

**St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology
Climate and Justice 397
Course Outline: Winter 2020**

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Office Hours:
Mondays 1-2
Tuesdays 11:30-1:30
Thursdays 10-12

Classroom Schedule: Wednesdays 12:45-2 pm and Fridays 11:15-12:30 pm

Classroom Location: MUL 4034

Course Description

This course focuses on some of the interconnections among the social, ecological, political and economic components of climate change, as framed by the concept of climate justice. Students are introduced to basic conceptions of justice in the context of the latest findings on climate science. Using this lens, the course seeks to promote fluency in the structural dimensions of climate change and specifically, how “inequality and climate change are linked, not only because we have an extractive economy, but because there’s a growing body of evidence that, especially in rich countries, the higher you have income inequality, the more emissions that you have...” (Rhianna Gunn-Wright, Co-author of *The Green New Deal*, 2019). We will be looking at these interconnections—between the natural and social world-- using an assessment of relations of power along the lines of race, class, gender as well as those historical relations between the global south/north as principally organised around the forces of capitalism, imperialism and colonialism.

Students should note that this course invites reflection and consideration of topics (images, audio, discussion and debate) that will likely at times, be difficult and upsetting. The course will engage in active discussion in fact, of the psychological and emotional difficulties caused by climate change, as well as how human beings can work with such feelings in purposeful ways. Students should also note that this course is discussion driven, meaning that it is imperative that students have read, and can thereby engage respectfully in classroom debates and conversations in deep ways.

Email and Office Policy

I will communicate through email for matters requiring brief responses, although I never provide grades by email. Students should make use of my office hours and ask questions in class. I do not check email on weekends or evenings.

Late Work

The deadlines for course work are firm. You will lose 2 percent each day that work is handed in late. After five days (equivalent to 10% grade loss) your work will not be accepted for credit. However, real emergencies do arise, and in those instances there will be no penalty if you inform the dean immediately of your circumstances and provide her with a medical note accounting for the days missed.

Students Services

Please refer to the STFX Academic Calendar for a full description of student services and supports.

StFX Equity Policy

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space—both face-to-face and online—that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. These values and practices are in accord with the StFX Discrimination and Harassment Policy which can be found at <http://www.mystfx.ca/campus/stu-serv/equity/>. Please feel free to talk to me about your questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the StFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor.

Electronics

This course is about the existential threat of climate change. There is no room for the distraction economy. Put another way: Phones and computers must be turned off and away while class is being held. Some students genuinely require supportive technologies, for instance, a computer to take notes (where handwriting notes is not an option)—in such instances, students should let me know.

Course grades and lecture policy

I do not use Moodle, or PowerPoint in class and do not post/provide my lectures to students. Students who miss classes are responsible to get missed lecture notes from another student in the class. I also, do not discuss or provide grades over email.

Required Texts

1. Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions.
2. Ingrid Waldron, *There's something in the water*. Fernwood Publishing.

Grading Scheme:

1. **Critical Research Paper (40%)** : **Due February 26th**: For this assignment, students are required to develop a critical sociological argument that has significant

contemporary relevance to issues and events unfolding on this planet. This assignment forms the first step of a process in which you will select a topic that matters to you, conduct careful, deep and critical research in order to construct a thorough, thoughtful and rigorous argument about something you would like people in positions of power to understand or do. Accordingly, your argument must be well researched, as this is the only way you will be convincing enough to motivate action. The support you bring to your argument must therefore, be explicit in your paper, as if you have brought experts with you who powerfully back your position with concrete and convincing details that endorse your stance. Your argument should be composed as an academic paper of approximately 6-8 pages (double-spaced, typed) in length. I suggest you use at least 3 powerfully supportive academic resources on one of the following issues/topics:

- a. Gender and climate change
- b. Indigenous worldviews and climate change
- c. Racism and climate change
- d. Poverty/social class and climate change
- e. The 'jobs vs the environment' debate
- f. Resistance and social movements
- g. Media and climate change
- h. Education and climate change
- i. Politics and climate change

- B. **Climate Justice Presentation (30%):** March 11th, 13th, 18th and 20th are set aside for student Climate Justice Presentations. We will sign up for dates in class, however please note that because we have exactly 28 students enrolled in the class (7 students will present on each day), there is no room whatsoever for changing your presentation date.

