

# *Climate Ethics, Climate Justice*

ENVS 411: TR, 2:00 – 3:50 CRN 22175

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursday, 11:00 – 12:00 (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.

We begin with a crash course in climate science, followed by an examination of the social and cultural causes of this issue. For example, how should we think about technology and capitalism in light of the climate crisis? How is our own cultural worldview and consumer lifestyle implicated? With this foundation, we move on to explore challenging questions about the ethical and justice dimensions of climate change. For example, how are we to think about an issue caused by the industrial countries, and yet dramatically affects the survival and well-being of people who didn't cause this problem in the first place? Are class, race, and gender significant in thinking through this issue? How are we to think about taking personal and responsibility for this issue? And finally, what is "climate denial," and what could help us work through our *own* forms of denial? We will confront these and other questions in an effort to struggle with the ethical and justice dimensions of this important issue.