

University of Victoria Political Science Department

Political Science 340 International Studies

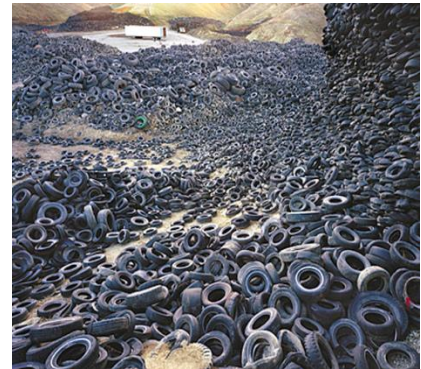
A Critique of the Culture of Global Capitalism: The Climate under Fire

2019

Mondays and Thursdays 2:30- 3:50 pm



BC Wildfire.



Three Gorges River Dam Project. Nickel Tailings, Sudbury. Oxford Tire Pile, California.

Course Description

This course analyzes the historical development of world order as a function of the changing nature of the state system and capitalism and their relationship to the environment. It develops a critique of the contemporary world order through a critical reading of international relations theory. The current world order is characterized by a global market culture and business civilization and increasingly privatized systems of appropriation and dispossession that unite the world through relations of global production, investment, and exchange. These relations create great disparities in power and influence and are destroying the world's eco-system. The processes by which the ideology and institutions of market civilization contribute to the degradation of the planet are analyzed. The course explores the ability of international relations theory to contribute to the development of a critical theory of global capitalism and to the identification of sources of resistance to planetary decay.

Course Objectives

"A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false. I believe that these assertions ... apply to the exploration of reality through art. So as a writer I stand by them but as a citizen I cannot. As a citizen I must ask: What is true? What is false?" Harold Pinter

The main objective of this course is to assist students in their ability to think “critically” about the nature of the world in which they live. By “critical theory” I mean a tradition of thought that draws from many philosophical sources to investigate the relationships between appearances and reality and between reason and authority. In this sense, critical theory encompasses reasoned argumentation and deliberation, as well as a process of uncovering, revealing, self-learning, and reflexivity in becoming aware of one’s place in society, of the links between theory and practice, and of the potential or immanence of theoretically informed praxis. Critical analysis is descriptive, analytical, and contains the potential for emancipatory political action. For the purposes of this course, the objective is to develop a critical understanding of the material structures and thought structures that frame and condition our understandings of international relations and set limits to our abilities to engage with our world actively and progressively as informed, responsible, and participatory global citizens.

How to Achieve these Objectives?

Through lectures, in class discussions, examinations, Term Paper assignments, and Reading Group Presentations students will be exposed to significant challenges to think critically about the world today. In order to achieve the course objectives students must do the following:

1. **Attend classes regularly.** Attendance is the single most important contributor to success in a course. Make sure to attend regularly.
2. **Do the required readings:** The required readings form an essential part of the course materials. It is insufficient to simply attend classes and rely on the Power Point Presentation. Required readings are precisely that- **Required!** Examinations are unlikely to receive passing grades if they do not reflect an understanding of the Required Readings. The Optional Readings are clearly not mandatory, but can enhance your understanding because they elaborate on concepts and analyses that figure in my weekly lectures.
3. **Participate actively in Class Discussion:** Time will be set aside regularly for class discussion. This is an opportunity to ask questions and share your insights into the lectures and readings.
4. **Participate actively in your Reading Group:** Students will be responsible for participating in a Reading Group, writing a Commentary on *This Changes Everything*, and preparing a Reading Group Presentation for class. Further details will be supplied in class.

Course Assignments

1. **Midterm Examination (35%) in class**

2. *Commentary* (35%)
3. **Reading Group Power Point Presentation (20%)**
4. **Reading Group Contribution and Attendance (10%)**

Midterm Examination

There will be an in class Midterm examination on February 14. Further details will be provided in class.

Commentary

Each student will write a 1,500- 2,000 word *Commentary* on some aspect of the tension between capitalism, corporations, and the climate. You are free to focus on any topic relevant to the course but are required to draw upon Karl Polanyi's, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* and Naomi Klein's, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, as well as the Required Readings in framing your analysis. The *Comments* are due in class and electronically on March 4. Further details will be supplied in class.

Reading Group Presentation on *Capitalism, Corporations, and Climate Change*.

