

Appalachian

STATE UNIVERSITY

United Nations Climate Negotiations [ECO 4530/5530]

Peacock Hall (PH 1130): M & W, 3:30 - 4:45

Instructor: Dr. Dave McEvoy

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Economics Department

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Office hours: Tuesday 9 - 10 am (and by appointment)

Course Description and Objectives: This course is focused on the negotiation of climate change agreements under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Since 1992, parties to the UNFCCC meet annually at the Conference of the Parties (COP) to further the collective goal of stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. The COP in Paris in 2015 (COP 21) was a turning point in climate negotiations, signaling a new, more inclusive and “bottom up” approach to managing climate change. COP 30 in Belém, Brazil is likely to further expand countries’ commitments for climate action in support of the Paris Agreement.

This course aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental issues regarding climate change, the negotiations process and the political dynamics of the UNFCCC. The course is intended to develop students’ analytical thinking and experiential learning at the international level – including the potential opportunity to attend COP 30 in Belém.

By the end of the course students should:

- understand the UNFCCC and the process of climate negotiations and treaty formation
- understand the heterogeneity of negotiation positions
- have practical experience serving as an observer to the UNFCCC negotiations in COP 30

Course Structure: The course (3 credits) is structured as a weekly seminar, with a practical component focused around COP 30 in Brazil. Interested students will be asked to submit an application that discusses their interests in the course in the context of their academic studies and future career path. Because slots to attend COP 30 are very limited, only selected students will be invited to enroll in the course.

Attending COP 30

Every effort will be made to provide students with the opportunity to attend COP 30. However, credentials for the negotiating sessions are limited and uncertain. More details will be provided as they become available throughout the semester. If slots or funding are not available, or if the COP is postponed or moved online, students can participate in the course without attending the negotiations in person.

During COP 28 and COP 29 it was possible for delegates to attend most sessions via an online platform, and this will be an option for COP 30.

Note that the dates of COP 30 occur during the semester. **The plan is to attend during the first week of the conference (November 10 – November 15) but with travel starting Nov 8 and going through November 16.** It is the responsibility of each student who wants to attend the COP to immediately begin discussions with all of their course instructors about any course conflicts. Missing/rescheduling course assignments is entirely at the discretion of your instructors and may determine whether you can attend the negotiations.

If travel to the COP 30 is approved, attending COP 30 is a required component of the course. However, there will be an optional *virtual* COP experience that will be available to students that are unable to travel.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites except for the minimum 84 credits needed to enroll in 4000 level courses for undergraduate students.

Materials: All of the course materials, notes and readings will be provided to you on AsULearn.

Assessment: All students will be evaluated on three criteria:

1. **Class Participation and Attendance (20%):** Student participation in class discussions is very important. Students are expected to come to class prepared by reading assigned materials to discuss during class.
2. **Assignments (40%):** Students will have a number of short assignments throughout the semester prior to attending COP 29. These include creating a collaborative timeline of COP events and milestones, reflection on assigned readings and other activities. Students will learn how to use [En-Roads](#), a climate change solutions simulator in preparation for writing a policy brief on an issue related to COP 29. En-Roads simulates the policy options that can be used to reach global targets of limiting warming to under 1.5 degrees.
3. **COP 30 Negotiations Policy Briefs (40%):** Prior to COP 30, students will choose a specific aspect of the upcoming negotiations to follow in person (or virtually) and summarize. The brief will clearly outline the issue, why it is important, the challenges, any outcomes observed while at the COP and policy recommendations.

Graduate students (those enrolled in ECO 5530) will have additional responsibilities in the **Participation and Attendance** category (still 20% of the grade). Specifically, each graduate student must help the class prepare for attending the COP by researching and presenting on one critical environmental issue part of the negotiations. Example issues include biodiversity loss, water shortages, coral reef degradation, loss and damage, sea-level rise and carbon capture and storage. There are many others. The students will have 20 minutes to present the issue (and, if possible, its place in the negotiations).

Grading Scale: Use the chart below to convert your percentage grade to letter grade.

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A	$x \geq 93$	C	$77 > x \geq 73$
A-	$93 > x \geq 90$	C-	$73 > x \geq 70$
B+	$90 > x \geq 87$	F	$70 > x \geq 67$
B	$87 > x \geq 83$	F	$67 > x \geq 63$
B-	$83 > x \geq 80$	F	$63 > x \geq 60$
C+	$80 > x \geq 77$	F	$60 > x$

Course Website (AsULearn): The course website can be accessed by logging into AsULearn with your username and password: <http://asulearn.appstate.edu/>.

Course Outline:

- Wednesday, 8/20: Introduction to class, UNFCCC History, Theory, and Context
- Monday, 8/25: Major Conventions and Milestones
- Wednesday, 8/27: Major Conventions and Milestones
- Monday, 9/8: Introduction to Portuguese with Meredith Church Pipes
- Monday, 9/15: Paris Agreement & Nationally Determined Contributions (changed from 9/17)
- Wednesday, 9/24: Carbon Markets (Cap and Trade)
- Wednesday, 10/1: The Structure of Negotiations & Related Activities at COP
- Wednesday, 10/8: Guide to Following Issues at COP
- Wednesday, 10/15: Travel Nurse visit & Logistics updates & Loss and Damage
- Monday, 10/20: Nicole Tran - Student Body President & COP 29 Cohort member
- Wednesday, 10/22: Grad student presentation (Emily); Climate Policy Simulator (EN-ROADs)
- Wednesday, 10/29: UNFCCC & COP 30 Jeopardy
- Monday, 11/3: Brazilian Culture with Meredith Church Pipes
- Wednesday, 11/5: Brazilian Culture with Meredith Church Pipes & Last minute planning
- **11/8 - 11/17: Travel to Brazil for COP 30**
- Monday, 11/24: COP 30 Debrief - Policy Brief questions
- Wednesday, 12/3: Last Class

Additional Syllabus Information: Details for university policies, including academic integrity, access & opportunity, and attendance & participation can be found on the academic affairs website: <https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources-forms/syllabi-policy-and-statement-information>