

# Spring 2021 Human Dimensions of Climate Change Seminar

HDCC 400 Spring 2021

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Instructor: Thomas Heyd, Ph.D.  
Lectures: Mondays 4:30-7:30 pm  
Videos: posted on Brightspace  
Office hours: WF 14:30-15:20 (by Zoom)  
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**Provisional outline:** Given changing circumstances arising from the Covid-19 situation, this outline is subject to changes before start of the course.

## Class periods

Normally seminar sessions will be conducted over Zoom at the scheduled class time. You will find the link to join the meetings on the Brightspace website page. The same link will work for the duration of the course. Participation in seminar sessions will be of crucial importance, and justified absences will need to be negotiated in advance.

## Seminar overview

This seminar is the capstone course of the Human Dimensions of Climate Change Minor programme. It is intended for students who want to take an active role in their education. Oral presentations, papers and active discussion will be part of the course (see below). There are no exams.

Students are expected to actively participate in every class. The emphasis will be on current perspectives on global climate change from multiple disciplinary points of view. Topics to be discussed will partly be determined by class interest.

## Description and structure

The present Covid-19 health crisis has demonstrated that human agency can provoke natural environmental factors to unleash processes generating effects that may prove disastrous for large segments of humanity. However, we have also seen a will to re-think the relation of humans to the natural environment in which we live, and to move forward in new, more environmentally appropriate, ways.

The focus in this seminar course is on achieving a deeper understanding of the *human* dimensions of climate change in terms of anthropogenic causes, consequences for populations in better- and less well off- countries and for future generations, and ways in which people can mitigate, cope with and adapt to this global change process. Materials from the natural and social sciences, as well as from the humanities and arts, will be drawn upon.

In the first part of the course, we jointly read selected texts in order to generate a common ground for discussion. Key topic areas to be considered include

- a) *coping* and *adaptation* in times subject to natural climate change in earlier periods,
- b) the dynamic determinants (social, geographic, historical, and so on) that, respectively, either generate *vulnerability* or provide for *resilience*, for particular human groups faced with significant environmental change, and
- c) possibilities and responsibilities for *transformative* action in light of already observable as well as foreseeable future consequences, in particular for people in the developing world and for future generations.

Key texts will be made available, students will take turns in leading class discussions, and selected guest speakers will be invited to address specific questions from each of the key topic areas addressed.

In the second part of the course, students will present their own research, agreed upon with the instructor in the beginning of the semester, leading to a high quality term paper or project.

## Basis for Grading

Term paper or project (45%): A paper or project (40%) that focuses on global climate change from one or several disciplinary perspectives. As a rough guideline, the paper would be around 15 to 20 pages, double-spaced, and due on the last day of classes. A project would be equivalent in effort and will consist of some kind of physical deliverable that can, in principle, be archived. An itemised, well-developed, outline (5%) should be handed in by 15 February.

Class Presentations (40%): Two types of class discussions will be led by students. Marks will be based on quality of the presentation and leadership of the class discussion.

- Presentation of assigned course readings (20%). Course readings will be divided up for presentation among class members in the first week of classes.
- Seminar presentation of an autonomously chosen topic leading to a paper or a project (20%). Classroom and instructor feedback is to be applied in the further development of the paper or project.

Participation (15%): Based on quality and thoughtfulness of student comments, questions, and responses to the assigned readings and in-class presentations of others (10%). In preparation for class discussion, students are expected to bring to class written-out weekly responses (5%) reflecting on issues raised in the readings.

## Grading scale and interpretation

Percentages will convert to a letter grade according to the standard University scheme:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 65-69	D = 50-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 60-64	F = 0-49
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72		

### *What the Grading Scale Means:*

<b>A+, A, or A-</b>	Earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
<b>B+, B, or B-</b>	Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
<b>C+ or C</b>	Earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
<b>D</b>	Earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
<b>F</b>	Work that is not worthy of course credit toward the degree.
<b>N</b>	An N grade indicates that the student did not complete one or more of the course's essential requirements. "N" is a failing grade and factors into the student's GPA as "0".

