

McGill University is located on land that has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honours, recognizes, and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today. You can learn more about the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples here: <https://native-land.ca/>.

FSCI 198

Climate Crisis and Climate Actions

Fall 2023

Welcome! Our course will meet twice a week: 1) for a 3-hour lecture with students, instructors, teaching assistants, and guests and 2) for a 1-hour smaller group workshop led by your teaching assistants.

Lectures: Mondays from September 11th to December 4th from 2:35 p.m. until 5:25 p.m. in [ENGTR 0100](#).

We're the people who will be leading the lectures:

Diane Dechief (pronounced deCHEF) (she/her) diane.dechief@mcgill.ca

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Natalya Gomez (she/her) natalya.gomez@mcgill.ca

Jennifer Sunday (she/her) jennifer.freeman@mcgill.ca

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Workshops: Be sure to enrol in a workshop section. Workshops are scheduled for 50 minutes once a week. A maximum of fifteen students can enrol in each section.

Course Description and Objectives: Welcome to FSCI 198! We're excited to see you here.

Many of us feel deeply concerned about climate change and the impact it has had and will continue to have on our own lives and the lives of people around the world. In FSCI 198, we will hear and learn from people with a wide range of knowledge and experiences of the climate crisis. This includes multiple ways of knowing—from data-rich science to quantitative climate and socio-economic models to Indigenous knowledge.

Throughout the course, we will examine the fundamentals of the climate change problem and develop skills to critically assess climate information published in academic journals and public media. We will focus on current climate actions and potential solutions, and we will gain skills to engage in personal and collective climate action. These skills include critical reading and thinking, cross-disciplinary dialogue, reflection, teamwork, and collaboration with peers.

Our goal is that by the end of the term, you will be able to:

- Access and interpret research and evidence from varied disciplinary and cultural perspectives.
- Explain the mechanisms of processes that contribute to climate change and the scope of their impact on the earth system.
- Examine the possibilities and impacts of adaptation and mitigation strategies, involving both technological and socio-political approaches.
- Recognize the impacts and inequities faced by various populations, ecosystems, and geographies due to the climate crisis.
- Analyze how climate change is communicated and framed in academic texts and popular media.
- Reflect on your past experiences, emotions, and future trajectories in relation to climate change.
- Create an engaged response to climate change by collaborating with peers across disciplines to imagine a collective future that is sustainable.

Major assignments include 1) reflect on a short documentary focused on an aspect of the climate crisis 2) summarize and share information from an academic research article related to the documentary in a visual format (infographic, detailed timeline, etc.), 3) interview someone who has experienced climate change differently than you or who is a Knowledge Keeper, researcher, artist, or industry or policy specialist, 4) create a plan for action in a team, and present your plan as a team.

Course texts: Weekly materials including podcasts, videos, news and magazine articles, book chapters, and academic journal articles will be posted on myCourses. These materials are varied and will serve as theory, instruction, and examples.

Assignment	Value	Due Date	Return Date
Engagement including reflective journaling	20%	Ongoing	Feedback throughout
Reflection on a climate-focussed documentary (you'll receive a list of options)	8%	Week of September 18th	1 week later
Brief summary of a research article related to the documentary + visual	12%	Week of October 16th	1 week later
Spotlight interview (team)	20%	Week of October 30th	1 week later
Proposal for action plan	5%	Week of November 13	a few days later
Team action plan	20%	Week of December 4th	2 weeks later
Presentation	15%	Week of November 27th	1 week later

Engagement activities, including journaling, 20%

Each week, there will be one required engagement activity. Generally, following each lecture, we will each answer prompts and then discuss our responses during the workshops. Some weeks there may be an output from a group activity (e.g., a summary or feedback) or a small individual activity to help you reflect, prepare, or scaffold your learning for the larger assignments. Guidelines will be provided in class and shared on myCourses. These activities will be marked for completion and altogether will comprise 20% of your mark.

Analysis and reflection on a documentary (~200-400 words) 8%

Why? In order to better understand other people's experiences of climate change, we'll each watch a short (~30 minute) documentary and write down your reflections on it. We'll also ask you to respond to questions about the perspectives included in the film, and the documentary maker's goals.

