

# Human Dimensions of Climate Change Seminar: Moving from eco-anxiety to climate resilience

HDCC 400 Spring 2022, CRN 24015, taught by Thomas Heyd, Ph.D.

This course description is © Thomas Heyd



Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland in front of the Chimborazo Volcano, by Friedrich Georg Weitsch (1806).

Instructor: Thomas Heyd, Ph.D.  
Lectures: Mondays 5:00-7:50 pm  
Classroom: Clearihue C109  
Office hours: TBA  
e-mail: [heydt@uvic.ca](mailto:heydt@uvic.ca)

**Provisional outline:** Given changing circumstances, especially in relation to Covid-19, there may be some changes to this outline throughout the course.

## Territory acknowledgment

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. This acknowledgment entails a commitment to ongoing dialogue and reconciliation with the peoples of these lands. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the UVic Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement.

## Seminar overview: Moving from eco-anxiety to climate resilience

According to the best science available (see [IPCC AR6](#)), there presently is unequivocal evidence of rapidly progressing anthropogenic climate change, and that its consequences will continue to be felt into the indefinite future. It has recently been suggested, moreover, that the combined impact of human activities on the planet may be ushering in a new geological epoch that has been christened 'The Anthropocene'.

The present Covid-19 health crisis has demonstrated that human agency can provoke natural environmental factors to unleash processes generating effects that may prove disastrous for large segments of humanity. Even while this situation has been provoking considerable anxiety, and often among younger people, we have also seen a will to think afresh the relation of humans to the natural environment in which we live, and to move forward in new, more environmentally appropriate, ways.

In this seminar, which is the capstone course of the Human Dimensions of Climate Change Minor programme, we will jointly explore paths toward climate resilience from multiple disciplinary points of view. The expectation is achieving a deeper understanding of the *human* dimensions of climate change so that we may gain a perspective from which to meaningfully engage with the present challenges as well as find a place in today's rapidly changing world.

## **Description and structure**

### *Course organisation*

In the first part of the course, we jointly read selected texts that bring in distinct perspectives on climate change and the Anthropocene in order to generate a common ground for discussion. These readings are also intended as preparation for guest lectures that address specific questions from each topic area. Class periods either are dedicated to a guest lecture or to class discussion of weekly texts assigned. Unless there is reason for re-organisation at some point in time, the course topics will follow the order set out in the course schedule (available separately from this outline). In the second part of the course, students present drafts of their own research on topics agreed upon with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Drafts are expected to lead to final course papers.

### *Student engagement and texts*

Students are expected to actively participate in all class periods, to take turns in leading class discussions, and to research and write a paper on a topic chosen by them in consultation with the instructor. There are no exams. In the first part of the course, students weekly submit written responses to readings (up to half a page), including at least one question for the guest speaker of the week. Students also take turns in leading class discussions on the required readings of the week. (A schedule will be made up in the first week of classes.)

By the third week of classes students are required to have met with the instructor to discuss a topic for their research paper. A topic should be chosen by the fourth week, and an itemised, well-developed, provisional outline of their paper project (including a one-page bibliography of relevant references) must be submitted by the fifth week. Presentations of draft essays will be scheduled in the last three weeks of classes (depending on class size). Students are expected to revise their papers on the basis of the feedback received from members of the seminar as well as the instructor. Texts for weekly class discussions, and some supplementary references relevant for the preparation of research papers, are made available online.

## **Grading**

Paper outline (5%): An itemised, well-developed, outline, including a one-page bibliography of relevant texts, should be handed in by 7 February. Outlines for topics that have not been discussed with me at least one week by 31 January will not be accepted.

Term paper (40%): An essay that focuses on climate change or the Anthropocene written from the perspective of one of the key approaches discussed in the course. The paper should be between 3,000 and 3,500 words long, double-spaced. It will function as a 'take-home exam' and will be due on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, to be uploaded to Brightspace. Late papers will only be accepted in the case for documented medical reasons or personal crisis. Further information on the paper will be made available at the beginning of the semester.

