Instructor Information

- Alexander Gleason
- Email: alg21@nyu.edu
- Office Address: Remote
- Office Hours: by appointment.

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: 01/22/2024 – 03/06/2024; 4.55 PM - 6.35 PM EST
- Class Location: 60 Fifth Ave Room 265
- Course Prerequisites
  - CORE-GP 1022: Introduction to Public Policy

Course Description

“U.S. Climate Policy, Politics and Change” will help students better understand climate change, its impact on the United States, and policy responses to the issue. The course will overview climate science, growing damages from climate change, and their economic impact.

We will learn about the 30-year policy and political debate on whether and how the United States should reduce its carbon pollution responsible for climate change. Additionally, we will identify various stakeholders’ theory of change, policies reflecting this change, and devise issue campaigns to make them a reality.

The stakeholder perspectives will include US presidential administrations, Congress, state and local governments, industry, labor, ‘mainstream green’ organizations, and the environmental justice movement. We will assess stakeholders’ “theory of change.” In simple terms, a theory of change guides stakeholders to follow a particular path for the development and
implementation of strategy and tactics necessary to achieve their objectives. For instance, the Obama administration’s theory of change for climate action relied upon executive action, and not Congress. The administration used executive authority under existing laws to adopt new regulations that would reduce climate pollution. The Trump Administration took no climate action whatsoever—often adversely impacting our climate goals—while the Biden Administration seeks compromise and solutions to increasingly necessary emissions reductions.

This is an intensive course – we only have seven sessions. Please be prepared for comprehensive discourse, class presentations, and reflections on what you have read and experienced.

Course and Learning Objectives

During the course we will focus on the following goals:

- Better understand climate science and its certainty, climate change impacts, and policy solutions.
- Assess the effectiveness of recent climate actions to determine those most likely to succeed.
- Examine the “theory of change” concept, and its relevance to advocacy campaigns.
- Identify various stakeholders’ theory of change.
- Design an issue advocacy campaign to achieve policy objectives that reflect stakeholders’ theory of change.
- Determine the most efficient method to develop and deploy resources to implement the campaign plan.
- Delineate between policy realities and political partisanship in policy related to climate.

Course Requirements

1. Careful preparation for and serious involvement in all seminar sessions. This means reading the materials and thinking about the topic in advance of each session.
2. In your reading, you should formulate views to address important questions, including the following issues.
   - What is the significance of the topic and the analyses you read –are the assumptions realistic? Does the data comport with the results?
   - Reality check: in what ways do the evidence and analyses conform to your own experience and assessments, and in what ways do they challenge them?
   - Consider the institutional and organizational implications that can be drawn from the readings, and what types of leadership responses would be most productive?
3. Class participation is crucial, and your final grade will reflect the quality and thoughtfulness of your involvement.
Learning Assessment Table

Your grade will reflect an evaluation of the op ed and letter—to-the-editor (20%), a memorandum (20%), an evaluation of the group campaign plan, including its presentation (40%), and your participation in class sessions (20%). This combination should reflect your analytic skills, ability to assess incomplete information, persuade stakeholders to adopt your recommendations, and design a plan to make it a reality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Assignment</th>
<th>Course Objective Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Opinion Editorial, Letter to the Editor, | • Identify various stakeholders’ theory of change.  
• Delineate between policy realities and political partisanship in policy related to climate. |
| Policy Memorandum  | • Assess the effectiveness of recent climate actions to determine those most likely to succeed. |
| Issue Advocacy Campaign | • Examine the “theory of change” concept, and its relevance to advocacy campaigns.  
• Design an issue advocacy campaign to achieve policy objectives that reflect stakeholders’ the theory of change.  
• Determine the most efficient method to develop and deploy resources to implement the campaign plan. |
| Class Participation | • Better understand climate science and its certainty, climate change impacts, and policy solutions. |

Required Readings

Most readings for the course are hyperlinked for your convenience. There are two books you need for this course:


The texts will be available at the school bookstore, and I also recommend going to local retailers like Bluestockings, Strand, or McNally Jackson, all of whom should have these books or easily be able to order them.
Assessment Assignments and Evaluation

Assessment

- Contribution to discussion & learning, 20%
- Op Ed/Letter to the editor, 20%
- Policy Memorandum, 20%
- Group Campaign Plan, 40%

- **Op Ed, Letter to the Editor:** Climate policy opinion editorial and opposing letter to the editor. Author an opinion editorial (op ed) [600-1000 words] on one facet of climate policy related to the generation, transmission, and consumption of energy, then draft a shorter letter to the editor (lte) [150-300 words] on the same issue from an opposing perspective. Identify three target publications and draft a pitch [no more than a few paragraphs] to accompany the op ed for that hypothetical target; do the same for the letter to the editor. We will discuss how to draft an op ed, letter to the editor, and pitch in class, as well as the intersections with the policy-making process (you will receive a one-pager.) It is not a lot of writing, but intentional writing [due session three].