How? Select a documentary from a list provided to you, then watch it and complete the assignment form. In your workshop, you'll have a chance to discuss what you watched.

Summary of a journal article and creation of a visual (~250 words and a visual) 12%

Why? The standard way that research findings are shared is through academic journal articles that include key findings, their significance, and the methods used in the research. We'd like for you to look closely at journal article related to the documentary that you watched in the previous assignment and share key findings from the article with your peers and TAs. Next, we'd like for you to create a visual (infographic, process, or detailed timeline) that could accompany the documentary or journal article.

How? Select an article provided to you or choose another one. Follow guidelines provided in workshops in order to summarize the paper and prepare a visual. Share draft visuals with your peers to receive feedback. Be

sure that they are for a general audience and include no jargon. Submit your article summary and your edited visual to be marked and to share with you peers in the course.

Spotlight Interview 20% (750 words-1000 max words)

Why? It's important for us to hear from people who are affected by the climate crisis or who hold knowledge or conduct research related to it.

How? Work in small groups (~pairs) to interview someone with specialized climate knowledge (from a provided list), then write key insights from your interview and, after the person you interview has reviewed the interview, share it with the rest of the class so we can all learn from the person you interviewed.

Plan for Action (Team Project) Total 35% (proposal 5%, written plan 20%, presentation 15%)

Why? A key goal of this course is for each of us to consider our actions in relation to the climate crisis. This assignment encourages groups of students (up to 4) to work together to create a plan for a climate action (e.g. an application to McGill's Sustainability Project Fund).

How? After hearing about existing and potential actions, we will form teams and collaborate to create a plan. Your plan for action includes three parts: an initial proposal to help your team choose an action, a longer written plan, and a group presentation of the plan to your peers.

Requirements, Policies, and Procedures:

- **Completing engagement activities is a must for success in this course—these are low stakes activities that are marked for completion. Details are in the Engagement folder on myCourses.**
- **Assignment Submission:** All assignments must be submitted, on their due date, to the correct folder on myCourses. Accordingly, assignments submitted via e-mail or in any other medium will not be accepted unless we have given prior written permission.
- **Format:** Unless otherwise stated, all assignments should be submitted double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font, left-aligned, with page numbers in the bottom right corner of every page.
- **Consequences of Late Submission:** Late work (i.e., work not submitted by the deadline in the appropriate format) will be penalized by 2% per day, including weekends. If you know that it will be difficult to meet one of the deadlines that is set out in the syllabus, please write to both of your instructors in advance. Exceptions that have already been determined to be acceptable include documented medical, family, and personal emergencies and observance of holy days. Students planning to observe holy days should notify the instructor by email **at the beginning of the course**. Holy days that are already acknowledged at McGill are listed here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/importantdates/holy-days-0>.
- **This course is administered via myCourses.** Students are advised *to check myCourses on a daily basis*. Failure to do so may result in your missing important information. **Neither absence from class nor failure to check myCourses is an acceptable excuse for being unaware of important course-related information.**
- **Recording class activities:** Students may not record any class proceedings or collect any electronic data (including photos and videos) from class activities without the express consent of the instructors.
- **Instructor generated course materials** (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, test questions, recorded lectures, etc.) are **protected by law** and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without the explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Course Schedule—updates will be posted as a myCourses Announcement

