



Climate Change + Colonialism

HP 3151-02

Spring 2023 | University of Wyoming

Time/Location	T/TH, Hoyt Hall 037, 1:20-2:35 p.m.
Instructor	Dr. Matt Henry, Assistant Instructional Professor Honors College, University of Wyoming Guthrie House 110 mhenry12@uwyo.edu
Office Hours	T/TH 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and by appointment (including Zoom)
Description	<p>From megadroughts and sea level rise to wildfires and species loss, climate change affects us all. But it has been well-documented that the felt impacts of the crisis are unevenly distributed along the lines of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Moreover, scholars and activists have increasingly linked climate change to colonialism’s legacies and ongoing impacts. While colonialism is not a uniform process, it is at bottom animated by the violent exploitation of diverse lands, resources, and peoples and driven by the structures and systems that have emerged as primary impediments to addressing the crisis.</p> <p>In this class, we will explore how global climate change both emerges from and reinforces historically inequitable power relations established and upheld by colonial regimes. For example, how should we historicize climate change in ways that call attention to entangled histories of racism, genocide, and environmental degradation? What on earth is the Racial Capitalocene? How is the story of nutmeg a parable for the climate crisis? What do we mean when we describe the “cyclical” nature of climate change experienced by Indigenous peoples under settler colonialism? How does climate science, and the adaptation and mitigation strategies it begets, reproduce colonial relations of power? Turning to diverse disciplinary perspectives, and drawing on the work of academics, advocates, and activists, we will explore the complex histories and entanglements of colonialism and climate change. We will conclude with a unit on climate justice, with a focus on decolonial justice concepts like just transition, reparations, and the #LandBack movement.</p>
Texts	<p>Many of the readings for this semester will be available for free on our WyoCourses Site. However, the following texts are required and can be purchased at the university bookstore or online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amitav Ghosh, <i>The Nutmeg’s Curse</i> • Max Liboiron, <i>Pollution is Colonialism</i>
Grading	Grading will be on a straight scale, with no plus/minus grading. A: 100-90%, B: 89.9-80%, C: 79.9-70%, D: 69.9-60%, F: < 60%

Life-Writing Journals (200 points, 20% of final grade)

Scholar-activist Giovanna DiChiro describes “life-writing” as a genre “embodied in personal struggles and life choices” that endow a sense of “*active* hope.” Within the context of climate change, life-writing can be a powerful way to see ourselves as “social and environmental change agents” rather than passive observers, deniers, or cynics. Throughout the semester, you’ll keep a journal recording your reactions to class readings and discussions and your thoughts on how you might become a social and environmental change agent through daily practices, civic engagement, and your professional trajectory.

Discussion Lead Presentations (150 points, 15%)

Once during the semester you’ll pair up with a fellow student to lead class discussion for 20 minutes. You’ll develop a handout and talking points and engage in dialogue with fellow students. Guidelines will be provided.

Community Points (150 points, 15%)¹

To foster an atmosphere of community, co-learning, and mutual aid, a key component of this class will be Community Points. You can receive Community Points in a variety of ways, including:

- Taking detailed notes in class and posting them to the class notes Discussion Thread, which can be helpful for students who are unable to attend class or who have disability accommodation needs.
- Contributing to Supplemental Reading List, a running bibliography of resources not covered in class.
- Contributing to the Climate + Colonialism Keywords discussion board post.
- Providing detailed feedback on and helpful resources for your classmates’ writing assignments.
- Emailing an author of a text, copying me, sharing how it changed your thinking.
- Any form of mutual aid - proofreading a classmate's work, providing feedback on a classmate's work, showing someone how to use library resources, etc.
- At the end of the semester, write a letter to future students with tips/tricks for navigating the course.

Climate/Colonialism Case Study (200 points, 20%)

Using the Environmental Justice Atlas and drawing on library research, you will write a case study exploring how the legacies of colonialism shape the impacts of climate change in a specific location.

Keywords for Climate Change + Colonialism: Collaborative Project (300 points, 30%)

In 1976, cultural theorist Raymond Williams published *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Williams insisted that the book was neither a dictionary or a glossary, but rather a guide to how the meaning of terms changes over time in response to cultural and political change. Williams’ *Keywords* has since inspired numerous volumes focused on the vocabulary of various academic fields, such as American Cultural Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies. However, a collection to keywords to describe the entanglements between climate change and colonialism does not yet exist.

For this assignment, you will contribute to the collaborative authorship of a Keywords for Climate Change + Colonialism guide. You will select a term that you consider critical to understanding the link between climate change and colonialism and write a concise overview, including an annotated bibliography detailing further resources for readers interested in learning more about the term. During the final week of the semester, we will hold an in-class conference in which you’ll present your keyword. Students’ final essays will be posted online (with consent) to form a digital Keywords for Climate Change + Colonialism collection. Guidelines will be provided.

