Governing The Green Transition - 2024

Convenors: Rasmus Corlin Christensen (rcc.ioa@cbs.dk) & Leonard Seabrooke (lse.ioa@cbs.dk) (Department of Organization).

Lecturers: Rasmus Corlin Christensen, Leonard Seabrooke, Jacob Hasselbalch, Rosie Collington, Stine Quorning, David Castro.

Term: Spring Semester, 2024.

Credits: 7.5 ECTS

Course Content

Climate change is the most important challenge facing humanity today, reconfiguring our economies and societies across the globe. Addressing climate change through the green transition will entail significant change and conflict. What does that change and conflict look like, and why? Which political actors and interests are involved, and how do they compete for influence over green standards and norms? The Governing the Green Transition course focuses on these questions, examining professional and organizational competition as markets change to bring in the green transition.

The course uses theories and approaches from International Political Economy and Sociology to examine how actors advance or impede the green transition needed to mitigate climate breakdown. We place particular stress on analyzing how a variety of actors coordinate and compete, tracing how they develop networks across different types of organizations. Students will apply theoretical frameworks and practical tools to a range of green transition issues. The course includes issues such as: environmental standards; plastics, energy and water use; food and agriculture; carbon markets; green accounting, taxation, pensions and investment, among others. International organizations, NGOs, firms and financial institutions, consultancies, and expert groups are considered as key actors in how green transition issues are controlled. Students will receive dedicated feedback from faculty throughout the course and at specific sessions to test their arguments and cases. The course develops students' analytical skills in understanding competition and coordination around the green transition, climate change and sustainability, and bolsters their capacity to locate actors who influence key issues, as well as their case knowledge of green transition issues and change dynamics in the international political economy.

Learning objectives

To achieve the grade 12, students should meet the following learning objectives with no or only minor mistakes or errors. After completing the course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- A comprehensive knowledge of the issues, institutions, and actors involved in the green transition topic in question,
- knowledge and understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to analysis of green transition issues,
- ability to link the theories to the empirical material in a reflexive manner.

Nordic Nine

The Governing the Green Transition course supports the Nordic Nine capabilities by teaching analytical approaches to understand **humanity's challenges**, climate change specifically, and how they may be resolved (NN3). The course provides the means to explain the social and politico-economic structures that replicate **prosperity and inequality over generations** (NN7). The stress in the course on climate-vulnerable and climate-forcing assets also helps students examine **how local communities create value from global connections** (NN9). Read more about the Nordic Nine here.

Integration

The course begins with a couple of sessions on theories, covering some key concepts relevant for the course. Then follows multiple sessions which introduce key practical tools and approaches to understand and analyze green transition issues, providing examples of application in recent scholarship. Further selected case studies are based around state-of-the-art research, including faculty's own, in the academic and policy fields, and students are encouraged to request greater detail where relevant. The planned seminar sessions have commonalities in the analytical approaches applied, applying concepts from the literature on the international political economy, climate governance, transnational governance, environmental politics, professional networks and advocacy to empirical cases. You will notice in the readings that we have a balance to be achieved between three elements: i) work on the international political economy; ii) work on climate governance and environmental politics; and iii) ways of studying how climate policy change can and does (or does not) occur. All three are of interest.

Teaching methods

The course follows a typical lecture/seminar format. Students are expected to do all the readings and to engage actively in class discussion and exercises. The course also provides a dedicated project development session (jointly with the Governing Risk course) where students are invited to present arguments and evidence on topics they intend to cover in their final essays. This session is both an opportunity for students to discuss each other's ideas and to obtain detailed guidance and feedback regarding application of course concepts and analyses to empirical material.

Office hours for the course are Wednesdays from 10-12 and Rasmus and Len can be contacted to arrange a slot.

Examination

The final exam will be a 10 page written paper. The paper must follow the normal guidelines for Home Assignment submission. You should concentrate your attention on providing an *argument* about a particular case - of your choosing - in the international political economy focusing on the green transition, drawing on theories and approaches from the course and reflecting on existing debates concerning your chosen topic. The essay will be graded according to the 7-point scale. Students will be examined according to the learning objectives, which require students to know and apply the major theories and concepts from the course, including from the readings and sessions.

