

Climate Ethics, Climate Justice

Winter 2015

ENVS 411: TR, 2:00 – 3:50, VIL 201

Instructor: Tim Christian Myers, tcc@uoregon.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 – 2:00 (or by appointment), COL 47A

Course Description:

Given the stakes, climate change is perhaps *the* defining issue of our age. How we respond (or don't) to this issue will likely influence the course of human existence for generations to come. But is this simply a technological or economic problem waiting to be solved by the experts, as most Westerners believe? Or, as many are now claiming, is this primarily an issue of ethics and justice?

The implications of climate change throw basic assumptions about how we live our lives and how we think into question. Perhaps no other issue compels us to so thoroughly reexamine how we relate to nature and to each other. Thus, as we struggle to confront the depth and gravity of climate change, new ways of thinking and living are increasingly called for. This course is designed to offer a variety of inter-disciplinary perspectives and approaches to this end.

Required Texts:

Flannery, Speth, and Klein books listed below are available at [Black Sun Books](#) (2467 Hilyard St., at 25th Ave. 541-484-3777). All other reading materials are available on Blackboard.

- Tim Flannery: *The Weather Makers* (TWM)
- Naomi Klein: *This Changes Everything* (TCE)
- James Gustave Speth: *The Bridge at the Edge of the World* (BEW)

Course Requirements:

You are expected to carefully read the materials offered in this course with the intention of comprehending the ethical—whether philosophical or political—issues involved in each. This is not a light-reading course. Some of these readings will be quite challenging, so it is of the utmost importance that you not only attend the lectures, but read before each one. Plan to commit around three or four hours of reading per class. Disciplined study habits are essential, and group study is recommended.

Success in this course also depends on the ability to write good papers. Writing a good paper not only involves comprehending the assigned readings, but also an ability to respond to them in thoughtful ways. Whether agreeing or disagreeing with the material, you will need to *justify* your views on the matters in question by providing *good reasons* in defense of your thesis (as opposed to offering unexplained opinions, going off on tangents, or simply “regurgitating” the material). And like all good writing—which involves *careful organization, clarity, and good reasoning* in defense of your thesis—multiple drafts are essential.

Grading:

Attendance/Participation:	10%
Quizzes:	20%
Midterm Paper:	25%
Final Paper Proposal:	10%
Final Paper:	35%

Attendance/Participation: Attendance is mandatory. It will be taken at the beginning of every lecture.

Important: *Missing four classes for any reason will result in a half-letter grade (5%) reduction. Another half-grade reduction will be made for any additional absence after that.*

Quizzes: There will be five short multiple-choice quizzes (five questions each) every other week at the beginning of class to review the materials of the previous two weeks. This is meant as an incentive to keep up on the readings. If you've done all of the readings, the quizzes should be straightforward. Of the five quizzes, I will count only the top four grades, dropping the lowest score.

Midterm & Final Papers: The midterm paper (3-4 pages) is due in class on Tuesday February 11th (Week 6). The final paper (6-7 pages) is due by email Wednesday, March 19th by midnight.

Note: Late midterm and final papers will be docked a *half-letter grade (5%) for each day late*—so be sure you finish a day ahead of schedule in case something unexpected comes up.

Paper Proposal: You will submit a proposal (1-2 pages) for the final paper that introduces a thesis and a concise account of how you intend to defend it. It should be emailed to me by Saturday March 7th at midnight.

Note: Late proposals will be docked a *half-letter grade (5%) for each day late*.

A = Superior, a mark of excellence. (90-100%)

B = Outstanding, very good (80-89%)

C = Good/Acceptable, average for most college students (70-79%)

D = Passing, but needs improvement (60-69%)

F = Below 60% is not a passing grade.

Academic Honesty:

Instructors are very good at recognizing plagiarism. Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts. A student will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is an acknowledgment of indebtedness.

Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever:

1. one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product;
2. one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words;
3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials--unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult me during office hours/via email, or seek assistance from Teaching Learning Center (68 PLC, 346-3226).

Scheduled Readings (Any changes will be announced on Blackboard or in class)

Flannery: *The Weather Makers* = TWM

Klein: *This Changes Everything* = TCE

Speth: *The Bridge at the Edge of the World* = BEW

Week 1: Introduction

1/06 — Introduction to course (**Film: Earth: The Climate Wars, Episode 1**)

- 1/08 — James Gustave Speth: “Looking into the Abyss” (BEW, Ch. 1)
 Naomi Klein: “One way or Another, Everything Changes” (TCE, Introduction)

Week 2: Crash Course in Climate Science

- 1/13 — Tim Flannery: “Gaia” (TWM, ch. 1)
 Tim Flannery: “The Great Aerial Ocean” (TWM, ch. 2)
 Tim Flannery: “The Gaseous Greenhouse” (TWM, ch. 3)
 Tim Flannery: “The Sages and the Onion Skin” (TWM, ch. 4)
 Tim Flannery: “Time’s Gateway” (TWM, ch. 5)
 Tim Flannery: “Born in the Deep Freeze” (TWM, ch. 6)
 Tim Flannery: “Making the Long Summer” (TWM, ch. 7)
 Tim Flannery: “Digging Up the Dead” (TWM, ch. 8)
(Film: Earth: The Climate Wars, Episode 2)

