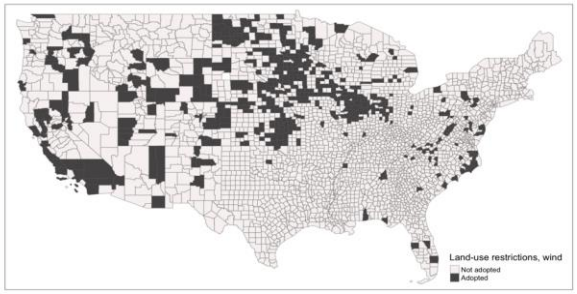

Climate Change Governance: SMEA 521

Autumn 2023 (3 CR)
MW, 2:30 – 3:50, Condon Hall 139

Instructor: Professor Nives Dolšak
nives@uw.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00-2:00 and Thursdays 3:30-4:30 pm, MAR 111

Course Description
Why would individuals, communities, countries, and firms invest resources to design, adopt, and implement policies to protect the global atmosphere? After all, this is an open access resource in that no government, firm, or individual can be prevented from benefitting from somebody else's action. Hence, it makes most sense to simply wait for others to do the work (incentives for freeriding are imminent). For example, the data from the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions indicate that only thirteen U.S. states and the District of Columbia have enacted carbon pricing to signal the social cost of carbon.

Furthermore, mitigation efforts are likely to impose non-trivial costs on the economy, with costs concentrated in specific sectors that have the incentives to organize and oppose climate change regulation. For example, 25% of U.S. counties have enacted local regulations restricting wind farms (map above). Between 2008 and 2021, over fifty utility-scale wind, solar, and geothermal energy projects were delayed or blocked in U.S. At the same time, adaptation to global climate change is an easier sell for individuals, communities, and firms. An entity funding adaptation only funds the adaptation needed for its unit, not for everybody else around the globe. Further, if mitigation and/or adaptation efforts result in the development of a new technology that can be protected by intellectual property rights, acting fast can lead to the creation of a marketable product and future revenues. Communities, individuals, and firms, therefore, balance the costs and benefits of mitigating and adapting to global climate change.

However, decision-makers are not guided only by cost considerations. They respond to ethical principles and opportunities for leadership created by pressures from voters and/or consumers, demanding cleaner, more resilient and sustainable communities, and sustainable products. As expressing these preferences requires overcoming collective choice dilemmas, non-governmental organizations frequently step in to frame the issues, organize and mobilize collective action (e.g., Climate Strike), and frequently even develop policy solutions. To study and impact climate change mitigation and adaptation governance, we need to draw on multiple academic disciplines that enable us to understand the problem of climate change, its impacts across communities, the framing of this problem for policymakers, the solutions available, and the policy instruments likely to lead to the implementation of these technologies and change of behavior.

Learning Objectives

(1) Advance the understanding of the nature of global climate change problems and how they are framed in a policy discourse;
(2) Understand how such (i) frames, (ii) interests and (iii) power of various policy actors, as well as (iv) political institutions, influence political feasibility of climate policies in the U.S., their adoption and implementation;
(3) Increase the capacity for democratic dialogue and civic engagement by learning how to speak/write about climate change governance in layman terms.

Course organization

This course takes a two-prong approach to the study of climate change governance: theoretical and applied. We will learn how policy process theories suggest a policy problem emerges, how policy solutions are devised and negotiated, as well as how they are implemented. At the same time, we will examine how these theoretical elements manifest themselves in climate change governance.

I use the Socratic method. Our class sessions are based on inquiry, asking questions, and probing key aspects of our answers. The goal of these discussions is to discern relationships among the concepts we are studying. To be well prepared for such a discussion, students have to read the assigned readings in advance, define the core concepts, and begin identifying relationships among them. Writing a discussion question in advance greatly enhances the ability to critically engage with these readings in class discussions.

Course assignments

	Maximum points
INDIVIDUAL WORK	
Discussion questions and participation in the class discussions Five discussion questions are required, each maximum 4 points	20
Voting record analysis for climate/energy/land use/transportation votes of an elected WA state legislators from your district	25
Team member assessment	5
TEAM WORK	
Summary of each team meeting posted on the discussion board	Not graded
Stakeholder analysis presentation	5
Stakeholder analysis written report; individual student's part	15
Stakeholder analysis written report; coherence of the coalition examination and the entire report	10
TOTAL	80

Please see the Canvas course site for detailed description of the assignments.

