

Climate Change Syllabus

LAWS 734

Fall 2024

I. Basic Information

Professor:	Thomas S. Mullikin, J.D., Ph.D.
Class Schedule:	Wednesdays 2:40 – 4:45 PM
Room:	397
Required Books:	Robert Henson, <i>The Thinking Person's Guide to Climate Change</i> (2 nd Ed.)
Other Materials:	Climate Change: Readings / Schedule: LINK Supplemental Readings: LINK
Optional Books:	Tom Mullikin, <i>Global Solutions: Demanding Total Accountability for Climate Change</i> (2007)
My Email:	MULLIKT@mailbox.sc.edu
Office Hours:	Outside after class (weather permitting), online by appointment

II. Course Goals

In this course, students should expect to:

- a. Develop a basic familiarity with the science of climate change.
- b. Understand greenhouse gases, their role and effect on climate change and their sources.
- c. Understand the policy options available for addressing climate change and its impacts, and the tradeoffs among those options.
- d. Learn about and critique climate policies adopted in the US and in other major economies.
- e. Understand the role of law and legal institutions in shaping climate policy options.

III. Expectations

This will be a demanding course during the semester. There will be a relatively large amount of reading, much of it in subjects (science, economics, public policy) that may be unfamiliar to you. You will be required to collaborate in groups to study and present findings to the class. There will

be two preliminary presentations during our regular classes and one final presentation to subject matter experts.

We only meet once per week, and there is no exam. After our last meeting, you will be done with the course (unless you are taking it for three credits and are still writing your paper).

Vibrant discussion among us is the core of the course and you should come prepared to engage with your classmates and be open to new ideas and perspectives. Participating in the discussion is required. I expect the total amount of time you spend on this course to reflect the credit hours you earn (2 or 3), though there may be weeks during the semester when it feels like more (again, remember that there is no exam to study for).

As your professor, I promise to do my best to help you learn the material, to treat you fairly and with respect, and to make myself available to you by email/chat as well as during office hours (and other times by appointment). I also promise to make the course requirements and my policies clear—though I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time, I will notify you in advance if I do so.

In return, I expect you to attend class when your health and public health conditions permit, work hard, be bold and respectful in class, help your classmates, and comply with the University honor code.

Open discussion is the heart of this course. All views are welcome, so long as they are presented respectfully.

Late work will not be accepted without prior authorization. I reserve the right to refuse requests for time extensions.

Presenting the work of others as your own, attempting to gain an unfair advantage over classmates, and other dishonest behavior are unacceptable and will be handled according to the policies in the University Honor Code. Plagiarism detection software may be used on written work.

IV. Course Materials and Technology

There is one required book, and we will likely read another together later in the semester. The required text is *The Thinking Person's Guide to Climate Change (2nd ed.)* by Robert Henson. Copies are available in the bookstore and from the usual sources. The 1st edition is fine though page numbers from assignments will not match up. Any format (hardback, paperback, or e-book) is fine.

In addition, we will read a wide variety of additional materials beyond these books. These

readings and a course outline are posted here: [LINK](#) do not suggest printing it out as the assignments may change depending on our progress. I will always let you know in class or by email if there is such a change.

Most readings are required, though some will be marked as optional.

You are welcome to bring a computer to class. Some assigned reading materials are only available online. The class is discussion-driven, and I strongly encourage you to minimize use of your computer during class unless used for class-related purposes. Please also keep your phone in your bag or pocket, silence it, and please do not use it during class.

AI Policy: This course assumes that work submitted by students – all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, final works – will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups as directed by class assignment instructions. This policy indicates the following constitute violations of academic honesty: a student has another person/entity do the work of any substantive portion of a graded assignment for them, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, and/or using generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

V. Communication

I am available to answer questions related to the course and material at any time. Please do not hesitate to ask for help. Email is the best ways to contact me. I will make every effort to reply to any messages within 24 hours.

Key materials for the course including reading lists, and supplemental materials are linked here:

Climate Change: Readings / Schedule: [LINK](#)

Supplemental Readings: [LINK](#)

Outside of class, I welcome both short questions and longer discussions about class and the material we cover. For short questions after class, please raise your hand and ask questions from your seat, rather than congregating at the podium.

For longer discussions, or for discussions you would like to keep private, I will hold office hours remotely via Zoom/Teams. If you would like to schedule a meeting, send me an email. I will also hold regular “open” office hours at a regular time TBD. This policy is subject to change.

VI. Course Format

As noted, the primary mode of instruction in this course will be in-person, public health conditions and university guidelines permitting. One or two meetings during the semester may

be conducted online where educationally justified, such as to allow a remote guest speaker to join us. Any such online or recorded meetings will be announced in advance. Additionally, there will be two mandatory classes for group presentations following our regular scheduled class on October 16, 2024 (5:00pm-7:00pm) and November 6, 2024 (5:00pm-7:00pm).

VII. Attendance

All students are expected to attend class, personal and public health permitting. This course is collaborative, and absence affects your classmates as well as you. Law school policy states that students may not miss more than 10% of regularly scheduled classes. Please familiarize yourself with this policy in the Student Handbook, including rules regarding waivers. Frequent absence or tardiness will substantially affect the participation component of your grade. I reserve the right to take attendance at each class, or to refuse entry to tardy students. If you miss more than 25% of the regularly scheduled classes, you will automatically receive a failing grade.

