

NRES 441: Climate Change Implications, Policies and Solutions

Spring 2021
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources

3 credits
Classroom: Zoom (Virtual)
Lecture: W 11-11:50 am
Discussion: Thu 9-10:50 am

Instructor

Dr. Shiba Kar

Office: TNR 180B; Meeting hours: T 10-11 am, Th 3- 4 pm or by appointment
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Course Description

Many communities and ecosystems around the world have observed warming of the climate system and changing climate patterns. This course will focus on addressing climate change implications on the sustainability of the social-ecological systems. We will explore climate change impacts on biosphere, people and societies; identify resource management and community sustainability challenges. We will introduce potential actions and approaches of climate adaptation, mitigation and policy solutions that would help students gain hands-on experience in developing resilient community and sustainable management approach of natural resources and ecosystems. To gain real-world experience of addressing climate change issues, you will be engaged in examining actual place-based impacts and community practices and developing a semester project focused on community adaptation plan.

Course Philosophy

Students learn best when they are applying what they learn. In this course, lectures will be used to illustrate important concepts and discussion will (most of the time) be focused on application of lecture and reading materials to complete your semester project successfully. I am here to facilitate your learning by providing tools, data, and assistance in finding information you need.

Learning Outcomes

In addition to the tasks listed above, students will develop several professional skills in this course. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explore and assess implications of climate change on social-ecological systems in real-world perspectives
2. Examine and apply tools and methods for adaptation planning and policy solutions of climate change
3. Strengthen skills on how to collaborate and work effectively in team-environment
4. Communicate plans and ideas in writing and orally to peers and public

Readings

All required and supplemental readings are posted in CANVAS.

Attendance and Grading

Attendance is mandatory in all lecture and discussion classes. You are also expected to actively participate in classes and complete your work on time. If you are unable to attend a lecture or discussion class, use the asynchronous participation discussion thread to earn attendance points. If any problem arises, please contact me as soon as possible. There will be no makeup assignment or exam unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor. All late assignments will be met with a 10% reduction in your grade each day (including weekends). That said, I expect this class to be fun, and you will be given multiple opportunities in class to ask questions and think about how you will apply course concepts to your case. You will also need to spend a considerable amount of time outside of class working on developing your community adaptation action plan. **Details for all group and individual assignments will be introduced in class as we progress.**

Assignments

I. Public perception survey

One of the biggest challenges in addressing climate change issues is lack of public awareness and climate literacy. To learn more about public perceptions and understanding on climate change issues, you will be assigned to a group and your group will conduct a brief in-person campus survey (3 surveys each group member). You will then compare, analyze and summarize the survey findings, review existing literature on public perceptions on climate change and submit a 2-page (about 1,000 words, single-space) written report in CANVAS.

II. Climate change impact- case study

As we explore implications of climate change on different aspects of social-ecological systems, you will be assigned to a group to select a case from a list that may include impacts on ecosystems, food and agriculture, water and sea level rise, human health, industry and energy supply. As a group, you will examine and review the relevant literature to give a detail presentation on the selected topic in class.

III. Climate action plan assessment

To be proactive in addressing climate change issues, many countries, states and local government have developed climate action plan to adapt with and mitigate the changes. To make you familiar with these action plans and to prepare you for the semester group project, each member of your group will assess a different plan from given list and, as a group, you will submit a comparative analysis of strengths and weakness of the plans with your recommendations (3-pages).

IV. Semester Group Project: Community adaptation plan and action

Based on your understanding of potential climate change impacts and familiarity of methods/strategies of climate action plans, your group will be developing a community adaptation and action plan. You will choose a county/municipality within Wisconsin (who currently does not have such plan), contact the relevant officials for more insights, data and information and, then, develop an adaptation plan and strategies for actions. This is the key lesson of this course that provides you real-world experience of utilizing existing data and information and applying tools and methods to develop an adaptation plan and find policy solutions to deal with changing climate patterns. There are three components in the

assignment—(i) you will apply a Resilient Wisconsin Menu (RWM) draft framework to assess community resilience by gathering all relevant data and information, choose a community resilience menu and based on the community preferences work on developing a plan as a draft (more than 60% complete), (ii) present the plan and ideas in class, and then, (iii) considering instructor’s and class feedback, complete the final report and submit in CANVAS. As I expect your best effort within your group project, **grades can be changed by up to 20 points** to address situations where student performance within the group does not meet expectations.

V. Climate change communication

To learn how to communicate climate change issues to public and other targeted stakeholders, this assignment will ask you to develop a 1-pager announcement with graphics and key communication messages on climate change issues to take actions.

VI. Class attendance/ participation

Attendance of class lectures and active participation in class discussion is mandatory. For days when you are unable to attend a lecture in synchronously, use the asynchronous participation discussion thread CANVAS to earn participation points.

VII. Weekly discussion/ reflections

There will be a weekly discussion thread in CANVAS. You will be asked to post key takeaways from each week's assigned readings, lectures and discussions. You can also consider posting questions, comments, news, events, photos, videos, and other relevant topics and issues of the week that help increase our understanding of climate change and policy issues.

VIII. Mid-term & Final Exam

There will be two exams consisting of multiple choice, short answers, or essay questions. The exams must be taken during the scheduled times and make-up exams will not be given unless there is a documented, valid reason for missing the scheduled exam.

