Global Warming Science 101 *(Spring 2021)*

Open course web-page
Harvard canvas course web page for EPS/ ESE 101:
https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/79038
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Administrative

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Day, time & location: Wednesday 3–5:45, HUCE room 440, 4th floor, 26 Oxford St.

Office hours: Each of the teaching stuff will hold weekly office hours, see course web page for times & place. Eli's office: 24 Oxford, museum building, 4th floor, room 456.

Course resources: available under the course web-page,

1. Course notes
2. Python Jupyter-notebooks and corresponding pickle data sets
3. Slides

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Description: An introduction to the science of global warming/climate change, meant to assist students to process issues that often appear in the news and public debates. Topics include: the greenhouse effect and consequences of the rise of greenhouse gasses, including sea level rise, ocean acidification, heat waves, droughts, glacier melting, forest fires, expected changes to hurricanes and more. The scientific basis for each subject will be covered, and every class will involve a hands-on analysis of observations, climate models, and climate feedbacks, using guided work with python Jupyter notebooks. Throughout, an ability to critically evaluate observations, predictions and risk will be developed.

Requirements: In-class participation required for students on continental US time zones. Students are asked to complete two assignments for each class: (1) a Jupyter-notebook based workshop, (2) a one-page report addressed to the president science adviser, explaining the problem, motivation, methods, the science results based on the class and workshop outcome and the implications. You need to address all guiding questions, while maintaining a coherent overall structure. Detailed guidelines here. Each student will serve as a *coach* in at least one workshop, helping other students after being prepared by the teaching stuff the week before. Each group of coaches will also prepare a two-slide presentation for a special course session on critically reading popular press articles about climate change, and another such presentation for the last class on the interface between climate change science and policy. **Grading:** HW, including workshop, essays and group presentations: 75% (the lowest grade will be dropped, the presentations cannot be dropped); coaching: 10%, participation: 15%. Jupyter notebook and one-page report should be submitted via *Gradescope* as two separate PDFs by 2pm on Wednesday a week after being assigned. You need to check the posted grades and let Eli know within 7 days from the release of grades if you see a problem. Please approach Eli rather than the TFs with any issue related to grading.

Optional extra credit HW problems: these will involve more challenging programming/ math/ independent work (teaching staff available to help, of course). Apart from the fun of doing these problems, they may bring the total HW score to up to 110%, counting against problems you may have missed in the same or other HW assignments…

Course meetings: 3-hour sessions, including short lecture segments mixed with guided hands-on programming. Group work is strongly encouraged during workshops.

Recommended Prep: Elementary calculus and ordinary differential equations, as covered for example by Math 1b, Math 19a, Math 21b. A minimal previous expoure to programming in any programing language is sufficient, python will be introduced as part of the course. The course will introduce the students to various science subjects, but no prior college-level science knowledge is assumed.

Programming in python, will be employed throughout the course. Basic exposure to programming (not necessarily python) is assumed, and students will be provided with template code (in the form of easy-to-use **Jupyter notebooks**) to start from and be closely guided in the weekly course workshops. **Students are requested to bring their laptops to the first class**, and to *try* to install Anacoanda python version 3.7 before class.

Academic Integrity and collaboration policy: we strongly encourage you to discuss and work on homework problems with other students and with the teaching staff. However, after discussions with peers, you need to work through the problems yourself and ensure that any answers you submit for evaluation are the result of your own efforts, reflect your own understanding and are written in your own words. In the case of assignments requiring programming, you need to write and use your own code, code sharing is not allowed. You must appropriately cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc that have helped you with your work.

Lecture order

Lecture order this semester, see below for outlines of lectures:

1. Introduction
2. Hurricanes
3. The greenhouse effect
4. Sea level rise
5. Clouds
6. Temperature
7. Ocean acidification
8. Critically reading popular press articles about climate change
9. Heat waves

10. Arctic sea ice
11. Mountain glaciers
12. Forest fires
13. Last class! (mis)using climate science in setting policy

Lecture outline

1. Logistics, course requirements; overview of the course and an introductory Jupyter notebook with python basics.

2. **The greenhouse effect**
   (a) Energy balance, the greenhouse effect in a two-layer model.
   (b) Emission height, atmospheric lapse rate, response to greenhouse gas increase.
   (c) Black body radiation.
   (d) What are greenhouse gasses and how do they absorb radiation:
      - Vibrational and rotational modes.
      - Energy levels, absorption lines, absorption windows.
      - Pressure and Doppler broadening.
      - Different greenhouses gasses compared via their Greenhouse Warming Potential.