Use of generative AI (Artificial Intelligence)

CBS has developed a guide for use of AI tools in the classroom, which can be found here. In general, it is not permitted for students to use generative AI as an aid in exams, including in this course. There are, however, many other ways students can use generative AI. We will discuss and use some of them in-class, and please know that you are welcome to ask the course convenors about AI use; curiosity is encouraged. For instance, students may use generative AI tools for sparring, as a learning tutor, e.g. to clarify concepts, structure thoughts, test yourself, develop code, or find inspiration for independent research. You can find more practical information and inspiration on how to use generative AI tools in this useful guide.

Feedback

The course offers continuous feedback and establishes an ongoing dialogue with students. Particular feedback includes: a) direct feedback on learning attainment during sessions; b) the use of in-class discussion and quizzes in live lecture sessions; c) focused feedback on 'work in progress' presentations of arguments and evidence; d) engagement via regular office hours in person or online. Feedback is given to explain how particular analyses and arguments can be improved according to the learning objectives.

Readings

You are not expected to read beyond the formal requirement, but we encourage students to read widely for the course. Please note that all the readings are available through the CBS Library or Canvas. Some will tire while reading through the list of articles listed. This is normal. The closer to the top the reading is listed the more 'compulsory' it is. Overachievers will insist on getting through them all. Underachievers will wonder what is going on in class. You may also note that we have not provided 'further reading' lists in the course guide, primarily because the capacity to search for related material is one of the skills you should have (or should develop) to become better researchers. Students are encouraged to find material relevant to the course from academic journals. Likely targets include:

IPE and social science journals	**Environmental/climate politics journals**
Accounting, Organizations and Society	*Climate Policy*

Environment and Planning A, C and D *European Journal of International Relations* *Global Governance* *Global Networks* *Global Policy* *Governance* *International Organization* *International Political Sociology* *International Studies Quarterly* *Journal of European Public Policy* *Journal of Professions and Organization* *New Political Economy* *Organization* *Organization Studies* *Regulation & Governance* *Review of International Political Economy* *Socio-Economic Review* *World Politics*	*Climatic Change* *Ecological Economics* *Energy Policy* *Environmental Politics* *Global Environmental Change* *Global Environmental Politics* *Nature (various)* *One Earth* *Organization & Environment* *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews - Climate Change*

Detailed course plan

1. Introduction

In this first seminar, we introduce the structure and content of the course and discuss expectations. We'll also go over the basics of climate change as a political economy phenomenon, and identify the relationship between the green transition and the organization of global markets. We'll also start discussing some of the ways we'll identify and analyze the key issues and players in the green transition in this course, including terms for thinking about green transition governance and its core questions.

Readings:

Paterson, M. (2021). Climate change and international political economy: between collapse and transformation. *Review of International Political Economy*, 28(2): 394-405.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09692290.2020.1830829

Maslin, M. (2014). *Climate change: a very short introduction*. OUP Oxford, chapter 1 (but look through other chapters too!).
https://libsearch.cbs.dk/permalink/45KBDK_CBS/1i6rvdp/alma990009737090305765

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023). Climate Change 2023. Synthesis Report. Summary for Policymakers. Geneva: Switzerland.
https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

2. Green Transition Governance

In this seminar we discuss how the green transition has become organized governance and politics, in which different groups attempt to "win" control over the rules and standards of the green transition. We'll see how the governance of climate policy has changed over time, and how different actors' assets and interests shape their competition for control.

Readings:

Green, J. (2021). Climate Change Governance: Past, Present and (hopefully) Future. In Michael Barnett, Jon Pevehouse and Kal Raustiala (eds). *Global Governance in a World of Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/E8F461AB7D42D4B4DE526C1EC59A9416/9781108843232c3_109-129.pdf/climate_change_governance.pdf

Colgan, J. D., Green, J. F., & Hale, T. N. (2021). Asset revaluation and the existential politics of climate change. *International Organization*, *75*(2), 586-610.
https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/0963988860A37F6988E73738EA93E0A1/S0020818320000296a.pdf/assetrevaluation-and-the-existential-politics-of-climate-change.pdf

Aklin, M., & Mildenberger, M. (2020). Prisoners of the wrong dilemma: why distributive conflict, not collective action, characterizes the politics of climate change. *Global Environmental Politics*, 20(4), 4-27. https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00578

3. Issue Control in Setting Green Standards (with exercise)

In this seminar we will discuss how specific actors make claims to authority in climate governance, conceptualizing the green transition as a 'social space' where actors - in particular what we'll call 'issue professionals' - compete and cooperate with each other for 'issue control' to define new environmental rules and standards. We'll focus on why environmental standards are influenced by some actors over others, and how influence is linked to power and expert communities. We'll also discuss how governance objects and ideas about climate change and climate policy are constructed within these social spaces, and how that impacts political outcomes.

