

GEOG 1200A: The Climate Emergency

Course Outline – Section 001 – Fall 2021

This course is taught in-person

1. Course Information

	Delivery Mode	Day/Time	Location
Lecture	In-person	Mondays 10.30-12.30	SEB-1200
Lecture	In-person	Wednesdays 11.30-12.30	SEB-1200

*Details about design and delivery of the course are listed below in Sections 4 & 7

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
September 8	November 1-7	December 8	December 9	December 10 - 21

September 16, 2021: Last day to add a first-term half course

October 11, 2021: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 12, 2021: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office hours
Dr. Tony Weis	tony.weis@uwo.ca	By appointment
Teaching Assistants		
Emilia Cameron	ecamer26@uwo.ca	
Veronica Reitmeier	vreitmei@uwo.ca	

Please use OWL Forums for questions about course content and logistics (see Communication below).

Due to Covid, there will not be in-person office hours, but Dr. Weis will be available for group office via Zoom *most* Fridays starting at 1 pm. A general zoom invite will be sent out via OWL, and attendance is voluntary. If you have questions you wish to discuss, please try to attend this session but you can also schedule an individual zoom meeting via email if necessary.

Your TA will be specified following the first assessment after the class roster has been finalized.

2. Calendar Description

An introduction to the science and politics of climate change. The course pivots on the great disjuncture between the urgency and magnitude of changes that climate scientists are imploring, and enduring 'business-as-usual' approaches. Struggles for action are considered in light of highly unequal responsibility and vulnerability.

3 lecture hours, 0.5 credit. No prerequisites.

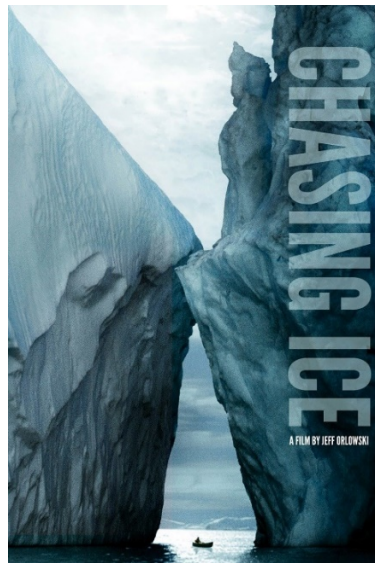
3. Readings and Documentary Films

There is no required textbook. Readings for each unit are available on OWL, along with details on how to access the documentary films.

The PowerPoint slides also provide an abundance of additional optional links that allow you to dig more deeply into subjects you are most interested in.

You are expected to watch 5 documentary films over the course of the term, 1 during each of Units 2-6. Most are available through the Western Library system, and some are available for free on YouTube.

- 1) **To the ends of the earth** (2016, Green Planet Films, 81 mins), available via **Western Libraries**
- 2) **Chasing Ice** (2012, Films We Like, 76 mins) available via **Watch Documentaries**
- 3) **Fleeing climate change — the real environmental disaster** (2019, DW Documentary [German Public Broadcaster], 43 mins) available via **YouTube**
- 4) **Merchants of Doubt** (2014, Mongrel Media, 96 mins) available via **Western Libraries**
- 5) **Rebellion** (2020, CBC Nature of Things, 90 mins), available via **CBC Gem**



4. Format

This course is based upon in-person lectures along with readings and documentary films. There is a total of 3 lecture hours per week (though the 2-hour session will rarely run the full 2-hours), and the readings for each of the 5 units should take about 2-4 hours. All PowerPoints will be posted to OWL at pdfs shortly *after* the lecture.

The course content is organized into 5 units as outlined in the following section. You are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned readings and documentary films. It is important to keep up with lectures, readings, and documentaries on a unit-by-unit basis.

The evaluation is based on 2 take-home test, 5 quizzes, and a take-home final exam (dates in the schedule).

Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#). Using the right browser is important, especially when using different features integrated with OWL. If you need technical assistance, support can be found on the [OWL Help page](#) or by contacting the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) (which can also be reached by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800).

5. Continuity of Education Plan (in-person class pivoting to online learning)

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the fall term that necessitates the university to direct courses to move away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered online, in asynchronous lecture segments (posted on OWL as MP4s for you to view at your convenience). The grading scheme *will not* change, and assignments will be conducted as planned (though extensions on the due dates may be warranted).

6. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will:

- be able to understand and explain the basic physical and anthropogenic dynamics of climate change, and how climate change threatens the stability of life on earth;
- be able to understand the deep inequalities associated with climate change with respect to past and present emissions and urgent mitigation and adaptation efforts;
- be capable of critically engaging with political debates, conflicts, and policy initiatives with respect to climate change;
- have a conceptual basis for further studies in climate change and geography more broadly;
- be inspired to think about the ethical dimensions of environmental change and take action, individually and as part of wider social movements.

7. Course Objectives and Schedule

This course is focused around a series of key subjects and burning questions, each of which are the focus of a two-week unit. The basic objective is that you will have a good grasp of answers to these questions by the end of the course.