Readings

I expect students to read the assigned readings PRIOR to the class session and come prepared to discuss them in class. Readings for each class session are listed on Canvas in each respective weekly module.

Required textbook:
Birkland, Thomas A. 2020. 5th edition. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. Available in the UW bookstore and in the UW Libraries (electronic format).

Schedule and Readings for Weeks 1-3
(schedule and readings for weeks 4-11 are available on the Canvas course site; see respective weekly modules)

Week 1: September 27: Introduction
Birkland, Ch. 1.

Week 2: October 2 & 4 (DQ1): Climate change, a global, national, and local problem
Most of this week's readings are fairly long and technical. Skim them to identify the most important aspects of climate change problems.

Monday:
IPCC, 2022: Summary for Policymakers [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, M. Tignor, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem (eds.)]. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 3–33, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.001. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

United National Environmental Programme. (2022). Executive Summary. In *Emissions Gap Report 2022: The Window is Closing*. UNEP, Nairobi. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/40932/EGR2022_ESEN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (Skim to identify key priorities for change in our policies and/or behavior.)

Wednesday:
EPA (2023). Executive Summary. In Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2021. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA 430-R-23-002. https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/US-GHG-Inventory-2023-Chapter-Executive-Summary.pdf

EPA. Climate Change Indicators (Familiarize yourself with the indicators and identify trends.)
EPA. Climate Change Indicators: Weather and Climate. https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators/weather-climate
EPA. Climate Change Indicators: Oceans. https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators/oceans
EPA. Climate Change Indicators: Snow and Ice. https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators/snow-ice
EPA. Climate Change Indicators: Health and Society. https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators/health-society
EPA. Climate Change Indicators: Ecosystems. https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators/ecosystems

Raymond, C.L, T.P. Nadreau, M. Rogers, Z. Kearl. 2022. Biophysical Climate Risks and Economic Impacts for Washington State. Report prepared for the Washington State legislature. Climate Impacts Group, University of Washington, Seattle. https://doi.org/10.6069/D7JK-D188 (Read pages 15-30)

Week 3: October 9 & 11 (DQ1): Policymaking system and its elements
Monday:
Birkland, Thomas A. 2020. An Introduction to the Policy Process. Chapter 2: Elements of the Policy Making System.

Aton, Adam. 2020. Try to be serious. Climate policy gets rare notice in chaotic presidential debate. https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/09/try-be-serious-climate-policy-gets-rare-notice-chaotic-presidential-debate

PEW Research Center. Important Issues in the 2020 Elections. https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/08/13/important-issues-in-the-2020-election/

Dolšak, N. and A. Prakash. 2020. Republicans embrace local environmental issues in competitive races. Forbes.com. https://www.forbes.com/sites/prakashdolsak/2020/09/23/republicans-embrace-local-environmental-issues-in-competitive-races/#416f2c362e10

Wednesday:

Birkland, Thomas A. 2020. An Introduction to the Policy Process. Chapter 3: The Context of Public Policy Making (skim to understand how the U.S. federal policy process context changes over time).

H.Res. 109 – Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal. 116th Congress (2019-2020) https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text If you wish to read the H.Res. 332, 117th Congress (Green New Deal reintroduced in 117th congress), you can access it here: https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-resolution/332/text?r=5&s=1

The White House. 2021. Updated Fact Sheet: Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/08/02/updated-fact-sheet-bipartisan-infrastructure-investment-and-jobs-act/

The White House. 2022. Fact Sheet: How the Inflation Reduction Act Builds a Better Future for Young Americans. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/16/fact-sheet-how-the-inflation-reduction-act-builds-a-better-future-for-young-americans/

Course and University Policies

Please see the course Canvas site for detailed description of the following policies:

- RECORDING AND FILE USE AGREEMENT
- CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT
- USE OF DEVICES DURING THE LECTURE
- DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
- DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS
- RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS
- LATE SUBMISSION POLICY
- INCOMPLETE GRADE
- ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
- STUDENT ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES
- SAFETY
- SEX- AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARRASSMENT