



Climate, Society and the Humanities

CAS NS 331 (4 credits)

Course Catalog Description:

Survey of climate topics across humanities and social sciences. Explores interpretive and comparative approaches to understanding human-climate interactions in oceanic contexts and identifies collaborative potential with scientists and stakeholders. Requires journal writing and critical application of concepts to group projects and discussions.

Instructor: SEA Faculty

Teaching Assistant: Visiting SEA Faculty

Locations: SEA campus in Woods Hole, MA. On shore in Te Waipounamu, Aotearoa New Zealand. Aboard SEA sailing school vessel *Robert C. Seamans*.

Course Description:

Our objective for this course is to learn from expert practitioners and writers—and each other—about the human dimensions of climate change. How is our own understanding of climate change shaped by the ways we relate to the places that are meaningful to us? How do power relations shape climate stakeholder participation, and to what social, cultural, and political frameworks can we turn to improve equity and inclusion? How do we assess our current responsibilities to human communities who will live in a future of vast planetary change? We will explore these and other questions during our conversations and observations in Woods Hole, the Southern Alps of Aotearoa New Zealand, and aboard *SSV Robert C. Seamans*. This course is a dedicated space for thinking about climate change's pervasive impact on human experience and our opportunities for effective, collaborative adaptation.

Course Objectives:

I have three primary goals in mind for this course: that all students (1) add to their existing knowledge of the breadth of climate impacts on human lives across social and geographical boundaries; (2) test new knowledge and skills against their own observations and experiences; and (3) explore and advance connections between the humanities and the natural sciences. I understand, however, that each of you have your own goals, and I look forward to learning about them.

Some class sessions will involve the familiar lecture format. Lectures are an effective way to convey broad themes and set up future readings and classwork. The focus, however, will be on discussions and other interactive ways of learning.

Evaluation:

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| Journal Essays (five total) | 75% |
| Class Participation, including in-class exercises | 25% |

Assignments:Journal Essays

I will assign five journal entries that track and augment our readings, discussions, and field experiences. The objective is to apply concepts learned from humanities-centered approaches to climate change to real and hypothetical case studies, and to explore solutions where warranted. I will present and discuss the journal prompts in class and place them in the course Google Classroom page. Each of the five journal entries is worth 15% of the total course grade.

Class Participation

For this course we will meet twice a week in the SEA classroom. My goal is to make the most of our time in this shared space by having conversations about essential aspects of the human-climate connection. There are two things we can all do to assure success. The first is to complete the assigned readings, podcasts, and videos before coming to class. The second is to feel empowered to express your thoughts on the topics under discussion. We need to hear every voice, which is why Class Participation is fully 25% of the final course grade.

Please come talk to me if you anticipate a high level of discomfort with speaking in class, or if you feel that you are not being heard.

Other Very Important Stuff:

The papers that you submit in this course are expected to be your original work. You must take care to distinguish your own ideas and knowledge from wording or substantive information that you derive from one of your sources. The term “sources” includes not only published primary and secondary material, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people and text that you cut and paste from any site on the Internet.

Using internet sources: As you browse websites, assess their usefulness very critically. Who posted the information and why? Can you trust them to be correct? Authoritative? Unbiased?

Your annotation should include the name of the author or organization originating any material that you reference. If you can't identify the source, don't use it!

Inclusivity and Classroom Culture:

Our SEA community embraces diversity of age, background, beliefs, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and other visible and nonvisible categories. We expect each one of you (and you should expect the same from us) to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment. If you feel that you are not being welcomed, included, or accepted here, please reach out to one of your teachers or one of the deans at SEA to share your concern.

Course Calendar:

| Topic | Readings/Assignments Due |
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| Week 1 – on shore, SEA campus in Woods Hole | |
| I. Place Wed: Introduction to the themes and expectations of the course. Introduction to Place. | Reading: Cresswell 2009. Place. Praskievicz 2022. Ground truth. |
| Week 2 | |
| Tue: Lecture – Place and climate change. Discussion – Topophilia and place metrics. Thu: Discussion – Place and foodways. | Listenings and Watchings: Happen Films 2021. Building Indigenous food sovereignty with the Hua Parakore organic framework. Link [Watch video with closed captions on.] GRAVY Podcast. Reclaiming native ground. February 9, 2017. Link Gastropod Podcast. A tale to warm the cockles of your heart. April 7, 2020. Link |
| Week 3 | |
| II. Power and Policy Tue: Lecture – From policy to polycentricity. Discussion – Wicked problems. | Readings: Ministry for the Environment (NZ) 2022. <i>Draft national adaptation plan</i> (read pp. 6-24) |

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| <p>Thu: ANZ climate governance exercise.</p> | <p><i>The Ngā Rauru Kiitahi Climate Change Strategy 2021</i> Link (read pp. 1-16)</p> <p>Dorsch and Flachsland 2017. Polycentric governance (read pp.50-59).</p> <p>For next Tue: Kealiikanakaoleohaililani and Giardina 2016. Embracing the sacred.</p> <p>Whyte 2017. Indigenous climate change studies</p> |
| <p>Week 4</p> | |
| <p>Tue: Lecture and Discussion – Hawaiian <i>pono</i> science, with Dr. Noelani Puniwai.</p> <p>Thu: World Café – In this moment: climate, COVID, and justice.</p> | <p>Readings for Thu: Gardiner 2020. Unequal impact: the deep links between racism and climate change. Link</p> <p>McCarthy 2021. Why is climate change a racial justice issue? Link</p> <p>Thomas and Haynes 2020. Black Lives Matter: the link between climate change and racial justice. Link</p> <p>Harvard SPH 2021. Q&A: Gaurab Basu on climate change, racial justice, and COVID-19. Link</p> |
| <p>Week 5</p> | |
| <p>III. Posterity</p> <p>Tue: Lecture – Oceans, climate, and future persons. Discussion – The world in 2123.</p> <p>Thu: Visit to Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.</p> | <p>Readings: read ahead for week 6</p> <p>Watch: for discussion on Tuesday of week 6: Happen Films 2019. Fools and Dreamers. Link</p> <p>Due : Journal entry 2</p> |

| Week 6 | |
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| <p>Tue: Intro to remote shore component on Te Waipounamu (South Island).</p> <p>Thu: World Café – Future landscapes and future persons.</p> | <p>Readings: UN 2023. To think and act for future generations (pp. 1-18).</p> <p>Yeoman et al 2015. 2050: New Zealand's sustainable future.</p> |

| Weeks 7 – on shore, ANZ | |
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| Remote shore component in Aotearoa New Zealand | <p>Readings: Hayward et al 2019. It's not "too late".</p> <p>Due: Journal entry 3</p> |

| Week 8 – on shore, ANZ and aboard RCS | |
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| Tue, Nov 21: Board RCS in Auckland | |

| Week 9 – at sea | |
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| Discussion by watch groups: The blue economy and blue innovation | <p>Readings: UNESCO 2021. Custodians of the globe's blue carbon assets.</p> <p>Rout et al 2024. Indigenising the blue economy in Aotearoa New Zealand.</p> <p>Due: Journal entry 4</p> |

| Week 10 – at sea | |
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| On shore in Napier | <p>Readings: HBRC 2023. Environmental Resilience Plan: Cyclone Gabrielle 2023.</p> <p>HBRC 2021. Kotahi.</p> |

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| <i>Week 11 – at sea</i> | |
| Discussion by watch groups: Topic TBD | Readings: TBD. |
| <i>Week 12 – at sea</i> | |
| Anchored off Great Barrier Island | Due: Journal entry 5 |