This course is meant to provide you with the information and resources typically discussed within the climate sciences discourse and policy. It is NOT an endorsement or advancement of any specific viewpoint. We welcome diversity of opinions and perspectives.

Course Instructor:  
Prof. Dev Niyogi  
dev.niyogi@jsg.utexas.edu  

TA: Trevor Brooks  
tbrooks4343@utexas.edu  

Recommended (not required) Course Textbooks or Web Sites:  


How to take this course

This is a fully online, semi self-paced course.

There are 28 required lectures. There are two additional optional lectures i.e. 28 + 2 = 30 lectures. Each lecture comes with 1 quiz. There are no midterms or final exams.

When you do 28 lectures, your 1 lowest quiz is dropped from final grading.

If you do 30 lectures i.e. the two optional, then one more quiz i.e. total of 2 lowest quiz are dropped from final grading.

Course Format

Modules: Course content is delivered entirely online through Canvas using modules to organize lectures and quizzes into four overarching themes. Each module contains multiple topics (outlined in course content table) related to the theme that are taught via lectures. Lectures are all pre-recorded and available once you advance through any specific pre-requisite material for that topic. Lecture topics within each module are comprised of a set of videos, each aimed to be <15 minutes long (called mini lectures on Canvas). You can watch these videos anytime and anywhere on any device that supports Canvas. At the end of each module, you will post a question about the module that you did not understand (Module Questions). These are due at the same time as the Climate Discussions and Graphical Reviews with one Module Question for each Module.

Quizzes are associated with EACH lecture. This intentionally forces you to follow along during lectures, but the advantage for you is that quizzes are 'low-stakes' in that they are non-cumulative and numerous – so each one is only worth a few points. Quizzes are open book, but there is a time limit to answer them. There are no midterm or final exams for this course. Your final course quiz score will be the average of all your completed quizzes.

Discussions allow you to interact with fellow students and the teaching team in response to prompts related to class material. This is intended to get you to think more deeply about issues raised in class for which there is no single clear answer. We will have four discussions based on ethical reasoning. Discussions will occur in groups of ~15-20 randomly assigned students. You will remain in these groups for the duration of the class. Discussion prompts and grading rubrics will be provided on Canvas. You are required to participate in each online discussion within your group. Discussions will occur during set time periods throughout the term providing several weeks for you to contribute to the discussion.

Climate Discussion Timing:

| Who or what is being harmed? | [August 28 – September 25] |
| Who is responsible?           | [September 18 – October 13] |
| Is climate harm justified?   | [October 2 – November 3] |
| How do we enforce responsibility? | [October 23 – November 17] |

You will develop a Graphical review of the group discussions. This graphical summary of your understanding of the content can be a flow chart, mind map, word map, or a pictorial summary. The graphical summary of the climate discussion topics are not anonymous (Canvas does not permit this option for discussions).

Call to Action Assignments include a small grab bag of short, low-stakes exercises that get you to think more broadly about course content and provide feedback on course material to the instruction team.

The Climate Discussion, Graphical Review, Module Quizzes, Module Question are all due at the same time when the Module closes.

Grading

Grading for this course is broken into five components:

- **Quizzes – 35%**
- **Climate Discussions – 40%**
- **Module Questions – 5%**
- **Graphical Review – 10%**
- **Call to Action Assignments – 10%**

Grades are awarded using UT's standard grades and symbols (below). Quiz grades are completed automatically via Canvas. Climate Discussions are graded by the TA. Discussions, Graphical Reviews, and Call to Action Assignments all have rubrics available on Canvas. Due to the volume of this class size, the instructor will not entertain requests for additional credit or time without documented extenuating circumstances.
Course Content:

Course content is delivered in Modules (grey boxes) with required lectures (in blue) and lectures that you can choose from (in white). The modules will close so make sure you have completed all of the lectures, quizzes, and assignments that go along with each module. Pay attention to what is required of you. There is more choice in the last two modules than in the first two modules. All lectures in Basics are required.

How to do well in an online course:

Online learning has evolved over time, but some challenges remain – particularly keeping students engaged while they manage their time independently. Student choice is known to correlate with student interest and ownership in their learning experience.

The best performing students are the ones who are regularly engaged with the course material. As a result, I would recommend setting a schedule for completing this class.

Students will fall behind in the course if they miss a Discussion. There are only four of them, so they each count for a large portion of your final grade. If you don’t understand the prompt or grading rubric, ask for guidance. More than likely you’re not the only one confused.