Students will select a Reading Group on Coursespaces that will meet throughout the course to discuss the Required Readings. Each Reading Group will be responsible for preparing a Power Point Presentation based upon the contributions of the members of the Reading Group. There will be regular meetings of the Reading Groups held in class and mandatory Presentation Preparation Sessions. The Presentations will be held March 11- 28. Further details will be supplied in class.

Participation in the Reading Groups, Presentation Preparation sessions, and Presentations is compulsory. Attendance will be taken and 10% will be deducted from the final grade for any absence that is not excused by the instructor or accompanied by required documentation. In addition, students who do not participate in the Reading Groups or Preparation Sessions will not be allowed to participate in the presentations and will receive no grade for the assignment.

Key Dates

January 5	First class
February 14	Mid-Term Exam
February 18- 22	Reading Break: no classes
March 4	Papers due in class hard copy and on Coursespaces
March 4, 7	Reading Group Presentation Preparation Sessions
March 11- 28	Reading Group Presentations

Policy on Submissions, Extensions, and Late Submissions

Late papers will receive a 3% reduction in grade per day late and will not be accepted after March 28 without an Academic Concession.

Extensions will not be granted without a medical note documenting the reason for the extension.

NOTE: Assignments must be submitted in hard copy and posted on Coursespaces.

Required Texts

Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: the political and economic origins of our time.*

Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate.*

Other Required and Optional readings are posted on Coursespaces.

Course Outline

1. Introduction (January 7)

Administrative session.

2. Stating the Problematic (January 10, 14)

Themes:

*ecological and planetary crises

*climate change and global inequality

*capitalism versus the climate

*climate capitalism

Required Readings:

Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster, "What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know about Capitalism," *Monthly Review* 61 (10) (2011): 1-30.

M. Terhalle and J. Depledge, "Great power politics, order transition and climate governance," *Climate Policy* 13 (5) (2013): 572- 88.

Bradley Parks and Timmons Roberts, "Inequality and the global climate regime: breaking the north-south impasse," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 21 (4) (2008): 621- 632.

3. IR Theory Redux: Part 1 (January 17, 21)

Themes:

- *meaning of a "discipline"
- * relationship between knowledge and power
- *the discipline of IR
- *ontology and epistemology in IR
- *self-images of a discipline and "gate-keeping"
- *IR theory as an invention
- *margins, silences, and bottom-rungs
- *IR theory and climate change

Required Readings:

Steve Smith, "Singing Our World into Existence: International Relations Theory and September 11th," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004): 499- 515.

Cynthia Enloe, "Margins, silences and bottom-rungs: how to overcome the underestimation of power in the study of international relations," in *International theory: positivism & beyond*, edited by Steve Smith, Ken Booth & Marysia Zalewski (Cambridge University Press: 1996), pp. 186-202.

E. DeSombre, "Studying and Protecting the Global Environment: Protecting the Trees but Sometimes Missing the Forests," *International Studies Review* 13 (1) (2011): 133-43.

Bradley Parks and Timmons Roberts, "Inequality and the global climate regime: breaking the north-south impasse," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 21 (4) (2008): 632-648.

Optional Readings:

D. Marsh and P. Furlong. "A Skin Not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science."

Michel Foucault, "Society Must be Defended," pp. 24- 41.

Miles Kahler, "Inventing International Relations Theory: International Relations Theory after 1945," in M. W. Doyle and G. J. Ikenberry (eds.) *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press).

4. IR Theory Part 2: Theorizing the National or Transnational? (January 24, 28)

Themes:

- *internationalization versus transnationalization?
- *continuity versus transformation?
- *national or transnational in ontology and epistemology?
- * the national and transnational in the politics of climate change

Required Readings:

Excerpts from Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, excerpts four and five.

Susan Strange, "The *Defective State*," *Daedalus* 124 (2) 55-74.

Jean Philippe Sapinski, "Constructing climate capitalism: corporate power and the global climate policy-planning network," *Global Networks* 16 (1) (2016): 89- 111.

P. Newell and M. Paterson, "A Climate for Business: global warming, the state, and capital," *Review of International Political Economy* 54 (1998): 679- 703.

Optional Readings:

John Ruggie, "Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis," *World Politics* 35 (2) (1983): 261- 285.

Stephen Krasner, "Westphalia and All That," in J. Goldstein, *Ideas and Foreign Policy* (Cornell University Press 1983).

Susan Strange, "Wake Up Krasner The World *Has* Changed," *Review of International Political Economy* 1 (2): 209- 219.

Bastiaan Van Apeldoorn, "Theorizing the transnational: a historical materialist approach," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 7 (2004): 142- 176.

