

# Climate & Capitalism

Credit Options: 16. Course Reference Numbers: 30240

Class Standing: all level; transfer students welcome - please contact faculty

Faculty:

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## Class Schedule

TUESDAY 10:00 am-1 pm Lecture/Presentation	WEDNESDAY 10:00 am- 1 pm Workshop/Lecture/Presentation	Friday 10:00 am-12:50 pm Lecture/Presentation
2-4 pm Seminar		2-4 pm Seminar

## Program Description

When talking about climate change, we cannot ignore the impact capitalism has had on our planet. Just 100 private companies are responsible for 71% of greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change - and those companies hold immense political power. Many economists, corporations, and politicians claim that a reformed "green" capitalism can be an agent for positive environmental reform, but many climate justice advocates argue that fossil-fuel driven capitalist expansion is the root cause of unsustainable greenhouse gas emissions.

This program will focus on the question of whether the climate crisis can be solved within the current economic system of capitalism - where privately owned corporations and actors make decisions about resource use based on maximizing profits and accumulating capital - or if capitalism will need to be replaced by alternative economic systems to prevent catastrophic climate change. Students will learn about capitalism as an economic system, its relationship to the production of greenhouse gases over the past several hundred years and explore debates over whether a reformed "green capitalism" or "green new deal" can mitigate widespread climate change. It will then explore alternatives to capitalism offered by eco-socialist, de-growth socialism or other climate focused alternatives and what those would look like. The program will also consider how the legacy of colonialism and north-south power relations shape current debates about climate mitigation and the role of social movements in linking struggles against capitalism to those against climate change. How are communities around the world envisioning equitable transitions to a low-carbon society? How might the burdens and benefits associated with burning fossil fuels be equitably distributed? Can we conceptualize a just transition to a low-carbon society?

Credit-bearing assignments will explore multiple modes of learning, including creative assignments, policy proposals as well as research papers. Program activities will include lectures, workshops, seminars, and active learning exercises. Students will be expected to demonstrate growth in reading texts, group project work, writing analytically, and thinking critically. Interested students are encouraged to reach out to program faculty at the Academic Fair on March 3. Preparatory for studies and careers in: International development, state government agencies, non-profit organizations, teaching, and environmental law.

## Reading list:

*Carbon* by Kate Ervine (2018)

*Slow Down: The Degrowth Manifesto* by Kohei Saitō & Brian Bergstrom (Astra House, 2024)

*A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal* by Aronoff, Battistoni, Cohen & Riofrancos (Verso, 2019)

*Climate Change as Class War: Building Socialism on a Warming Planet* by Martin Huber (Verso, 2022)

## Anticipated Credit Equivalencies

4 - Political Economy of Climate Change

4 - Political Science

4 - Global Environmental Politics

4 - Climate Justice