   (e) Water vapor feedback to increased CO_2.

3. **Temperature**
   (a) Equilibrium climate sensitivity.
   (b) Transient climate sensitivity and the role of the ocean.
   (c) Polar amplification.
   (d) Natural variability and "hiatus" periods.
   (e) Stratospheric cooling.

4. **Sea level rise**
   (a) The historical record and future projections:
      - Exiting from the little ice age vs anthropogenic global warming.
      - Decadal variability.
      - Global vs regional.
      - Future projections.

   (b) Global mean sea level change:
      - Thermal expansion.
      - Glacier and ice sheet mass balance.
      - Land water storage.

   (c) Regional sea level change:
      - Wind stress.
      - Atmospheric sea level pressure.
      - Ocean circulation.

- Land erosion.
- Gravitational effects.

5. **Clouds**
   (a) Cloud types: high/ low, water/ ice.
   (b) Shortwave (SW) and longwave (LW) cloud radiative forcing (CRF).
   (c) How clouds form, atmospheric convection.
   (d) Cloud microphysics: fall speed of cloud droplets, cloud dissipation, droplet size distribution, hygrometer types, aerosols.
   (e) Cloud feedbacks and warming uncertainty.

6. **Ocean acidification**
   (a) The ocean carbonate system.
   (b) Alkalinity, total CO_2, pH.
   (c) The effect of increasing atmospheric CO_2 on ocean acidity and on calcium carbonate dissolution.
   (d) Long-term decline of anthropogenic CO_2

7. **Ocean circulation collapse**
   (a) The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation.
   (b) Ocean temperature, salinity, density.
   (c) Multiple equilibria, stability, tipping points, hysteresis.
   (d) Consequences of meridional circulation collapse
   (e) Observations, has the ocean circulation started collapsing? Projections.

8. **Hurricanes**
   (a) The big factors: Sea Surface Temperature (SST), wind shear.
   (b) Have hurricanes become stronger already: correlation with SST.
   (c) Potential intensity: Clausius-Clapeyron relation, hurricane energetics and future intensification.

9. A special course session on **critically reading popular press articles about climate change**, first class after spring break: You need to read the full annotated version of the article "The Uninhabitable Earth" from the New York Magazine. **Your assignments: (1)** Write a 1-page (single space, 12pt) recommendation to the chief editors of major papers such as the New York Times, based on your reading of **the entire article**, about how they should deal with articles about global warming, with a focus on how they should consider scientific accuracy vs other factors. This writing assignment is meant to get you to think about the issue before the meeting. There are no wrong answers as long as your response is thoughtful and reasoned. During class, we will discuss this, and hopefully additional points of view will come up and allow all of us to refine our views. **(2)** Each group of coaches will be assigned one section from this article for further analysis. Follow all provided links in your assigned section — all the way to the actual scientific literature — and carefully evaluate what you find. Prepare **exactly two** carefully reasoned **slides** using a **24pt**

font or larger, at least one and no more than two relevant images, and 50 words per slide: one summarizing points you agree with and another summarizing those that you feel are not supported by the science. Make sure your names are noted on each of your slides. During class, we will examine the slides and discuss what is the best way for the press to cover global climate change, be prepared to explain your detailed and reasoned assessment of your assigned section. The TFs will email your assigned section a week before this class. You need to submit your slides and writing via Gradescope by 4pm, two days before class, to allow us to provide feedback on the slides and revise if needed.

10. **Arctic sea ice**
    (a) Recent changes to Arctic ice extent, area, volume, age.
    (b) Why these changes occurred, what is the impact.
    (c) sea-ice feedbacks: albedo, age and melt ponds, thickness and insulation, thickness and mobility due to storms.
    (d) Detection of climate change.
    (e) Future projections.

