

SYLLABUS: Sociology of the Climate Emergency Spring 2023

SOCIOL 122 001 - LEC 001

Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley

Monday and Wednesday, 630-8 pm, Room: Moffitt 102



Professor: [Daniel Aldana Cohen](#), Assistant Professor of Sociology, Director of the [Socio-Spatial Climate Collaborative, or \(SC\)2](#) | dacohen@berkeley.edu

Syllabus shortcut: <https://bit.ly/SocClimate2023>

Graduate Student Instructor: Sanjana Tadepalli, Energy and Resources Group | sanjana.tadepalli@berkeley.edu

Discussion section times: Mondays 2-3 pm in 3119 Etcheverry; 3-4 pm in 71 Evans; first meeting on Jan 23.

[Discussions section syllabus.](#)

Office hours

Professor Cohen office hours and location:

Wednesday 3-5 pm. [Book here](#). Please email directly if you are unable to find a time on Calendly. On Wednesdays, I will be available to meet on zoom and in-person.

Instructor Tadeballi office hours and location:

Thursday 1-2 pm at Giannini 46b or by appointment

Basics

Notes on course elements and meeting times.

- This course will have a weekly discussion section led by a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI)
- You will be expected to submit a 150-200 word discussion post on bCourses by 10 pm on the Sunday night before the Monday class, and comment on at least two other students' posts before class; you may skip the online posts for two classes at your discretion.
- Most lecture classes will also include some time in breakout groups where you discuss core concepts from the readings and lectures, and complete short surveys via google forms. I'll ask some breakout groups to report back, to ensure that we know what's going on with the readings and the course's core ideas.
- Each class includes an audio-visual component to vary the learning method.
- The reading load of the course is moderate. But please note, in many classes you have the *option* to select which readings you want to do, especially in the second half of the class when the focus turns to group projects. I will use surveys to assess reading progress throughout the course, and will adjust as needed.
- I have included "Further reading ideas" *in case you want to deepen your knowledge, especially if you're drawing on this area for your group project*. These are entirely optional, and you are not expected to cite these readings in your weekly reflections, or in your mid-term.

Intellectual agenda

The climate emergency is in many ways new. And it is urgent beyond words. The world's best scientists have said that to have a good chance of keeping global heating to the safest level of heating (1.5 degrees Celsius), we must cut global carbon emissions by nearly half by 2030, and must make "[far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society](#)." (Or, as Naomi Klein puts it, we must "change everything.") But. If we only consider the current emergency in terms of the last five, ten, one hundred, or even one thousand years, we may fail to understand some of the fundamental reasons why we are in this emergency; and by misdiagnosing the cause, we may pursue inadequate solutions. Likewise, because heat-trapping greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are so profoundly entwined in our energy and land use systems; our political economy; and our intersecting systems of patriarchy, white supremacy, and colonialism; it is impossible to pursue GHG reductions in isolation from these broader dynamics.

Indeed, we are in the midst of a radical environmental turn across the social sciences. Cutting-edge scholars across the social sciences and humanities are interrogating every foundation of their discipline. Sociology, for instance, has long been organized around the idea of "social facts," an idea from the 19th century. But scholars are increasingly recognizing that the idea that we do (or should) belong to a society "separate" from nature is an illusion—or, more precisely, an ideology used to justify European colonialism, and to celebrate a certain form of privileged lifestyle more generally. To make sense of the climate emergency, we need a new common sense. And to sustain that common sense, we have to revise and improve our concepts and empirical accounts of the past—down to the most basic ways that human beings have related to non-human nature since the emergence of our species. We thus devote three weeks to Simon Lewis's and Mark Maslin's *The Human Planet*, a brilliant historical synthesis of new developments in a wide range of fields, combining earth systems analysis with the histories of organized social life, capitalism, and colonialism.

This course first begins with a brief sketch of the core climate challenges. Then, through a reading of *The Human Planet*, it undertakes a more holistic, historical approach, which we continue through classic and new work on Black Reconstruction and Indigenous struggles. The historical re-grounding makes up the first half of the class. The second half of the class surveys some of the leading social science, especially sociology, on the climate crisis, building on that broader foundation. We work toward a consideration of whether a “Green New Deal” approach, broadly understood, can address the climate emergency. Shorter: we first situate the climate emergency in some broad historical developments in humans relationship to nature—especially capitalism and colonialism—and then we explore a handful of contemporary social science of climate debates in light of those foundations.

The fundamental goal of the course is to equip you intellectually to better *understand* the climate emergency—its causes, its entanglements with other issues, and some potential strategies for stabilizing the climate—from a critical social science perspective, anchored in sociology. My hope is that this deeper, more contextual understanding will sharpen your analysis of contemporary climate policy struggles.

