

PPE: Climate Change, Politics, and Environmental Justice

LMH Summer Programmes are provided by Lady Margaret Hall, a college in the University of Oxford

Course:	PPE: Climate Change, Politics, and Environmental Justice
Available:	Programme Session 2: 21 st July 2025 to 8 th August 2025
Lectures:	18 Hours
Seminars:	12 Hours
Tutorials:	3 Hours
Independent Study:	Approximately 120 Hours
Recommended Credit:	15 CATS / 7.5 ECTS / 4 US Credits

About this Course:	<p>Perhaps the greatest challenge facing humankind is anthropogenic climate change, the rapid warming of the earth's temperature driven by the consumption of fossil-fuels and emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In this course you will investigate the political challenges and economic consequences of both action and inaction on climate change, utilising case studies on a local, national, and international scale.</p> <p>The course begins with an introduction to the principles of environmental sustainability, exploring some of the legal, regulatory, and economic changes needed for a low carbon and socially equitable transition. You will progress to an in-depth examination of environmental policy and governance, investigating the dynamics and processes shaping global environmental politics today. An important aspect of climate change is that some of those least responsible for emissions are likely to suffer the greatest impact from rising temperatures, and in the final part of the course we will consider global warming and climate change in terms of social justice, human rights, and intergenerational equity, asking how we can achieve a 'just transition' to a decarbonised world.</p> <p>This varied and interdisciplinary course will provide you with a deep understanding of this vitally important global challenge.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) is a combined interdisciplinary area of study which has been taught at the University of Oxford since the early 20th century to equip students with the breadth of expertise required to understand and influence the world around us.</p>
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<p>Course Overview:</p>	<p><u>Week 1: Climate Change and the Low Carbon Transition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability • Environmental Change and Energy management • Global Energy Policy, Law, and Regulation for a Just Transition • The Economics of Net Zero <p>The rate and complexity of climate change poses profound economic, social and political challenges for contemporary society, particularly for global energy systems. This week provides a broad-base introduction to climate change and the principles of environmental sustainability, asking: What is climate change and why should we transition to a net zero society? What systems are needed to decarbonise, and how? What kinds of legal, regulatory and economic changes are necessary to adopt for a low carbon and socially equitable transition?</p> <p><u>Week 2: Environmental Policy and Governance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Environmental Politics • The Role of Industry in Decarbonisation • The Role of Civil Society and Communities • Urban Governance of Climate Change <p>The global dimensions of environmental issues pose distinctive and pertinent political and governance challenges. This week introduces the key actors in environmental politics, such as the state, international organisations, civil society and the private sector. It will examine the political dynamics and processes shaping global environmental politics to understand how these actors interact – formally and informally – and how they attempt to address sustainability challenges in a myriad of ways across multiple levels. We will explore the development of new forms of governance and their significance for addressing environmental and sustainability challenges. During this week, we will seek to address: Who are the key actors shaping global environmental politics? What are the main challenges and tensions for governing global environmental change, and why? At what scale does (or should) environmental governance occur?</p> <p><u>Week 3: Environmental Ethics and the Just Transition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Justice • Energy Justice and Just Transitions • Global and Local Climate Justice • Environmental Ethics <p>The acceleration of climate change is a source of significant risk and harm in an increasingly unequal world. Environmental Justice and the concept of the ‘just transition’ has risen in prominence across the world as the junction of environmental activism and advocacy, social justice and human rights, and energy politics and policymaking. This week will examine the evolution and development of the environmental justice movement and identify how climate justice plays out across different forms, scales, and geographies. Specifically, it will examine: how can we consider global warming and climate change in terms of social justice, human rights, and intergenerational equality? How does the concept of environmental justice help us to consider climate justice and energy justice? Why do we need a just transition, and what steps are necessary to achieve decarbonisation in an equitable and inclusive manner?</p>
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Key Texts:	<p>Fankhauser, S., et al., “The Meaning of Net Zero and How to Get it Right”, in <i>Nature Climate Change</i> 12: 15-21, 2022.</p> <p>Dietzel, A., <i>Global Justice and Climate Governance: Bridging Theory and Practice</i>, Edinburgh, 2019.</p> <p>Dernbach, J.C., and Cheever, F., “Sustainable Development and its Discontents”, in <i>Transnational Environmental Law</i> 4(2): 247-287, 2015.</p>
Learning Outcomes:	<p>By the end of this course, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the fields of climate ethics and environmental justice. • Be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the economic impacts of both action and inaction on climate change. • Be able to engage critically with a range of local, national, and international policy initiative to address climate change.
Admissions Requirements:	<p>LMH Summer Programmes are designed for students who want to gain and develop knowledge in their chosen subject area. LMH Summer Programmes are intensive courses of study aimed at undergraduates who have completed one, two, or three years of their degree, or entry level postgraduate students.</p> <p>We will consider each applicant’s academic ability and expect successful applicants to have a minimum grade point average equivalent to 2:1 level on the British grading scale. For example, this would mean at least a 3.2 GPA on the 4.0 grading scale in the United States, and 80% in China.</p> <p>This course would suit students in Social Sciences and the Humanities, especially those with a background in Politics, Philosophy, Economics, Development Studies, Human Geography, or International Relations.</p> <p>To participate fully in the programme all students will need to have proficiency in English.</p> <p>English language requirements for students who are not native English speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOEFL iBT score of 98 • IELTS score of 7.0 (no less than 6.5 in each component) • Duolingo English Test score of 125 (no less than 115 in each section) • Cambridge English Scale score of 185 <p>If the language of instruction in your home institution is English you do not need to provide evidence of your English proficiency.</p>
Teaching Methods:	<p>Core syllabus material will be covered in lectures. Students attend four lectures each week and each lecture lasts 90 minutes. Seminars in smaller groups offer students space to discuss and debate, to dig deeper into difficult concepts, and to explore their own ideas. Student contribution to seminars is vital, and tutors will ensure everyone takes part in discussions. Seminars last 1 hour and students will take part in four seminars each week.</p> <p>Independent study is a crucial part of an LMH Summer Programme and of the Oxford teaching model. Tutors will recommend important reading to do between lectures and seminars that will enable students to come to class equipped to understand the information presented and prepared to take part in discussion and debate. Each week students will have an assignment of independent work to complete and submit in advance of the tutorial. There is an appropriate amount of space in the timetable to complete the necessary reading, preparation, and assignments. Students should expect to do around 40 hours of independent study each week.</p>

	The final class each week is a tutorial, a very small class typically including only 2-4 students and central to the teaching methods used by the University of Oxford and on LMH Summer Programmes. Guided by their tutor, students will receive feedback on their assignments and be challenged to defend, justify, or even rethink their work and ideas. These rigorous academic discussions help develop and facilitate learning in a way that cannot be done with lectures and seminars alone.
Assessment:	On a three-week LMH Summer Programme students produce one piece of assessed work every week, which is submitted to the tutor and then discussed in a tutorial. At the end of each week students will receive a percentage grade for their submitted work. Each week's work counts for a third of the final percentage grade, so the final grade is an average of the mark received for each piece of work. Students who stay for six or nine weeks will receive a separate grade for each 3-week course.
Academic Credit:	Lady Margaret Hall will provide a transcript of students' assessed work, and can send this directly to your home institution if required. LMH Summer Programmes are designed to be eligible for academic credit, and we will communicate with home institution to facilitate this as needed. As a guide, we recommend the award of 15 CATS / 7.5 ECTS / 4 US Credits for each 3-week course.