

HIST 008: GLOBAL WARMING

CORONAVIRUS SYLLABUS



Essential Information:

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:15.

Professor: Dr. [Dagomar Degroot](#).

TA: Maddie Bowen.

Professor's email: dd865@georgetown.edu.

TA's email: mlb339@georgetown.edu.

Professor's Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00 by Zoom

TA's Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30

Course Website: warmingmodule.weebly.com

Course Description:

The world is warming, and it is warming fast. The culprit: carbon dioxide, methane, and other “greenhouse gases” added to our atmosphere by human industry and agriculture. Average global temperatures are now nearly one degree Celsius higher than they were midway through the twentieth century.

Around the world, weather is getting “weird.” Tropical cyclones, droughts, torrential rains, heat waves, and even cold snaps are all more severe than they used to be. In developed societies, such weather has led to thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in lost economic productivity. In impoverished societies, it has worsened existing social inequalities and driven migration in ways that have provoked civil wars. Ever more extreme weather in our warmer future could threaten the survival of rich and poor countries alike.

This module will take you beyond the science of global warming. We will explore how scientists discovered human-caused climate change, how they communicated the threat to the public, and why they have failed to motivate the kind of political action that will save us from catastrophic “climate breakdown.” We will investigate the causes for global warming denial, analyse the possible social and political consequences of climate change, the evaluate the case for climate “determinism.” You should emerge with a better understanding of what may be seminal issue of our lives.



Course Goals:

Like other courses offered by the Department of History, this course will help you:

1. Gain a deeper appreciation of the nature and practice of history as a discipline, and as the study, based on evidence, of human experiences, interactions, and relationships as they change over time.
2. Learn that history does not consist of a simple succession of self-evident facts, and that evidence-based interpretation and analysis are central to all historical work.
3. Hone reading, writing, and oral communication skills.
4. Develop your capacity to think historically: to situate events and developments in their historical context for the purpose of critical analysis.
5. Expand your ability to engage with complex causal analysis, and to articulate arguments that integrate supporting evidence and analytical commentary.
6. View the world from perspectives other than your own.

This course in particular will also help you:

1. Appreciate the significance of, and deep context for, anthropogenic global warming.
2. Understand complex relationships between climate change and humanity, in the past, present, and future.
3. Broaden your appreciation for diverse scholarly disciplines, and their distinct ways of deciphering the past.

Breakdown:

Weekly Quizzes:	20%
“Tipping Points” Article:	40%
Final Test:	40%

Evaluation:

“Tipping Points” Article:

Visit ClimateTippingPoints.com. Use the tools listed on the site to write a short (roughly 750-word) article that explains the projected consequences of global warming in an American county over the coming century. Your essay will tell our readers: 1) How climate change will affect a local environment; 2) How we know; and 3) How the local environmental consequences of climate change may influence peoples’ lives.

You can bring in additional information from newspapers or scholarly articles. You should also include maps or graphs that visualize the impact of climate change on a particular place, so long as you are able to explain how they were made. With your consent, I will edit your article and publish it on our website. You may remain anonymous if you choose.

I have written a template on Washington, DC that should give you an idea of what I am looking for. We will also discuss how to write the article in class. Please submit your papers through Canvas, with maps or graphs embedded within the document.

Final Test:

This short test consists of six short essay questions, of which you must answer three. I will give you many more details during our Zoom sessions.

Grading Criteria:

Each of these criteria will be worth approximately a third of your grade:

Clarity:

Are you using words that appropriately and formally express your meaning? Are your points sourced correctly? Do your sentences precisely express your meaning, and are they grammatically correct? Is there a clear thesis that presents an argument and outlines how that argument will be defended? Is there a coherent organization that culminates in a conclusion that references the thesis?

Research:

Are your secondary sources serious works of scholarship, and are they relevant to your argument? Do your primary sources illuminate the issue you are investigating, and to what extent? Are those primary sources relevant to your argument, and do you present them in the context of your secondary sources?

Ideas:

How creative and nuanced are your arguments? Are you merely repeating the claims of other scholars, or are you evaluating them in the context of other arguments and concepts? To what extent can you develop fresh ideas?

Important Notes:

House Rules:

Please mute your microphone when you join our Zoom sessions – but be sure to unmute when you have something to say.

Submitting Assignments:

Your Tipping Points submission is due at 11:59 PM. Any assignment submitted after that time is automatically marked as late on Canvas. Late assignments will receive a 2%/day penalty. I will

not grade assignments that are more than one week late, unless you have negotiated an extension with me (see below).

Extensions:

Your Tipping Points assignments will be due near the end of the semester, so although you may ask me for a short extension – and I will grant it if you do – bear in mind that I cannot accept submissions after May 8th.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is not just about copying someone else’s writing. Any time you present ideas without correctly citing them, you are committing plagiarism. This is the most serious intellectual offense you can commit in academia, and your professors take it very seriously.

It is **your** responsibility to familiarize yourself with the [Georgetown University Undergraduate Honor System](#). It is your professor’s duty to refer academic misconduct - including plagiarism – to the Georgetown Honor Council. If the Council decides that you have plagiarized, you will fail this class and suffer additional penalties.