For this assignment, students must develop their own climate justice presentation to be delivered to the class as well as an invited guest (TBA) who will have a background in policy, government, or social justice activism. Your task shall be to convince your audience, including the special guest, to endorse the seriousness of the issue you describe, and the legitimacy of your position. Perhaps you might be so effective as to induce action among your audience members.

You will only have 5 minutes in which to offer a concise description of your argument and its core supporting ideas (which you have worked on and developed in your critical research paper). *Students should practice their presentations several times* in order to gain confidence and fluidity, and to ensure the timing is appropriate (Most people tend to speak WAY too quickly. Also, know that the 5 minutes available is firm and going over time is not an option. Anticipate questions from the audience.

- C. **Final exam: Date TBA 30%**

**Week 1 : January 10th
Introductions**

Week 2: January 15th and 17th **On the role of science**

- The 2018 IPCC Report : <https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>
- Max Weber, *Science as Vocation* available here:
<http://www.wisdom.weizmann.ac.il/~oded/X/WeberScienceVocation.pdf>

Week 3: January 22nd and 24th

The economics of climate change: Capitalism and the tragedy of the commons

- https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/25/capitalism-economic-system-survival-earth?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other
- Hardin, G (1968). "The Tragedy of the Commons". *Science*. **162** (3859): 1243–1248. (Online at: <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243>).
- Film: *Who's counting?: Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WS2nkr9q0VU> (1:28 mins).

Week 4: January 29th and 31st: Colonialism and climate: Reclaiming A'se'k

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hj-4iXsuLnw> (44 minutes) CBC Doc: *Industry vs. the Environment*
- *Boat Harbour and the Mill* film:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDYwZO9Ot44> (6.33 mins)

Sign up for Climate Justice Presentation dates

Week 5: February 5th and 7th: The fundamental rules of sustainability

- Netukulimk video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrk3ZI_2Dd0 (22:12 mins)
- Prosper, K. , McMillan, L. J. , Davis, A. A. , Moffitt, M. (2011). Returning to Netukulimk: Mi'kmaq cultural and spiritual connections with resource stewardship and self-governance. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 2(4) . Available at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=iipj>
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. The Council of Pecans, *Braiding Sweetgrass*
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. The Gift of Strawberries, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

Week 6: February 12th and 14th: Intersectionality and Climate change

- Gaard, Greta. 2015. 'Ecofeminism and climate change'. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 49, Pp. 20-33. (*This article will be sent to you in the first weeks of class*).

Midterm break Week of Feb 17th: No classes

Week 7: Feb 26th and 28th Anti-racism=climate action

- Ingrid Waldron, *There's something in the water*. Pages 1-89

- ENRICH Map: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/ns-environmental-racism-map-1.3494081>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZjTvQpazcl> :In whose backyard?: Environmental racism in Nova Scotia (30 minutes)

Critical Research Paper (40%) Due Feb. 26th

Week 8: Mar 4th and 6th: Environmental racism in the Maritimes

- Ingrid Waldron, *There's something in the water*. Pages 89-140
- Hannah Martin : <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=651995681888534>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xdkoCFdeHE> Defenders of the Dawn (45.12 mins)

Week 9: Mar 11th and 13th: Climate Presentations Week 1

Week 10: Mar 18th and 20th: Climate Presentations Week 2

Week 11: Mar 25th and 27th: Climate psychology

- Cunsolo, A., Ellis, N.R. Ecological grief as a mental health response to climate change-related loss. *Nature Climate Change* **8**, 275–281 (2018) Available at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0092-2>
- Galway, Beery, Jones-Casey and Tasala, 2019. "Mapping the solastalgia literature: a scoping review study", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* Link to PDF here: [Mapping the Solastalgia Literature: A Scoping Review ... - MDPI](https://www.mdpi.com/1924-6460/17/12/4512)
- <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/1809754>

Week 12: April 1st and 3rd **: Work Party: Acadian Forest and Farm School

- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. In the Footsteps of Nanabozho: Becoming Indigenous to Place, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. Allegiance to Gratitude, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

** There will only be one class this week, which will be 3 hours long, with the exact time and date to be determined by the class. Carpooling will be necessary.