The seminar will also include an exercise, using the conceptual tools and frameworks from seminars 2 and 3 to discuss and apply your emerging knowledge to a real-life business case.

Readings:

Seabrooke, Leonard and Lasse Folke Henriksen (2017) 'Issue Professionals and Transnational Organization', in Leonard Seabrooke and Lasse Folke Henriksen (eds) *Professional Networks in Transnational Governance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 18. https://libsearch.cbs.dk/permalink/45KBDK_CBS/1srlcq0/cdi_openaire_primary_doi_dedup_343e02f0211e37484a27b42ef6eb001f.

Henriksen, Lasse Folke and Leonard Seabrooke (2016) 'Transnational Organizing: Issue Professionals in Environmental Sustainability Networks', *Organization* 23(5): 722–741. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1350508415609140

Allan, B. B. (2017). Producing the climate: States, scientists, and the constitution of global governance objects. *International Organization*, *71*(1), 131-162. https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/D3E3B10F8ACC38895B609D99EC23A382/S0020818316000321a.pdf/producin g-the-climate-states-scientists-and-the-constitution-of-global-governance-objects.pdf

4. Measuring the Green Transition

In this seminar we will discuss the politics of measuring progress on climate change and the green transition, focusing on key thresholds and tools for understanding climate change and transition trajectories. We focus especially on Integrated Assessment Modeling (IAM) as the most important technical innovation in governing the green transition. The academic readings for this session help to contextualize the practice of IAM in the broader politics of climate change, as well as unpack its latent assumptions and characterize the professional community of climate modellers. We begin, however, with a great overview text asking: why haven't we bent the emissions curve yet? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the way transitions are modeled and narrated.

Readings:

Stoddard, I., Anderson, K., Capstick, S., Carton, W., Depledge, J., Facer, K., Gough, C., Hache, F., Hoolohan, C., Hultman, M., Hällström, N., Kartha, S., Klinsky, S., Kuchler, M., Lövbrand, E., Nasiritousi, N., Newell, P., Peters, G. P., Sokona, Y., … Williams, M. (2021). "Three Decades of Climate Mitigation: Why Haven't We Bent the Global Emissions Curve?" *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, *46*(1), 653–689. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-012220-011104

Beek, Lisette van, Maarten Hajer, Peter Pelzer, Detlef van Vuuren, and Christophe Cassen. "Anticipating Futures through Models: The Rise of Integrated Assessment Modelling in the Climate Science-Policy Interface since 1970." Global Environmental Change 65 (November 1, 2020): 102191. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2020.102191.

Cointe, Béatrice, Christophe Cassen, and Alain Nadaï. "Organising Policy-Relevant Knowledge for Climate Action: Integrated Assessment Modelling, the IPCC, and the Emergence of a Collective Expertise on Socioeconomic Emission Scenarios." Science & Technology Studies 32, no. 4 (December 13, 2019): 36–57. https://doi.org/10.23987/sts.65031.

5. Analyzing Green Transition Issues (with exercise)

In this seminar, we will discuss how to analyze issues and cases in the green transition, focusing on how to identify, assess and select relevant empirical areas, as well as methodological options for analysis - drawing on your existing knowledge of methods - applied to the green transition. We'll also discuss the use of generative AI tools, and how to think about the final exam.

The seminar will also include an exercise, allowing discussion and application of analytical approaches to a real-life case.

Readings:

Paterson, M., Hoffmann, M., Betsill, M., & Bernstein, S. (2017). 'Professions and Policy Dynamics in the Transnational Carbon Emissions Trading Network', in Leonard Seabrooke and Lasse Folke Henriksen (eds) *Professional Networks in Transnational Governance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 12. https://libsearch.cbs.dk/permalink/45KBDK_CBS/1srlcq0/cdi_openaire_primary_doi_dedup_343e02f0211e37484a27b42ef6eb001f.

