

CLIMATE CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Professor: **Dr Aleksandar Rankovic**

Language of instruction: **English**

Number of hours of class: **10h**



Objective of the Course

The course aims to give students an overview of why climate matters for international relations, and why international relations matter for climate. More specifically, the course will give students an understanding of the gravity – but also beauty – of the challenge that awaits our generation in this century: to completely renew how we think of and practice world affairs.



Summary

The first half of the course will describe the emergence of climate change as an international problem and give students an overview of the different facets covered by international negotiations and processes linked to climate change. This will help understand how the problem is currently structured, and the different causes of gridlock explaining why progress seems so slow.

The second half of the course will then start from the Paris Agreement to show how climate action actually calls for a profound change in how we think and practice international relations, a change that is for now much deeper than what States are capable of doing, and a change opposite to current trends of increasing competition between country blocks. The end of the course will be action-oriented and will discuss the existing and possible modes of action in this context.



Organization of the course & bibliography

Session 1: The first session will address the history of climate science and policy and discuss the current state of play in international climate policy, notably how the Paris Agreement functions.

Readings:

UNFCCC Explainer on the Paris Agreement: <https://unfccc.int/news/the-explainer-the-paris-agreement>

Colombier, M. (2015). COP21: building an unprecedented and sustainable agreement, Working Papers N°13/15, IDDRI, Paris, France, 16p.
https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/import/publications/wp1315_mc_from-kyoto-to-paris.pdf

Session 2: The second session will discuss the different ways in which the climate issue can be represented and how they open different ways to act – and cooperate.

Readings:

Chakrabarty, D. (2009). The climate of history: Four theses. Critical inquiry, 35(2), 197-222. <http://www.law.uvic.ca/demcon/2013%20readings/Chakrabarty%20-%20Climate%20of%20History.pdf>

Chancel, L., Bothe, P., Voituriez, T. (2023) Climate Inequality Report 2023, World Inequality Lab Study 2023/1. <https://wid.world/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CBV2023-ClimateInequalityReport-2.pdf>

Session 3: Where are we in achieving global climate goals? How can we explain that we are lagging? What could be done differently?

Readings:

Stoddard, I., Anderson, K., Capstick, S., Carton, W., Depledge, J., Facer, K., ... & Williams, M. (2021). Three decades of climate mitigation: why haven't we bent the global emissions curve?. Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 46, 653-689.
<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-environ-012220-011104>

Supran, G., & Oreskes, N. (2021). The forgotten oil ads that told us climate change was nothing. The Guardian, 18 Nov 2021
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/18/the-forgotten-oil-ads-that-told-us-climate-change-was-nothing>

Session 4: This session will discuss the new forms of international cooperation that are needed to implement the Paris Agreement, and will examine proposals on how to make them happen.

Readings:

Wintour, P. (2024). National self-interest stymying global cooperation, report finds. The Guardian, 12 Feb 2024

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/12/national-self-interest-stymying-global-cooperation-report-finds-munich-security-conference>

Andre, P., Boneva, T., Chopra, F., & Falk, A. (2024). Globally representative evidence on the actual and perceived support for climate action. Nature Climate Change, 1-7.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-024-01925-3>



Professor's Biography



Aleksandar Rankovic is a researcher and activist based in Paris. He holds a PhD in ecology (Sorbonne University) and graduated in international affairs (Sciences Po). He participated in more than twenty intergovernmental negotiations on climate, biodiversity, and international financial cooperation (e.g., UNFCCC, CBD, IPBES, IUCN, IMF/World Bank) as a delegate for Parties, intergovernmental organisations, research, and NGOs. In 2015, he was a visiting researcher in the Program on Science, Technology and Society at the Harvard Kennedy School. He is a lecturer at Sciences Po and HEC.