

# **EVST 4410**

## **How Do You Solve a Problem Like Climate Change (With Policy)?**

### Spring 2025

Professor: Josh Basseches (he/him/his)  
jbasseches@tulane.edu  
504-862-8319

Class Meets: Wednesdays, 3:00-5:30pm

Classroom: Richardson Building, Room 108

Office Hours/Location: Tuesdays, 10:00am-12:00pm or by appointment, Norman Mayer Building 305<sup>1</sup> (or via Zoom). *In-person office hours appointments must be signed up for via Calendly. Zoom office hours appointments must be arranged via email. Here is the Calendly sign-up link (despite the URL name, this is for Spring 2025 sign-ups): <https://calendly.com/jbasseches/basseches-office-hours-fall-2024>*

### **Course Catalog Information**

Prerequisite(s): EVST 1010 and EVST 3310  
Credit Hours: 3 (4 for Writing Intensive students)

### **Course Description and Goals**

Climate change has often been called a “wicked problem,” not only because of its devastating impacts, especially on parts of the world that are already economically disadvantaged, but also because of the unique political challenges associated with trying to “solve,” or at least mitigate, climate change through public policy.

In this seminar, we will explore the particular nature of these challenges, focusing especially but not exclusively on the United States. We will then consider different policy options. We will focus especially on tradeoffs associated with policy design, and how different policy designs have different impacts on different constituencies. Relatedly, we will explore how the politics associated with various policy approaches might help or impede chances of adoption, and ultimately, chances of achieving successful outcomes.

### **Learning Objectives**

After successfully completing this course, you should be able to:

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<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, the upper floors of the Norman Mayer building are inaccessible for persons with certain physical disabilities. I’m always happy to meet you on Zoom if my office is not accessible to you.

- Read scholarly writing efficiently, recognizing key points and avoiding getting bogged down by unimportant details
- Understand (and be able to explain to others) why climate policy is so politically challenging, what progress has been made despite the challenges, and what challenges remain
- Understand the importance of policy design, not just policy adoption
- Think critically about the interplay between politics and policy
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing (especially WI students!), about policy tradeoffs and their impacts on relevant stakeholders
- Learn from your peers, and appreciate the diverse points of view on a complex problem without easy solutions

## Course Materials:

There are two required books for this course. These books are available for purchase from the campus bookstore, or online vendors such as Amazon.com.

All other materials will be scanned as PDFs and made available to you on the course Canvas page. Regarding the scanned materials, however, please keep in mind that these are copyrighted materials and it is unlawful to distribute them outside of the class.

Regarding book purchases, I am sensitive to the fact that some students are more financially secure than others, and I would invite you to contact me confidentially if you cannot afford to purchase the requisite books. In such circumstances, I will be happy to make alternative arrangements so that you can access the material free of charge.

### Required Books:

Mildenberger (2020). *Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics*.

Cullenward and Victor (2020). *Making Climate Policy Work*.

## Course Requirements and Grading Policies:

There are five elements of the final grade you will receive in this course, which are detailed below. Those who are enrolled in the course for “writing intensive” (WI) credit will have slightly different expectations/requirements for the Midterm Writing Assignment and more significantly different expectations/requirements for the Final Exam (see below for details).

**Questions on Canvas (15% of final grade):** Each week (except for the first and last), you are asked to make a short (1 paragraph max.) post on Canvas, asking a question based on one or more of the readings assigned for that class. I will sometimes incorporate these questions into our class discussions. These question posts are an opportunity to demonstrate that you’ve completed the reading and have thought about it critically. Questions must be posted by no later than the midnight before class meets.

**Pop Quizzes/Attendance Checks (10% of final grade):** An undisclosed number of times throughout the semester, class will begin with a “pop quiz” that will primarily serve as an attendance check, to motivate you to attend class regularly and to arrive on time. The degree to which you answer the quiz question(s) correctly will NOT affect your grade, as the main purpose of these quizzes is to encourage attendance without my having to take attendance each class. That said, your answers will also serve as an indication to me as to whether or not you are keeping up with and comprehending the reading, enabling me to identify and provide extra support to students who may be struggling with the course material. Each student is permitted one “unexcused absence,” meaning you can miss one of these pop quizzes without any negative repercussions for your grade. That said, of course I encourage all students to attend every class meeting, especially since we only meet once per week, and so missing even a single class could result in your falling behind.