Green, J., Hadden, J., Hale, T., & Mahdavi, P. (2022). Transition, hedge, or resist? Understanding political and economic behavior toward decarbonization in the oil and gas industry. *Review of international political economy*, 29(6), 2036-2063. https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2021.1946708

6. Sustainability Consulting

In this seminar, we discuss the emerging field of sustainability and climate consulting - who they are, what they do, and their impacts. We'll talk about how consultants have played a key role in making climate issues 'governable', and discuss how the status of "climate expertise" confers significant power to the advisory industry. We'll cover how consulting is entwined with climate governance, and discuss how policy responses to climate change have been constructed, with the help of consultants, within the broader climate policy world.

Readings:

Christensen, R. C., & Collington, R. (2024). Climate consulting: A critical review. *Public Money & Management*, forthcoming. [Paper uploaded to Canvas]

Keele, S. (2021). Taming Uncertainty: Climate Policymaking and the Spatial Politics of Privatized Advice. In *Professional Service Firms and Politics in a Global Era: Public Policy, Private Expertise*, ed. Chris Hurl and Anne Vogelpohl (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 53–75, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72128-2_3.

- Open access version here: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Janet-Roitman-2/publication/355049560_Professional_Service_Firms_and_Politics_in_a_Global_Era_Public_Policy_Private_Expertise_by_Chris_Hurl_Anne_Vogelpohl/links/615b77369911cb6c9dd95d00/Professional-Service-Firms-and-Politics-in-a-Global-Era-Public-Policy-Private-Expertise-by-Chris-HurlAnne-Vogelpohl.pdf#page=65

Gond, J. P., Brès, L., & Mosonyi, S. (2024). Consultants as discreet corporate change agents for sustainability: Transforming organizations from the outside‐in. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*. https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12649

7. Tax and Climate Breakdown

In this seminar, we discuss the tax challenges - and potential solutions - of the climate breakdown. On the one hand, tax havens and corporate tax avoidance may enable environmental degradation, erode state resources needed to address climate change. On the other hand, tax policy tools have the potential to help us address climate change by reasserting state sovereignty, bolster public finances, and re-price environmentally damaging activity, for instance through carbon taxes. We'll talk about these issues and consider how tax and the climate breakdown are interlinked.

Readings:

Green, J. F. (2020). Beyond Carbon Pricing: Tax Reform is Climate Policy. *Global Policy*. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1758-5899.12920

Galaz, V., Crona, B., Dauriach, A., Jouffray, J. B., Österblom, H., & Fichtner, J. (2018). Tax havens and global environmental degradation. *Nature: Ecology & Evolution*, 2(9), 1352-1357. https://www.df.cl/noticias/site/artic/20180914/asocfile/20180914135209/galaz2018.pdf

Christensen, R. C., & Hearson, M. (2019) 'The new politics of global tax governance: Taking stock a decade after the financial crisis', *Review of International Political Economy*, 26(5): 1068–1088. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09692290.2019.1625802

8. Green Accounting

In this session we discuss the political economy of climate or 'green' accounting standards and sustainability reporting. Climate and sustainability has in recent years become an increasingly salient issue for accounting standard-setters as well as businesses and governments facing calls from stakeholders to provide climate-related information on their activities, risks and impacts. However, standards and underlying data and methodologies remain contested. We will consider these developments with a particular focus on professional and organizational contestation over climate accounting and reporting.

Readings:

Maechler, S. (2022). Accounting for whom? The financialisation of the environmental economic transition. *New Political Economy*, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2022.2130222

Thistlethwaite, J., & Paterson, M. (2016). Private governance and accounting for sustainability networks. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, *34*(7), 1197-1221. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0263774X15604841

Lovell, H., & MacKenzie, D. (2011). Accounting for carbon: the role of accounting professional organisations in governing climate change. *Antipode*, *43*(3), 704-730. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00883.x

9. Central Banks and Climate Risk *(joint session with Governing Risk in the World Economy)*

The finance sector has potential to contribute to sustainability by redirecting capital flows towards innovations, investments and companies that can support a green transition. In this seminar, we discuss the promises and pitfalls of greening finance, focusing on the role of professionals and expertise in putting climate risk on the agenda of central banks and influencing policies on sustainable finance.

