

Inter 150

Fighting for the Planet: The Political Economy of Climate Change

Course Details

Class sessions: Daily 9:30 - 11:20am

Room: R110

Instructor: David Spataro

Email: david.spataro
@bellevuecollege.edu

Phone: (425) 564-3161

Office: D200E

Office hours: M 12 – 1pm

Tu 12 – 1pm

**W 12 – 2 pm
(outside R230)**

Th 12 – 1pm

BJ Unti

bj.unti
@bellevuecollege.edu

(425) 564-2616

A200C

Tu 11:30 – 12:20pm

**W 12 – 2pm
(outside R230)**

Th 11:30 – 12:20pm

F 11:30 – 12:20pm

Course Description

The science is in. Climate change is threatening life on the planet. Unless humans radically reduce the burden we place on the earth, we are headed for disaster. Unfortunately, the global community has done very little to battle climate change. Indeed, key policy decisions of the last decade push us in precisely the wrong direction; calling for faster economic growth and higher levels consumption. How is this possible? Are we in denial? Why are our leaders ignoring the facts? And, most importantly, what can you do to become more knowledgeable and engaged with environmental issues? This class will address these questions and explore the relationship between capitalism, our political system, and the nature of the environmental crisis.

Outcomes

- Identify and elaborate key links between our economic system and the environmental crisis.
- Understand the interests and influence of different political constituencies in the public debate over environmental policy.

- Explain the emergence and organization of international political bodies designed to address climate change.
- Understand the history of the environmental movement and where it is today, including the ways in which this movement overlaps with broader movements for social and political reform.
- Critically evaluate the effectiveness of different policy measures proposed for addressing climate change.
- Discuss the concept of environmental justice.
- Apply and critique economic concepts and models from both mainstream and heterodox traditions.
- Understand the many forms of political participation from the ballot box to direct action.
- Identify opportunities for engagement in environmental issues at the local level.
- Comprehend basic concepts, metrics, and targets used by economists, environmental scientists, and policy makers.

Additional Outcomes

- POLS 101: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/All/POLS%26/101>
- POLS 175: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/All/POLS/175>
- ECON 100: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/All/ECON/100>
- ECON 202: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/All/ECON%26/202>
- ECON 250: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/All/ECON/250>

Grades

Participation:		
	Class participation	10%
	Reading presentation	10%
	Reading responses	10%
Podcast Project:		
	Weekly blog	15%
	Podcast	15%
Exams:		
	Midterm	20%
	Final	20%
	total	100%

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	92 - 100%
A-	90 - <92%
B+	88 - <90%
B	82 - <88%
B-	80 - <82%
C+	78 - <80%
C	72 - <78%
C-	70 - <72%
D+	68 - <70%
D	60 - <68%
F	<60%

Participation: Participation is an integral part of this class. Students will be assessed on in-class participation. Assessment areas include attending class, showing up prepared, listening actively, and engaging with other students and the professors. Students will also be required to present one reading during the quarter and facilitate a seminar-style discussion. Lastly, students who are not presenting will complete reading response questions on a weekly basis. **Late Work Policy:** Late work will not be accepted for reading responses and reading presentations. If you are absent, please email your reading responses by class time and turn in a hard copy when you return to class.

Podcast Project: The final project for this class will be to produce a short podcast (audio documentary) that draws upon the conceptual material from the class. Preparation for this project requires weekly blogging where students will gather audio and write short reflection writings based upon prompts provided by the professors. The skills and the content of the weekly blogs should contribute to the final podcast. **Late Work Policy:** Weekly blog entries are due on Fridays before class starts. Students who miss the due date will have one week to submit the assignment late and receive 85% of the grade.

Exams: The midterm exam will cover the first half of the class material. The final exam will be cumulative. The best way to prepare for the exams is to come to class, do the weekly readings, and complete assignments on time. **Late Work Policy:** Alternative exam times are only available for students with emergencies or pre-determined excused absences.

Classroom Learning Atmosphere

Affirmation of Inclusion

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination. We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

Religious Holidays

Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or any other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance should be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent, preferably at the beginning of the term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments should be offered an opportunity to make up the work without penalty (if they have previously arranged to be absent), unless it can be demonstrated that a makeup opportunity would constitute an unreasonable burden on a member of the faculty. Should disagreement arise over what constitutes an unreasonable burden or any element of this policy, parties involved should consult the department chair, or Dean.

College Anti-Discrimination Statement (Title IX)

Bellevue College does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity; color; creed; national origin; sex; marital status; sexual orientation; age; religion; genetic information; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; gender identity or veteran status in educational programs and activities which it operates.

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Such behavior will result in a zero grade for the assignment/exam in question. Please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-2050p/>.

Important Resources/Services

Disability Resource Center – B132

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for

treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the DRC as soon as possible. If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is an additional access program available to you. Contact [Autism Spectrum Navigators](#). Email and phone number is on the web page. ASN is located in the Library Media Center in D125.

The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call the reception desk at (425) 564.2498. Deaf students can reach the DRC by Skype: the address is **DRCatBC** (NOTE: There is no @ sign...it is actually **DRCatBC**). Please visit the website at [Disability Resource Center](#) for application information and other helpful links.