- **Policy Memorandum:** Drafted on a local, state, or national climate policy. Identify the stakeholder [an elected official, non-profit leader, corporate leader, though leader] and outline a basic strategy. The memorandum is intended to be a mix of policy and strategy. The target audience is undefined but should be for a non-descript stakeholder [you are not doing research on the person particularly for whom it is written. The objective is the policy memorandum, not to be caught-up in the ‘who.’] who wants to see the chosen policy advance. The memorandum can also be for an existing organization championing a critical climate issue in a key jurisdiction. The assignment is due week 5.

- **Group Campaign Plan:** Collaborate with assigned team members to design an issue advocacy campaign plan to promote policies appropriate for the assigned stakeholders. We will designate team and stakeholders at Session Three. Each plan must include goals, strategy, tactics, and a result. The guise of the project should be operating from the idea, “What can I change as a result?” Each team will orally present their plan at Session Seven. The final written plan, incorporating feedback from colleagues is due session seven.

**Late Submission Policy for Assignments**

Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency, out of respect to those who abide by deadlines despite equally hectic schedules. Late submissions without extensions will be penalized 20% per 24-hour period.
Course Outline

- Week 1
  - Date: January 22nd
  - Topic: Introduction to the Course: Climate as an Existential Crisis or a Technocratic Problem to Solve?

- Week 2
  - Date: January 29th
  - Topic: Climate Science and Carbon Pollution Reduction Goals

- Week 3
  - Date: February 5th
  - Topic: Climate Policy at the Federal, State, Local Levels
  - Deliverable: Op ed, LTE, Pitch Assignment Due

- Week 4
  - Date: February 12th
  - Topic: The Just Transition Through the Worker Lens—How do Labor & the Climate Intersect?

- Week 5
  - Date: February 19th
  - Topic: Environmental Justice & Constructing a Campaign
  - Deliverable: Memorandum Due

- Week 6
  - Date: February 26th
  - Topic: A Case Study in New York City: Local Law 97, Offshore Wind Solicitations, Municipal Solar Procurement

- Week 7
  - Date: March 4th
  - Topic: Manufacturing Doubt, the Politics of Climate Denialism, and Campaign Plan Reviews & Feedback
  - Deliverable: Group Campaign Plan

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Grade</td>
<td>Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- **(A) Excellent**: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

- **(A-) Very good**: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

- **(B+) Good**: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

- **(B) Adequate**: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate, but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

- **(B-) Borderline**: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”
(C/-+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

(F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

[If you choose to publish a numeric-to-grade scale in your syllabus, please follow and use the scale below.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt; 93.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>&gt; 90.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>&gt; 87.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>&gt; 83.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>&gt; 80.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>&gt; 77.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>&gt; 73.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>&gt; 70.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 70.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Detailed Course Overview

Session One: Climate as an Existential Crisis or a Technocratic Problem to Solve?

Objectives

- Understanding the relationship between private and public goods.
- Identify externalities, and who pays for them.
- Discuss the “Tragedy of the Commons” concept.
- Define the concept of a “cooperative game” within the context of a broader public policy implication.

Reading assignments:

[your objective with these readings is to understand theory and concepts. Don’t worry about the math and models—it is the context that is our focus here].
Public Finance and Public Policy, Jonathan Gruber
  o Chapter 5: Externalities- Problems & Solutions (121-148)
  o Chapter 6: Externalities in Action-Environmental and Health Externalities (149-179)

Economics of the Public Sector, Joseph E. Stiglitz
  o Chapter 6: Public Goods and Publicly Provided Private Goods (129-160)


Supplemental Resources:

“Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood,” Karl Marx, Rheinische Zeitung, Nos. 298, 300, 303, 305 and 307, October 25, 27 and 30, November 1 and 3, 1842 [skimming is probably best here]