We are on a tight timeline. We do have many ways to act. I hope this class will be as helpful for people who are doing activism right now as for those who are less certain about whether or how to take action. It should also help those focused on building research careers, whether in or outside academia. All the historical readings are designed to enrich our understanding of the present moment, and our futures. And while covid protocols and the lecture format will limit our interactions to some extent, we will all work to learn from each other, with each of us bringing unique perspectives, back-stories, interests, and experiences into the conversation. Although this is a text-heavy class, we will be connecting the texts to our everyday lives. We have one decade to make major changes to the global economy—this isn’t an “academic” exercise.

We will operationalize this “action-oriented” element of the class with the major group assignment, in which you will use analytic skills developed in the class (and elsewhere) to analyze why a certain decarbonization pathway has been blocked—and what to do about it.

Lectures

Each class will feature lectures and some small-group discussions. I’ll use lectures to highlight the core arguments of class readings, the core evidence supporting those arguments, and to lay out additional context and ideas. We’ll use small-group discussions and google quizzes to ensure that students are following along, and to provide spaces for them to share their own ideas and interpretations. I will always use the lectures to explain core methods and ideas in (environmental) social science. And I will devote class time to developing some of the core reading and writing skills needed to excel in this and other social science courses.

Lectures will be recorded by course capture. I will post lectures for approximately ten days after each class, and then take them down.

Discussion sections

In discussion sections, you’ll have time and space to discuss the class’s readings in a more intimate setting. And you’ll be working with your group, and the GSI, on the class’s major group assignment.

Readings

All readings will be made available online through bCourses. You’re also encouraged, but not required, to keep up with news about climate change. The readings in the first half of the class are designed to provide an intellectual foundation for thinking about climate change in its full social and historical

context. The readings in the second half of the class are designed to equip students to analyze some key controversies in contemporary climate politics, including tools that can be used for any number of additional issues. The class will split attention between the United States and the rest of the world, with a slight majority of the focus being on the U.S.

Attendance

Doing the readings and attending class are required. You're always expected to show up with something to say about the readings, and to be prepared to partake in group work and online surveys. ***That being said, if you are feeling any potential covid symptoms, if you have tested positive, if you have been exposed, or you should otherwise be in quarantine, please do not attend!***

Professionalism

Professionalism is important at Berkeley for staff, faculty, and students. In the classroom, it implies the following: (a) being accountable and taking responsibility for your actions; (b) keeping appointments; (c) being honest; (d) being engaged with the topic and the class; (e) communicating clearly and concisely in class and over email; (f) arriving on time and ready to work; (h) keeping the professor aware of any situations that might affect your performance; and (i) fostering a relationship of mutual respect—**no sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise disrespectful comments will be tolerated.**

Assignments

Participation (30 pts)

- You are expected to post 150-200 word reactions to the readings on bCourses each week. The reaction post is due by 9 p.m. on Sunday evening. **No reaction is required for the first**

week. You can skip some additional 3 weeks with no explanation. *In total, you are expected to turn in 10 reaction posts, worth 1.5 points each.*

- I will provide reaction prompts and open a forum on bCourses no later than the Thursday before the reaction posts are due. You are welcome to react to my prompt. But it is not required! As long as your reaction is thoughtful, the format is flexible. Write what moves you. You may find it helpful to use the reaction posts to *both* clarify something that seemed confusing *and* take the chance to express an opinion, some uncertainty, and/or connect dots between readings—whatever gets your neurons firing.
- You are also expected to write brief responses to one other students' post. You can respond more, of course, when interesting threads develop.
 - Note: We will read but not “grade” the reaction posts in detail. If your reaction post completely lacks care, you will receive only partial credit that week.
 - If you write reaction posts for 10 weeks, including responses to other students' posts, you will get full participation credit.
- In addition, you are expected to participate in small-group discussions in class, as well as online polls taken during class.
- You are also expected to attend your weekly discussion section meetings and to have something to say about the course content each week. That being said, shyness will not be penalized!
- Overall, 15 pts of participation will come from your weekly reaction posts ($10 * 1.5$); and 15 pts will come from participation in weekly discussion sections led by Sanjana Tadeipalli.

In-class midterm assignment (30 points), March 1

- You will have the class time to answer two of four essay questions. (I.e, you will get to choose between prompts.) The point isn't to provide a gotcha test, but to give you the chance to develop an argument based on your engagement with the course material.

Major group assignment (40 pts), final project due May 8, 10 pm

- Groups of 3-4 students, formed within their weekly discussion section, will identify a jurisdiction (eg, San Francisco), or a sector of the economy (eg, concrete). They will choose 1-3 decarbonization plans for that sector. Then they will provide a) a sociological analysis of why this technically feasible plan is not occurring, and b) suggestions for how to overcome those barriers (including reforms to the plans themselves). The final product will include a 25-30 page report (including writing, visuals, and any additional analysis); a 20-minute presentation to the weekly discussion section; an 8-minute presentation to the entire class on the final day.
- The grading for the assignment will be broken down as follows:
 - Initial proposal: 5 pts (due February 17)
 - 1st draft of text and deck: 10 pts (due April 10)
 - Final text, deck, and presentation: 25 pts (Week of April 24)
 - Revised deck and text due May 3
- Rubrics for each assignment will be provided in advance
- Readings and discussion sections in the second half of the class will all focus on how various social (and economic, cultural, political, and psychological) forces have prevented technically feasible pathways for decarbonization from advancing

