

CRITICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF CLIMATE MIGRATION

1 *Course Information*

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Term Spring 2023
Institution George Washington University
Department Department of Geography

Day/Time [REDACTED]
Course Number GEOG 6293
Course Room [REDACTED]
Email [REDACTED]

2 *Course Description*

Earth's changing climate is dramatically rearranging the geographies of where people live. Each year, the consequences of climate change lead more people to relocate within their country, such as Californians leaving the state due to wildfires, or migrate beyond their borders, such as residents in North Africa facing extreme water scarcity. Yet too often, the relationship between climate change and human migration are assumed rather than interrogated. Critical Geographies of Climate Migration provides a graduate level introduction to the complex relationships between human migration and climate change, not as isolated phenomena, but as inter-related consequences of the geographic organization of society due to capitalism, nation-states and borders, colonialism, political conflict, and resource extraction. Although this course incorporates the latest research on climate science, the course investigates climate migration primarily through a critical geography lens that emphasizes questions of power, space, identity, and the conditions of possibility for meaningful change. Rather than starting from the assumption that a unique phenomenon called climate migration exists, the course scrutinizes this increasingly hegemonic framework both in terms of its empirical and analytical contributions as well as its limitations, contradiction, and absences. Course readings will draw eclectically from geographic scholarship, including recent work on the international migration and refugee system, climate nationalism, and the anthropocene; case studies across the Global North and South; recent government- and NGO-sponsored analyses of climate migration; and first-hand accounts of living in the most ecologically vulnerable parts of the planet. The course will be taught in seminar fashion with ample opportunities for students to contribute their own expertise and perspectives to advance our shared understanding of climate migration.

3 *University Policies*

Academic Integrity Code

Academic integrity is an essential part of the educational process, and all members of the GW community take these matters very seriously. As the instructor of record for this course, my role is to provide clear expectations and uphold them in all assessments. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and otherwise violate the Code of Academic Integrity. If you have any questions about whether or not particular academic practices or resources are permitted, you should ask me for clarification. If you are reported for an academic integrity violation, you should contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) to learn more about your rights and options in the process. Consequences can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the university and may include a transcript notation. For more information, please refer to the SRR website (<https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity>), send an email to rights@gwu.edu, or call 202-994-6757.

University policy on observance of religious holidays

Students must notify faculty during the first week of the semester in which they are enrolled in the course, or as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls within the first three weeks of class, the student must inform faculty in the first week of the semester. For details and policy, see “Religious Holidays” at provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines.

Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Please contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport@gwu.edu if you have questions or need assistance in accessing electronic course materials.

Disability Policy

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services (DSS) at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. DSS can be reached at 202-994-8250.

4 University Services and Support

Writing Center

GW’s Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative, critical, and inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers develop strategies to write independently in academic and public settings. Appointments can be booked online at gwu.mywconline.

Academic Commons

Academic Commons provides tutoring and other academic support resources to students in many courses. Students can schedule virtual one-on-one appointments or attend virtual drop-in sessions. Students may schedule an appointment, review the tutoring schedule, access other academic support resources, or obtain assistance at academiccommons.gwu.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services

GW’s Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services. Phone number: 202-994-5300.

Safety and Security

- In an emergency: call GWPD 202-994-6111 or 911.
- For situation-specific actions: review the Emergency Response Handbook at: safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook.
- In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out, or Take Out. See go.gwu.edu/shooterpret

- Stay informed: safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed.

5 Course Policies

Preparation for Class

My baseline expectation is that seminar participants will come every week having read the assigned readings in their entirety. I also expect seminar participants to come prepared with something substantive to say about the week's readings.

Class Discussion

Classroom discussion is the primary source of learning in a seminar, so intelligent, respectful, on-topic participation through dialogue is essential. Respectful debate over ideas is encouraged, but disrespectful communication, including discriminatory or degrading language will not be tolerated. Meaningful participation means that the student is "eyes-up" in the discussion using active listening skills rather than distracted by technology.