Dates	Theme	Burning question	Assignment Dates
Sept. 8	Introduction		
Sept. 13-15 Sept. 20-22	1 Causality	How are scientists sure that the earth is warming and that this is different from natural cycles?	
Sept. 27-29 Oct. 4-6 Oct. 13	2 (soaring & insatiable) Growth	How did human societies become addicted to fossil energy?	1st film quiz: Oct. 6 Take-home test #1: presented Oct. 13
Oct. 18-20 Oct. 25-27	3 Urgency	What is a 'safe' level of warming and emissions? (and how fast do we need to get there?)	Take-home test #1: DUE: Oct. 20 @ 5 pm EST 2nd film quiz: Oct. 27
Nov. 1-7	Fall Reading Week		
Nov. 8-10 Nov. 15-17	4 Inequality	What is climate justice (and injustice?)	3rd film quiz: Nov. 17 Take-home test #2: presented Nov. 17
Nov. 22-24 Nov. 29-Dec. 1 Dec. 6-8	5 Inertia vs. Action	If climate scientists are so confident about causation and risks, why haven't major actions been taken yet? What is to be done? (or is it too late?)	Take-home test #2: DUE: Nov. 24 @ 5 pm EST 4th film quiz: Dec. 1 5th film quiz: Dec. 6
Dec. 10-21	Exam Period		Take-home final: date specified by registrar

October 11: Thanksgiving Holiday

7. Communication

- you are encouraged to check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- you should post general course-related queries (whether content or logistics) to the Forums tab in OWL, so that the clarifications can be seen by everyone (which will be organized by units and subjects as the term unfolds)
- posts in Forums and emails will get monitored daily; you can expect to receive a response in 24 – 48 hours
- some communications about the course will arrive through your university email account. It is your responsibility to ensure that email received from the University at your UWO address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

8. Evaluation

The evaluation breakdown for the course is as follows:

Assessment	Format	Weighting	Due Dates
Take-home tests	submit as Word document (.doc) through Assignments tab in OWL specified folder	50% (25% each x 2)	Presented at end of Units 2 and 4; due October 20 & November 24
Documentary film quizzes	Occur in the Tests & Quizzes tab in OWL	15% (3% each x 5)	Oct. 6, 27 Nov. 17 Dec. 1, 8
Final take-home exam	submit as Word document (.doc) through Assignments tab in OWL specified folder	35%	Presented on last day of classes; due during exam period; date to be set by registrar

Take-home tests (2 x 25% = 50% of course grade)

At the conclusion of units 2 & 4, you will be presented with a take-home test. You will have one week to prepare and submit each test on OWL (due on 11.59 pm EST on Oct. 20 and Nov. 24). You are expected to draw upon both the course lectures and assigned readings in your answers.

Format: Please use 12 pt. font, double space, and save and submit your work as a Word document. You can follow whatever formatting convention you are comfortable with (just be sure to follow it correctly and consistently)

Save as: LASTNAME-FIRSTNAME-Test#.doc

Submit: on OWL via Turnitin (see statement in policies below)

Due: October 20 and November 24 at 5 pm EST.

Documentary film quizzes (15% of course grade)

On 5 specified days, you are expected complete a short quiz (available on OWL) about the documentary film that accompanies the unit.

Final take-home exam (35% of course grade)

The final take-home exam will be presented to you on the final day of classes, Wednesday, December 8. The due date will be in the final exam period as specified by the registrar, and it will be submitted on OWL. You are expected to draw upon **both** the course lectures and assigned readings in your answers.

Late policy

- late take-home tests and final exam without illness self-reports face a late penalty of 10%/day
- late take-home tests and final exam with illness self-reports should be submitted within 24 hours of submission of the last illness self-report; beyond that there is a late penalty of 10%/day

Notes on grading

- plagiarized or copied work will receive a grade of **zero** (see notes on academic offences below).
- after an assessment is returned, if you have concerns you should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting your TA. To ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days
- click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The following table outlines the University-wide grade descriptors:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: You are responsible for your grades in this course.

9. Make-up Tests, Quizzes, and Exam

A make-up test, quiz, or final exam will only be granted with approved documentation. If documentation is not received within 48 hours of the due dates, a grade of zero will be assigned.

The content and form of make-up assessments may differ substantially from the original.

10. Professionalism, Privacy, and Online Etiquette

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:

- students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL
- all course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course
- be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing
- be professional and scholarly in all online postings: cite the ideas of others appropriately and be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment. “Flaming” is never appropriate.

11. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

For the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

13. How to be successful in this class

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

- 1) Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
- 2) Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
- 3) Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Treat this course as you would a face-to-face course. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more

effectively than just reading or watching the videos.

- 4) Connect with others. Try forming an online study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
- 5) Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor and/or teaching assistant.
- 6) Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.

14. Information on COVID-19

Masking Guidelines

Students will be expected to wear triple layer, non-medical, paper masks at all times in the classroom as per University policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask must seek formal accommodation through Western Accessible Education, and present medical documentation.

Students are not permitted to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks.

Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Dean, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Course Absences due to Daily COVID Screening Questionnaire

Missed assessments (e.g., take home tests, quizzes, final) require formal academic considerations.

15. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

16. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about "Accessibility at Western" is available.

17. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

18. Support Services

[Western's Support Services](#)
[Student Development Centre](#)

19. Important Dates

September 8: Classes resume

September 16: Last day to add a first term half course

October 11: Thanksgiving Holiday – Department Office Closed

November 1 to November 7: Fall Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

November 12: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

November 30: Last day to drop a full course without penalty

December 8: Classes end

December 9: Study day

December 10-21: Examination Period