“A HISTORY OF PRICING POLLUTION (OR, WHY PIGOUVIAN TAXES ARE NOT NECESSARILY PIGOUVIAN)”, H. Spencer Banzhaf, NBER Working Paper 27683


Microeconomics, Samuel Bowles
  o Chapter 4: Coordination Failures and Institutional Responses

Session Two: Climate Science and Carbon Pollution Reduction Goals

Objectives

• Understand climate change science
• Learn that climate change impacts are underway, and have significant, direct impacts on our lives and economy.
• Discuss government strategies for reducing carbon at an international level
• Examine sources of U.S. climate pollution.
• Discuss policy implications of climate pollution sources—enclosing externalities

Reading assignments

• Climate Change: A Very Short Introduction, Mark Maslin, Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780191904721 (depending on edition, this is about 200 pages, but it’s easy and digestible)
• “Perceptions of Climate Change”, James Hansen, Makiko Sato, and Reto Ruedy, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) (pages 1-9)

Supplemental Resources:

• “The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change”, Science, Vol 306, Issue 5702
• “Communicating the consensus on climate change to college biology majors: The importance of preaching to the choir”, Jeremy D. Sloane, Jason R. Wiles, Ecology and Evolution Journal, November 2019
Session Three: Climate Policy at the Federal, State, Local Levels [ASSIGNMENT ONE DUE—OP ED & LTE]

Objectives
- Learn about the court decisions that required the president to address climate change
- Determine why federal climate legislation consistently fails (does it?)
- Identify executive actions and investment of federal dollars that would achieve some pollution reductions.

Reading assignments
- “Cities Must Address the Threat Of Climate Change”, Rick McGahey, Forbes, 2020
- “US Climate Change Policies”, Congressional Research Services report, October 2021
- National Climate Task Force, Biden White House, 2022
- “The Fed and a smooth macroeconomic transition to a cleaner U.S. economy”, Josh Bivens, Economic Policy Institute (EPI), December 2022,

Supplemental Resources
- Eilperin, Juliet, “Trump administration proposes rule to relax carbon limits on power plants,” Washington Post, August 21, 2018
- Eilperin, Juliet, “Trump administration sees a 7-degree rise in global temperatures by 2100,” Washington Post, September 28, 2018
Session Four: The Just Transition Through the Worker Lens—How do Labor & the Climate Intersect?

Objectives
- Understand the role of Labor and workers in the climate transition.
- Understand the intersections of the generation, transmission, and consumption of energy and why that is critical for climate policy.
- Define the context of a “just transition” through a ‘Labor lens’
- Articulate current policies and initiatives of the American Labor Movement to both address inequality and create family-sustaining jobs. Understand large drivers of emissions in the energy process and solutions (& pitfalls) to society’s ‘climate solutions.’ [or why are people afraid of just transition?]

Reading assignments
- *Re-Valuing Workers: Towards a Democratic and Sustainable Future*, Tobias Schulze-Cleven and Todd Vachon [you will likely want to purchase this whole text]
  o Chapter 1: “Revaluing for Democracy and Sustainability”
  o Chapter 3: “Deus Est Machina: Historical Amnesia, Methodological Myopia, and the Future of work”
  o Chapter 5: “Climate Change and the Future of Workers”
  o Chapter 6: “Worker Mobilization and Political Engagement: A Historical Perspective”
  o Chapter 7: “Worker Voice in Technological Change: The Potential of Recrafting”
- “Climate for Change, A Complete Climate Jobs Roadmap for NYC”, Cornell University’s Labor Leading on Climate Program, Dr Lara Skinner, May 2022
- “Achieving 80x50”, Edward Mazria, Architecture 2030,
Session Five: Environmental Justice & Constructing a Campaign [ASSIGNMENT TWO DUE—MEMORANDUM]

Objective
- Understand a theory of change
- Understand the difference between ‘mainstream green’ organizations and the environmental justice movement.
- Identify stakeholders with an economic or ideological climate agenda
- How do stakeholders’ theory of change dictate their substantive position and advocacy strategy?

Reading assignments
- “How Does Theory of Change Work?” Center for Theory of Change, p. 1
- “Anatomy of Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement”, Robert D. Bullard, UCI
- “The Long Environmental Justice Movement”, Jedediah S. Purdy, Columbia Law School, 2018

Design a campaign plan objectives
- Learn the many critical elements of an effective issue advocacy campaign plan.
- Appreciate that the campaign’s budget will determine many tactics.
- Learn to work backwards to achieve a result that otherwise would not be occurring

Elements of an Advocacy Plan
1. Principles
2. Goals and objectives
3. Strategy
4. Tactics
5. Message
6. Metrics
7. Budget
8. Calendar
9. Evaluation

Note: These guides/articles include very similar recommendations, so feel free to select one from Supplemental Resources.

