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NRSM 326.01: Climate and Society

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NRSM 326 Climate and Society

Fall 2021

Instructor: Laurie Yung

laurie.yung@umontana.edu

Office hours: By appointment (please email to schedule – I am always happy to meet)

Outdoor Classroom Above North Underground Lecture Hall

This course will meet outdoors unless students are notified otherwise. Please be sure to dress warmly and bring a jacket/hat as we move into the fall. I will send an email if we need to move indoors at some point. The alternate/indoor location for this course is NAC 011.

Course Description

This course examines the relationship between climate and society, with a focus on interactions across scales and different dimensions of society. The course draws on a range of social science disciplines to explain social vulnerability, the politics of climate change, communication and behavior change, adaptation and land management, and systems and transformations. The goal of the course is to advance student understanding of climate change as a complex problem and the ways in which social science insights can contribute to solutions.

Course Objectives

Students in this course will:

1. Understand the core social and political components of climate change, and how to use that knowledge to advance effective communication, mitigation, adaptation, and transformation.
2. Learn how to apply key insights from social science to the problem of climate change.
3. Improve writing, speaking, and analytical skills.

More specifically, students will:

- a) Apply complex systems thinking to climate change and climate solutions.
- b) Examine the concept of vulnerability to understand the uneven impacts of climate change.
- c) Understand the social, political, and psychological processes explain why climate change is politically polarized.
- d) Use findings from communication science and behavioral science to develop climate solutions.
- e) Learn strategies to build resilience in different sectors and communities.
- f) Explore adaptation options and natural climate solutions for land managers.
- g) Analyze proposed energy transitions and societal transformations, across local to global scales.

Flipped Classroom Structure

Some portions of this course are structured as a flipped classroom. Many of the course materials (e.g. readings, recorded lectures, other videos) are provided via Moodle and the expectation is that students will complete this material prior to class meetings. This enables us to utilize most of our classroom time for more active learning, where we can practice applying

concepts, hone analytic skills, and engage in deliberation. It is very important that students understand that course material must be completed prior to class meetings.

Course Readings and Videos

Required Course textbook: Leichenko, R. and K. O'Brien. (2019) *Climate and Society: Transforming the Future*. Polity Press. Cambridge, U.K.

Additional course readings, recorded lectures, and videos will be available on Moodle/UMOnline.

Please be prepared to pay approximately \$10 to rent films.

As noted above, readings and videos must be completed prior to class meetings. To adequately prepare for class, students need to read/watch this material, taking notes to prepare for class. Students should be familiar with the "facts" outlined in the readings and videos (who, what, when, where, how, etc.) and carefully analyze and critique the material presented. As you are reading and watching, make notes related to any discussion question(s) that have been provided, as well as key points, questions you have, interesting issues raised, and connections to other topics being covered in the course.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (8.30-9.3) Climate Change as a Complex Problem

Week 2 (9.7-9.10) The Social Impacts of Climate Change

Week 3 (9.13-9.17) Understanding Vulnerability

Week 4 (9.20-9.24) Public Views of Climate Change

9.20 Paper/Presentation Topics Due

Week 5 (9.27-9.29) The Politics of Climate Change

10.1 – no class/online learning day

Week 6 (10.4-10.8) The Politics of Climate Change II

10.4 1-1:50 pm Exam #1 via Moodle (exam covers content from weeks 1-5)

Week 7 (10.11-10.15) Climate Communications I

Week 8 (10.18-10.22) Mitigation and Behavior Change

10.18 Presentations Due

Week 9 (10.25-10.29) Mitigation and System Change

10.25 Peer Feedback on Presentations Due

Week 10 (11.1-11.5) Energy Transitions

Week 11 (11.8-11.12) Understanding Adaptation

11.8 1-1:50 pm Exam #2 via Moodle (exam covers content from weeks 6-10)

Week 12 (11.15-11.19) Building Resilience

11.15 Draft Paper Due (draft are required)

Week 13 (11.22) Building Resilience, cont. – no class/online learning day

11.26 Feedback provided on Paper Drafts

Week 14 (11.29-12.3) Climate, Food, and Agriculture

Week 15 (12.6-12.10) Transitions and Transformations

12.10 Revised Papers Due

12.15 1:10-3:10 pm Exam #3 (exam covers content from weeks 11-15)

Evaluation

Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade	Due Date
Attendance/participation	10%	Ongoing
Reflections/responses	18%	Ongoing
Paper Topic Due	2%	9/20
Exam #1	10%	10/4
Presentation	15%	10/18
Draft Paper Due	Not graded but lose points if fail to submit	11/15
Exam #2	10%	11/8
Final Paper Due	25%	12/10
Exam #3	10%	12/15

All assignments should be submitted via Moodle.

Presentation and Paper

Students are required to create a 3-minute video presentation and write a 5-page paper on a topic of their choice related to climate and society. Students will submit paper topics for review

and approval by 9/20. Presentations are due on 10/18. Draft papers are due on 11/15 (Draft papers will not be graded but will receive feedback and suggestions for improvements. Students will have 5% of their total course grade deducted if they do not turn in a draft paper by the deadline.). Final papers are due 12/10. A detailed description of these assignments will be posted on Moodle.