¹ I would like to acknowledge that the idea for this assignment comes from Dr. Max Liboiron, Métis scholar and Associate Professor of Geography at Memorial University in Canada (<https://twitter.com/MaxLiboiron/status/1470771504145215499>).

COURSE INFORMATION AND POLICIES

Participation Policy

Participation is key to your success in this class. Classroom discussion develops our understanding of important topics and helps meet critical learning outcomes. Through discussion, students learn to synthesize and evaluate information, persuade others through effective rhetorical choices and concrete evidence, and respond appropriately and respectfully to ideas expressed by others. In this class, participation includes coming to class having carefully read the assigned materials and completed any homework assignment; contributing thoughtfully to classroom discussions and small group discussion; making relevant points that are supported with evidence; actively listening to your classmates and responding to their contributions (aka being an active listener/participant).

Attendance

The single most important factor in academic success is going to class. Since this is a discussion-based class, being here and participating is even more important. You are allowed **three (3) unexcused absences** after which your final grade may be lowered. An exception to this rule is if you must miss class due to an extended illness (e.g., COVID- see below) or other extenuating circumstances beyond your control. I strongly encourage you to communicate with me to make alternative arrangements.

Late Work

Occasionally, late assignments are unavoidable. However, all late assignments must be cleared with me 24 hours in advance. Otherwise, 10% per day will be deducted.

COVID-19

If I or someone in my family tests positive for COVID-19 and I have to quarantine at home, class will be held on Zoom. If you are exposed to or test positive for COVID-19, please contact me and we will make arrangements for missed classes and work. For all other COVID-19 information, please see our WyoCourses page.

Communication

I will use email and announcements through WyoCourses for class updates, so please make sure your university email account is the one you actually use (you can also set WyoCourse for text notifications if that works better for you). Please email me for quick questions that are not answered on the syllabus, making an appointment, letting me know you are ill, and rescheduling a conference. For anything more substantive, please see me during office hours.

Academic Dishonesty

I take academic dishonesty very seriously. According to UW Regulation 2-114. Academic dishonesty means *anything that represents someone else's ideas as your own without attribution*. It is intellectual theft – stealing - and includes (but is not limited to) unapproved assistance on examinations, plagiarism (use of any amount of another person's writings, blog posts, publications, and other materials without attributing that material to that person with citations), or fabrication of referenced information. *Facilitation of another person's academic dishonesty is also considered academic dishonesty and will be treated identically*. Academic dishonesty/plagiarism will result in failure in the assignment, course, or possibly in your degree program. It may also jeopardize your scholarships. The Honors College will report instances plagiarism to the Dean of Students. If you find yourself in a bind or panicked over a due date, PLEASE come see me rather than turn to the internet. See the Honors Policy on Academic Dishonesty.

Respect, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In the classroom, online, and in individual meetings, I expect you to communicate with your peers and with me respectfully, professionally, and collegially. As a reminder, the [Student Code of Conduct](#) still applies when you are acting online, including when sending emails. The University of Wyoming values an educational environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The diversity that students and faculty bring to class, including age, country of origin, culture, disability, economic class, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, linguistic, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, worldview, and other social and cultural diversity is valued, respected, and considered a resource for learning.

Duty to Report

"UW faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX, discrimination based upon sex and gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, the faculty member MUST report information you share about the incident to the university's Title IX Coordinator (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are people who can meet with you. Faculty can help direct you or you may find info about UW policy and resources at <http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit> (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)

You do not have to go through the experience alone. Assistance and resources are available, and you are not required to make a formal complaint or participate in an investigation to access them."

Course Resources

Your first resources are me (your instructor) and your fellow students. I encourage you to communicate with me regularly. I am here to help. If you need to schedule a meeting with me outside of my posted office hours, please just let me know and I am confident we'll be able to find a mutually agreed upon time. Also remember that your classmates are your resources, too. While ultimately you will be held accountable for the quality of your work, conversation, brainstorming, and collaborative work is welcome.

STEP Tutor Center

The University of Wyoming has a range of tutoring options. Please visit <https://www.uwyo.edu/step/tutoring/> for more information about in-person or remote tutoring options.

UW Writing Center

The Writing Center, located in Coe 302, is able to help writers at any stage of the writing process. With a focus on teaching and learning, the Writing Center is not a "fix-it" shop; instead, they help writers identify, articulate, and implement possible solutions for struggles they face in their writing. The Writing Center is generally open M-F, 9am to 4pm, and you can make an appointment by stopping in or calling 307-766-5250. For more information, visit <http://www.uwyo.edu/writing-center/>.