Care

These have been hard years. For many, it's been challenging at the most basic levels of economic survival, mental well-being, physical health, and so on. Basic collective care and self-care come first. We will be sure to check in with each other. And I will of course not penalize anyone facing the kinds of challenges that make ordinary coursework even more difficult. Berkeley has policies and resources, there are many mutual aid groups on campus and in communities in the East Bay and elsewhere. If students feel that they are lacking information on potential support systems, we will create a shared database. [Support Resources](#) include emotional, physical, safety, social, and other basic wellbeing

resources for students. Academic resources can be found at the [Student Learning Center](#) and [English Language Resource](#) sites. Berkeley's Office of Emergency Management has resources to [prepare for emergencies](#).

The pandemic has made all of this harder. A large number of students will have direct caregiving responsibilities in their lives—including of family members, friends, partners, and other members of their communities. This essential work cannot be devalued or ignored. This course is organized to maximize student flexibility during this challenging time, by emphasizing continuous learning through reading (including options on what to choose to read), weekly reaction posts (two of which can be skipped at no penalty), and just two open-ended written assignments. Consistent small-group work online and in person will offer opportunities for peer learning. Please let me know if your caregiving responsibilities are creating problems that require additional adjustments to evaluation.

Basic Needs

If you are facing challenges securing food or housing during the semester, please seek out resources for support and help. It can be challenging to do your best in class if you are having trouble meeting your basic needs. You can find a list of key campus resources at the following webpage (<https://basicneeds.berkeley.edu/>) as well as information about accessing the [UC Berkeley Food Pantry](#). Additionally, please notify me of your situation if you are comfortable doing so as this will allow me to make necessary class accommodations or assist you as I can within my capacity.

Students with Disabilities

If you require course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability, contact [UC Berkeley's Disabled Students' Program \(DSP\)](#). Notify the GSI and professor through course email of

the accommodations you would like to use. You must have a Letter of Accommodation on file with UC Berkeley to have accommodations made in the course.

UC Berkeley is committed to providing robust educational experiences for all learners. With this goal in mind, we have activated the ALLY tool for this course. You will now be able to download reading materials in a format that best fits your learning preference (i.e., PDF, HTML, EPUB, and MP3). For more information visit the alternative formats link or watch the video entitled, "[Ally in bCourses](#)."

Diversity Statement

Consistent with UC Berkeley's [Principles of Community](#), we are all responsible for creating an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives—expressed through race and ethnicity, culture, gender identities and sexual orientations, political and social views, religious and spiritual beliefs, learning and physical abilities, language and geographic characteristics, age, veteran status, and social or economic classes—are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength. Everyone is expected to treat everyone else with respect and dignity. I welcome suggestions on how to further incorporate diversity into the course in a meaningful way. Climate change in particular can be a distressing and stressful topic—especially in the context of a global pandemic! We will be patient and understanding with each other. And we will recognize that there are no intrinsically right answers on many of the questions we take up. (The class does, however, presuppose an acceptance of the overwhelming, international scientific consensus on the basics of climate science.)

Pronouns

We will address each other by our preferred pronouns (and names) in class. I expect everyone to use the preferred pronouns of the person with whom they are communicating. Pronouns are important aspects of speech that are used to refer to others instead of using their name. Using the preferred

pronouns is part of respectful and caring communication. More information on preferred pronouns is available on the following website: <https://www.mypronouns.org/sharing>

Mental Health and Wellness

All students — regardless of background or identity — may experience a range of issues that can become barriers to learning. These issues include, but are not limited to, strained relationships, anxiety, depression, alcohol and other drug problems, difficulties with concentration, sleep, and eating, and/or lack of motivation. Such mental health concerns can diminish both academic performance and the capacity to participate in daily activities. In the event that you need mental health support, or are concerned about a friend, UC Berkeley offers many services, such as free short-term counseling at University Health Services. An excellent campus website having links to many resources is: <http://recalibrate.berkeley.edu/>. Another campus website addressing mental health services in specific reference to this time of the coronavirus pandemic is: <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/coronavirus/student-mental-health>. *Remember that seeking help is a good and courageous thing to do — both for yourself and for those who care about you.*

Grading

The course is designed to keep students working at a relatively even pace throughout the semester. The assignment are designed to reward careful reading and engagement during class, as well as cumulative learning in the case of the final project. All the assignments invite students to develop *their own arguments and ideas about climate and society, and to communicate those ideas.*

Final grade:

>=93 points = A

90-92 points = A-

87-89 points = B+

83-86 points = B

80-82 points = B-

77-79 points = C+

73-76 points = C

70-72 points = C-

67-69 points = D+

63-66 points = D

<=63 points = F

bCourses

There is a bCourses site for this course. You are responsible for ensuring that you can access it, and for checking it regularly. I will post zoom links to all online classes the morning before class. If you miss a class, you are responsible for learning whether any changes have been announced during your absence. And you are responsible for finding out from other students what you have missed.