Technology in the Classroom

Cell phones and any other technology not directly used for classroom learning is strictly prohibited. Computers, tablets, and other devices used for reading, note-taking, or other activities directly related to the course are permitted, but notifications should be turned off and non-class-related browser tabs and applications should be closed. No classroom recording of any kind (video or audio) is permitted.

Email Communication

When writing emails to the professor or to each other, students should take care to ensure that the writing demonstrates minimum standards of professionalism and collegiality. This does not imply that emails should be overly-formal, only that emails should include: a meaningful subject line, simple opening (a name or greeting will suffice), a reasonably well-formatted and proofread body, and a simple closing (the sender's name will suffice).

Email is rarely an appropriate medium for attempting to resolve inter-personal issues, work through anger and frustration, or debate substantive concerns. In these situations, arrange an in-person conversation, and, if necessary, include a third party. Students should be aware that, as a general professional matter, emails and other electronic forms of communication constitute significant personal, professional, and legal liabilities. Write every email as if it will one day be read aloud in court.

I respond to emails in 1-3 days. As a rule, I will not be able to respond to emails in less than 24 hours (unless it is a true emergency), which means that I will almost certainly not see emails you send me on the day of class. If I have not responded in more than three days, you may wish to send a follow-up email as a courtesy.

6 Required Coursework & Grading

Your final grade will depend on three main areas: course participation (30%), course assignments during the term (20%), and the final paper (50%). The requirements and details of the final paper will be discussed at the third class.

If you fulfill all the requirements above for this course, you will receive one of the five following letter grades:

- A: 93-100%

- A- 90-92.9%
- B+ 87-89.9%
- B 83-86.9%
- B- 80-82.9%

An 'A' grade indicates truly outstanding performance and top prospects for future scholarships and academic careers. An 'A-' or 'B+' grade indicates a good student who performs at the standard expected for graduate students with no significant concerns or weaknesses. Students with clear weaknesses or generally mediocre performance will earn a 'B' or lower.

7 Course Schedule with Readings

January 23 (Day 1): Course Introduction

Syllabus discussion, course overview, and introductions. No assigned readings for Day 1.

January 30 (Day 2): Key Concepts, Questions, and Problems in Climate Migration Research

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Baldwin, Andrew. (2014). "Pluralising Climate Change and Migration: An Argument in Favour of Open Futures." *Geography Compass* 8 (8): 516-528. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12145>. <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/12859/1/12859.pdf>.
2. Boas, Ingrid, Hanne Wiegel, Carol Farbotko, Jeroen Warner, and Mimi Sheller. (2022). Climate mobilities: migration, im/mobilities and mobility regimes in a changing climate. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48(14): 3365-3379.
3. Cundill, Georgina, Chandni Singh, William Neil Adger, Ricardo Safra de Campos, Katharine Vincent, Mark Tebboth, and Amina Maharjan. (2021). "Toward a climate mobilities research agenda: Intersectionality, immobility, and policy responses." *Global Environmental Change* 69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102315>.

February 6 (Day 3): Label Trouble: Environmental Migrants, Climate Refugees, or Something Else?

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Piguet, E. (2013, 2013-01-01). From "Primitive Migration" to "Climate Refugees": The Curious Fate of the Natural Environment in Migration Studies. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 103(1), 148-162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2012.696233>
2. Felli, R. (2013). Managing Climate Insecurity by Ensuring Continuous Capital Accumulation: 'Climate Refugees' and 'Climate Migrants'. *New Political Economy*, 18(3), 337-363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2012.687716>

Assignment(s) due on this day:

1. Submit representations of "climate migrants" by noon on day of class. See notes from previous class for detailed description of assignment.

February 13 (Day 4): Empirical Studies in Climate-Induced Migration

Final paper discussion.

