

School of the Environment, University of Toronto
CCP 400 Climate Policy and Corporate Responses

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The climate is changing and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently declared that it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming. In response to the changing climate, governments across the world are developing policies and regulations to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. For a variety of reasons, the development of climate policies and their related regulations have progressed at different rates in various jurisdictions across the globe. The course targets students interested in understanding the current state of international, national and sub-national climate change policies relevant to Canada and its major trading partners. The course will provide students with the tools and knowledge to critically assess the performance of climate policies both from the regulatory and from the industry perspectives. The course is dynamic, provides real life examples, and will give students the opportunity to apply their knowledge in the development of a GHG mitigation strategy on a company of their choosing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the course is to provide students with a basic understanding of the state of current climate change science, along with an overview of the status of the climate policies and regulations that are being developed to address the climate change challenge at the international, national and sub-national levels. By reviewing current policies and regulatory regimes, students will learn the key elements and effectiveness of various regulatory approaches. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to assess the effectiveness of policies and how industries have responded.

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student should be able to:

- Identify the physical, regulatory and financial impacts of climate change
- Discuss key elements of North American climate policies, the related carbon markets and regulations
- Contrast cap and trade with a carbon tax as mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Understand the drivers of carbon prices
- Describe how carbon can contribute to the financing of emissions offset projects
- Evaluate the level of corporate disclosure and reporting of climate change related risks
- Identify the importance of a corporate carbon strategy and its basic components

COURSE MATERIALS

The course does not require a text book.

For online readings, the relevant websites are provided on weekly basis through the course website. The website is on the Blackboard at: <http://portal.utoronto.ca>. Announcements, assignments, and other course-related material will be posted on the website. Each module will consist of a module topic discussion supported by directed readings. Students are advised to check the website on a regular basis to stay informed about announcements and other course-related matters.

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADES AND ASSESSMENT

Grades are based on your writing and critical thinking ability, participation in the weekly discussion forums and level of contribution to the final long essay project.

	Due Date	Weight
Assignment #1	Week 3	10%
Take-Home Mid-Term Exam	Week 4	15%
Assignment #2	Week 6	10%
Participation in Discussion Forum	Ongoing	30%
Preliminary to the Long Essay (Group Assignment)	Week 8	5%
Final Long Essay (Group Assignment)	Week 10	30%

You will receive clear instructions on both the short and long essays once the course has started. The short 24 hour take-home exam will evaluate your growing knowledge and will be a series of questions to be answered in paragraph form based on course content in combination with peer-reviewed articles and/or government documents.

Overall assessment

This course requires that you maintain 70% or greater in the course work for continuation in the course. There is an expectation for a high level of quality in the work produced by the student. For evaluation purposes, work will be graded under the following criteria:

Distance Education Certificate Program Grade Scale

Letter Grade Scale	Numerical Scale of Marks
A +	90-100%
A	85-89%
A -	80-84%
B+	77-79%
B	73-76%
B-	70-72%
FZ	0-69%

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

a) Students are expected to participate "in class" every week. Participation is 30% of your overall mark and will be based on regular contributions to all discussions, so do participate. Rubrics on the measure of quantity and quality of your participation in the discussion forum will be used for evaluation.

Promptness and Initiative	Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely	Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion; limited initiative	Responds to most postings within a 24 hour period; requires occasional prompting to post	Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates good self-initiative
Delivery of Post	Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings
Relevance of Post	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic
Expression Within the Post	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; no connection to topic	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic
Contribution to the Learning Community	Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic

b) Students are also expected to meet deadlines for written assignments. The assignments will have specific due dates. If you are unable to meet one of the deadlines (for a legitimate reason such as illness), please email me before the deadline at oliver.bussler@utoronto.ca. If you do NOT notify me of late assignment in advance, I will still accept your paper, but deduct 5% per day for each day it is late.

Forum Etiquette

In discussion forums, remember to *think, discuss, and debate* from a multitude of perspectives. Both the instructor and the student will use language that is scholarly and professional. Express yourself *clearly, accurately, and in an intellectual* rather than in a personal fashion.