Any instances of plagiarism will result in severe penalties, up to and including a failing grade in the course and additional penalties.

Plagiarism

You are expected to familiarize yourself with UC Berkeley's policies on [plagiarism and academic integrity](#), and the [potential consequences of plagiarism](#). Plagiarism can lead to the assignment in question being graded as low as a zero; and if the problem is serious, can lead to a failing grade in the class.

UC Berkeley's [policy](#) states:

Plagiarism is defined as use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source, for example:

- Wholesale copying of passages from works of others into your homework, essay, term paper, or dissertation without acknowledgment.
- Use of the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment.
- Paraphrasing of another person's characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device without acknowledgment.

And UC Berkeley warns of the [following consequences](#):

If a student is found responsible for academic misconduct through the Center for Student Conduct's process there will be a resolution plan, which will include University sanctions. Sanctions range from a non-reportable warning through dismissal from the University. In most cases, resolution plans will also include educational sanctions such as reflective writing assignment, activities, and workshops.

The use of ChatGPT or any similar tools to simulate writing for the class is strictly prohibited. (During the class, we will discuss the evolving role of Artificial Intelligence tools in essay writing.)

The good news is that avoiding this kind of problem is simple! Produce the creative, original work that you are more than capable of. This resource is also helpful on what constitutes plagiarism:

<http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/how-to-avoid-plagiarism.html>

Reading and engaging audio-visual material

For your own time management, making best use of the reaction posts and discussion sections, and managing your own brain flow, you're highly encouraged to do the full week's reading in advance of Monday's class, as well as engaging with the audio-visual content.

Class schedule

WEEK 1: Introduction

January 18

- *No reading required.*
- Take online quiz on needs and hopes for course.

Audio-visual:

- Podcast interview: [A Skeptical Take on the A.I. Revolution. *New York Times*.](#)

PART 1: HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

WEEK 2: Welcome to the Climate Emergency / Foundations

January 23

- Klein, Naomi. 2016. "[Let Them Drown: The Violence of Othering in a Warming World.](#)" June 2.
- Wallace-Wells, David. 2022. "[Beyond Catastrophe: A New Climate Reality Is Coming Into View.](#)" *New York Times Magazine*. October 26.
- Mary Heglar. 2019. "[Climate Change Isn't the First Existential Threat.](#)" *Medium*.

January 25

- Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin. 2018. *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*. Yale University Press. Introduction, Chapter 1. (Digital scan available on bCourses)

Audio-visual:

- [Greta Thunberg full speech at UN Climate Change COP25 - Climate Emergency Event.](#)

- [Raj Patel On Chicken Nuggets And Capitalism](#). *Now This*.
- [Daniel Aldana Cohen, Penn 1.5 C lecture series](#).

Further reading ideas:

- Roberts, David. 2020. "[The scariest thing about global warming \(and Covid-19\)](#)." *Vox*. July 7. 2020.
- McKibben, Bill. "[Global Warming's Terrifying New Math](#)." *Rolling Stone*.
- Meyer, Robinson. 2021. "[It's Grim. The latest UN report is clear: Climate change is here, it's a crisis, and it's caused by fossil fuels](#)."
- Cohen, Daniel Aldana and Dan Kammen. 2020. "[Climate crisis will deepen the pandemic. A green stimulus plan can tackle both](#)." *The Guardian*.
- Táíwò, Olúfẹ́mi O. 2020. "[Climate Apartheid Is the Coming Police Violence Crisis](#)." *Dissent*.

Note: Climate Science Background: This course doesn't go in-depth on climate science, although key summaries are found in the readings, especially the fundamentals of climate science as presented in *A Human Planet*. The most reliable climate science explainers can be found at www.carbonbrief.org; for instance, see their [in-depth Q&A on the last major international climate science report](#) (the IPCC's 2021 AR6 report summarizing recent climate science).

WEEK 3: The long history of climate change, part 1

January 31

- Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin. 2018. *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*. Yale University Press. Chapter 4.
- Steffen, Will, Paul J. Crutzen and John R. McNeill. 2007. The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature? *Ambio*. (36)8, 614-621

- Panko, B. [“The Supposedly Pristine, Untouched Amazon Rainforest Was Actually Shaped By Humans.”](#) *Smithsonian Magazine*. March 13, 2017.

February 1

- Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin. 2018. *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*. Yale University Press. Chapters 5-6
- Mike Davis. 2020. [“California’s Apocalyptic ‘Second Nature’.”](#) *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung* blog; *Monthly Review*.

