

GEOG 4450F – Climate Change and Collective Action Course Outline: Fall 2024

This course is taught in-person

1. Course Information

*Details about design and delivery of the course are listed below in Sections 4-8



Classes Start	Fall Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
September 5	October 14-20	December 6	December 7 & 8	December 9-22

September 13, 2024: Last day to add a second-term half course

October 14, 2024: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 30, 2024: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty



Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours
Dr. Carol Hunsberger	chunsber@uwo.ca	See OWL

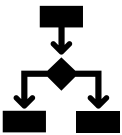
Office hours will be held in person.

2. Calendar Description

Explores the role of collective action in addressing the climate crisis. Examines theories of the state, civil society and social change, and historic and ongoing tactics of social and environmental movements. Urges shifting the focus of action from “what can I do?” toward “what can we do?” [2 lecture hours, 2 tutorial hours, 0.5 course]

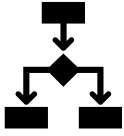
Extended description

The course explores how a variety of strategies to push for social change can inform efforts to address the climate crisis. We begin by reviewing the challenge of achieving a just transition and consider how the scale and urgency of this task – deeply rooted in capitalist and colonial power structures – goes beyond the level of individual lifestyle choices. Deep decarbonization and climate justice perspectives will be compared. Theories of democracy set the stage for exploring the potential and limits of working within, against, and outside existing institutions. Student presentations will profile the tactics and achievements of historical and ongoing social movements focused on the environment, independence struggles, labour issues, anti-discrimination, and more. Students will spend the tutorials planning and carrying out a climate change action as a group, using one of the strategies studied in class. This could involve preparing a delegation to meet with a politician, running a public education campaign, lobbying the university to take a specific action, or organizing an event alongside one of London’s existing community organizations, among other possibilities.



Prerequisites

Third- or fourth-year status and at least two of: Geography 1200A/B, 2133A/B, 3350A/B, 3443F/G, 3446F/G, or permission of the instructor.



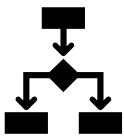
Prerequisite checking is the student's responsibility. Senate Regulations state, "unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

3. Readings



All assigned readings, videos and other resources will be freely available through OWL, except for the film *Don't Look Up* (Week 11), which at the time of writing is only available on Netflix. In addition to required readings, each week several Further Resources are provided. While these are not mandatory, they are recommended: reading (or watching) them will extend and enrich the week's discussion.

4. Format



- Barring illness, attendance is expected in this small, in-person, interactive course. Full participation in all classroom discussions and tutorial activities is necessary for students to successfully achieve the course learning outcomes.
- Engaging in collective action – that is, undertaking a hands-on activity designed by the class – is the centrepiece of the course. All students are expected to contribute equitably to this effort. It is up to the group to determine a fair division of tasks and responsibilities.
- Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned readings and films. All of these are considered testable content for the final oral exam.
- All course material will be posted to the new [OWL Brightspace](#) learning environment. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.
- All popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace. Please update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.
- For technical assistance, students can consult the [OWL Brightspace Help page](#) or contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) (phone: 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800).

5. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze how capitalism and colonialism intersect with climate change and climate action;
- Discuss how theories of democracy inform efforts for social change;
- Explain the rationale behind various tactics for collective action, using historical examples;
- Articulate a personal position on whether and under what conditions various tactics can be justified;
- Demonstrate the intellectual, logistical and interpersonal skills needed to plan and execute a collective action on climate change;
- Express compelling and well-supported arguments, orally and in writing.



