

**CLIMATE CHANGE  
AND THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT**  
INTD 397 (002)  
Fall 2023 McGill University

**Class Schedule:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:05AM–11:25AM

**Classroom:** ENGMD 276

**Instructor:** Blair Peruniak, Dr. ([blair.peruniak@mcgill.ca](mailto:blair.peruniak@mcgill.ca))

**Office/Hours:** McTavish 3610, RM TBA/TBA

### **Course Description**

Climate change is the defining issue of the Twenty-First Century and the greatest challenge to current and future development practices. What kinds of impacts can we expect this century from climate change? What are the prospects for sustainable development under newly emerging conditions of climate disruption, technological innovation, and socio-economic uncertainty? What do previous periods of social and environmental instability tell us about what lies ahead? In this course, students will (i) identify the technical, political, and biophysical challenges posed by various climate change scenarios as well as urgent development issues relating to global emissions, extreme weather, sea level rise, biodiversity loss, transportation, energy infrastructure, and geoengineering, among others; (ii) critically reflect on the roles and obligations of governments and the public in adaptation and mitigation efforts in rural, urban, and remote environments in developed and developing countries; and, (iii) design and evaluate new proposals for counteracting and adapting to rapid rates of anthropogenic environmental change within parameters set by a wide range of social and environmental justice criteria. Throughout the semester students will also grapple with the moral and psychological challenges inherent to development planning during times of deep uncertainty and social upheaval.

**Course Objectives.** By the end of this course students should be able to:

- Engage in contemporary debates about the significance of climate change to international development.
- Think critically about the role of scientific evidence, risk assessment, and complex Earth-systems processes as a basis of future development policy.
- Explain the challenges in mitigating and adapting to rapid, large-scale anthropogenic environmental change.
- Design, evaluate, and defend original intervention proposals that aim to identify and meet the development challenges of the Twenty-first century and beyond from an interdisciplinary perspective through written and oral arguments.

## Teaching Methods

- Lectures
- Theoretical and applied readings
- Audio-visual materials
- Student-led discussions
- Independent and collaborative research

## Required Readings

All required and supplementary readings will be available on myCourses.

## Suggested Companion Reading:

- Joseph Romm. 2022. *Climate Change: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Third Edition. OUP.
- Dale Jamieson. 2014. *Reason in a Dark Time: Why the Struggle Against Climate Change Failed—And What it Means for Our Future*. OUP.
- Jonathan Lear. 2008. *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*. HUP.

## Important Dates

Aug 30	Course Introduction
Sep 04	No Class, Labour day
Sep 14	Confirmation of Assigned Groups/Schedule
Oct 20	Development Proposals Due, 5PM
Oct 30	Midterm Posted, 5PM
Nov 06	Midterm Due, 5PM
Dec 04	No Lecture, Final Research Papers Due, 5PM

## Assignments

**NB.:** All Assignments are to be submitted on myCourses.

A	Participation	10%
B	Student-led Seminars	25%
C	Research Proposal	15%
D	Mid-term (take home)	20%
E	Final Paper	30%

## **Instructions and Grading Criteria**

### **A. Participation (10%)**

Certain classes will be devoted to discussions and student-led seminars during which you will be expected to participate and engage with your peers. You will be awarded full grades for attendance and participation during student-led seminars/discussions. Attendance will be recorded on these days.

### **B. Student-Led Seminars (25%)**

Students in groups of 3 or 4 will be responsible for leading a 30min (max) supplementary in-class activity/discussion based on themes or issues related to required readings or relevant course themes for your facilitation week. You may draw from a wide range of supplementary materials and approaches to stimulate discussion or otherwise facilitate student engagement and class participation including, but not limited to:

- recent news or social media coverage of climate change or related development issues
- brief segments from films, podcasts, advertising
- PowerPoint slides
- organized debates/small group discussions/problem solving activities

Scheduling: Student-led discussions will generally take place on Wednesdays, unless otherwise noted, based on enrollment and scheduling parameters. Instructions on how to form groups will be discussed in class and posted on myCourses.

#### Group-based Grading Criteria:

*15 Points: Facilitation of in-class activity and discussion*

\*You are strongly encouraged to discuss any logistical details or concerns you may have about your choice of theme or material used to facilitate your in-class seminar with your instructor.

*10 Points: Seminar notes (2-3 pages)*

- 1 submission per group.
- Briefly outline your activity/discussion strategy, any supplementary sources or materials relevant to the course themes, and your goals – i.e., what you want other students to reflect on or get out of your activity/discussion.

Notes are due by 10AM on the morning of your Group Facilitated Activity/Discussion.