**Guest Speaker Memo (10% of final grade):** During the semester, we will have two guest speakers join our class. For this assignment, you will pick one of these speakers and write a 1-2 page (double-spaced) memo analyzing the speaker’s comments in relation to material we have read for/discussed in class. More specific guidelines will follow separately.

**Midterm Writing Assignment (30% of final grade):** This will function as the midterm assessment for the course. It will be a 5-7 page (double-spaced) “take-home essay” assignment in which you will be asked to respond to one of three prompts provided by me (you choose which one). You can refer to any materials from class (it’s “open book,” “open notes”) but you must work individually on the assignment and should not discuss your response with your classmates. You will be asked to reference/cite course materials and readings in support of an argument you will make in response to the prompt. *WI students will be required to submit an outline of their essay for feedback in advance of the deadline and will be expected to incorporate any instructor suggestions in their final drafts. While this assignment will represent 30% of the final grade for all students, the grading rubric for WI students will be slightly different, placing greater emphasis on organization/structure of the argument as well as writing style. Non-WI students who would still like feedback on an outline have the opportunity to “opt-in” to the WI requirements for this particular assignment by notifying me of their intention to do so in advance.*

**Final Exam (35% of final grade):** All students will take a final exam during class time on April 30. For all students, this exam will include multiple choice questions and open response questions. *However, while non-WI students will take a longer in-person exam that will also include short essay questions, WI students will instead complete a separate “take-home paper” of 10-12 pages (double spaced).* Further instructions on this paper will follow separately.

The numerical score-to-letter-grade conversion used for your final grade in this course is:

A: 93-100  
A-: 90-92  
B+: 88-89  
B: 83-87  
B-: 80-82

C+: 78-79

C: 73-77

C-: 70-72

D: 60-69

F: 0-59

### **ADA/Accessibility Statement:**

Tulane University is committed to offering classes that are accessible. If you anticipate or encounter disability-related barriers in a course, please contact the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility to establish reasonable accommodations. If approved by Goldman, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. I will never ask for medical documentation from you to support potential accommodations needs.

#### **Goldman Center Contact Information:**

Email: [goldman@tulane.edu](mailto:goldman@tulane.edu); Phone: (504) 862-8433; Website: <https://accessibility.tulane.edu>

### **Code of Academic Conduct:**

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e. Code of Academic Conduct and Code of Student Conduct) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

**Academic Integrity:** You are expected to produce work that is entirely your own (unless otherwise indicated, such as a group project). Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated under any circumstances. All student work in this class may be analyzed electronically for violations of the University's Code of Academic Conduct and may also be included in a database for the purpose of testing for plagiarized content. Students who plagiarize will automatically fail the course and be referred to the Dean's office for consideration of further disciplinary action.

**Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use:** In general, I strongly discourage the use of these tools for pedagogical reasons we will discuss in class. They have the potential to undermine the value of your liberal arts education. That said, some of you may find a place for their use in limited circumstances that would not violate course policies. Any use of such tools must be consistent with the University's Code of Academic Conduct. Three fundamental principles apply at all times: 1) all work submitted must be your own; 2) when you use the work, the words, or the ideas of others – including online sites – you must give full credit through accurate citations; and 3), if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment or exam, you must ask for clarification. Any “take-home” writing assignments will include a reflective “process statement” in which you must transparently describe your process for completing the assignment, whether or not Generative AI tools played a role in that process.

### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement:**

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are important Tulane values that are key drivers of academic excellence. I hope and expect that the students enrolled in this class will come from a variety of backgrounds, and have a variety of views about the topics we will discuss. All students must feel comfortable and safe expressing their perspectives in class. Any student who feels disrespected due to the views they choose to express in class, or on the basis of their race/ethnicity, religion, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, or socio-economic status, is strongly encouraged to reach out to me to discuss their concerns confidentially.

## Religious Accommodation Policy:

Per Tulane’s religious accommodation policy as stated at the bottom of Tulane’s academic calendar, I will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students are able to observe religious holidays without jeopardizing their ability to fulfill their academic obligations. Excused absences do not relieve students from responsibility for any course work required during the period of absence. Students should notify me within the first two weeks of the semester about their intent to observe any holidays that fall on a class day or during the final exam period.