5. IR Theory Part 3: The Great Silence and Assumption: IR Theory and the Market

a. The Market in Liberal Thought (January 31, February 4)

Themes:

- *meaning and origins of “market civilization”
- *transitions from feudalism to capitalism
- *theorizing the market: Adam Smith, Max Weber, Karl Marx
- *naturalization and neutralization of the market

Required Reading:

Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Introduction and chapters 1-7, 11-18, 21. See Handout.

b. Capitalism, the Market and the Climate (February 7, 11)

Themes:

- * problematizing the market: Realism, Neo-liberalism, Historical Materialism
- * market fundamentalism
- *capitalism versus the climate

Required Reading:

Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*.

D. Stuart, R. Gunderson, and B. Paterson, “Climate Change and the Polanyian Counter-Movement: Carbon markets or Degrowth?” *New Political Economy* (2017).

6. Midterm Examination (February 14)

7. Reading Break: (February 18- 22). No classes.

8. Theorizing the Climate Crisis as a Crisis of Late Capitalism and Market Civilization (February 25, 28)

Themes:

- *market civilization and the competition state

- *transnationalization of capitalism
- *the structural power of capitalism
- *privatization, marketization, and deregulation
- *liberal mythology of the market
- *commodification of the environment
- *accumulation by dispossession
- *resistance to climate capitalism

Required readings:

Stephen Gill, "The Power of Capital: Direct and Structural," in *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*, ch. 6.

Stephen Gill, Market civilization, new constitutionalism and World Order, in Gill and Cutler, *New Constitutionalism and World Order*, ch. 2.

A.Claire Cutler, "New constitutionalism and the commodity form of global capitalism, in Gill and Cutler, *New Constitutionalism and World Order*, ch. 3.

Nancy Fraser, "Can society be commodities all the way down? Post-Polanyian reflections on the capitalist crisis," *Economy and Society* 43 (3) (2004): 541-558.

Optional readings:

Stephen Gill and A. Claire Cutler, "New Constitutionalism and World Order: General Introduction," in Stephen Gill and A. Claire Cutler, (eds.) *New Constitutionalism and World Order* (Cambridge University Press 2014), Ch. 1.

Philip Cerny, "Globalization and other stories: the search for a new paradigm for international relations," *International Journal* LI Autumn 1996: 617- 637.

David Harvey, "The Neoliberal State," in Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 64-86.

Stephen Gill, "Leaders and led in an era of global crises," in Stephen Gill (ed.) *Global Crises and the Crisis of Global Leadership* (Cambridge University Press 2012), pp. 23- 37.

Claire Cutler, "Private transnational governance and the crisis of global leadership," in Gill (ed.) *Global Crises and the Crisis of Global Leadership*, pp. 56- 70.

David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford University Press 2003), pp. 1-25; 137- 182.

Peter Dauvergne and Jane Lister, "The Power of Big Box Retail in Global Environmental Governance: Bringing Commodity Chains Back into IR," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39 (1) 2010): 145- 160.

9. Reading Group Presentation Preparation Sessions: (March 4, 7)

See handout for instructions.

10. Reading Group Presentations: (March 11- 28)

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please see the (revised) academic integrity policy: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-01/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>

Please note that the Department and University rules on plagiarism are enforced. Students must retain an electronic copy of their assignments and submit them on request in order to receive a final grade for this course.

Note concerning N grades

Students who have completed all of the above assignments will be considered to have completed the course and will be assigned a final grade. Failure to complete one or more of these assignments will result in a grade of "N" regardless of the cumulative percentage on other elements of the course. An N is a failing grade, and it factors into a student's GPA as O. The maximum percentage that can accompany an N on a student's transcript is 49.

UVic PERCENTAGE GRADING SCALE

Passing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage	Description
A+	9	90 – 100	Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.
A	8	85 – 89	
A-	7	80 – 84	

B+	6	77 – 79	Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.
B	5	73 – 76	
B-	4	70 – 72	
C+	3	65 – 69	Satisfactory , or minimally satisfactory . These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
C	2	60 – 64	
D	1	50 – 59	Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
Failing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage	Description
F	0	0 – 49	Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.
N	0	0 – 49	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

1. The percentage grading scale applies to all Faculties at the University of Victoria.
2. The percentage grades should be associated with a letter grading schema.
3. A percentage grade for an N grade should be assigned in the following manner:

Course Experience Surveys (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will 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 the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to <http://ces.uvic.ca>. 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.