- 1/15 — Tim Flannery: “The Unraveling World” (TWM, ch. 9)
 Tim Flannery: “An Energetic Onion Skin” (TWM, ch. 14)
 Tim Flannery: “Playing at Canute”(TWM, ch. 15)
 Tim Flannery: “Model Worlds” (TWM, ch. 16)
 Tim Flannery: “The Commitment and Approaching Extreme Danger” (TWM, ch. 17)
 Tim Flannery: “The Pack of Jokers” (TWM, ch. 21)
 Tim Flannery: “Civilization: Out With a Whimper?” (TWM, ch. 22)
(Film: Earth: The Climate Wars, Episode 3)

Quiz 1

Week 3: The Politics of Climate Change

- 1/20 — Dale Jamieson: “The Nature of the Problem” (pp. 18-60)
 Naomi Klein: “The Right is Right: The Revolutionary Power of Climate Change” (TCE, Ch. 1)
- 1/22 — Naomi Klein: “Fruits, Not Roots: The Disastrous Merger of Big Business & Big Green” (TCE, Ch.6)
 James Gustave Speth: “The Limits of Today’s Environmental Movement” (BEW, Ch. 3)
(Film: Naomi Klein interview)

Week 4: Social Roots of Climate Change: Mass Production and Consumption

- 1/27 — James Gustave Speth: “Modern Capitalism: Out of Control” (BEW, ch. 2)
 L. Hunter Lovins: “Natural Capitalism: Path to Sustainability?”
 Fred Magdoff & John Bellamy Foster: “Can Capitalism Go Green?”
(Film: The Story of Stuff)
- 1/29 — James Gustave Speth: “Consumption: Living With Enough, Not Always More” (BEW, Ch. 7)
 John Bellamy Foster, Bret Clark, & Richard York: “Carbon Metabolism and Global Capital Accumulation”

Quiz 2

Week 5: The Spirit of Technology and Geo-engineering

- 2/03 — Martin Heidegger: “Memorial Address”
 Herbert Marcuse: “The New Forms of Control”
(Film: The Crisis of Faith)
- 2/05 — Clive Hamilton: “Geoengineering: Our Last Hope, or a False Promise?”
 Naomi Klein: “Dimming the Sun: The Solution to Pollution is...Pollution?” (TCE, Ch. 8, p. 156-284)

Week 6: Worldview Shifts and Indigenous Responses to Climate Change

- 2/10 — Naomi Klein: “Beyond Extractivism: Confronting the Climate Denier Within” (TCE, Ch. 5)
 Bernard J. Nebel & Richard T. Wright: “Are We in the Process of a Major Paradigm Shift?”
 James Gustave Speth: “A New Consciousness” (BEW, Ch. 10)

*****Midterm Paper Due in class*****

- 2/12 — Chief Luther Standing Bear: “Indian Wisdom”
 Sarah Krakoff: “American Indians, Climate Change, and Ethics for a Warmer World”
(Film: *In Light of Reverence*)

*****Quiz 3*****

Week 7: Climate Ethics: The Question of Responsibility

- 2/17 — Dale Jamieson: “Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming”
 Steven Gardiner: “A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics, and the Problem of Moral Corruption”

- 2/19 — Allen Thompson and Jeremy Bendik-Keymer: “Adapting Humanity”
 Allen Thompson: “Radical Hope in a Warmer World”
(Guest Lecture: Allen Thompson)

*****Quiz 3*****

Week 8: Climate Justice

- 2/24 — Naomi Klein: “Climate Rage”
 J. Timmons Roberts: “Climate Change: Why the Old Approaches Aren’t Working”
 Angela Parks: “Everybody’s Movement: Environmental Justice and Climate Change” (pp. 6-26)

- 2/26 — Vandana Shiva: “Triple Crisis, Triple Opportunity”
 Vandana Shiva: “The Politics of Climate Change” (pp. 9-16)
 Vandana Shiva: “Soil Not Oil”

*****Quiz 4*****

Week 9: The Psychology of Climate Denial

- 3/03 — Kari Norgaard: “Failure to Act, Denial versus Indifference, Apathy, and Ignorance”
 Kari Norgaard: “‘People Want to Protect Themselves a Little Bit’: The Why of Denial”
 Kari Norgaard: “Climate Change as Background Noise in the United States”

- 3/05 — Michael Shellenberger & Ted Nordhouse: “From the Nightmare to the Dream”
 James Gustave Speth: “The Bridge at the Edge of the World” (BEW, ch. 12)
 Richard Heinberg: “The Psychology of Peak Oil and Climate Change”
 Tim DeChristopher & Terry Tempest Williams: “What Love Looks Like”

*****Paper Proposals Due: Saturday 3/07—emailed to me (tcc@uoregon.edu) by midnight*****
Late papers not accepted without a valid reason.

Week 10: Toward a New Politics?

- 3/10 — Bill McKibben: “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math”
 Christopher Hayes: The New Abolitionists
 Chris Cuomo, “Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Responsibility”

- 3/12 — Terry Tempest Williams: “Climate Change: What is Required of Us?”
 James Gustave Speth: “A New Politics” (BEW, Ch. Ch. 11)
 Naomi Klein: “The Leap Years: Just enough Time for Impossible” (TCE, Conclusion)

*****Quiz 5*****

Final Paper Due: Wednesday March 18th emailed to me (tcc@uoregon.edu) by midnight.
Late papers will be docked a half- letter grade for each day late.