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Warner, K., Hamza, M., Oliver-Smith, A., Renaud, F., & Julca, A. (2010, 2010-12-01). Climate change, environmental degradation and migration. *Natural Hazards*, 55(3), 689-715. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-009-9419-7>
2. Van Praag, L., Lietaer, S., & Michellier, C. (2021). A Qualitative Study on How Perceptions of Environmental Changes are Linked to Migration in Morocco, Senegal, and DR Congo. *Human Ecology*, 50(2), 347-361. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-021-00278-1>
3. Andersen, L. E., Verner, D., & Wiebelt, M. (2017). Gender and Climate Change in Latin America: An Analysis of Vulnerability, Adaptation and Resilience Based on Household Surveys. *Journal of International Development*, 29(7), 857-876. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3259>

February 20

President's Day. No classes.

February 27 (Day 5): The Securitization of Climate Migration

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Bettini, G. (2014). Climate migration as an adaption strategy: de-securitizing climate-induced migration or making the unruly governable? *Critical Studies on Security*, 2(2), 180-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2014.909225>
2. Methmann, C., & Oels, A. (2015). From 'fearing' to 'empowering' climate refugees: Governing climate-induced migration in the name of resilience. *Security Dialogue*, 46(1), 51-68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614552548>
3. *Optional*: Hartmann, Betsy. 2010. "Rethinking climate refugees and climate conflict: Rhetoric, reality and the politics of policy discourse." *Journal of International Development* 22 (2): 233-246. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.1676>.

March 6 (Day 6): Climate Change as Homeland Security

Individual course feedback and middle of the term grade evaluations.

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Miller T (2017) *Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration, and Homeland Security*. City Lights Publishers.

Tod Miller joining us in class to discuss his book.

March 13

Spring break. No classes.

March 20 (Day 7): Climate Nationalism, Ecofascism, and New Migration Controls

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Turner J and Bailey D (2021) 'Ecobordering': casting immigration control as environmental protection. *Environmental Politics* 31(1): 110-131.
2. Warner, J., & Boas, I. (2019, 2019-12-01). Securitization of climate change: How invoking global dangers for instrumental ends can backfire. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 37(8), 1471-1488. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399654419834018>

March 27 (Day 8): Climate Coloniality & Migration in the Anthropocene

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Sultana, F. (2022). The unbearable heaviness of climate coloniality. *Political Geography*, 99.
2. Whyte, K., L Talley, J., & D. Gibson, J. (2019). Indigenous mobility traditions, colonialism, and the anthropocene. *Mobilities*, 14(3), 319-335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2019.1611015>.
3. *Optional:* Bettini, G. (2019). And yet it moves! (Climate) migration as a symptom in the Anthropocene. *Mobilities*, 14(3), 336-350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2019.1612613>

April 3 (Day 9): Planetary Specters Part I

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Ahuja, N. (2021). *Planetary Specters: Race, Migration, and Climate Change in the Twenty-First Century*. The University of North Carolina Press.

April 10 (Day 10): Planetary Specters Part II

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Ahuja, N. (2021). *Planetary Specters: Race, Migration, and Climate Change in the Twenty-First Century*. The University of North Carolina Press.

April 17 (Day 11): Migrant Rights & Climate Justice

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Rice, J., Long, J., & Levenda, A. (2021). Against climate apartheid: Confronting the persistent legacies of expendability for climate justice. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 5(2), 625-645. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848621999286>
2. Gonzalez, C. (2020). Racial capitalism, climate justice, and climate displacement. *Oati Socio-Legal Series*, 11(1), 108-147. <https://doi.org/10.35295/osls.Iisl/0000-0000-0000-1137>

April 24 (Day 12): Migrant Rights & the Capitalocene

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day:

1. Camfield, D. (2022). *Future on Fire: Capitalism and the Politics of Climate Change*. PM Press.
2. *Or:* Felli, R. (2021). *The Great Adaptation: Climate, Capitalism and Catastrophe*. Verso Books.

May 1 (Day 13): Policy Interventions Workshop

Assigned readings to be discussed on this day are TBD.

May 2 (Day 14):

Student paper presentations. All students required to attend.

May 3 (Day 15):

Student paper presentations. All students required to attend.

May 8: Start of Finals Week

Final papers due on date TBD.