Exams

There will be three exams (none are cumulative). Instructors will make every effort possible to post study guide questions each week to help students prepare for the exam. Exam questions will be almost entirely pulled from the large bank of study guide questions. Exams will be taken remotely via Moodle on 10/4 (1-1:50), 11/8 (1-1:50), and 12/15 (1:10-3:10). Students must take the exams at those dates and times (except in cases of a family or medical emergency, or other extenuating circumstances). Students can take the exams at a location of their choosing (e.g. apartment, dorm room, computer lab).

Reflections and Responses

Throughout the course, students will be required to respond to some of the readings, lectures, and videos by providing short reflections in Moodle. When reflections are required, there will be a question following a specific reading, lecture, or video and a target length will be provided (e.g. 3-5 sentences). Students will also be asked to provide feedback on three other student video presentations. Please note that these reflections must be completed by the due date (or points will be deducted).

Participation and Attendance

PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY! Participation grades will be based on attendance, punctuality, coming to class prepared, and active engagement during discussion groups. Attendance will be taken at every class. Students with unexcused absences will have the opportunity to make up the material through substantial, time-consuming additional assignments. More than three unexcused absences with no make-up assignments completed will result in a zero in participation (and thus a 10% reduction in the student's final grade). More than six unexcused absences will automatically result in an F in the course, with no options to do make-up assignments.

HOWEVER, in cases where students have family or medical emergencies, or other legitimate reasons for missing class, I am always willing to make alternative arrangements and accommodations, on a case-by-case basis. Please communicate with me if something is interfering with your attendance so we can troubleshoot! I am very happy to work with students who are experiencing difficult circumstances.

COVID! If you need to miss class due to any of the following, I will work with you to make up the content in a timely manner so you can continue to make progress in the course: (1) you test positive for COVID and need to isolate, (2) you are a close contact and need to quarantine, (3) you have COVID symptoms and you are being responsible and staying home until you get your test results, or (4) your kids test positive or need to quarantine, and you need to stay home to take care of them. I will work with students in any of these situations on appropriate make-up assignments.

Late Assignments

Points will be deducted for late reflections, presentations, and papers (the later you turn them in, the more points you will lose), but please note that better late than never definitely applies (i.e. it's better to get some credit for an assignment rather than none at all). If you have a family or medical emergency, or another legitimate reason to submit assignments late, please talk with me as soon as possible. Please reach out if you are finding it difficult to keep up! I will take your circumstances into account and we can make alternative arrangements, but please know that I may ask for documentation.

Grading Scale

Final course grades will be determined based on the following scale:

93-100 A
90-92 A-
88-89 B+
83-87 B
80-82 B-
78-79 C+
73-77 C
70-72 C-
68-69 D+
63-67 D
60-62 D-
59- F

COVID Policies and Information

As per UM policy, masks are required in indoor classrooms (see: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus/mask-policy.php>). Thus, when we transition to our indoor classroom, everyone will be required to wear a mask. Masks must be worn properly, over the mouth and the nose. Buffs, bandanas, masks with vents, and other face coverings that do not meet CDC standards will not be allowed. Eating and drinking will not be allowed in the indoor classroom. If you need to get a drink of water, you are welcome to briefly exit the classroom.

Masks are not required in our outdoor classroom. However, we will social distance as much as possible to limit transmission of COVID.

In both our outdoor and indoor classrooms, we will be using assigned seats and taking attendance to enable contact tracing.

If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please do not come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330. If you test positive for COVID or you are a close contact, please be sure to follow all isolation and quarantine orders from the Missoula City-County Health Department. In other words, do not attend class during your isolation or quarantine period.

UM recommends students get the COVID-19 vaccine. Please direct your questions or concerns about vaccines to Curry Health Center. **Note that if you are a close contact of a positive COVID case, but you are fully vaccinated and do not have COVID symptoms, then you do not have to quarantine and can continue to attend class (as per current CDC guidelines).** Please refer to the Missoula City-County Health Department for the latest guidelines regarding testing, contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine: <https://www.missoulainfo.com/>. Please note that Missoula County requires proof of vaccination to determine if close contacts do not need to quarantine.

As you know, the situation with COVID-19 is evolving. UM policies and Missoula City-County Health Department guidelines may change during the fall semester. I will update you on changes to the best of my ability, but please stay informed as much as possible.

Other Course Policies

Equal Access to Instruction and Office of Disability Equity

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE). If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact the ODE at: (406) 243-2243, ode@umontana.edu, or visit www.umt.edu/disability for more information. Retroactive accommodation requests will not be honored, so please, do not delay. As your instructor, I will work with you and the ODE to implement an effective accommodation, and you are welcome to contact me privately if you wish.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#). Please be aware that plagiarism is a violation of the student conduct code and will not be tolerated in this course. If a student plagiarizes, their course grade will be impacted and the UM Dean of Students will be notified. If you aren't entirely certain what constitutes plagiarism is, please see these excellent resources:

[Plagiarism Web Link](#)

[Writing Center Link](#)

[Owl English Purdue Link](#)

[Owl English Purdue Resource Link](#)

Grading Option

Please note that this class is offered for traditional letter grade only; it is not offered under the credit/no credit option.

Important Dates Restricting Opportunities to Drop a Course Fall 2021

Please see this webpage for information on drop deadlines and the process for dropping a course: <https://www.umt.edu/registrar/students/drop-add/default.php>