Summary of Deadlines / Assignments

Due Date	Assignments	Brief Description	Points
Week 3	Group	Public perception survey	50
Week 5	Group	Impact study Presentation	50
Week 7	Group	Climate action plan assessment	50
Week 8	Individual	Mid-Term Exam	50
Week 10	Group	Community adaptation plan and action report- draft	20
Week 11	Individual	Climate change communication	30
Week 13	Group	Presentation on community adaptation plan	50
Week 15	Group	Community adaptation plan and action final report	50
Finals	Individual	Final Exam	50
Assignments must be submitted to CANVAS unless otherwise noted.			
All weeks	Individual	Class attendance/participation	50
All weeks	Individual	Weekly discussion/reflections	50
Total			500

Percentage ranges for letter grades

A	93-100%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	60-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	F	below 60%
B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%		

Academic Integrity, CANVAS, and turnitin.com

Familiarize yourself with the academic honesty policy of UWSP. In a nutshell, if you cheat, plagiarize, or turn in work other than your own, you will at a minimum receive a zero on that assignment. The CANVAS dropboxes are linked to turnitin.com. This means that everything you submit is compared to multiple other sources to check for originality. We encourage you to turn in a copy of your work early and check the report generated by turnitin.com. If there are issues with originality, you can address them and then turn in another copy of your work, thus negating any chance of you losing points on your assignment for plagiarism.

Accessibility Statement

If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester. 103 Student Services Center, (715) 346-3365; TTY (715) 346-3363; www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm

Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and schedule when necessary to meet the learning needs of the students, compensate for cancelled classes or other unforeseen circumstances.

		Topic	Reading	Assignments: **Due: Friday at 11:59 pm to CANVAS
Week 1 Jan 27-28	Lecture	Syllabus, icebreaker – Overview on Climate Change Issues		
	Discussion	Begin: Survey and literature review on climate change perception History of Earth’s climate (Eggleton 2013, Ch. 8, 9)		
Week 2 Feb 3-4	Lecture	Factors forcing climate change	NASA: http://climate.nasa.gov/causes/	
	Discussion	Reading Discussion (Eggleton 2013, Ch. 3 & 4)		
Week 3 Feb 10-11	Lecture	Climate change research, models, and predictions	IPCC Synthesis Report for Policymakers	**Survey results summary
	Discussion	Survey results Discussion Begin: Climate change impact- case study		
Week 4 Feb 17-18	Lecture	Climate change impacts on Biosphere and societies	NOAA: http://www.noaa.gov/topic-tags/climate-impacts	
	Discussion	Reading discussion- impacts on biosphere and communities Exercise- Climate change myths and facts		
Week 5 Feb 24-25	Lecture	Impact case study presentations	https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/	Case Studies (In-class)
	Discussion	Impact case study presentations Begin: Climate action plan assessment assignment		
Week 6 Mar 3-4	Lecture	Climate change adaptation	NRC- National Academies 2010; IPCC Report on Adaptation; U.S. Climate Resilience toolkit	
	Discussion	Reading Discussion Begin: Project on community adaptation plan and action		
Week 7 Mar 10-11	Lecture	Climate-Smart conservation and Community resiliency	Stein et al. 2014. Climate-Smart Conservation: Putting Adaptation Principles into Practice;	**Action plan assessment
	Discussion	Work session: adaptation planning; Exam review		
Week 8 Mar 17-18	Lecture	Mid-Term Exam	EPA community-based adaptation 2015; WICCI report	Mid-Term Exam
	Discussion	Discussion on place-based evidence and practices Work session on community adaptation plan		

		Spring Break!		
Week 9 Mar 31- Apr 1	Lecture	Climate change, culture and Traditional ecological knowledge	UCS: Importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, 2017; Tribal adaptation toolkit: https://toolkit.climate.gov/tool/tribal-climate-change-adaptation-planning-toolkit	
	Discussion	Work Session: Traditional practices in tribal lands		
Week 10 Apr 7-8	Lecture	Climate change communication and raising public awareness	Yale Climate Change communication program: https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/	** Draft project report due
	Discussion	Work session: Effective climate change communication Begin: climate communication assignment		
Week 11 Apr 14-15	Lecture	Climate change mitigation	IPCC 2014: Report- Mitigation; U.S. CC mitigation: https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/response-strategies/mitigation	**Climate change communication piece due
	Discussion	Work Session: Energy, greenhouse gas metrics and mitigation pathways		
Week 12 Apr 21-22	Lecture	Climate change and economics	RFF Paper (2006): The Economics of Climate Change	
	Discussion	Work Session and reading discussion Work with your group on completing adaptation project presentations		
Week 13 Apr 28-29	Lecture	Policy tools: carbon trade, tax, dividend	OECD 2015. Climate Change Mitigation: Policies and Progress, Ch 1	**Project group presentations (in class)
	Discussion	Group presentations		
Week 14 May 5-6	Lecture	Climate policy and negotiations	UNFCCC 2015_ Paris Agreement; https://unfccc.int/documents ; https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs	
	Discussion	Work session: Mitigation policy tools and practices; policy debate		
Week 15 May 12-13	Lecture	Climate change and sustainable development		**Project report due
	Discussion	Work session: Global vs local initiatives; Final exam review		
Final Exam: Available in CANVAS 5/18 @ 6 am to 5/20 @ 6 am				