Class Presentations (40%): Two types of class discussions will be led by students. Marks will be based on quality of research and arguments presented, on appropriateness of the format of the presentations, and on leadership of class discussions.

- Presentation of assigned course readings (20%). (Course readings will be divided up for presentation among class members in the first or second week of classes).

- Seminar presentation of draft paper (20%). Draft papers should be made available to fellow class member one week before presentation date, so that everyone may acquaint themselves with the topic that will be discussed. Written feedback by each seminar member after presentations is required (see below), and may be used to sharpen final versions of course papers.

Weekly responses (10%): Weekly responses are submitted to the instructor as hard copy at the beginning of class discussion periods. No late weekly responses will be accepted. The responses should be no more than a page long, reflecting on issues raised in the particular weekly readings.

Weekly responses consist of a) an insight, b) a question or c) an objection concerning a point made in the week’s reading material. The primary point of this assignment is to prepare class discussion. You need to show that you are engaging with the reading, so perfunctory questions (such as, ‘what’s the argument on p. 99?’, ‘I don’t understand such-and-such’) are not sufficient. Instead, say *what you do* understand about the point that you are commenting on and then articulate *what is puzzling*, and *why*. (With thanks to professors Thomas Land and James Young for some of the wording.)

Once we turn to the presentation of draft papers of fellow students, responses should be in terms of constructive feedback, again submitted to the instructor and to speakers at the beginning of class.

General participation (5%): Grades will be assigned on the basis of regular attendance, as well as degree of respectfulness, quality and thoughtfulness of comments, questions, and responses to lectures and class presentations.

### Grading scale and interpretation

Percentages will convert to a letter grade according to the standard University scheme:

|             |            |            |           |
|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| A+ = 90-100 | B+ = 77-79 | C+ = 65-69 | D = 50-59 |
| A = 85-89   | B = 73-76  | C = 60-64  | F = 0-49  |
| A- = 80-84  | B- = 70-72 |            |           |

#### *What the Grading Scale Means:*

- A+, A, or A-** Earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
- B+, B, or B-** Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student’s full engagement with the course requirements and activities. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students. B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material.
- C+ or C** Earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material, adequate skills to work with the course material are displayed, and the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
- D** Earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
- F** Work that is not worthy of course credit toward the degree.
- N** An N grade indicates that the student did not complete one or more of the course’s essential requirements. In this course that means that a student has not completed the Final take-home exam or the Mid-term test or the Experiential project. N is a failing grade and factors into the student’s GPA as “0”.

Interpretation of these grade definitions is up to the discretion of the instructor. If you receive a grade during the course that you believe is unfair, please begin by discussing the matter with the instructor (or TA) in a respectful, open-minded manner. Rest assured that if, after discussing the matter with the instructor, you still believe that the grade that you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the Director of the Programme. For additional information regarding

grades, including N and DEF status, please see the most recent edition of the *UVic Undergraduate Calendar*. Final examinations are the property of UVic and will not be returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office according to UVic procedures and regulations.

All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to *percentage scores*. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference. The final course grade will be calculated according to the percentages indicated above. However, this will not be done automatically on Brightspace, so please ignore the 'Grades' section on Brightspace.

### **Other matters**

#### *Late assignments, academic integrity and University academic regulations*

Late assignments will have 5% subtracted per working day from grade, unless documentation of illness or family emergency is provided. The University Calendar states that "Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. ... Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community." All students in this course should complete the Integrity Matters module that is available in Brightspace ([here](#)) before you hand in *any* coursework for evaluation. Students need to self-enrol in this module by searching for it under the Discovery tab (drop-down menu) on the Brightspace homepage.

Violations of academic integrity include plagiarism, multiple submissions, falsifying materials subject to academic evaluation, cheating on work, tests and examinations, unauthorized use of an editor, and aiding others to cheat. Please view the UVic Libraries plagiarism guide <https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/> to avoid plagiarism and cheating. I reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software or other platforms to assess the integrity of student work. Penalties for violations vary, with first violations generally resulting in a failing grade on the work. Please view [https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk\\_0xsM\\_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcltemType=policies](https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcltemType=policies). Also, please familiarise yourselves with Undergraduate Academic regulations here: <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policies>.