6. Course Content and Schedule

Theme	Week	Date	Topic	Readings (access through OWL)	Reflection paper due dates
Introduction	1	Sep 5	Course overview	Lukacs 2017 Guardian 2022	
System Change	2	Sep 10,12	Capitalism vs the climate	Klein 2015 Intro Adler 2015	One reflection: Sep 9 or 16
	3	Sep 17, 19	Colonialism vs the climate	Coulthard 2013 LaDuke & Cowen 2020	
Big Ideas	4	Sep 24, 26	Decarbonization vs Climate justice	Jaccard 2020 Timperley 2021	One reflection: Sep 23 or 30
	5	Oct 1, 3	Democracy, freedom, responsibility	Taylor 2018 (video) D'Arcy 2013 Ch 3	
'Working within' state and other institutions	6	Oct 8, 10	Politics and policies	Routledge et al 2018 OWF 2021 (video)	One reflection: Oct 7 or 21
	-	Oct 14-18	Reading Week: no class, tutorial or readings		
	7	Oct 22, 24	Divestment	Rowe et al. 2016 D'Arcy 2014	
Direct Action	8	Oct 29, 31	Blockades	Simpson 2021 McCreary 2020	One reflection: Oct 28 or Nov 4
	9	Nov 5, 7	Sabotage	Malm 2021 D'Arcy 2013 Ch 6	
Prefiguration	10	Nov 12, 14	'Being the change you wish to see'	Jeffrey & Dyson 2021	One reflection: Nov 11 or 18
	11	Nov 19, 21	Black and Indigenous futurity	Gergan & Curley 2023 Barnes 2021	
Swimming Upstream	12	Nov 26, 28	Grief and frustration	McKay 2021 (film) Monbiot 2022	No reflections
	13	Dec 3, 5	Hope and progress	Taylor 2021 Klein 2015 Conclusion	

7. Communication



- Updates will be provided using OWL announcements. Please opt in to receiving OWL announcements by email
- Students are responsible for checking their **UWO e-mail address** in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO e-mail accounts [here](#)
- Instructor emails will be checked daily; students will receive a response in 24 – 48 hours

8. Evaluation



Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any changes will be communicated. Detailed instructions on assignments will be provided separately.

Assessment	Format	Weight	Due Date
Reflection papers (5x5%)	Written (individual)	25%	See schedule
In-class presentation	Oral (individual)	20%	TBD (one per week)
Collective action: plan	Written (group)	10%	Oct 1

Collective action: report	Video or other (group)	20%	Nov 26
Final exam	Oral exam (individual)	25%	Dec. exam period

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course. Full participation in the collective action process is mandatory, though not everyone needs to perform the same tasks. Grades on the group plan and report will be based in part on confidential peer evaluations.

Submission policy

- Written assignments should be submitted through OWL, on or before the due date
- Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin (statement in policies below)
- Students will have unlimited submissions to Turnitin up to the due date

Grading

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning grading. The table below 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. 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](#).

General Information about missed work:

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here.

Any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

Flexibility statements

The reflection papers and collective action assignments already include flexibility in the form of students' choice of dates (for the reflection papers) and flexible deadlines (for the collective

action plan and report), explained further below. For this reason, academic consideration will not be given for late or missed submissions.

Absence from Course Commitments

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation.

Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Supporting documentation for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Course Assessments that Require Supporting Documentation

For this course the following assessment has been designated as requiring supporting documentation: In-class presentation. Students will sign up for dates in Week 2.

Academic Consideration for Course Components with Flexibility

Flexibility is built into the timing of the reflection papers: students can choose whether to write a reflection paper in the first or second week of each two-week unit (see Section 6). Reflection papers are due 24 hours before the class for which the week's materials are assigned (i.e. 12:30 on Monday before a 12:30 Tuesday class). Submissions received between the deadline and the start of class will be subject to a 5% late penalty. Submissions received after the start of class will not be graded, since the point of the assignment is for students to read and independently think through course material before we discuss it in class.

The collective action group plan and final report have flexible deadlines. Students are expected to submit each assignment by the deadlines listed in Section 6. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, the group may submit their assignment up to 72 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. After that, a late penalty of 5% per day will be subtracted from the assignment grade.

If you have a long-term academic consideration or an accommodation for disability that allows greater flexibility than provided here, please reach out to your instructor at least one week prior to the posted deadline.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test.

10. Make-up Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents.

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

11. Use of Electronic Devices

The instructor proposes a laptop-free classroom environment during lectures, to be discussed with the class and a decision reached during Week 1. No electronic devices will be allowed during the oral examination.

12. 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.

13. 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 any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also contact Accessible Education 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.

14. 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.

15. Support Services

Western's Support Services
Student Development Centre

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find

information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

16. Important Dates

September 5: Classes resume

September 13: Last day to add a first term half course

October 14: Thanksgiving Holiday – Department Office Closed

October 14-20: Fall Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

November 30: Last day to drop a first term half course or a full course without penalty

December 6: Classes end

December 7 and 8: Study days

December 9-22: Examination Period