If you do not attend the first meeting or give a valid reason for your absence (e.g. illness), you will be dropped from the course.

VIII. Coursework and Grades

This course is a small-group seminar, and its foundation is class discussion and includes including a small group research and presentation component. Attendance is mandatory and a substantial portion of your grade is based on in-class participation. The course may be taken for either 2 or 3 credits. The three-credit option satisfies the law school writing requirement.

Grade Components

Two-credit option: Grades for students taking the seminar for two credits are based on class participation (30%) two preliminary group research and presentations (20% each), and your final group presentations (30%).

Three-credit option: Grades for students taking the seminar for three credits are based on class participation (15%), two preliminary group research and presentations (15% each), your final group presentations (25%) and a written research paper (30%).

Students are required to tell me by the end of our second class meeting if they intend to take the class for three credits and to follow all of the registrar's related requirements. Otherwise, I will assume you are taking the course for two credits.

Participation

Class participation will count for a significant part of your grade. This will be based on quality of contributions, not quantity. Nevertheless, you must make some contributions to receive credit. Quality contributions are not those that are “right” but rather those that demonstrate understanding of the material and creative or in-depth thinking. The very best contributions do this and help other students. Attendance is mandatory. Missing even one class will have a substantial negative impact on your participation grade, except in circumstances where absence would be excused in a professional context. Put simply, show up to class and be a part of the conversation, and you will do well.

Group Research and Presentations

The class will be divided into 6 groups at the beginning of the semester. Each group will be assigned one of the six sources of greenhouse gas emissions (see <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>): Energy, Transportation, Industry, Commercial, Residential, and Agriculture. Group/Team members / source assignments will be determined during the first class session. Students are to work together within their group to research the topics and prepare slide deck presentations. The anthropogenic source teams will be given time to explore source of emissions, technologies to reduce emissions and any available tax advantages/consequences of reductions. Team members and the respective work teams are embedded in a broader organizational system of anthropogenic interference in South Carolina and the interrelated complexity, and tempo of the team task. The interactions of each team are reciprocal in that team performance outputs resolve task demands emerging from the surrounding system or environment and change the state of the system or environment in some fashion.

Teams will be expected to understand the system context and linkages across multiple levels—individual, team, organization. John Muir: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

There will be a total of three presentations throughout the semester. The final presentations will be during a VIP presentation to invited subject matter experts / dignitaries from each of the source sectors.

Each presentation should be 15 minutes in length, include a minimum of 12 probative slides, and allow for each member of the group to participate in the oral presentation.

The first presentation should focus on an overview of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission source including data on the amount and types of GHGs emitted, a review of the stakeholders involved and affected, and the laws governing the releases.

The second presentation should focus on the technologies currently being utilized to minimize

the source emissions, technologies that are being developed, and tax consequences and laws/regulations which affect investment and utilization of minimization techniques.

The third and final presentation should be a concise recap of all the previous research and conclude with specific recommendations – legal and technological – including a detailed timeline on how to reduce emissions from the source. This presentation will be made to VIP subject matter experts from each of the six sources on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, at 5:00 pm.

Research Paper (3-credit students only)

Students taking the course for 3 credits are required to complete a substantial research paper. Papers must be at least 9,000 words (not including footnotes). Papers that meet this requirement (and receive a passing grade) will also meet the Law School's writing requirement for graduation. (You may ignore the school's requirement of 30-50 pages; that assumes you will double-space your paper. Please submit papers single-spaced).

You may write on any subject related to both climate AND law. This is a broad subject, but your paper may not be purely policy, politics, or science. I encourage you to begin thinking about topic ideas immediately and to discuss them with me if you have any questions. I cannot, however, supply topic ideas for you.

You must submit a topic idea for approval by September 11 and an outline by October 9. Papers are due December 13, the last day of the exam period. If your exam schedule or other requirements make an extension of this due date necessary, please discuss this with me *before the last day of class* (November 6). I reserve the right to refuse extensions and absent extremely unusual circumstances no extension beyond November 6 will be granted. I encourage you to submit your papers at or before our last meeting in November. This will free you to study for other classes during the exam period and enable me to get you your grade more quickly.

Exam

There is no exam for this course.

IX. Standards

The university is committed to a campus environment that is inclusive, safe, and respectful for all persons, and one that fully embraces the Carolinian Creed. To that end, all course activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendly participation and interaction among colleagues, recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences, background, and point of view each student brings. You are always expected to apply the highest academic standards to this course and to treat others with dignity and respect.

Two core values, inquiry, and civility, govern our class. **Inquiry** demands that we all cultivate an open forum for exchange and substantiation of ideas. Strive to be creative, to take risks, and to challenge our conventional wisdom when you see the opportunity. **Civility** supports our inquiry by demanding respect for the voice, rights, and safety of others. The legal profession sets a high standard for both, even if it has not always met those standards in the past. Nevertheless, I expect you to respect these values in our course, just as I hope you will in your careers. One part of respecting these values is respecting the health and safety of your classmates and community, as discussed above.