Discussion forums are designed for you to ask questions and gain further knowledge. Remember to reason intelligently with the instructor and other students. Given the novelty and evolving nature of environmental finance, please feel free to give your view or interpretation based on your own experiences.

Develop *awareness* of your own ethnocentrism and make conscious efforts to ameliorate it. Keep in mind that the course materials will come from a wide cross-section of fields of study and may use jargon that is not familiar to you. Seek to understand the subtleties of these new terms to gain a deeper understanding of the material being presented. Please ask about concepts or terms that you do not understand.

Remember, if you have a question, it is likely someone else has the same question. Also, be conscious of the language you use when you speak about race, ethnicity, and gender. And be careful to avoid any bigoted or exclusive language.

Students who express themselves *inappropriately* or attack others personally in the discussion forums will lose their points for participation, and possibly their privilege to continue. Most students are considerate and respectful of others, but every now and then, someone is abusive and it ruins the experience for everyone.

MODULES

MODULE 1 – Climate Change Basics

In this first module we will review the basics of the science behind climate change and global warming. We will also look at the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions. In the first week I would also like to know about student backgrounds related to climate change studies and understand your interests in the course.

MODULE 2 – Introduction to Climate Policy

In this module, we will discuss the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, and the process for the development of an international treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol. Through an examination of the historical development of the Kyoto Protocol and the international efforts to replace it through the Conferences of the Parties (COP) process, students will begin to see the difficulties in developing international agreements and how concessions are made.

MODULE 3 – Emissions Trading, Taxation, and Command & Control

In this module, we will look at the key instruments that are at the disposal of the regulators to manage greenhouse gas emissions. The fundamental differences between market based and command and control systems will be reviewed. We will also calculate the impact on a corporation of different carbon costs and targets.

1st assignment due end of week 3

MODULE 4 – Understanding Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Regulations

In Modules 4 and 5 we will take a close look at the key design elements of existing climate change regulations as well as their performance to date (where applicable). Among other programs, we will look in detail at the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), California/Quebec, the Alberta Specified Gas Emitters Regulation, the British Columbia Carbon Tax, and the Reduction of Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Coal-Fired Generation of Electricity Regulations.

24 hour mid-term exam will be administered at the end of week 4

MODULE 5 – Understanding Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Regulations *continued*

Module 5 is a continuation of the Understanding Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Regulations begun with Module 4. Module 5 differs from Module 4 in that the regulations being reviewed will be North American-centric rather than at the international level.

MODULE 6 – Carbon Finance Opportunities

In this module, we will explore the large and growing carbon offset project industry that was briefly introduced in Module 4. We will define project based emission offsets and understand their role in carbon finance. Topics covered include: the role and influence of emission offsets within cap and trade, basic concepts and processes in the development of offset projects.

2nd assignment due end of week 6.

MODULE 7 – Environmental and Sustainability Reporting

In this module, we will explore the voluntary and regulatory reporting of greenhouse gas emissions. We will look at the voluntary framework of the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), and the mandatory reporting of the Environment Canada Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting Program (GHGRP). We will also explore shareholder level reporting made through Management Discussion & Analysis (MD&A) reporting.

MODULE 8 –Insurance and Climate Risk

In this module, we will identify and discuss the structure and role of the insurance sector and governments in addressing physical climate risks. We will review the magnitude of the financial risks associated with extreme weather events for affected stakeholders including the insurance industry and governments.

Preliminary to the final long essay assignment due at the end of week 8

MODULE 9 – Corporate Greenhouse Gas Strategy Development

In this module, we will cover the strategic imperative to prepare companies for climate change regulatory risks. Fundamental components in the creation of a corporate strategy will be introduced and discussed.

MODULE 10 – Presentation of Final Group Projects and Wrap-up

In this final wrap-up module, we will complete the course by using the discussion forum to review any outstanding questions. As part of the final module, students will also be asked present their final papers and lead the discussions on their aspect of the study.

Final long essay assignment due at end of week 10