11. **Greenland and Antarctica**
    (a) Observed changes to Greenland and Antarctica.
    (b) Surface Mass balance (SMB): Ablation vs accumulation, positive degree days (PDD).
    (c) SMB as function of height: elevation-desert effect; lapse rate and reduced ablation; temperature precipitation feedback.
    (d) Calving: yield stress, floating criteria, hydro-fracturing in ice shelves.
    (e) Marine Ice Sheet Instability (MISI).
    (f) Basal heat budget and melt water production.
    (g) Ice streams acceleration, lubrication by basal water, melt ponds and Moulins.
    (h) Ice ages
    (i) Observations of current trends and future projections.

12. **Mountain glaciers**
    (a) Observed retreat over the past 150 years, acceleration in recent decades.
    (b) Surface mass balance, equilibrium line, accumulation and ablation zones.
    (c) Glaciers as climate proxies: ice cores and glacier length records.
    (d) Glacier ice flow and retreat due to warming and changes in surface mass balance.
    (e) Retreat due to exit from little ice age vs anthropogenic climate change.

13. **Droughts and precipitation**
    (a) Precipitation, evaporation and soil moisture.
    (b) Droughts driven by remote SST changes due to natural variability modes such as El Niño or the Indian Ocean dipole.
    (c) Reconstructing past droughts, tree rings, and the detection of anthropogenic climate change.
    (d) Future projections: two case studies, Sahel and South-West US.

   (e) Understanding precipitation projections:
      i. The "wet getting wetter, dry getting drier" global-scale projection.
      ii. Expansion of the Hadley cell and shift of desert bands.
      iii. Strengthening of extreme precipitation events.
   (f) Bucket model for soil moisture.

14. **Heat waves**
   (a) Heat waves as weather events, location-specific threshold temperature and duration.
   (b) Processes: high pressure aloft, subsidence, surface winds, clear sky and enhanced shortwave radiation, dry soil, heat stress.
   (c) Heat stress and human health effects
   (d) Projections: anticipated changes to amplitude, frequency, duration and total number of heat wave days.
   (e) Understanding the projected shift in heat wave statistics.

15. **Forest fires**
   (a) Fuel aridity and fire weather indices.
   (b) Non-climate human influences: ignition, fuel and fire suppression management, population increases.
   (c) Climate factors: drought, temperature, prior-year cold season precipitation, winds, vapor pressure deficit.
   (d) Fires enhanced by climate variability modes and teleconnections vs by climate change.
   (e) Test cases: south-western US and Australia.

16. Last class! **Using climate science in setting policy.** Read the "Green New Deal" law posted to the course webpage, we are focusing only on the parts that are not highlighted in blue. **Your assignments:** **(1)** Write a 1-page (single space, 12pt) recommendation to your representative in congress, based on your reading of **the entire law** (blue parts excluded again), about how they should deal with the issue of climate change in setting new policies/ laws. Focus on how they should consider actual observations of climate change and specific projections to set specific goals that address these projections. Discuss how they should consider scientific accuracy vs other factors. This writing assignment is meant to get you to think about the issue before the meeting. There are no wrong answers as long as your response is thoughtful and reasoned. During class, we will discuss this, and hopefully additional points of view will come up and allow all of us to refine our views. Submit via gradescope by 2pm before class. **(2)** Each group of coaches will be assigned three short sections from this law for further analysis. Prepare **exactly one** carefully reasoned **slide** for each of your three sections, using a **24pt font or larger, at least one and no more than two relevant images, and no more than 30 words per slide**, addressing: Are specific actual observations of climate change or climate change projections used to motivate specific action? Are scientific claims about climate change correct? Are policy goals feasible? Other comments? Make sure your

names are noted on each of your slides. During class, we will examine the slides and discuss what is the best way for policymakers to use climate (and other) science, be prepared to explain your detailed and reasoned opinion of your assigned sections. To research these issues, use the IPCC 2018 global-warming 1.5degree report, and the US 4th national assessment science and mitigation reports posted to the course web page, as well as other sources, as needed. The TFs will email your assigned sections a week before this class. You need to submit your slides via Gradescope by 4pm, two days before class, to allow us to provide feedback on the slides and revise if needed.