Week	Lecture Date	Lecture plan	Workshop plan	Assignments due
1	LABOUR DAY	No lecture	Workshops begin Sept. 5, 6, 7 -River of Experience	
2	Sept. 11 Add/drop: Sept 12	FSCI 198 Introductions River of experience Macy's framework for transformation (Julia Freeman) How we talk about climate change (Diane Dechief) Indigenous Knowledge and journaling (Juliann Wray)	-Introduction to journaling -Documentary assignment discussion	River of Experience
3	Sept. 18	Climate anxiety and care (Josh Medicoff and Amy Janzwood) Carbon Cycle (Jenn Sunday) Reporting on carbon (Lisa Johnson) Searching library resources (Andrea Miller-Nesbitt)	Journal articles: search and summary	Assignment 1 Documentary Reflection
4	Sept. 25	Roots of the climate crisis (Julia Freeman) Framing climate communication (Diane Dechief)	Audience needs Constructive peer feedback	
5	Oct. 2	Response of the Earth system to climate change (Natalya Gomez) Scales and organization of climate action Assignment intro: Spotlight Interviews (Jenn Sunday)	Spotlight interviews: invitation email, spotlight/profile, how to conduct an interview	
Reading break Oct. 6-11		No lecture	Only Thursday workshops	
6	Oct. 16	Experience at COPs (Karakwinetha (Sage) Goodleaf-Labelle) Climate education and action (Rebeca Esquivel) Introduce action plan assignment (Natalya Gomez) Sustainability Project Fund (Shona Watt)	Interviewing-how to	Assignment 2 Summary and Visual
7	Oct. 23	How to respond to climate change (Darin Barney) Sea level change and coastal resilience (Natalya Gomez)	Peer feedback on spotlight interviews	
8	Oct. 30	Why eco-poetry? (Eli McLaren) Canadian policy and climate commitments (Senator Rosa Galvez)	Begin Action Plan assignments (proposal, plan and presentation)	Assignment 3 Spotlight Interview

			Rivers of Experience to reflect on Action Plan	
9	Nov. 6	Policy approaches and solutions to climate change (Chris Ragan)	Working on interviews	
10	Nov. 13	Canadian pipeline resistance (Amy Janzwood) Precarity and possible futures (Julia Freeman)	Preparation for presenting (work on plans or icebreaker games)	Assignment 4 Action plan proposals
11	Nov. 20	Climate-inspired recital (Tong Wang and Maitreyi Muralidharan) Differences between coral "resistance" and "resilience" to climate change (Victoria Glynn)	Presentation guidelines Continue working on presentations and written action plans	
12	Nov. 27	Spotlight interviews panels Solar and community solar projects (Kyle Kasawski)	Practice presentations (Thursday)	
13	THURSDAY Nov. 30th MAKE-UP DAY	Indigenous knowledge and climate change (Ka'nahsohon (Kevin) Deer) Responses to climate change in the biosphere (Jenn Sunday)	Practice presentations No Thursday workshop	
14	Dec. 4	Action plan team presentations	NO WORKSHOPS	Due: Written Action plan

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Range
A	85-100
A-	80-84
B+	75-79
B	70-74
B-	65-69
C+	60-64
C	55-59
D	50-54

University Policies, Procedures, and Resources

1. McGill Resources for Academic Success

(a) Inclusive Learning Environment

McGill is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment. If you experience barriers

to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with your instructor. If you have a special learning need or disability, you are encouraged to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities: <https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>.

(b) Health and Wellness

Student wellbeing is a priority for the University. To help students find the support they need as quickly as possible, all of McGill's health and wellness resources have been integrated into a single [Student Wellness Hub](#), a one-stop shop for everything related to physical and mental health. If you need access to services or would like more information, you are strongly encouraged to visit the Virtual Hub: <https://www.mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/>.

(c) McGill Writing Centre Tutorial Service

Writing well is key to both academic and professional success. The McGill Writing Centre (MWC) offers credit courses in academic and professional writing, and a tutorial service open to all McGill students: <https://www.mcgill.ca/mwc/tutorial-service>. The tutorial service offers one-to-one sessions with seasoned instructors and experienced tutors who will work with you at any stage of the writing process.

During the campus closure period, there will be no tutors on site and no administrative staff at the MWC to answer inquiries. Tutoring sessions will be conducted online via the Microsoft Teams platform. This application is available for free to all students through Office 365: <https://www.mcgill.ca/it/office365-software>. For information about how to book an appointment through Microsoft Teams, please go to <https://www.mcgill.ca/mwc/tutorial-service>.

(d) McGill Library

Discover the McGill Library's rich array of resources. Watch a short welcome video in English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Persian, Spanish, or Urdu: <https://www.mcgill.ca/library/orientation>.

2. Academic Conduct

(a) 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*: <https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest>.