## Title IX:

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available; you can learn more at <https://allin.tulane.edu>. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Confidential” or “Private” as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am required by the university to share your disclosure in a Care Connection to the Office of Case Management and Victim Support Services to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. The Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration is also notified of these disclosures. You choose whether or not you want to meet with these offices. You can also make a disclosure yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at <https://tulane.edu/concerns>.

Confidential	Private
<p><i>Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one’s self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Counseling &amp; Psychological Services (CAPS)   (504) 314-2277</li> </ul>	<p><i>Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case Management &amp; Victim Support Services   (504) 314-2160 or <a href="mailto:srss@tulane.edu">srss@tulane.edu</a></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Line (24/7)   (504) 264-6074</li> <li>▪ Student Health Center   (504) 865-5255</li> <li>▪ Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE)   (504) 654-9543</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tulane University Police (TUPD)   Uptown - (504) 865-5911   Downtown – (504) 988-5531</li> <li>▪ Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration   (504) 865-5611 or <a href="mailto:titleix@tulane.edu">titleix@tulane.edu</a></li> <li>▪ Student Affairs Professional On-Call (24/7)   (504) 920-9900</li> </ul>
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## Emergency Preparedness and Response:

<p>In the event of a campus emergency, Tulane University will notify students, faculty, and staff by email, text, and/or phone call. You were automatically enrolled in this system when you enrolled at the university.</p> <p>Check your contact information annually in Gibson Online to confirm its accuracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Follow all TU Alerts and outdoor warning sirens</li> <li>▪ Seek shelter indoors until the severe weather threat has passed and an all-clear message is given</li> <li>▪ Do not use elevators</li> <li>▪ Do not attempt to travel outside if weather is severe</li> </ul> <p>Monitor the Tulane Emergency website (<a href="http://tulane.edu/emergency/">tulane.edu/emergency/</a>) for university-wide closures during a severe weather event</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><u>RUN</u></b> – run away from or avoid the affected area, if possible</li> <li>▪ <b><u>HIDE</u></b> – go into the nearest room that can be locked, turn out the lights, and remain hidden until all-clear message is given through TU ALERT</li> <li>▪ <b><u>FIGHT</u></b> – do not attempt this option, except as a last resort</li> <li>▪ For more information or to schedule a training, visit <a href="http://emergencyprep.tulane.edu">emergencyprep.tulane.edu</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Download the Everbridge app from the App Store or Google Play store</li> <li>▪ The Report feature allows you to silently and discreetly communicate with TUPD dispatchers</li> <li>▪ The SOS button allows you to notify TUPD if you need help</li> <li>▪ The Safe Corridor button serves as a virtual escort and allows you to send check-in notifications to TUPD</li> </ul>

## Other Course Policies:

**Attendance:** I expect you to attend every class meeting unless formally excused. Excused absences can be due to reasons that include religious observances, university-sponsored athletic competition, and family emergencies and health. Please let me know if you are unable to attend class, and keep in mind that it is your responsibility to make up anything you have missed.

**Assignment Deadlines:** You are expected to submit all written work on time. Submitting writing assignments late will result in a five-point grade drop (out of 100 possible points) for each day the assignment is late, and no assignments will be accepted more than three days late. Extensions

are discouraged but possible in extenuating circumstances, and must be negotiated with me **in advance of the deadline**, on a student-by-student basis, **and through written (email) communication**.

**Electronic Devices:** In my teaching career, a tiny number of students have not had their laptops open in class, yet every one of these students has received an A, and the average grade in my classes is generally a B to B+. Correlation does not equal causation, but I am reporting this data to you and you can make whatever conclusions about it you wish. I will not ban the use of laptops, since I know many of you prefer to take notes on them and there are good arguments for having them available in class. However, they can also be distracting. I strongly discourage their use in class for any purpose other than note-taking.

**Office Hours and Appointments:** My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus, and I'm also available by appointment if they do not work with your schedule. Please keep in mind that, while I am happy to meet outside of office hours if my office hours do not work for your schedule, it is important that you request such a meeting as far in advance as possible to ensure we are able to find a mutually convenient time to meet since I have an extremely busy schedule.