Further reading ideas:

- Levis, C. et al. 2017. [“Persistent effects of pre-Columbian plant domestication on Amazonian forest composition.”](#) *Science*. 03 Mar 2017. (355)6328, 925-931.
- Graeber, David and David Wengrow. 2021. *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Abu-Lughod, J. L. 1993. “The world system in the thirteenth century: dead-end or precursor?” In Michael Adas ed. *Islamic & European expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*. Temple University Press.
- Moore, Jason. [‘Amsterdam is Standing on Norway’ Part I: The Alchemy of Capital, Empire and Nature in the Diaspora of Silver, 1545–1648.](#) *Journal of Agrarian Change*, (10)1, 33-68.

Audio-visual:

- [The End of the World? Award-winning scientists Profs Simon Lewis & Mark Maslin.](#) *Going Underground on RT* (YouTube)

WEEK 4: The long history of climate change, part 2, and Race, labor, and environmental politics, part 1

February 6

- Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin. 2018. *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*. Yale University Press. Chapter 7.
- Malm, Andreas. 2015. "[The Anthropocene Myth](#)." *Jacobin*. March 30.

February 8

- WEB DuBois. 1936. *Black Reconstruction in America*. "To The Reader," Chapters 1 and 2; 26 (excerpt). Pages 29-66, 861-862.

Audio-visual:

- [This California Tribe Is Fighting Wildfires With Fire](#). *AJ+* (YouTube)
- [Brandon Smith: Begin the Decade of the Green New Deal](#). Organizing for Justice / Sunrise (YouTube)
- [Optional: Meet the formerly incarcerated fire crew protecting California from wildfires](#). *Los Angeles Times*.
- Optional: Jason Moore. "[Nature, Capitalism, Crisis](#)." *Against the Grain*. Podcast.

Further reading ideas:

- Du Bois, W. E. B. 1925. "[Worlds of Color](#)." *Foreign Affairs*. (3)3: 423-444.
- Daniel Aldana Cohen. 2018. "[Apocalyptic Climate Reporting Completely Misses the Point](#)." *The Nation*. November 2.

WEEK 5: Race, labor, and environmental politics, part 2; Indigenous histories of resistance, part 1

February 17: Initial proposal for group project due

February 13

- Newkirk II, Vann. R. 2019. "[The Great Land Robbery: The Shameful Story of How 1 Million Black Families Have Been Ripped from Their Farms.](#)" *The Atlantic*. September.

Read 1 of 2:

- Bullard, Robert D. 1994. "The Legacy of American Apartheid and Environmental Racism." *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*. (9)2: 445-474.
- Pulido, Laura. 2016. Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 27:3, 1-16.

February 15

- Estes, Nick. 2019. *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. New York: Verso. Prologue, Chapter 1.
- Solnit, Rebecca. 2016. "[Standing Rock protests: this is only the beginning.](#)" *The Guardian*.

Audio-visual:

- [Reconstruction. Experiments in Land Owning.](#) *Slate* podcast.
- *Optional*: Kate Aronoff and Daniel Aldana Cohen. 2020. [Hot & Bothered: Putting Racial Justice First, with Patrick Houston.](#) (Podcast)

Further reading ideas:

- [The Truth About Land Grabs.](#) *Oxfam*.
- GRAIN. 2008. SEIZED! The 2008 Land Grab for Food and Financial Security. Barcelona: GRAIN. <https://grain.org/e/93>

- Mauldin, Erin Stewart. 2017. "Freedom, Economic Autonomy, and Ecological Change in the Cotton South, 1865-1880." *Journal of the Civil War Era* (7)3: 401-424.
- Taylor, Dorcetta. 2009. *The Environment and the People in American Cities, 1600s-1900s: Disorder, Inequality, and Social Change*. Durham: Duke University Press. Introduction.
- Chung, Youjin B., and Marie Gagné. 2021. "Understanding Land Deals in Limbo in Africa: A Focus on Actors, Processes, and Relationships." *African Studies Review*, 64(3): 595-604.
- Muller, Christopher. 2021. Exclusion and exploitation: The incarceration of Black Americans from slavery to the present. *Science*, 374: 6565: 282-286.

WEEK 6: Indigenous histories of resistance, part 2

February 20

- Holiday, no class.

This week's reaction post due on February 21, 9 pm.

February 22

- Estes, Nick. 2019. *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. Verso.
 - Read one 1 of Chapters 4, 5, or 6.
- Indigenous Environmental Network and Oil Change International. 2021. "Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon."

<https://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Indigenous-Resistance-Against-Carbon-2021.pdf> Pp. 1-20.

Audio-visual:

- [Tara Houska, "The Standing Rock resistance and our fight for Indigenous rights."](#) TED.

- Sam Cowie. 2019. [How crime drives deforestation in Brazil's Amazon](#). *Financial Times*.
- Optional: Nick Estes [interviewed](#) at length on *The Dig*. ([Transcript](#).)

