Andrew Glikson, 'The Criminal Dimension of Climate Change', *Monthly Review*, 2017, 58-62 (4 pgs.) <https://monthlyreview.org/2019/03/01/the-criminal-dimension-of-climate-change/>

Bradley C. Parks and J. Timmons Roberts, 'Climate Change, Social Theory and Justice', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 27(2-3), 2010, 134–166 (20 pgs. + 12 pgs. refs.)

Selections from *This is Not a Drill: An Extinction Rebellion Handbook*, London: Penguin Books, 2019.

Extinction Rebellion, 'Declaration of Rebellion', 1-2 (2 pgs.).

Farhana Yamin, 'Die, Survive or Thrive?', 21-27 (6 pgs.).

Mohamed Nasheed, 'We are Not Prepared to Die' (31-34 (4 pgs.).

Firefighter, California, 'There's Fear Now' (46-47) (2 pgs.).

Douglas Rushkoff, 'Survival of the Richest' (58-64) (7 pgs.).

Matthew Todd – 'The Climate Emergency and the End of Diversity' (69-72) (4 pgs.).

Roger Hallam, 'The Civil Resistance Model' (99-102) (4 pgs.).

Week 11 – Nov. 22 - Ecomodernism, Geoengineering

Holly Jean Buck, 'Programming', *After Geoengineering: Climate Tragedy, Repair, and Restoration*, London: Verso, 2019, 211-39 (28 pgs.)

Jonathan Symons, 'Ecomodernism and its Critics', *Ecomodernism: Technology, Politics and the Climate Crisis*, Cambridge: Polity, 2019, 51-82 (31 pgs.).

Week 12 – Nov. 29 – Degrowth, Green New Deal, Ecosocialism

Aaron Bastani, 'Fully Automated Green Communism' (<https://novaramedia.com/2017/11/19/fully-automated-green-communism/>, 2017) (6 pgs.).

John Bellamy Foster, 'On Fire This Time', *Monthly Review*, 71(6), 2019, 1-17, (16 pgs. + 1 pg. refs.).

Robert Pollin, 'De-Growth vs. a Green New Deal', *New Left Review*, 112 (July/Aug), 2018, 5-25 (20 pgs.).

Week 13 – Dec. 6 - Alternative Knowledges/Practices/Futures

David Chandler and Julian Reid, 'Introduction: Becoming Indigenous', *Becoming Indigenous: Governing Imaginaries in the Anthropocene*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, 1-22 (20 pgs + 2 pgs. refs.)

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, 'Indigenous Peoples and the Fight for Survival', *This is Not a Drill: An Extinction Rebellion Handbook*, London: Penguin Books, 2019 (54-57) (4 pgs.).

Timothy Morton, 'You Are Being Tuned', *Being Ecological*, London: Pelican Books, 2018, 119-126 (8 pgs.).

Selections from Giacomo D'Alisa, Federico Demaria and Giorgos Kallis (eds), *Degrowth: A Vocabulary For A New Era*, London and New York: Routledge, 2015.

Giacomo D'Alisa, Marco Deriu and Federico Demaria, 'Care' (63-66) (4 pgs.).

Silke Helfrich and David Bollier, 'Commons' (75-78) (4 pgs.).

Marco Deriu, 'Conviviality' (79-82) (4 pgs.).

Sylvia Lorek, 'Dematerialization' (83-85) (3 pgs.).

Filka Sekulova, 'Happiness' (113-116) (4 pgs.).
Serge Latouche, 'Imaginary, decolonization of' (117-120) (4 pgs.).
Samuel Alexander, 'Simplicity' (133-136) (4 pgs.).
Samuel Alexander, 'Basic and maximum income' (146-148) (3 pgs.).
Nadia Johannisova, Ruben Suriñach Padilla and Philippa Parry, 'Co-operatives' (152-154) (3 pgs.).
Sergi Cutillas, David Llistar and Gemma Tarafa, 'Debt audit' (156-158) (3 pgs.).
Claudio Cattaneo, 'Eco-communities' (165-168) (4 pgs.).
Chris Carlsson, 'Nowtopians' (182-184) (3 pgs.).
Giacomo D'Alisa and Giorgos Kallis, 'Post-normal science' (185-188) (4 pgs.).

IMPORTANT POLICIES

A Note on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.