Supplemental Resources

- “Winning Your Election the Wellstone Way,” Bill Lofy and Jeff Blodgett, Wellstone School [easily the best book authored on electoral and legislative campaign organizing].

Session Six: A Case Study in New York City-Local Law 97, Offshore Wind Solicitations, Municipal Solar Procurement

Class six objectives
- Identify policies in New York City and how they are being implemented as models for the rest of the country.
- Observe case studies in renewable energy scaling to articulate structures and patterns to municipal procurement and climate resiliency.

Required Readings

Local Law 97
- “New Climate Law Will Reshape NY’s Key Sectors”, Michael B. Gerrard, Edward McTiernan, Columbia Law School, 2019
- “About Local Law 97”, Urban Green Council, 2023
- “Local Law 97 One-Pager Summary”, Urban Green Council, 2022
- “CONSTRUCTING A GREENER NEW YORK, BUILDING BY BUILDING”, Report, ALIGN for a Greater NY, 2018

Offshore Wind
- “Massachusetts Switches On Its First Large Offshore Wind Farm”, New York Times, 2024
- “Equinor, BP cancel contract to sell offshore wind power to New York” New York Times, 2024” Reuters
- “Equinor pulls plug on 1 of 3 offshore wind projects off Long Island”, CBS News

Session Seven: Manufacturing Doubt, the Politics of Climate Denialism, and Campaign Plan Reviews & Feedback

Class 7 objectives
- Understand the political context and dynamics of climate denialism in the policy process.
- Uncover ‘Dark Money’ campaigns and their impact on climate policy nationally.
- Exploring concepts of partisanship, ideology, and rhetoric of reaction.

Reading assignments
- “Exxon Scientists Predicted Global Warming, Even as Company Cast Doubts, Study Finds”, Hiroko Tabuchi, January 12, 2023, New York Times
- “Michael Crichton and Global Warming”, David B. Sandalow, Brookings, 2005
• “For Earth Day: Michael Crichton Explains Why There Is “no Such Thing as Consensus Science”, Mark J Perry, American Enterprise Institute (AEI), 2015
• “State of Fear: Not So Hot”, Bruce Barcott, New York Times, 2005
• VIDEO LECTURE: “Michael Crichton | States of Fear: Science or Politics?”, Independent Institute, 2005
• DOCUMENTARY: PBS Frontline “The Power of Big Oil” Parts I & II [I HIGHLY RECOMMEND YOU WATCH THIS WHOLE SPECIAL]
• “Knowledge politics and post-truth in climate denial: on the social construction of alternative facts”, Frank Fischer, Critical Policy Studies, May 2019
• “Does climate denialism still matter? The prevalence of alternative frames in opposition to climate policy” Heather W. Cann, Leigh Raymond, Environmental Politics, 2018
• “Ellen’s Energy Adventure”, the Universe of Energy, EPCOT

Supplemental Resources
• Michael Crichton on Charlie Rose, interview on climate change 2007
• “ALEC and Climate Denialism,” The Years Project

Present and review action campaign plans
• Teams present their proposed climate action campaign plans.
• Teams have 24 hours after Class 8 to revise and submit written campaign plans.

Objectives
• Learn about elements of a successful issue campaign by critiquing classmates’ plans.
• Improve your team’s plan via classmates’ critique.
• Revise your campaign plan and return to instructor 48 hours after class.

Brightspace
All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click the “Get Started” button. You can
also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

**NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays**

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. You must notify me in advance of religious holidays or observances that might coincide with exams, assignments, or class times to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives. Students may also contact religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu for assistance.

**NYU’s Wellness Exchange**

[NYU’s Wellness Exchange](#) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

**Class Policies**

[Feel free to make this section your own. Add any additional instructions or information that you believe students need to know. Some examples of categories for this section: attendance [for those of you teaching intensive courses, please be explicit since missing even one day or a portion of a day may be too much and students may need to choose a different course], reporting illnesses or emergencies, participation, re-grading, late submission policy, technology use in the classroom, your response time, incomplete policy, course withdrawal policy, etc.]