

# GEOG 1200A: The Climate Emergency

## Course Outline – Section 001 – Fall 2022

This course is taught in-person



### 1. Course Information

|         | Delivery Mode | Day/Time              | Location |
|---------|---------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Lecture | In-person     | Mondays 10.30-12.30   | SSC-2500 |
| Lecture | In-person     | Thursdays 11.30-12.30 | SSC-2500 |

| Course Instructor   | Contact Information | Office hours             |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Dr. Tony Weis       | tony.weis@uwo.ca    | Mondays 1-2 pm, SSC 1403 |
| Teaching Assistants |                     |                          |
| Daniel Amoak        | damoak@uwo.ca       |                          |
| Derrick Kessie      | dkessie@uwo.ca      |                          |

| Classes Start | Reading Week     | Classes End | Study day(s) | Exam Period      |
|---------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| September 8   | Oct. 31 – Nov. 6 | December 8  | December 9   | December 10 - 22 |

September 16, 2022: Last day to add a first-term half course

October 10, 2022: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 12, 2022: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

- Please use OWL Forums for questions about course content and logistics (see Communication below).
- Dr. Weis will be available immediately after every class and has office hours on Mondays, 1-2 pm.

## 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

There is no required textbook and all readings for each unit are available on OWL in the unit folders (in the Resources tab).

The PowerPoint slides also provide an abundance of additional links to encourage to dig deeper into subjects you are most interested in, and these links are also intended to provide sparks for the online discussion segment of the course.

## 4. Format

The course content is organized into 6 units, as outlined below, which are based upon in-person lectures and readings. There are 3 lecture hours per week, though the 2-hour session will rarely run the full 2-hours. The readings for each of the 6 units should take about 2-3 hours in total. All PowerPoints will be posted to OWL at pdfs shortly after each lecture.

You are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned readings, and it is important to keep up with lecture material and readings on a unit-by-unit basis. The evaluation is based on 2 midterm tests, contributions to online discussions, and a 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. Course Objectives and Schedule

This course centers on a series of key subjects and burning questions, each of which are the focus of a two-week unit (save for a single one-week unit). The basic objective of the course is that you will have a good grasp of answers to these questions by the end of the term.

| Unit | Dates          | Theme  | Burning question   |
|------|----------------|--|--|
|      | Sept. 8        | Course Introduction                              |  |
| 1    | Sept. 12       | <b>Causality</b>                                 | How are scientists sure that the earth is warming and that this is different from natural cycles?          |
|      | Sept. 15       |  |  |
|      | Sept. 19       |  |  |
|      | Sept. 22       |  |  |
| 2    | Sept. 26       | (soaring & insatiable)<br><b>Growth</b>          | How did human societies become addicted to fossil energy?  |
|      | Sept. 29       |  |  |
|      | Oct. 3         |  |  |
|      | Oct. 6         |  |  |
|      | Oct. 10        | Thanksgiving, no class                           |  |
|      | Oct. 13        | <b>TEST #1 (25%)</b>                             |  |
| 3    | Oct. 17        | <b>Urgency</b>                                   | What is a 'safe' level of warming and emissions?<br>(+ how much and how fast must we change to get there?) |
|      | Oct. 20        |  |  |
|      | Oct. 24        |  |  |
|      | Oct. 27        |  |  |
|      | Oct. 31-Nov. 6 | Fall Reading Week                                |  |
| 4    | Nov. 7         | <b>Inequality</b>                                | What is climate justice (and injustice)?   |
|      | Nov. 10        |  |  |
|      | Nov. 14        |  |  |
|      | Nov. 17        | <b>TEST #2 (25%)</b>                             |  |
| 5    | Nov. 21        | <b>Inertia</b>                                   | If climate scientists are so confident about causation and risks, why isn't sufficient action being taken? |
|      | Nov. 24        |  |  |
| 6    | Nov. 28        | <b>Action</b>                                    | What is to be done?  |
|      | Dec. 1         |  |  |
|      | Dec. 5         |  |  |
|      | Dec. 8         |  |  |
|      | Dec. 10-22     | <b>FINAL EXAM (35%), date TBA in exam period</b> |  |

October 10: Thanksgiving holiday (no classes)

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

December 9: Study day

## 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. 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)
- queries posted 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

Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.

| Assessment        | Format   | Weighting             | Dates                             |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Term tests        | Multiple choice and short answer                       | 50%<br>(25% each x 2) | October 13<br>&<br>November 17    |
| Online discussion | Occurs in the <b>Forums</b> tab in OWL                 | 15%                   | ongoing                           |
| Final exam        | Multiple choice, short answer, and paragraph responses | 35%                   | TBA in exam period:<br>Dec. 10-22 |

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

**Term tests (2 x 25% = 50% of course grade) add Final exam (35% of course grade)**

The term tests are a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions, and the final exam combines multiple choice, short answer, and paragraph responses. Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned readings. More detailed instructions will be given in advance of both mid-term and final.

If you fail to write the term tests or the final exam on the scheduled time you will be given zero, unless you communicate with me *prior to* the exam. Exam absences require a note from your physician (see note on special examination policy below).

**Online discussion (15% of course grade)**

This course covers a lot of subjects that are in the news on a daily basis, and the lectures and PowerPoints regularly highlight contemporary news stories, reports, animations, and short videos. The PDFs of the PowerPoint slides contain an abundance of embedded links to these additional resources, and the online discussion is intended to encourage you to dig into those subjects that you are most interested in digging into further.

The basic expectation for this segment of the course is that you will post at least one reflection per unit (of at least 200 words) that discusses one or more of the links contained in the slides. These posts can summarize key aspects of a story, report, animation, or video to your peers, and why it is important, and might also discuss multiple links in relation to each other or indicate key concerns or questions that you have (be sure to mark your post with clear explanatory headings). If the item you intend to comment on has already been written about by one of your peers at the time you are posting, you should add to that thread, in which case the point is not simply to agree or disagree but to add something constructive to the conversation – and do so in a respectful manner.

The opportunity to comment on the material for each unit will be closed at the point the next unit begins in the Monday class at 10.30 am. Participation will be assessed over the term as a whole, and top marks will be awarded to those who consistently make meaningful contributions over the course of the entire term (consistency means participating in at least 5 of the 6 units; i.e. you can take one unit off).

**Notes on grading**

- after a test 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. Use of Electronic Devices

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

## 10. 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

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness - Undergraduate Students](#)

[Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#)

### 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](#).

## 11. Make-up Tests and Exam

Makeups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided to the Academic Counselling Office within 48 hours of the scheduled exam, otherwise the instructor will assign a grade of zero.

The format and content of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

## 12. 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.

### **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.

- 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.
- make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
- 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.
- connect with others. Try forming an online study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
- 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.
- 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. Continuity of Education Plan (in-person class pivoting to online learning)**

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the university to direct courses move away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

### **15. 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., tests and final exams) require formal [academic considerations](#) (typically through academic counselling).

## **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](#).

## **16. Western's Commitment to Accessibility**

The Department of Geography and Environment 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 10: Thanksgiving Holiday – Department Office Closed

October 31 to November 6: 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