Student Educational Opportunity/Disability Support Services

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent her/him from fully demonstrating her/his ability should contact the course instructor as soon as possible so that the student and instructor can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation. It is recommended that students with disabilities also contact the University Disability Support Services (UDSS) at <http://www.uwyo.edu/uds>

COURSE CALENDAR*

*Subject to change

Week 1 Introduction + Climate Change

17 Jan Course Intro + Syllabus Overview

19 Jan **Keyword Essay: Andrew Ross, "Climate Change"**
Keyword Essay: Shona Williams, Colonialism"

Week 2 Competing Histories: Anthropocene or Capitalocene?

24 Jan Steffen et al, "The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives"
Todd and Davis, "On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene"

26 Jan Patel and Moore, Intro to *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*

Week 3 Cheap Nature, Cheap Lives, and the Plantationocene

31 Jan Patel and Moore "Cheap Lives" and "Cheap Nature"
Discussion Lead #1

02 Feb Davis et al, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, ... Plantationocene?"
Vergès, "Racial Capitalocene"
Moore et al, "Plantation Legacies"

Week 4 The Coloniality of Power

07 Feb Quijano, "The Coloniality of Power"
Discussion Lead #2

09 Feb Sultana, "The Unbearable Heaviness of Climate Coloniality"

Week 5 An Alternative History of the Climate Crisis

14 Feb Ghosh, *The Nutmeg's Curse* Chapters 1-7
Discussion Lead #3

16 Feb Ghosh, *The Nutmeg's Curse* Chapters 8-11

Week 6 An Alternative History of the Climate Crisis

21 Feb Ghosh, *The Nutmeg's Curse* Chapters 12-16

23 Feb Ghosh, *The Nutmeg's Curse* Chapters 17-19

24 Feb **Assignment Due: Submit Two Journal Entries by midnight on WyoCourses**

Week 7 Underdevelopment + Climate Migration

28 Feb Rodney, excerpts from *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*
[Discussion Lead #4](#)

02 Mar Ahuja, “Race, Insecurity, and the Invention of the Climate Migrant”

Week 8 Settler Colonialism + Climate Change as “Colonial Déjà vu”

07 Mar Whyte, “Settler Colonialism, Ecology, and Environmental Injustice”
Whyte, “Our Ancestors’ Dystopia Now”
[Discussion Lead #5](#)

09 Mar Estes, excerpts from *Our History is the Future*
NDN Collective, “Memo: The Climate and Missing and Murdered Indigenous and Relatives Crisis”

Week 9 SPRING BREAK

14 Mar NO CLASS

16 Mar NO CLASS

Week 10 Science, Colonialism, and Anticolonial Research Methods

21 Mar Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism* Introduction + Ch. 1
Excerpts from Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

23 Mar NO CLASS – Instructor Traveling

24 Mar **Assignment Due: Case Study Essays Due on WyoCourses by Midnight**

Week 11 Science, Colonialism, and Anticolonial Research Methods

28 Mar Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism* Ch. 2
[Discussion Lead #6](#)

30 Mar Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism* Ch. 3-end

Week 12 Settler Colonialism: Israel-Palestine

04 Apr Intro to Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Class

06 Apr Weizman, *The Conflict Shoreline: Colonization as Climate Change in the Negev Desert*
[Discussion Lead #7](#)

07 Apr **Assignment Due: Submit Two Journal Entries on WyoCourses by Midnight**

Week 13 Climate Solutions and Coloniality

11 Apr Paprocki, “Threatening Dystopias: Development and Adaptation Regimes in Bangladesh”
Bachram, “Climate Fraud and Carbon Colonialism”
Discussion Lead #8

13 Apr Riofrancos, “What Green Costs”
Jerez et al, “Lithium Extractivism and Water Injustices in the Salar de Atacama, Chile”

Week 14 Climate Justice: Frameworks and Platforms

18 Apr Sultana, “Critical Climate Justice”
Schlosberg and Collins, “From Environmental Justice to Climate Justice”
Discussion Lead #9

20 Apr Climate Justice Alliance, “Just Transition”
La Rutadel Clima, “Climate Justice in Latin America: Direct Lessons from On-The-Ground Activists”
COP27 People’s Declaration for Climate Justice

Week 15 Climate Justice: Reparations and Land Back

18 Apr Kelley, excerpt from *Freedom Dreams*
Táíwò and Cibralic, “The Case for Climate Reparations”

20 Apr Thompson, “Returning the Land”

Week 16 In-Class Conference – Keywords for Climate Change + Colonialism

30 Apr **Assignment Due: Keyword Essay Drafts Due by midnight on WyoCourses**

02 May **Keyword Presentations/Discussion**

04 May **Keyword Presentations/Discussion**

Week 7 FINALS WEEK

10 May **Assignment Due: Keyword Essay Final Draft on WyoCourses by Midnight**

12 May **Assignment Due: Submit Full Journal on WyoCourses by Midnight**