Further reading ideas:

- Cohen, Daniel Aldana. 2019. “[Stop Eco-Apartheid: The Left’s Challenge in Bolsonaro’s Brazil](#).” *Dissent*.
- Norgaard, Kari Marie. 2019. *Salmon and Acorns Feed Our People: Colonialism, Nature and Social Action*. Rutgers University Press. Introduction, Chapters 1-2. (Scan will be made available.)
- Liboiron, Max. 2021. *Pollution Is Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

WEEK 7 : Indigenous Histories of Resistance, part 3, mid-term

February 27

- Estes, Nick. 2019. *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. Verso. Chapter 7.
- Alter, Charlotte. 2020. “[Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Facebook Videos of Her Trip to Standing Rock Reveal Her Political Awakening](#).” *Time*. **[I recommend reading online to see video clips.]**
- Mid-term review

March 1

- **In-class mid-term.**

Audio-visual:

- [Our History Is the Future: Lakota Historian Nick Estes on Thanksgiving & Indigenous Resistance](#). *Democracy Now*.
- Optional: [Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz on Indigenous History](#). *The Dig*.

Further reading ideas:

- Jesse, Nathan. 2020. [Resisting the Oblivion of Eco-Colonialism: A Conversation with Tribal Leaders from Louisiana's Gulf Coast](#). *Anthropocene Curriculum*.
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. 2018. [What White Supremacists Know](#). *Boston Review*.
- Norgaard, Kari Marie and James V Fenelon. 2021. "Towards An Indigenous Environmental Sociology." In *Handbook of Environmental Sociology*, eds Caniglia, Beth Schaefer et al. Gewerbestrasse: Springer, 477-494.

PART 2: Social barriers to decarbonization: The contradictions of green racial capitalism

WEEK 8: Pivot to projects: Urban climate politics, and Climate diplomacy, and the problem of global inequalities:

March 6

- Rainwater, Brooks. 2021. "[The 15-minute city can make urban living more sustainable—and inspire the suburbs](#)." *Fast Company*.
- Cohen, Daniel Aldana. "The Other Low-Carbon Protagonists: Poor People's Movements and Climate Politics in São Paulo." In *The City Is the Factory*, edited by Miriam Greenberg and Penny Lewis, 140–57. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017.

March 8

- Plumer, Brad. 2015. "[The world just agreed to a major climate deal in Paris. Now comes the hard part](#)." *Vox*. December 12.
- Lustgarten, Abraham. 2022. "[The Barbados Rebellion: An Island Nation's Fight for Climate Justice](#)." *New York Times*.
- Farand, Chloé. 2022. "[Mia Mottley builds global coalition to make financial system fit for climate action](#)." *Reuters*. September 23.
- 2022 Bridgetown Initiative.

Audio-visual:

Watch 1 of 3

- [Global Climate Justice against Neo-Colonialism: New Concepts and Priorities for Just Cooperation](#), Socio-Spatial Climate Collaborative, or (SC)2
- [U.S. Engagement with Chinese Climate Politics](#), Socio-Spatial Climate Collaborative, or (SC)2
- [A Pan-American Green New Deal? Green Investment, Extraction Battles, and Reforestation](#), Socio-Spatial Climate Collaborative, or (SC)2

Further reading ideas:

- Táíwò, Olúfẹ́mi O. and Patrick Bigger. 2022. “[Debt Justice for Climate Reparations](#).” *Climate and Community Project*. April.
- David Victor. 2011. *Global Warming Gridlock*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8, 9.
- Roberts, J. Timmons and Bradley Parks. 2007. *Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Inequality, and Global Climate Policy*. Introduction, Chapters 5 and 6, skim Chapter 7.
- International Energy Agency. 2021. “[Net Zero by 2050 A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector](#).” *Read online summary, explore interactive graphics*.
- Friends of the Earth et al. 2021. “[United States of America: Fair Shares Nationally Determined Contribution](#).” Read pp 1-9, skim rest.
- “[Chapter 6: Global carbon inequality](#).” *2022 World Inequality Report*. [Read online for interactive data features.] Skim text, look at key diagrams and visuals.
- Danielle Renwick X. January 21. “What Do Rich Countries Owe the Rest of the World? Georgetown philosopher Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò discusses why climate justice requires reparations.” *Nexus*. January 21.

WEEK 9: Structural and political barriers to climate action

March 13

Read 1 of 2

- Dorninger, Christian et al. 2021. Global patterns of ecologically unequal exchange: Implications for sustainability in the 21st century. *Ecological Economics*, (179)106824, 14pp.
- Stoddard, Isak et al. 2021. “Three Decades of Climate Mitigation: Why Haven’t We Bent the Global Emissions Curve?” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*. 46: 653-689.

March 15

- Monbiot, George. 2007. “Chapter 2: The Denial Industry” in *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning*. London: Penguin, 6-29.
- *Optional*: Supran, Geoffrey and Naomi Oreskes. “[Assessing ExxonMobil's climate change communications \(1977–2014\)](#).” 2017. *Environmental Research Letters*.