Readings:

Quorning, S. (2023). The 'climate shift' in central banks: how field arbitrageurs paved the way for climate stress testing. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2023.2171470

Dimmelmeier, A. (2021). Sustainable finance as a contested concept: tracing the evolution of five frames between 1998 and 2018. *Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/20430795.2021.1937916

Seabrooke, L., & Stenström, A. (2022). Professional ecologies in European sustainable finance. *Governance*. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12739

10. Corporate Climate Activism

In this session we will consider the corporation as a contested space where actors – organizations, investors, and activists - engage in environmental governance. On the one hand, this can contribute to promoting corporate sustainability and market change. On the other hand, it might be empty words– or even smoke and mirrors contributing to distracting us from achieving the green transition. We will examine this tension from the case of shareholder activism, passive investors, and the SDGs.

Readings:

Neville, K. J., Cook, J., Baka, J., Bakker, K., & Weinthal, E. S. (2019). Can shareholder advocacy shape energy governance? The case of the US antifracking movement. *Review of International Political Economy*, *26*(1), 104-133. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09692290.2018.1488757

Baines, J., & Hager, S. B. (2022). From passive owners to planet savers? Asset managers, carbon majors and the limits of sustainable finance. Competition & Change, 10245294221130432. https://doi.org/10.1177/10245294221130432

van den Broek, O. M., & Klingler-Vidra, R. (2021). The UN Sustainable Development Goals as a North Star: How an intermediary network makes, takes, and retrofits the meaning of the Sustainable Development Goals. *Regulation & Governance*. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/rego.12415

11. Production and Consumption in the Green Transition I: Plastics

In lectures 11 and 12, we move into some new themes for the course that are still closely connected to the overall theme of market organization and green transition. One important feature to consider within sustainability transitions is the balance of power between producers and consumers. To what extent can we rely on sustainable production processes or sustainable consumption practices to steer us towards greener futures? How is the burden and responsibility between producers and consumers negotiated? We will see that these are intensely political processes that are subject to strategic maneuvering, especially on the part of powerful incumbent firms. These dynamics will be brought to light first in a lecture on the plastics problem, second on the political economy of food and agriculture.

Readings:

Mah, A. (2021). Future-Proofing Capitalism: The Paradox of the Circular Economy for Plastics. *Global Environmental Politics*, *21*(2), 121–142. https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00594

Bauer, F. & Fontenit, G. (2021). Plastic dinosaurs - Digging deep into the accelerating carbon lock-in of plastics. *Energy Policy, 156*(September), 112418. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421521002883

Palm, E., Hasselbalch, J., Holmberg, K., & Nielsen, T. D. (2022). Narrating plastics governance: Policy narratives in the European plastics strategy. *Environmental Politics*, *31*(3), 365-385. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2021.1915020

12. Production and Consumption in the Green Transition II: Food

The second of the two lectures on production and consumption in green transitions deals with the topic of food. In the plastics lecture, we were introduced to the matter of incumbency and some of the cultural strategies pursued to control the shape and direction of transitions. In the food lecture, we complement the cultural explanation of corporate power with a more structural one: how does financialization and corporate concentration influence the global food system, and with what consequences for sustainability? Before coming to that, we will also look at a brief history of the global food system and how food became a commodity.

Readings:

Patel, R. & Moore, J. W. (2018). 'Cheap food' in *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*, London: Verso Books, pp. 138-160.

Clapp, J. (2014). Financialization, distance and global food politics. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(5), 797–814. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.875536

Clapp, J. (2018). Mega-Mergers on the Menu: Corporate Concentration and the Politics of Sustainability in the Global Food System. *Global Environmental Politics*, *18*(2), 12–33. https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00454

13. Project Development Session (*joint session with Governing Risk in the World Economy*)

In this session we will meet to discuss the development of your essay ideas, arguments, and strategies for data collection. Students are invited to present the basics of their theoretical considerations, empirical case and methodological approach. The faculty team will organize a constructive round of feedback and suggestions for developing the final paper.

14. Conclusion

In this final seminar we will tie together the theoretical, methodological and empirical threads from throughout the course to give an overview of the relationship between the green transition and the organization of global markets. There'll also be time for questions and discussion of the final exam.

Readings:

Katz-Rosene, R. M., Kelly-Bisson, C., & Paterson, M. (2020). Teaching students to think ecologically about the global political economy, and vice versa. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1-16.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09692290.2020.1748092

Svartzman, R., & Althouse, J. (2020). Greening the international monetary system? Not without addressing the political ecology of global imbalances. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1-26.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09692290.2020.1854326