

**Planning ---  
Urban Political Ecology and the Climate Crisis  
Spring 2024  
Friday 1PM-3PM**

**Prof. Hugo Sarmiento  
hs3327@columbia.edu  
Buell Hall 303  
Office hours:  
Wednesdays 3-5PM**

### **Course Description**

This course is focused on a set of analytic perspectives and theories associated with urban political ecology. It is a reading-intensive exploration of politics, broadly defined, and of natures, as they relate to environmental ideologies and forms of governance. These theoretical frameworks will allow students to synthesize empirical observations in ways that inform their understanding of the contemporary evolution of climate and environmental policy and planning practice. The course reviews the evolution of environmental thinking in planning and examines new conceptual paradigms triggered by intensive urbanization, social inequality, conflict, displacement, biodiversity and climate change, and evolution of new environmental practices. Topics include political ecology, social-ecological transitions and resilience theory. These topics will be explored through current debates and their application to cases of urban policy and planning practice in a global context.

### **Outcomes**

- Students will gain familiarity with the concepts, theories and applications of analysis associated with climate and environmental planning.
- Students will develop critical awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of states, markets and collective structures as resources for climate and environmental governance.
- Students will develop a historical appreciation of environmental policy in order to reflect critically on contemporary status and trends.
- Students will develop an interdisciplinary understanding of climate and environmental policy through exploration of economic, sociological and political scientific perspectives.
- Students will be exposed to a broad range of climate and environmental problems and policy responses including national and international cases and analyses at multiple scales.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Reading and Discussion – 30%  
Short essay – 20%  
Seminar Facilitation –20%  
Final Paper – 30%

## Reading and Discussion

Seminar participants are expected to closely read everything that has been assigned before the class meeting. The majority of each meeting will consist of engaged and active discussion. In order for this to work, each participant in the course will need to actively participate—sharing opinions, raising questions and points of dis/continuity in the readings, and respectfully engaging the arguments from the readings and their fellow seminar participants.

My primary aim is to moderate discussion as needed, though I will periodically interject with brief presentations.

Readings will be posted on the course website.

## Seminar Facilitation

Each week, two members of the class will be in charge of co-facilitating discussion. Those presenters will be expected to read closely, prepare brief summaries of the readings, and come prepared with questions and discussion points to pose to the other seminar participants. 15-20 minutes will be allocated at the beginning of seminar each week to give the presenters a chance to set the stage for seminar and guide discussion. Those members of the course that are presenting each week should also plan to act as "experts" for that week's readings, and thus, they should be prepared to take a particularly active role in discussion.

During the first course meeting, seminar participants will select which weeks they are interested in facilitating. It is generally expected, but certainly not required, that the co-facilitators for each week will meet before seminar to discuss the readings, identify key points, and make a plan for how they will guide the week's seminar.

## Short Essay

Midterm, each seminar participant will be expected to write a short essay in response to questions I will provide. The objective of the essay is to evaluate your understanding of the concepts we are discussing in the seminar. You will not need to perform any outside research for this assignment. The essay should be completed in no more than 5 pages.

## Final Paper

Each seminar participant will be expected to produce a final paper for the course. The goal with these papers is to challenge yourself to apply the theory we are learning in this seminar to a case or writing project. I want these papers to be useful for you, and so I am willing to be flexible on the length and format, so long as the paper is on a topic that is relevant to the course and is of an appropriate scope for a graduate seminar.

## Presentations

Each seminar participant will be expected to present your writing project for the course. In effect this will be a presentation of your paper. My expectation is this will be a work in progress presentation and an opportunity to gain feedback for your final paper.

## **Schedule**

### **Week 1 – Jan. 18th**

Introduction and overview

### **Week 2 – Jan. 25**

Foundations: Urban Political Ecology and the Climate Crisis

#### *Readings*

- Robbins, Paul. (2020). Political Ecology. Third Edition: A Critical Introduction. Ch.1-3
- Watts, Michael. (2020). "Now and then: the origins of political ecology and the rebirth of adaptation as a form of thought," in Perreault, T., Bridge, G., & McCarthy, J. Eds.. *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology* (1st edition). Routledge.

#### *Recommended*

- Watts, M. & Peet. R. (2004). Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements. United Kingdom: Routledge.

### **Week 3 – Feb. 1**

Climate urbanism

#### *Readings*

- Long, J., & Rice, J. L. (2019). From sustainable urbanism to climate urbanism. *Urban Studies*, 56(5), 992-1008
- Joshua Long & Jennifer L. Rice (2021) Climate urbanism: crisis, capitalism, and intervention, *Urban Geography*, 42:6, 721-727
- Vanesa Castán Broto & Enora Robin (2021) Climate urbanism as critical urban theory, *Urban Geography*, 42:6, 715-720

### **Week 4 – Feb. 8**

The Social Construction of Risk

#### *Readings*

- W. Neil Adger. (2006). Vulnerability. *Global Environmental Change*. Volume 16, Issue 3. 268-281
- Tierney, Kathleen. (2014). The Social Roots of Risk. Stanford University Press. Ch. 1. [Chapter

on growth machine]

- Gaul, Gilbert. (2019). *The Geography of Risk: Epic Storms, Rising Seas, and the Cost of America's Coasts*. Sarah Crichton Books, New York. Introduction & Ch. 13-15.