Students tend to improve their quiz scores with time, indicating that they are spending the first few quizzes getting acquainted to the content and quiz format. All quizzes are open-book and at-home, but with a time limit. Prepare for quizzes by treating lectures as if you were in an in-person class. Stop the videos, take notes, rewind over confusing parts, email the instruction team for clarification, study, explore the material in the readings/links, and THEN take the quiz. This consistently leads to improved quiz scores.

Communication and feedback:

Communication in a large online class is difficult, particularly when students are taking the class asynchronously. While this provides a lot of flexibility to students, it does not create a strong sense community, which is valuable given that we are all somewhat isolated from each other.

To keep you on track, I will send weekly emails indicating where you should be if you are moving through the course material at a ‘normal’ pace. If you do not see these emails, be sure to check your spam folder settings. Finally, academic instructors rely on formal feedback from course instruction surveys, which will be sent to you digitally via email. Digital surveys have a lower rate of return, so please be sure to buck this trend!

The Fine Print

Academic integrity: Students are expected to read and to strictly adhere to the University's Honor Code and written policies on academic dishonesty, which states: “As a student of the University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.” Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated and any student caught violating University policy will be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs for disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty harms you, all students, and the integrity of the

Your Instructor: Prof. Dev Niyogi
Email: dev.niyogi@jsg.utexas.edu
https://www.jsg.utexas.edu/researcher/dev_niyogi/

Office hours:
TA Office hours: Thursday 11am-12pm (Central Time Zone) on Zoom.
Instructor Office hours: Wed 10 am – 11 am (Central Time Zone) on Zoom.
These will be virtual sessions offered from within Canvas. I will log into Zoom and wait for students to arrive. This means you may join at a time when other students are there. If you want a private meeting, you can make appointments with me (via Zoom) using the link provided on Canvas. Please email me with questions.
University. Think about it – do you really want to throw away your tuition by cheating your way through school? While all quizzes are open-book, students are expected to work independently on all examinations. This is to ensure that we can evaluate the knowledge that you personally have gained throughout the course. Any student caught cheating will be given a zero on that quiz.

Sharing of Materials is Prohibited: No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture handouts, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course. Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Late assignments: Deadlines on Canvas are adhered to automatically and you are not allowed to submit late assignments unless you have prior permission from the instructor. If there are unforeseen circumstances that prevent you from keeping up with course deadlines, please email me as soon as possible to request accommodations. Failure to provide adequate warning of possible late course material means that I am much less likely to grant permission.

An accessible classroom: This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. We all learn differently, and the organization of this course should be able to accommodate each student's needs – documented or not. Anyone with documented disability who requires more formal academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (video phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Religious exemptions: By UT Austin policy, you must notify an instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss an aspect of this course in order to observe a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Trevor Brooks
Hello! I am from Annapolis, MD, but I attended Bridgewater College (in Virginia) for my undergraduate in Environmental and Political Sciences. I am currently a graduate student in the Jackson School studying the urban heat island effect and sustainable infrastructure. I love to workout, hike, and explore. I look forward to being your TA this semester and getting you more excited about climate science! Please email me if you have any questions. Please call me Trevor!

Email: tbrooks4343@utexas.edu

Help & UT Resources
If you are feeling lost or overwhelmed…

1. Make an appointment with me
You are welcome to email me or make an appointment to meet. Many questions and issues can be easily resolved this way.

2. Use online resources. Each lecture is associated with several links to additional online resources that can be helpful to understand the topic covered.

3. All students are welcome to take advantage of the Sanger Learning Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332)

4. All of us benefit from support in times of struggle. You are not alone. An important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. If you or someone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support at the Counseling and Mental Health Center. www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individual_counseling.html

5. Important Safety Information: If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call the Behavior Concerns Advice Line: 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn’t feel right – it probably isn’t. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

6. Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms.
Q Drop Policy If you want to drop this class after the cutoff day, you’ll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution.

Personal Pronoun Use: Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Student rights and Responsibilities: You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness. You have a right to respect. You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly. You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression. You have a right to privacy and confidentiality. You have a right to meaningful and equal participation, to self-organize groups to improve your learning experience. You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student will be isolated, excluded, or diminished in any way. With these rights come responsibilities: You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the teaching team and others if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming. You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and always respectful of others. Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy that you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers’ experiences. You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up with someone is excluded. You are responsible for holding yourself accountable to these standards, holding each other to these standards, and holding the teaching team accountable as well. Your success in this class is important to me. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible.

Arctic sea ice reaches its minimum each September. September Arctic sea ice is now declining in areal extent at a rate of 13.2% per decade. The 2012 sea ice extent is the lowest in the satellite record.

The Paris Climate Agreement within the United Nations Framework on Climate Change was adopted by all of the 195 UN member states and the European Union. Members promised to reduce emissions to keep warming below 2°C.