

## Title: Communicating Climate Change

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**Semester:** Fall 2020

**Course type:** *(to be filled in by administration)*

**Hours:** 18

**ECTS:** 5

### Course description

Climate change is one of the major policy challenges of the 21st century. As it involves future projections, the capacity to address it successfully requires the credible communication of the impending change of climate, which makes policy action necessary. This further requires devising strategies that separate the known from the speculative and devising strategies that are able to bring about the change in behavior and create acceptance for government measures that will be necessary to address these concerns. At the same time, from a perspective of participatory governance that is key to the acceptance of policies, this not only involves the transmission of knowledge about the phenomenon, but also about generating the involvement of citizens in designing solutions that then can be accepted by the public. Drawing on sociology, political science and communication literature, this class examines climate change communication and its role in achieving the goals of climate change policy. It provides not only knowledge about the current effects and potential roles of climate change communication as a policy tool, but also about communication strategies that seek to engage citizens in this policy problematic.

### Objective

The aim of this class is, on the one hand, to equip students with a better understanding of ethical issues in communication of scientific evidence and specifically in climate change communication, as well as of the current and potential roles and effects of climate change communication as a policy tool. On the other hand, this class aims to foster critical thinking of students who will learn how to evaluate climate change communication, with the help of communication theories.

### Course timeline

Session 1: Introduction. Climate change as a challenge

Session 2: The role of science in understanding and communicating climate change

Session 3: The role of government in tackling climate change

- Session 4: The role of mass media in communicating climate change
- Session 5: The role of civil society in mobilizing for climate change action
- Session 6: The role of transnational bodies in generating coordinated action
- Session 7: The interplay between stakeholders to generate sustained policy action
- Session 8: The impact of other societal challenges on climate change
- Session 9: Concluding remarks: The way forward

### Assessment

Students are expected to read in advance the texts assigned for each session and be prepared to discuss them during the online sessions. Class participation includes class discussions and short (team) class activities or very short quizzes on the required readings (25% of the final grade). Written assignments include one response memo on the assigned texts for one session at student's choice (25% of the final grade) and a final reflection paper on a topic assigned by the instructor (25% of the final grade). In addition, students will be required to make a very short presentation of a case study, as discussed and agreed with the instructor (25% of the final grade).

### (Recommended) Bibliography

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Boykoff, M. (2011). *Who Speaks for the Climate? Making Sense of Media Coverage of Climate Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dunlap, R.E.; McCright, A.M. and J.H. Yarosh (2016). The political divide on climate change: Partisan polarization widens in the U.S. *Environment: Science and Policy for Public Engagement*, 58(5). 4-23.

Frank Fischer (2019) Knowledge politics and post-truth in climate denial: on the social construction of alternative facts, *Critical Policy Studies*, 13:2, 133-152

Goldberg, M. H., van der Linden, S., Leiserowitz, A., & Maibach, E. (2019). Perceived social consensus can reduce ideological biases on climate change. *Environment and Behavior*, doi: 10.1177/0013916519853302

Howarth, C., Painter, J. (2016). Exploring the science–policy interface on climate change: The role of the IPCC in informing local decision-making in the UK. *Palgrave Communication*.

Jordan, A.J., et al., 2012. Understanding the paradoxes of multi-level governing. *Global Environmental Politics*, 12 (2), 41–64



Klein, Naomi (2014). *This Changes Everything. Capitalism vs. Climate*. Toronto: Penguin Books.

Massey, E.; Biesbroek, R.; Huiteima, D. and A.J. Jordan (2014). Climate policy innovation: the adoption and diffusion of adaptation policies across Europe, *Global Environmental Change*, 29, pp. 434-443

Miller, Clark A. 2004. "Climate Science and the Making of a Global Political Order." *States of Knowledge*, ed. Sheila Jasanoff, 46-66. New York, NY: Routledge.

Moser, S. C. (2016). Reflections on climate change communication research and practice in the second decade of the 21st century: what more is there to say? *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 7(3), 345-369.

Nisbet, M.C. (2014). Disruptive ideas: public intellectuals and their arguments for action on climate change. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 5(6), 809-823.

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Polk E. (2018) Communicating Climate Change: Where Did We Go Wrong, How Can We Do Better? In J. Servaes (Ed.) *Handbook of Communication for Development and Social Change*. Singapore: Springer.

Park, Angela (2009). *Everybody's Movement: Environmental Justice and Climate Change*. Washington, DC: Environmental Support Center.

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