#### *Recommended*

- Mike Davis: *Ecologies of Fear: The case for letting Malibu burn*

### **Week 5 – Feb. 15**

Resilience theory: Social ecological systems

#### *Readings*

- C.S. Holling (2012). *Foundations of Ecological Resilience*. United States: Island Press.
- Folke, C. (2008). *Navigating Social-Ecological Systems: Building Resilience for Complexity and Change*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wilkinson, C. (2012). Social-ecological resilience: Insights and issues for planning theory. *Planning Theory*, 11(2), 148–169.

#### *Recommended*

Swyngedouw, E. (2004). *Social Power and the Urbanization of Water: Flows of Power*. United Kingdom: OUP Oxford.

### **Week 6 – Feb. 22**

Social Ecological Transitions and Cities

#### *Readings*

- Bulkeley, H. (2015). An urban politics of climate change: Experimentation and the governing of socio-technical transitions (7526158). Routledge. Chapter 2.
- Hodson, M., Marvin, S., (2010). Can cities shape socio-technical transitions and how would we know if they were? *Res. Policy*
- Pelling, M. (2010). *Adaptation to Climate Change: From Resilience to Transformation*. Routledge. Ch. 2

**Paper Proposal Due**

## **Week 7 – Mar. 1**

### The Resilience Industrial Complex

#### *Readings*

- Leitner, H., Sheppard, E., Webber, S., & Colven, E. (2018). Globalizing urban resilience. *Urban Geography*, 39 (8), 1276–1284.
- Goh, K. (2020). Flows in formation: The global-urban networks of climate change adaptation. *Urban Studies*, 57(11), 2222-2240
- Maud Borie, Mark Pelling, Gina Ziervogel, Keith Hyams. (2019). Mapping narratives of urban resilience in the global south. *Global Environmental Change*. Vol 54.

#### *Guest Speaker*

## **Week 8 – Mar. 8**

### Climate Governance and Urban Regimes

#### *Readings*

- Agrawal, A., Agrawal, A. P. o. P. S. A. (2005). *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects*. United States: Duke University Press.
- Zeiderman, A. (2012). On Shaky Ground: The Making of Risk in Bogotá. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 44(7), 1570–1588.
- Harriet Bulkeley (2021). Climate changed urban futures: environmental politics in the anthropocene city, *Environmental Politics*, 30:1-2, 266-284

## **Week 9 – Mar. 15<sup>th</sup>**

### Climate Justice

#### *Readings*

- Burkett, Maxine. (2018). Behind the Veil: Climate Migration, Regime Shift, and a New Theory of Justice. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*. Vol. 53
- David Schlosberg, Lisette B. Collins. (2014). Advanced Review. From environmental to climate justice: climate change and the discourse of environmental justice. *WIREs Clim Change*

- Sara Hughes and Matthew Hoffmann (2020). Just urban transitions: Toward a research agenda. *WIREs Climate Change*. 11:e640

#### *Recommended*

- Anguelovski, et al. (2016). Equity Impacts of Urban Land Use Planning for Climate Adaptation: Critical Perspectives from the Global North and South. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 36(3), 333-348.

#### *Guest Speaker*

#### Short Essay Due

#### **Week 10 – Mar. 22**

#### **SPRING BREAK**

#### **Week 11 – Mar. 29**

#### The Climate Crisis and Racism

- Levi Van Sant, Richard Milligan, and Sharlene Mollet. (2020). Political Ecologies of Race: Settler Colonialism and Environmental Racism in the United States and Canada. *Antipode* Vol. 0 No. 0
- Keston K. Perry, Leon Sealey-Huggins. (2023). Racial capitalism and climate justice: White redemptive power and the uneven geographies of eco-imperial crisis. *Geoforum*. Vol. 145
- Gonzalez, Carmen G., Racial Capitalism, Climate Justice, and Climate Displacement (January 14, 2020). *Oñati Socio-Legal Series*, symposium on Climate Justice in the Anthropocene, volume 11(1), pp. 108-147 (2021)

#### **Week 12 – Apr. 5**

#### *Readings*

#### Towards a Post-Development Framework

- Escobar, A. (2015). Degrowth, postdevelopment, and transitions: a preliminary conversation. *Sustain Sci* 10, 451–462
- Hickel, J. (2020). *Less is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World*. Random House.
- Paulson, Susan. (2017). Degrowth: culture, power and change. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 24: 425-666.

*Recommended:*

- Tim Jackson. (2009). Prosperity without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow

**Week 13 – Apr. 12**

Paper presentations

**Week 14 – Apr. 19**

Paper presentations

**Week 15 – Apr. 26**

**Conclusion**

**Final Paper due May 5th**