Multicultural Services – 2nd Floor of B building (above the bookstore)

Multicultural Services (MCS) is a student-centered service program on campus that is designed to support all students in general, and diverse student populations in particular. MCS is a broad program that can assist students with tutoring in Math and English as well as help students locate community resources such as food and housing assistance. Please familiarize yourself with MCS by stopping by or visiting: bellevuecollege.edu/mcs/

Counseling Center – 2nd Floor of B building (above the bookstore)

The Counseling Center provides personal, career, and academic counseling for all registered BC students. The Counseling Center can be a helpful place for locating community resources (referrals) as well as free counseling appointments with the center's staff of licensed mental health counselors. Please familiarize yourself with the services offered by the counseling center by stopping by or visiting: bellevuecollege.edu/counseling/.

Course Calendar

This is a general calendar that is subject to change. Each Thursday, we will hand out a more detailed weekly schedule for the coming week. The weekly handout will outline the due dates for readings, reading presentations, and reading responses.

Week 1: April 4 - 8

The Crisis

TOPICS

- Syllabus/Icebreakers
- The state of the world: Climate Science, Planetary Boundaries
- Social Science and the Environment
- Special Guest Lecturer Rick Glover: Ocean Acidification

READINGS AND RESOURCES:

- Seattle Times “Sea Change” – <http://bit.ly/1hhZ4P2>
- WWF “Living Planet Report” – PDF
- Foster and Magdoff “The Crisis” – PDF

Week 2: April 11 - 15

Economics and Ideology

TOPICS

- The Making of Political Economy: History, Class Struggle, and Ideology
- Neoclassical and Heterodox traditions
- Podcasting 101
- Special Guest Lecturer Radio Journalist/Podcaster Steve Scher

READINGS AND RESOURCES:

- Johnson “Social Systems” – PDF
- Mitchell, Wray, and Watts
 - “Neoclassical V Heterodox” (pp. 1-9) – PDF
 - “Historical Evolution of Capitalism” (pp. 44 – 57) – PDF

Week 3: April 18 - 22

Commodification

TOPICS

- The Commodity Form
- Commodification of Nature
- Neoliberalism
- Fictitious Commodities

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Polanyi selections from “The Great Transformation” – PDF
- Marx “The Fetishism of Commodities” – PDF
- Sandel “What Money Can’t Buy” – PDF
- Zizek “First as Tragedy, Then as Farce” – VIDEO <http://bit.ly/1hhZ4P2>
- Jenson “Forget Shorter Showers” – PDF

Week 4: April 25 - 29

National Economy, Territory, Sovereignty

TOPICS

- Measurements, Targets, Economic & Ecologic Efficiency
- The Business Cycle, Unemployment, Inflation
- The State and Nationalism
- Ecological V Political Boundaries

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Mitchell, Wray, and Watts “System of National Income and Product Accounts” – PDF
- Greider “Inflation” – PDF
- J.S. Mill “Of the Stationary State” – PDF
- Tim Jackson “Sustainable alternatives to GDP” – PDF
- Klein “You and What Army?” – PDF

Week 5: May 2 - 6

Nature and the Classical Model

TOPICS

- Theories of Nature
- Culture V Nature
- The (neo)Classical Model
- Eco-feminism

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Dillard “The Classical Model” – PDF
- Worster “The Dismal Science” – PDF
- Nash “The Wilderness Cult” – PDF

Week 6: May 9 - 13

Limits, Imperatives, and Keynes

TOPICS

- Natural Limits V the Limits of Capitalism
- The Keynesian Solution: Effective Demand and Growth

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Dillard “Keynes” – PDF
- Schor “The Overspent American” – PDF
- Hanauer “Rich People Don’t Create Jobs” – VIDEO
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBx2Y5HhplI>
- Funk “Shell Games” – PDF

Week 7: May 16 - 20

Government Policy

TOPICS

- Conventional Wisdom: Debt, Deficits, and Financial Constraints
- The Politics of Economics and The Economics of Politics
- Neoliberalism

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Tucker “Fiscal Policy” & “Monetary Policy” – PDF
- Daily Show clip on Supply Side Economics – VIDEO <http://bit.ly/1uqXiTT>
- Readings TBD

Week 8: May 23 - 27

Money and Monetary Production

TOPICS

- Ideology and The Myth of Barter
- MMT: Credit and State Theories of Money
- Degrowth and the Job Guarantee

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Graeber, The Myth of Barter
- Wray, Overview
- Mosler, Government Deficits
- Kalecki, Political Aspects of Full Employment
- Readings TBD

Week 9: May 31 - June 3 (Holiday Monday, May 30)

Globalization and Trade

TOPICS

- Uneven & Combined Development
- Primitive Accumulation and Dispossession
- The TPP V IPCC
- Kyoto Protocol
- Europe's Cap and Trade Market

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Klein selections from "Hot Money" – PDF
- Hymer "Robinson Crusoe and the Secret of Primitive Accumulation" – PDF
- Harvey reading TBD
- Chiang selections from "Kicking Away the Ladder" – PDF
- The TPP – VIDEO <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9ZFDpuiFUs>
- The IPCC: <http://www.ipcc.ch>

Week 10: June 6 - 10

Public Goods and Commons

TOPICS

- Tragedy of the commons V Tragedy of the commodity
- Public goods and Common goods
- The value of sharing

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Hardin “Tragedy of the Commons” “Lifeboat Ethics” – PDF
- Linebaugh “The City and the Commons” – PDF
- Readings TBD

Week 11: June 13 - 17

FINALS (FRIDAY JUNE 17TH, 9:30 - 11:20)