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le *Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires*: <https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest>).

Students are responsible for knowing McGill's rules and regulations concerning academic honesty, which can be found on the Students Rights and Responsibilities website: <https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/>. Violations of academic integrity undermine not only the value of honest students' work, but also the academic integrity of the University and the value of a McGill credential. The Student Rights and Responsibilities website provides resources that can help students avoid dishonest work, and an explanation of the disciplinary measures that go with it.

As of Fall 2019, all newly admitted students must complete the Academic Integrity Tutorial (AIT) in Minerva during their first semester at McGill. Failure to complete the tutorial will place a hold in Minerva and restrict the student from registering for courses in the following semester. The Tutorial can be accessed as follows:

Minerva → Student Menu → Academic Integrity Tutorial.

(b) Assessment

The University Student Assessment Policy exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads:

https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/2016-04_student_assessment_policy.pdf

(c) 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 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.

(d) Inclusive and Professional Communication

If you would like to share information about your preferred pronouns or if you would like to be referred to by a different name than the name indicated in your student records, please let your TA and/or an instructor know by email or in a conversation after class or a workshop. We are also happy to meet with you privately.

This course is designed to help you learn to communicate effectively both during your time at McGill and in your future workplaces. In keeping with McGill's policies on student rights and responsibilities, it is expected that during class discussions and small group interactions you will communicate constructively and respectfully. Sexist, racist, homophobic, ageist, and ableist expressions will not be tolerated in the classroom or during group meetings held outside of class.

(e) Course Evaluations

End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that we work towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available. A minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to future students so please fill out course evaluations at the end of term. We will remind you. 😊

3. Basic needs

If you have difficulty affording food or if you lack a safe and stable place to live and believe that these circumstances may affect your performance in this course, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students, who can connect you with support services. If you feel comfortable doing so, please let one of us know as well so we can discuss how we can best support your learning.

4. Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Violence

McGill University is committed to creating and sustaining a safe environment through proactive, visible, accessible, and effective approaches that seek to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual violence. *McGill's Policy against Sexual Violence* underlines this commitment and ensures that procedures are in place to address complaints. To learn more, visit the Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support, and Education website: <https://www.mcgill.ca/osvrse/>.

Sexual Violence Training: "It Takes All of Us"

In accordance with a new law, Bill 151, Policy to Prevent and Fight Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions, McGill has implemented training measures for all community members. The online training is mandatory for everyone at McGill—all students, faculty, and administrative and support staff.

As of fall 2019, all newly admitted students must complete the sexual violence training course, called “It Takes All of Us,” in *myCourses* during their first semester at McGill. Failure to complete the training will place a hold in Minerva and restrict the student from registering for courses in the following semester. The training can be accessed through *myCourses* and will appear as a separate course in your profile.

5. Policy on Harassment and Discrimination

McGill University is committed to promoting an equitable environment where the fundamental dignity of all of its members is respected. The objectives of McGill’s *Policy on Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited by Law* are to promote education and awareness about equity issues and to ensure that procedures are in place to address complaints: <https://www.mcgill.ca/how-to-report/>.

6. Inclusivity and safe spaces

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

We are committed to nurturing a space where students, teaching assistants, lecturers, and professors can all engage in the exchange of ideas and dialogue, without fear of being made to feel unwelcome or unsafe on account of biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race/ethnicity, religion, linguistic and cultural background, age, physical or mental ability, or any other aspect integral to one's personhood. We therefore recognize our responsibility, both individual and collective, to strive to establish and maintain an environment wherein all interactions are based on empathy and mutual respect for the person, acknowledging differences of perspectives, free from judgment, censure, and/or stigma.

7. Guidelines for the Academic Accommodation of Pregnant Students and Students Caring for Dependents

McGill acknowledges the challenges facing pregnant students and students caring for a dependent. McGill supports students in their desire to further their education while meeting their family obligations. A student who is faced with a conflict between a responsibility in respect of pregnancy, or of care-giving responsibilities toward a dependent, and an academic obligation, may ask the University for academic accommodation in accordance with the guidelines found here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/records/pregnant-students-and-dependants>