**Readings:** This is an upper-level, once-per-week capstone seminar, and as a result, there is a significant amount of reading. I am aware that it is a lot. Although you are responsible for completing all the required reading listed on this syllabus, one skill that I hope you will learn throughout the class is how to read efficiently, and I will even encourage you in some cases to skim, in order to glean the most important points from the readings without getting bogged down by unimportant details. In certain cases, either on the syllabus or verbally in class, I will suggest "shortcuts" to the readings, such as certain pages that can be skimmed or skipped entirely. Therefore, it is important that you read the syllabus carefully before setting out to complete the reading and also that you attend class regularly so that you do not miss important announcements regarding the readings. In addition, while I will not add readings, I *may* remove readings, based on how the course is going. If/when readings are removed, this information will be announced during class—another reason why coming to class is so important!

## **Important Dates:**

**January 17:** Last Day to Confirm Enrollment

**January 24:** Last Day to Register/Add. Last Day to Drop with 100% Tuition Refund

**January 31:** Last Day to Drop with 75% Tuition Refund

**February 7:** Last Day to Drop with 50% Tuition Refund

**February 10:** Deadline to "Opt-in" to WI requirements for Midterm Writing Assignment

**February 14:** Last Day to Drop with 25% Tuition Refund; Last Day to Drop Without Record; Last Day to Change Grading Rules for Audit; WI Students Only (and non-WI opt-ins): Midterm Outline Due

**February 21:** Midterm Writing Assignment Due for All Students

**March 15 and 16:** Designated Make-Up Days (only in the event of a university closure)

**April 2:** Guest Speaker Charles Hua

**April 9:** Guest Speaker Madeleine Barr

**April 18:** Guest Speaker Memos Due

**April 30:** Final Exam During Class Time  
**May 8:** Final Papers Due (WI Students Only)

## **Class Schedule:**

### **Unit 1: Foundations of Climate Policymaking**

#### ***Week 1***

Wednesday, January 15: Theoretical Foundations

##### *Readings Due:*

- Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg (2004), “Interrogating the Treadmill of Production: Everything You Wanted to Know About the Treadmill but Were Afraid to Ask.” *Organization and Environment*.
- Spaargaren & Mol (1992), “Sociology, Environment, and Modernity: Ecological Modernization as a Theory of Social Change.” *Society and Natural Resources*.
- Aklin and Mildenberger (2020), “Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change.” *Global Environmental Politics*.

#### ***Week 2***

Wednesday, January 22: Institutional Foundations

##### *Readings Due:*

- Mildenberger (2021), “The Development of Climate Institutions in the United States.” *Environmental Politics*.
- Mildenberger (2020), *Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics*. Chapter 1 (skip p. 13-19).
- Karapin (2020). “Federalism as a Double-Edged Sword: The Slow Energy Transition in the United States.” *Journal of Environment and Development*.

#### ***Week 3***

Wednesday, January 29: Political Foundations

##### *Readings Due:*

- Rabe (2004), *Statehouse and Greenhouse: The Emerging Politics of American Climate Change Policy*. Chapter 1.
- Mildenberger et al. (2017), “The Spatial Distribution of Republican and Democratic Climate Opinions at State and Local Scales.” *Climatic Change*.
- Mildenberger (2020), *Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics*. Chapter 2.



## Unit 2: Climate Policy Design Principles

### Week 4

Wednesday, February 5: Market-Based Policy

*Readings Due:*

- Krugman (2015). “Environmental Economics 101: Overcoming Market Failures.” Chapter 17 in *Global Environmental Politics*.
- Rabe (2018). *Can We Price Carbon?* Chapters 1 and 2.
- Prasad (2010), “Taxation as a Regulatory Tool: Lessons from Environmental Taxes in Europe.” In *Government and Markets: Toward a New Theory of Regulation*.

### Week 5

**Non-WI students wishing to “opt in” to WI requirements for the Midterm must notify Prof. Basseches (via email) by 11:59pm CT on Monday, February 10**

Wednesday, February 12: Justice-Oriented Policy

*Readings Due:*

- Yang (2002), “Melding Civil Rights and Environmentalism: Finding Environmental Justice’s Place in Environmental Regulation.” *Harvard Environmental Law Review*.
- Pastor, Cha, Mendez and Morello-Frosch (2024), “California Dreaming: Why Environmental Justice is Integral to the Success of Climate Change Policy.” *PNAS*.