Interpretation of these grade definitions is up to the discretion of the instructor. If you receive a grade during the course that you believe is unfair, please begin by discussing the matter with the instructor (or TA) in a respectful, open-minded manner. Rest assured that if you still believe the grade you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department. For additional information regarding grades, please see pp. 51-53 of the most recent edition of the *Uvic Undergraduate Calendar*.

All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to *percentage scores*. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference. Final examinations are the property of Uvic and are not returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office according to Uvic procedures and regulations (pp. 49-51 of the calendar).

## **Territory acknowledgment**

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. This acknowledgment entails a commitment to ongoing dialogue and reconciliation with the peoples of these lands. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the UVic Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement.

## **Other matters**

### *Technical Help*

You'll find a link to the Zoom Help Centre on the Brightspace website along with a link to UVic's Learn Anywhere site. That site is designed to help students navigate all aspects of UVic's online learning environment. Don't hesitate to ask me for help with any technical issues that you run into. If I can't help, I'll find someone who can.

### *Late assignments*

Late assignments will have 5% subtracted per working day from grade unless documentation of illness or family emergency is provided.

### *Academic integrity and University academic regulations*

The University Calendar states that "Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility and... Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community."

Violations of academic integrity include plagiarism, multiple submissions, falsifying materials subject to academic evaluation, cheating on work, tests and examinations, unauthorized use of an editor, and aiding others to cheat. To avoid plagiarism and cheating please view the Libraries' plagiarism guide

<https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/>. I reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software or other platforms to assess the integrity of student work.

Penalties for violations vary, with first violations generally resulting in a failing grade on the work. Please view [https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk\\_0xsM\\_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcltemType=policies](https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcltemType=policies). Also, please familiarise yourselves with Undergraduate Academic regulations here: <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policies>.

### *Copyright statement*

All course content and materials are made available by instructors for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students registered in their class. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked with a ©. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires the written permission of the instructor, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300). Any evidence you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

### *Inclusivity/diversity*

UVic is committed to providing a safe, supportive learning environment for all members. Information about UVic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are available at [www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQOpzdAN](http://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQOpzdAN). If you have any particular concerns about these matters in our course please don't hesitate to contact me.

### *Religious accommodation*

Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVic Calendar at <https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/religious/index.php>.

### *New Student Mental Health Supports / UVic Support Connect*

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. This may especially be the case during the present Covid-19 crisis. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with

problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you believe that you could benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact the new UVic Student Wellness Centre / UVic Support Connect. In addition to providing face to face help, they offer a 24 x 7 phone & online mental health counselling and support program, no matter where you are located, at any time. This is an excellent resource at your disposal on campus. They genuinely want to help, so *do consider taking advantage of this free resource.*

#### *Health Services and Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)*

A note to remind you to take care of yourself, especially in these times. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. The sooner you let any of these on-campus services know your needs the quicker they can assist you in achieving your learning goals. Resources include

- Counselling Services, already mentioned above. See <https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>.
- University Health Services (UHS) provides a full-service primary health clinic for students and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives. <http://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>
- Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Center for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible. CAL staff members are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>. Please note that instructors cannot provide CAL-type accommodations without CAL documentation.

#### *Food bank and Community Cabbage*

Sometimes students run out of money for food. *Health restrictions permitting*, these two options are available at the Students' Union: 1) "The UVSS Food Bank & Free Store is run by a team of dedicated staff and volunteers and offers all UVic students access to food essentials and free household items", see <https://uvss.ca/foodbank/>. 2) "The Community Cabbage is a student organization at the University of Victoria. We serve a free weekly hot meal to the campus community prepared from reclaimed food – edible but unsellable food donated by grocery stores. A crew of volunteers turn these ingredients into a healthy and delightful vegetarian meal at a community kitchen. Anyone is welcome to come cook with us and/or eat with us!" See <https://uviccommunitycabbage.wordpress.com/about/>.

#### *Important dates and academic advising*

Important dates for the 2020-2021 Academic Year are found here: <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>.

Please consult the Important Dates for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examinations period start/end dates, etc. For information about declaring a program, academic concessions or interpreting your UVic CAPP report, please visit Undergraduate Advising or make an appointment with an advisor.

#### *Course Experience Survey (CES)*

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help HDCC improve the overall programme for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an e-mail inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an e-mail invitation, you can go directly to your CES dashboard. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course:

1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.