### **C. Development Intervention Proposal (15%):**

A detailed proposal explaining the rationale for a climate adaptation/mitigation strategy—a development intervention—that anticipates the effects of climate change on/at a particular location during a set time period of your choosing between 2024 and 2100. The time period is therefore expressed as any specific set of years between 2024 and 2100 (e.g., 2024-2026, 2035-

2038, 2090-2095, etc.). Students must reference scientific data that supports the plausibility of their hypothetical scenario. Students must also anticipate and discuss one salient moral or political obstacle that the intervention is likely to face. In sum, the paper will briefly outline the hypothetical scenario/anticipated effects of climate change that your strategy anticipates, the scientific evidence in support of these projections, the basic strategy-intervention you propose, the intervention timeline and, one moral or political challenge your project would face. Do not include funding or monetary challenges.

Approaches to this project will be formally outlined in class.

\*Max. 500 wrds. +/-10% words not including footnotes or bibliography.

\*A tentative bibliography of 3-5 sources.

\*Due Oct. 20, 5pm on myCourses.

Grading Criteria:

*7.5 Points Effective communication*

- Procedural statement outlining the hypothetical scenario and basic approach
- Grammar/spelling/style/citations/bibliography/page numbers/etc.
- Quality of research, use of relevant sources, and empirical data.

*7.5 Points Analysis and Research*

- Quality/plausibility of anticipated climate issue/development rationale
- Significance of your intervention strategy including the central goal and timeline.
- Identification of ONE significant (non-monetary) obstacle/limitation of your approach.

**Due** Oct 20, by 5PM, via myCourses.

#### **D. Mid Term (take home) /20%**

An argumentative essay (Maximum 1000 words +/- 10%, excluding bibliography) in response to ONE essay question/topic. Three Essay options will be offered based on the required readings and lectures inclusive of Week 9. Question options will be posted on myCourses on Oct 30 at 5PM. Details on how to structure the mid-term essay will be formally outlined in class.

**Due** November 06, by 5PM, via myCourses.

Grading Criteria:

*10 points: Effective communication*

- Clear and logical organization of ideas (structure of paper, explicitly indicated in a concise introduction)
- Pertinent examples/clear citation and referencing
- Style, grammar and spelling

10 points: *Analysis and argument*

- Understanding and application of relevant concepts, theories and literature
- Clear articulation of student's own argument/position
- Effective support/evidence provided for the student's argument
- Quality and convincingness of argumentation

### **E. Final Development Intervention Paper (30%):**

A fully revised and expanded version of your Intervention Proposal based on feedback and additional research.

\*3000 words +/-10%, excluding footnotes and bibliography.

\*Due Dec 04, 5pm, in worddoc. on myCourses.

#### Grading Criteria:

10 Points: *Structure, Clarity, and Style*

- Concise introduction that briefly and immediately summarizes the overall project followed by a clear procedural statement outlining the paper's structure.
- Structure outlined in the procedural statement is the structure actually followed in the paper.
- Development and communication of a clear and suitably focused human rights issue/problem identifying a specific migrant group/individual.
- Grammar/spelling/references/bibliography/page numbers/etc.

10 Points: *Analysis and Research*

- Incorporation of feedback on your proposal
- Understanding, application, and critical analysis of relevant empirical or social science literature on your climate change topic
- Rationale for your approach supported by evidence and logical argumentation
- Quality, depth, and integration of sources/research.

10 Points: *Significance of Approach*

- Details regarding the main elements of the strategy or approach including the goal and timeline.
- Quality of policy/recommendations and insightfulness
- Assessment of ONE main (non-monetary) obstacle/limitation of your approach.

## COURSE READING SCHEDULE

*\*\*Course materials and scheduling are subject to change\*\**

### **Week 1 – August 30: Course Introduction**

### **Week 2 – September 06: *The Limits of Development***

- Steffen, et al. (2018) The “Hothouse Earth” Paper *aka*: Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 1–8.
- Rockström, et al. (2023) Safe and Just Earth System Boundaries. *Nature* 619: 102–111.

### **Week 3 – September 11&13: *The Future Past***

- Diamond (1995/2005) Environmental Collapse of Easter Island. In: *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, 1–7.
- Oreskes & Conway (2013) The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future. *Daedalus* 142(1): 40–58.

### **Week 4 – September 18&20: *Mitigation & ‘Predatory Delay’***

- Ehrhardt-Martinez, et al. (2015) Mitigating Climate Change. In: *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*, 199–234.
- Buck, et al. (2014) Gender and Geoengineering. *Hypatia* 29(3): 651–669.
- Broome (2014) A Philosopher at the IPCC. *The Philosopher’s Magazine*, 1–6.

### **Week 5 – September 25&27: *Emotional Impacts***

- McQueen (2021) The Wages of Fear? Toward Fearing Well About Climate Change. In: *Philosophy and Climate Change*, 152–177.
- Curato. (2019) Responding to the Unspeakable. *Democracy in a Time of Misery*, 14–32.