**WI Students (and non-WI opt-ins): Midterm Outlines Due (via email) by 5:00pm CT on Friday, February 14**

## Unit 3: Challenges in Climate Policy Execution

### Week 6

Wednesday, February 19: “Electric Mountains” and Energy Siting Challenges

*Readings Due:*

- Golding (2021), *Electric Mountains*. Chapters 1-3.
- Holzman (2024), “The Climate Case Against the Permitting Deal.” *Heatmap News*.
- Holzman (2024), “Why Energy Wonks Love the Permitting Deal.” *Heatmap News*.
- OPTIONAL/SKIM: Demsas (2024), “Can Blue States Build?” *The Atlantic*.

**ALL Students: Midterm Writing Assignment is Due by 5:00pm CT on Friday, February 21 (Submit via Canvas)**

### Week 7

Wednesday, February 26: Comparative National Policy

*Readings Due:*

- Mildenberger (2020), *Carbon Captured: How Business and Labor Control Climate Politics*. Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Wednesday, March 5: NO CLASS; MARDI GRAS/SPRING BREAK

## **Unit 4: Policy Instruments and Design Complexities**

### ***Week 8***

Wednesday, March 12: Policy Instruments Overview

*Readings Due:*

- Carley (2011), “The Era of State Energy Policy Innovation: A Review of Policy Instruments.” *Review of Policy Research*.
- Bergquist and Warshaw (2023), “How Climate Policy Commitments Influence Energy Systems and the Economies of U.S. States.” *Nature Communications*.
- OPTIONAL/SKIM: Martin and Saikawa (2017). “Effectiveness of State Climate and Energy Policies in Reducing Power-Sector CO2 Emissions.” *Nature Climate Change*.

### ***Week 9***

Wednesday, March 19: Carbon Markets Deep Dive, Part 1

*Readings Due:*

- Cullenward and Victor (2020), *Making Climate Policy Work*. Chapters 1-3.

### ***Week 10***

Wednesday, March 26: Carbon Markets Deep Dive, Part 2

*Readings Due:*

- Cullenward and Victor (2020), *Making Climate Policy Work*. Chapters 4, 5 and 8.

### ***Week 11***

Wednesday, April 2: Renewable Portfolio Standards Deep Dive

Guest Speaker: Charles Hua, Founder and Executive Director of Powerlines

*Readings Due:*

- Basseches (2024). “Renewable Portfolio/Clean Energy Standards.” *Elgar Encyclopedia of Climate Policy*.

- Fischlein and Smith (2013). “Revisiting Renewable Portfolio Standard Effectiveness: Policy Design and Outcome Specification Matter.” *Policy Sciences*.
- LISTEN: “This New Organization Wants to Remake PUCs for the Energy Transition.” <https://www.volts.wtf/p/this-new-organization-wants-to-remake>.

## ***Week 12***

Wednesday, April 9: Climate Justice and Policy Design

Guest Speaker: Madeleine Barr, VP of Outreach and Sales, Resonant Energy

*Readings Due:*

- Welton and Eisen (2019), “Clean Energy Justice: Charting an Emerging Agenda.” *Harvard Environmental Law Review*.

## ***Week 13***

Wednesday, April 16: NO CLASS

***Guest Speaker Memos are due Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm (Submit via Canvas)***

# **Unit 5: Inflation Reduction Act and Green Industrial Policy**

## ***Week 14***

Wednesday, April 23: Inflation Reduction Act of 2022

*Readings Due:*

- Davenport and Friedman (2022). “Five Decades in the Making: Why It Took Congress So Long to Act on Climate.” *New York Times*.
- Evergreen Action (2022). “Evergreen Explains: The Climate Impact of the Inflation Reduction Act.”
- Lavelle (2022). “After 25 Years of Futility, Democrats Finally Jettison Carbon Pricing in Favor of Incentives to Counter Climate Change.” *Inside Climate News*.
- Bittle (2022). “The Inflation Reduction Act Promises Thousands of New Oil Leases. Drillers Might Not Want Them.” *Grist*.
- Storrow (2022). “Exemptions in Climate Bill Fuel Debate about LNG Emissions.” *E&E News*.

## ***Week 15***

Wednesday, April 30: Final Exam During Class Time

***Final Papers (for WI Students only) are due Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm (Submit via Canvas)***