Further reading ideas:

- Oreskes, Naomi and Erik M. Conway. 2010. *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. New York: Bloomsbury Press. Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 6, Conclusion, Epilogue.
- McWright, A.M. and Riley E. Dunlap. 2011. “Cool dudes: The denial of climate change among conservative white males in the United States.” *Global Environmental Change*. (21)1163-1172.
- Cohen, Daniel Aldana. 2020. “New York City as ‘Fortress of Solitude’ After Hurricane Sandy: A Relational Sociology of Extreme Weather’s Impact on Climate Politics.” *Environmental Politics*. (30)5, 687-707
- Brulle, Robert J. 2018. “The climate lobby: a sectoral analysis of lobbying spending on climate change in the USA, 2000 to 2016.” *Climatic Change*. 149:289–303

Audio-visual:

- [Merchants of Doubt](#) (film). We will watch excerpts in class.

WEEK 10: Climate Psychology and Fossil politics

March 20

Read 1 of 3:

- Kahan, Dan M. et al. 2012. “The Polarizing Impact of Science Literacy and Numeracy on Perceived Climate Change Risks.” *Nature Climate Change*. 2(10):732–35. [File on bCourses includes excerpt from another article that summarizes cultural cognition theory.]
- Norgaard, Kari Marie. 2011. “Climate Denial: Emotion, Psychology, Culture, and Political Economy.” In John S. Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Schlosberg eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brulle, Robert J. & Kari Marie Norgaard. 2019. “Avoiding cultural trauma: climate change and social inertia.” *Environmental Politics*. (28)5, 886-908.

March 22

- McKibben, Bill. 2016. “[Global Warming’s Terrifying New Chemistry](#).” *The Nation*.
- Jerolmack, Colin and Nina Berman. 2016. “Fracking Communities.” In *Public Culture* 28(2(79)): 193-214.
- Brief news reports on New York fracking ban.

Audio-visual:

- Renée Lertzman. 2019. [How to turn climate anxiety into action](#). TED Talk.
- *Optional:* [Hot & Bothered: Has the Fracking Bubble Finally Burst? with Bethany McLean](#). *Dissent*.

Further reading ideas:

- Jerolmack, Colin and Edward T. Walker. 2018. "Please in My Backyard: Quiet Mobilization in Support of Fracking in an Appalachian Community." *American Journal of Sociology*. (124)2, 479-516.
- Hickman, Caroline, Elizabeth Marks, Panu Pihkala, Susan Clayton, R Eric Lewandowski, Elouise E Mayall, Britt Wray, Catriona Mellor, and Lise van Susteren. "Climate Anxiety in Children and Young People and Their Beliefs about Government Responses to Climate Change: A Global Survey." *The Lancet Planetary Health* 5, no. 12 (December 2021): e863–73.
- Elliott, Rebecca. 2019. "The Sociology of Climate Change as a Sociology of Loss." *European Journal of Sociology*. (59)3, 301-337.
- Hardin, G. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*, 162, 1243-1248.
- Mildemberger, Matto. 2019. "[The Tragedy of the Tragedy of the Commons](#)." *Scientific American*. April 23.

SPRING BREAK: March 27-March 31

WEEK 11: The politics of decarbonization

April 10

Read 1 of 2:

- Leah Stokes. 2020. "An Institutional History of Electricity Politics and Climate Inaction." In *Opti: Interest Groups and the Battle over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 68-107.
- Lennon, Myles. 2017. "Decolonizing Energy: Black Lives Matter and Technoscientific Expertise Amid Solar Transitions," *Energy Research and Social Science* 30: 18 - 27.

April 12

Read both

- Riofrancos, Thea. 2022. "[Shifting Mining From the Global South Misses the Point of Climate Justice](#)." *Foreign Policy*. February 7.

- Riofrancos, Thea et al. 2023. “Achieving Zero Emissions with More Mobility and Less Mining.” *Climate and Community Project*.

Audio-visual:

- [The Invisible Power Struggle with Leah Stokes](#). *Why Is This Happening?* Podcast.

Graduate supplementary reading:

- Hochstetler, Kathryn. 2021. People and place: Siting Wind and Solar Plants in Brazil and South Africa. In *Political Economies of Energy Transition: Wind and Solar Power in Brazil and South Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 175-220.
- Gavin Bridge, Stefan Bouzarovski, Michael Bradshaw, Nick Eyre. 2013. “Geographies of energy transition: Space, place and the low-carbon economy.” *Energy Policy*. (53) 331-340.
- McCarthy, J. 2015. “A socioecological fix to capitalist crisis and climate change? The possibilities and limits of renewable energy.” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 47(12), 2485–2502.
- Baker, Shalanda Helen. 2019. “Anti-Resilience: A Roadmap for Transformational Justice within the Energy System.” *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review (CR-CL)*, Vol. 54, pp. 1-48 (2019), Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper No. 346-2019.
- Saundry, Peter D. 2019. “Review of the United States energy system in transition.” *Energy, Sustainability and Society*. (9)4, 1-32.
- Cohen, Daniel Aldana and Thea Riofrancos. 2020. Latin America’s Green New Deal. *NACLA Report on the Americas*. (52)2: 117-121

WEEK 12: Environmental justice, racism, and urban inequalities

April 10: First draft of group deck and report due

April 10 | Guest lecture by Sanjana Tadepalli on climate disasters

- Readings TBA

April 12

Read 1 of 3

- Pulido, L., & De Lara, J. 2018. "Reimagining 'justice' in environmental justice: Radical ecologies, decolonial thought, and the Black Radical Tradition." *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 1(1-2), 76-98.
- Cha, J. Mijin, Madeline Wander, and Manuel Pastor. 2020. "Environmental Justice, Just Transition, and a Low-Carbon Future for California." *The Environmental Law Reporter*.
- Ranganathan, Malini and Eve Bratman. "From Urban Resilience to Abolitionist Climate Justice in Washington, DC." *Antipode*. (53)1: 115-137.