### **Week 6 – October 02&04: *Adaptation & Unsustainable Development***

- Carmin, et al. (2015) Adaptation to Climate Change. In: *Climate Change and Society*, 164–198.
- Kotzé & Adelman (2023) Environmental Law and the Unsustainability of Sustainable Development: A Tale of Disenchantment and of Hope. *Law and Critique* 34: 227–248.
- Scott (2022) Great Power Responsibility for Climate Security in the United Nations Security Council. In: *Great Powers, Climate Change, and Global Environmental Responsibilities*, 189–207.

### **Week 7 – Reading Break, No Classes**

### **Week 8 – October 16&18: *Green Growth & De-Growth***

- Hickel & Kallis (2019) Is Green Growth Possible? *New Political Economy*, 1–18.
- Dengler & Lang (2022) Commoning Care: Feminist Degrowth Visions for a Socio-Ecological Transformation. *Feminist Economics* 28(1): 1–28.

**Week 9 – October 23&25: Radical Interventions**

- Rudel (2019) Shocks, States, and Societal Corporatism. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences* 9(4): 429–436.
- Skrbina & Kordie (2021) Creative Reconstruction of the Technological Society. In: *Sustainability Beyond Technology*, 254–276.
- Morrison, et al. (2022) Radical Interventions for Climate-Impacted Systems. *Nature Climate Change*. 12: 1100–1106.

**Week 10 – October 30&November 01: Dispossession & Dissent**

- Middeldorp & LeBillon (2019) Deadly Environmental Governance: Authoritarianism, Eco-populism, and the Repression of Environmental and Land Defenders. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109(2): 324–337.
- Brown (2023) Civil Disobedience, Sabotage, and Violence in US Environmental Activism. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Environmental Politics*, 356–374.
- Arkush & Braman (2023/24) Climate Homicide: Prosecuting Big Oil for Climate Deaths. *Harvard Environmental Law Review* 48(1): Section 1: 1-10 (Section II recommended).

**Week 11 – November 06&08: Climate Change & Racism**

- Tuana (2023) Racial Climates. *Racial Climates, Ecological Indifference*, 34–56.
- Kartha (2011) Discourses of the Global South. *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, 504–519.
- Henry & Pam. (2018) Indigenous Knowledge in the Time of Climate Change. *Indigenous Knowledge for Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation*, 58–74.

**Week 12 – November 13&15: Biodiversity Loss & the Rights of Nature**

- Bradshaw, et al. (2021) Underestimating the Challenges of Avoiding a Ghastly Future. *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 1: 1-10.
- Kauffman. (2021) Rights of Nature: Institutions, Law, and Policy for Sustainable Development. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Environmental Politics*, 499–517.

**Week 13 – November 20&22: Climate Change & Classism**

- Hardin (1974) Lifeboat Ethics. *Psychology Today*, 1–8.
- Arsel (2023) Climate Change and Class Conflict: Sink or Swim Together? *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. 50(1): 67–95.

**Week 14 – November 27&29**

- Final Research Paper Workshops

**Week 15 – December 05**

- Research Papers Due by 5PM.

## **GENERAL POLICIES**

**Formatting:** All assignments/papers should be submitted to myCourses in word doc. format, 12-point font, double-spaced text with standard margins. All papers should include the student's name and bibliography. Title pages are optional. Please use single spacing for block quotations, footnotes, and bibliographies. References and citations must follow a standard academic format. Students should use in-text citations and include specific page numbers when referencing claims or quoting from academic sources – for example, (Jones 2005: 135). For more details, see the instructions for specific assignments above.

**Late Penalties:** Written work is due at the times indicated in the instructions for specific assignments above. Late papers will be subject to a 5% penalty per day, starting with the due date/time (except in special cases, with the instructor's prior agreement).

\*Please note that I reserve the right to modify aspects of the course timeline or readings if necessary.

### **Academic Integrity:**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the “Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information). Note that to support academic integrity, your assignments may be submitted to text-matching or other appropriate software (e.g., formula-, equation-, and graph-matching).

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy:**

The use of generative AI tools and apps, including ChatGPT or any other AI writing and coding assistants, is prohibited in all course assignments unless otherwise stated by the course instructor. This policy is meant to support the instructor's pedagogical goals, to promote your intellectual self-development, and to help you achieve course learning objectives, including in collaborative endeavors.

### **Language of Submission:**

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

### **Extraordinary Circumstances Statement:**

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.



**Content warning:** Please be aware that some of the course content may be disturbing for some students. It has been included in the course because it directly relates to the learning outcomes. Please contact the instructor if you have specific concerns about this.

**Assessment Policy Statement:**

The [University Student Assessment Policy](#) exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations.

**Copyright:**

All slides, lecture notes, instructor-generated content, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning and research. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials. Recording lectures in whole or part is not permitted.

**Inclusive learning Environment:**

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.

**Mental Health:**

All health and wellness services at McGill University have been integrated into our new Student Wellness Hub. Please visit the [Virtual Hub](#) for all health and wellness information, at <https://mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/>.