#### *Copyright Statement*

All course content and materials are made available by the instructor for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students registered in their class. This includes all lecture notes. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked with ©. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires the written permission of the instructor, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300). Any evidence that you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

#### *Technology in the classroom*

Some students require laptops or voice recognition apps for their learning strategies. For this reason, they are not prohibited in the classroom. However, studies demonstrate that multi-tasking reduces the performance of other nearby students. Therefore, anyone caught on social media, internet surfing, etc. during lecture periods may be asked to leave and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

#### *Inclusivity/diversity*

The Philosophy Department is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all students, staff, and faculty. We affirm the diverse identities of persons and that the rights all individuals have to be treated with dignity and respect irrespective of their gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, class, or national origin. This basic commitment entails, among other things, specific recognition and support for trans, queer, two-spirited, and non-binary people, and we respect the rights of individuals to self-determination and self-description. Information about UVic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are available at [www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQOpzdAN](http://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQOpzdAN). If you have any particular concerns about these matters in our course, please don't hesitate to contact me. Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVic Calendar at <https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/religious/index.php>.

#### *Transition and New Student Connect Program*

Students who are new to the University and would like assistance may contact Transition Office, [www.uvic.ca/transition](http://www.uvic.ca/transition), and you may also participate in New Student Connect. Participating students in New Student Connect will be assigned in

small groups by Faculty and/or interest groups to upper year peer mentors who will provide insights about student life, the UVic student community, available support services, and ways that students can get connected as needed. For further information see: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/studentlife/initiatives/new-student-connect/index.php>

#### *Student Mental Health Supports / UVic Support Connect*

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health at some point in time as undergraduate students. This may especially be the case during the present Covid-19 pandemic. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, however, if at any point you believe that you could benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact the new UVic Student Wellness Centre / UVic Support Connect. In addition to providing face to face help, they offer a 24 x 7 phone & online mental health counselling and support program, no matter where you are located, at any time. This is an excellent resource at your disposal on campus. They genuinely want to help, so do consider taking advantage of this free resource.

#### *Health Services and Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)*

A note to remind you to take care of yourself, especially in the present times. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. The sooner you let any of these on-campus services know your needs the quicker they can assist you in achieving your learning goals. Resources:

- Mental health counselling Services, already mentioned above. See <https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>.
- University Health Services (UHS), which provides a full-service primary health clinic for students and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives. <http://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/ health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Center for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible. CAL staff members are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations, see: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>. Please note that instructors cannot provide CAL-type accommodations without CAL documentation.

#### *Food bank and Community Cabbage*

Sometimes students run out of money for food. Health restrictions permitting, the Food bank and Community Cabbage are available at the Students' Union: "The UVSS Food Bank & Free Store is run by a team of dedicated staff and volunteers and offers all UVic students access to food essentials and free household items", see <https://uvss.ca/foodbank/>. "The Community Cabbage is a student organization at the University of Victoria. We serve a free weekly hot meal to the campus community prepared from reclaimed food – edible but unsellable food donated by grocery stores. A crew of volunteers turn these ingredients into a healthy and delightful vegetarian meal at a community kitchen. Anyone is welcome to come cook with us and/or eat with us!" <https://uviccommunitycabbage.wordpress.com/about/>.

#### *Important dates and academic advising*

Important dates for the 2021-2022 Academic Year are found here: <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>. Please consult the Important Dates for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examinations period start/end dates, etc. For information about declaring a program, academic concessions or interpreting your UVic CAPP report, please visit Undergraduate Advising or make an appointment with an advisor.

#### *Course Experience Survey (CES)*

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of the semester you have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help HDCC improve the overall programme for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an e-mail inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an e-mail invitation, you can go directly to your CES dashboard. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course:

1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.