Audio-visual:

- [Hot & Bothered: Putting Racial Justice First, with Patrick Houston.](#)
- OPTIONAL: [Hot & Bothered: Why Defunding the Police is Key to a Just Transition, with J. Mijin Cha](#)
- OPTIONAL: [Follow the Carbon.](#) (Lecture, Daniel Aldana Cohen)

Further reading ideas:

- Ranganathan, M. 2016. Thinking with Flint: Racial Liberalism and the Roots of an American Water Tragedy. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. 27(3), pp. 17-33.
- Cohen, Daniel Aldana. "Confronting the Urban Climate Emergency: Critical Urban Studies in the Age of a Green New Deal." *City* 24, no. 1-2 (2020): 52-64.

- Millington, Nate, and Suraya Scheba. 2020. "Day Zero and The Infrastructures of Climate Change: Water Governance, Inequality, and Infrastructural Politics in Cape Town's Water Crisis." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.
- Doshi, Sapana. "Greening Displacements, Displacing Green: Environmental Subjectivity, Slum Clearance, and the Embodied Political Ecologies of Dispossession in Mumbai." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 2019.
- Auyero, J., & Swistun, D. 2008. "The Social Production of Toxic Uncertainty." *American Sociological Review*, 73(3), 357–379.

WEEK 13: Where next? Carbon tech, or a Green New Deal?

April 17: Guest lecture by Andrew Jaeger on elite green coalitions in California, and carbon removal policies

- Jaeger, Andrew. 2022. "Silicon Valley Goes Green: The Origin of California's Climate Regime." *Social Forces*. Online first.

April 19

- "[H.Res.109 - Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal](#)." 116th Congress (2019-2020)
- Aronoff, Kate, Alyssa Battistoni, Daniel Aldana Cohen, Thea Riofrancos. 2019. Introduction. *A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal*. New York: Verso, 1-34.

Optional:

- Cohen, Daniel Aldana . [Seize the Hamptons](#). *Jacobin*. 2014.
- Prins, Seth and Brett Story. 2019. "[A Green New Deal for Decarceration](#)." *Jacobin*.
- Fleming, Billy and Xan Lillehei. 2020. "[To Rebuild Our Towns and Cities, We Need to Design a Green Stimulus](#)." *Jacobin*.
- Patel, Raj and Jim Goodman. 2019. "[A Green New Deal for Agriculture](#)." *Jacobin*.

- Lim, Audrea. 2020. "[We Shall Not Be Moved: Collective ownership gives power back to poor farmers.](#)" *Harpers*.
- Estes, Nick. 2019. "[A Red Deal.](#)" *Jacobin*.
- Meek, David and Rebecca Tarlau. 2020. "Educating for Ecosocialism." *NACLA Report on the Americas* (52)2, 206-213.
- Táíwò, Olúfẹ́mi O. 2022. "Towards an Energy Democracy." *New York Magazine*. January 24.

Audio-visual:

- [Hot & Bothered: Building Power, with Naomi Klein, Jane McAlevey, and Julian Brave NoiseCat](#) (or video available [here](#)).

Further reading ideas:

- Baker, Shalanda Helen. 2019. "[Anti-Resilience: A Roadmap for Transformational Justice within the Energy System.](#)" *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* (CR-CL), Vol. 54, pp. 1-48 (2019), Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper No. 346-2019.

WEEK 14: The Contradictory Now: Inflation Reduction Act and Beyond

April 24

- Leber, Rebecca. 2022. "[The US finally has a law to tackle climate change.](#)" *Vox*. August 16.
- [RE: Evergreen Explains: The Climate Impact of the Inflation Reduction Act.](#) *Evergreen Action*. August 23.
- Bigger, Patrick et al. 2022. "[Inflation Reduction Act: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly.](#)" *Climate and Community Project*. August 2, 2022.

April 26

- Short presentations of final projects

Further reading ideas:

- Storrow, Benjamin. 2022. "[Modeling 'IRA' carbon cuts: Caveats, uncertainty and luggage.](#)" *EE News*. August 11, 2022.
- Bond, Kingsmill et al. 2022. "[From Deep Crisis, Profound Change: An assessment of the dynamics accelerating the global sprint away from fossil fuels in the wake of Putin's War.](#)" *RMI*.

May 3: Final project materials (deck and research report) due