Schedule:

- *Please complete all weekly readings by Tuesday, and try to complete your readings in the order listed.*
- *Remember: we will meet on Zoom, using the link provided in Canvas.*

Week 1: Introductions

March 5

Readings:

1. Sam White, Christian Pfister, and Franz Mauelshagen (editors), *The Palgrave Handbook of Climate History*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. “Chapter 38: From Climatology to Climate Science in the Twentieth Century,” “Chapter 25: Climate from 1800 to 1970 in North America and Europe,” and “Chapter 26: Global Warming (1970-Present)” (that’s pages 605-632 and 309-328). Available through our library website.

Week 2: The Anthropocene and the Great Acceleration

March 17: CLASS CANCELLED

March 19

Readings:

1. Steffen, Will et al., “The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives.” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 369:1938 (2011): 842-867.
2. Lewis, Simon L., and Mark A. Maslin, “Defining the Anthropocene.” *Nature* 519:7542 (2015): 171-180.
3. Waters, Colin N. et al. “The Anthropocene is functionally and stratigraphically distinct from the Holocene.” *Science* 351:6269 (2016).
4. McNeill, J.R. and Peter Engelke, *The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene since 1945*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. “Introduction” and “Chapter 2: Climate and Biological Diversity” (that’s pages 1-6 and 63-102). Available through our library website.

Week 3: Agriculture and the Countryside

March 24
March 26

Readings:

1. Ingram, B. Lynn and Frances Malamud-Roam. *The West Without Water: What past Floods, Droughts, and Other Climatic Clues Tell Us about Tomorrow*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015. “Chapter 13: Future Climate Change and the American West” and “Chapter 2: The 1861–1862 Floods: Lessons Lost” (pages 190-203 and 27-40). Available through our library website.
2. Worster, Donald. *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, 2004. “Introduction,” “Chapter 1: The Black Blizzards,” “Chapter 5: Sodbusting” (pages 3-8, 10-25, and 80-98). Find it here: <https://www.fulcrum.org/concern/monographs/41687h57c>
3. Glotter, Michael, and Joshua Elliott. “Simulating US agriculture in a modern Dust Bowl drought.” *Nature Plants* 3:1 (2016): 1-6.

Week 4: Migration and Violence

March 31
April 2

Readings:

1. Brosig, Max et al. “Implications of Climate Change for the U.S. Army.” https://climateandsecurity.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/implications-of-climate-change-for-us-army_army-war-college_2019.pdf.
2. Kelley, Colin P. et al. “Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought.” *Proceedings of the national Academy of Sciences* 112:11 (2015): 3241-3246.

3. Werrell, Caitlin E., Francesco Femia, and Troy Sternberg. "Did we see it coming?: State fragility, climate vulnerability, and the uprisings in Syria and Egypt." *SAIS review of international affairs* 35:1 (2015): 29-46.
4. Selby, Jan, Omar S. Dahi, Christiane Fröhlich, and Mike Hulme, "Climate change and the Syrian civil war revisited." *Political Geography* 60 (2017): 232-244.

Week 5: Urban Adaptations

April 6: EXXON PAPERS ESSAY DUE

Readings:

1. Cohen, Joel E. "Cities and Climate Change: A Review Essay." *Population and Development Review* 45:2 (2019): 425-435.
2. Fan, Qin, and Meri Davlasheridze. "Economic Impacts Of Migration And Brain Drain After Major Catastrophe: The Case Of Hurricane Katrina." *Climate Change Economics (CCE)* 10, no. 01 (2019): 1-21.
3. Molinaroli, Emanuela, Stefano Guerzoni, and Daniel Suman. "Do the Adaptations of Venice and Miami to Sea Level Rise Offer Lessons for Other Vulnerable Coastal Cities?" *Environmental management* 64:4 (2019): 391-415.
4. Liao, Kuei-Hsien. "Living with Floods: Ecological Wisdom in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta." In *Ecological Wisdom*, pp. 195-215. Springer, Singapore, 2019.

Week 6: Communication and Denial

April 14

April 16

In class movie: *Merchants of Doubt*

Readings:

1. Cook, John, Naomi Oreskes, et al. "Consensus on consensus: a synthesis of consensus estimates on human-caused global warming." *Environmental Research Letters* 11:4 (2016).
2. *The Palgrave Handbook of Climate History*, "Chapter 14: The Denial of Global Warming" (pages 149-171). Available through our library website.
3. Howe, Joshua P. "The Stories We Tell." *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 42:3 (2012): 244-254.
4. Hulme, Mike. "Why we disagree about climate change." Available at: <https://www.mikehulme.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/Hulme-Carbon-Yearbook.pdf>.

Week 7: Forecasting the Future; Finding Solutions

April 21: Q and A with [Victoria Herrmann](#)

April 23

Readings:

1. “Global Warming of 1.5° C: Summary for Policymakers.” IPCC. Available at: http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf.
2. Wallace-Wells, David. “We’re Getting a Clearer Picture of the Climate Future.” *New York Magazine*, 2019. Available at: <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/12/climate-change-worst-case-scenario-now-looks-unrealistic.html>.
3. Naam, Ramez. “How to decarbonize America - and the world.” TechCrunch. Available at: <https://techcrunch.com/2019/02/15/how-to-decarbonize-america-and-the-world>.
4. Adger, W. Neil et al. “Cultural dimensions of climate change impacts and adaptation.” *Nature Climate Change* 3:2 (2013): 112-117.

Week 8: Test

April 28: FINAL TEST

May 4: TIPPING POINTS ARTICLE DUE