

Course Syllabus

GRAD-C1-1020: The Policy Process: Climate Policy

1. General information

Course Format	Onsite
Instructor(s)	Prof. Dr. Christian Flachsland
Instructor's E-mail	flachsland@hertie-school.org
Assistant	Alwine Hoppe (hoppe@hertie-school.org)
Instructor's Office Hours	Please email my assistant.

Link to [Study, Examination and Admission Rules and MIA, MDS and MPP Module Handbooks](#)

For information on **course room, times and session dates**, please consult the [Course Plan](#) on *MyStudies*.

Instructor Information:

Christian Flachsland is Professor of Sustainability and Founding Director of the Centre for Sustainability (CfS) at the Hertie School. He is also a Research Fellow at the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC). His main research interests relate to the political economy and design of climate policy. Professor Flachsland's current research focuses on domestic climate institutions and international climate diplomacy. He coordinates the research on governance in the [Ariadne project](#), a major research consortium assessing climate policy options for Germany and Europe, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

2. Course Contents and Learning Objectives

Course contents and learning objectives:

Understanding the policy process. This course offers an introduction to politics and the policy process in modern societies. It equips students with a solid understanding of foundational insights from comparative politics, economics and policy analysis, enabling them to navigate the politics of complex domestic policy processes throughout their careers. The first part of the course introduces the main steps in the policy cycle and key concepts to understand related dynamics: Problem formulation and agenda-setting & -seeding; normative and positive perspectives on policy formulation; decision-making at the elite and mass level; policy implementation; and policy evaluation & learning. The second part introduces the international level, discusses differences between democracies and autocracies, challenges from right-wing populism, and offers a discussion of conceptualizing broader social change. The course uses climate policy as the main policy field to draw on for illustrative case studies, but other topics such as redistribution, race and gender feature prominently. Please note that this course does not offer a comprehensive introduction to climate policy – for this, attend my second year “Advanced Climate Policy” elective. Note also that this course requires reading substantial amounts of academic literature and features extensive lectures, interspersed with in-class discussions. Some texts feature formal notation and basic calculus, which will not be required in the exams and assignments. Students work on individual country climate policy case studies in several assignments throughout the semester.

Diversity Statement:

Understanding and respect for all cultures and ethnicities is central to the teaching at Hertie. Being mindful of diversity is an important issue for policy professionals in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programmes designed for specific groups, populations, or communities. Diversity and cultural awareness will be integrated in the course content whenever possible.

3. Grading and Assignments

Composition of Final Grade:

Case study assignment 1	Handed out: Session 1 (5 Sep), in-class Submission: 17 Sep, noon via Moodle	1000 words essay on agenda-setting in your case study, details provided in class.	20 %
Case study assignment 2	Handed out: Session 4 (26 Sep) Submission: 18 Oct, noon via Moodle	1000 words essay on elite & mass climate politics in your case study.	20 %
Case study assignment 3	Handed out: Session 7 (31 Oct) Submission: 19 Nov, noon via Moodle	1000 words essay on international climate politics in your case study.	20 %
Final Exam	Exam week 9-13 Dec, specific date tba	In-class	40 %

Grading is based on three case study essays (20% each) and a final exam (40%).

Assignment Details

Assignments 1-3: Three case study essays (20 % each)

Each student chooses an individual country climate policy case study that she will be working on in three essay assignments throughout the semester. Each essay has a 1000-word limit (+/- 100) and will be submitted via Moodle. The essays will focus on (i) agenda-setting, (ii) elite and mass climate politics, and (iii) the international climate policy position of the country case. Specific assignment questions will be handed out in class. Students are free to select their country case but should take into account that they will require some material (newspaper articles, academic papers, think tank reports, etc.) to be able to study it and write their essays – make sure this is given when choosing your case at the start of the semester.

Assignment 4: Final Exam

The final exam is a closed-book in-class exam of 90 min. The exam will include questions on basic concepts, brief applications of concepts, and essay questions requiring the explanation and application of concepts introduced in class.

Late submission of assignments: For each day the assignment is turned in late, the grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. submission two days after the deadline would result in 20% grade deduction).

Attendance: Students are expected to be present and prepared for every class session. Active participation during lectures and seminar discussions is essential. If unavoidable circumstances arise which prevent attendance or preparation, the instructor should be advised by email with as much advance notice as possible. Please note that students cannot miss more than two out of 12 course sessions. For further information please consult the [Examination Rules](#) §10.

Academic Integrity: The Hertie School is committed to the standards of good academic and ethical conduct. Any violation of these standards shall be subject to disciplinary action. Plagiarism, misuse of AI, free riding in group work, and other deceitful actions are not tolerated. See [Examination Rules](#) §16, the Hertie [Plagiarism Policy](#), and [the Hertie Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence Tools](#).

Compensation for Disadvantages: If a student furnishes evidence that he or she is not able to take an examination as required in whole or in part due to disability or permanent illness, the Examination Committee may upon written request approve learning accommodation(s). In this respect, the submission of adequate certificates may be required. See [Examination Rules](#) §14.

Extenuating circumstances: An extension can be granted due to extenuating circumstances (i.e., for reasons like illness, personal loss or hardship, or caring duties). In such cases, please contact the course instructor and Examination Office *in advance* of the assignment deadline.

4. General Readings

Clark, W.R., M. Goulder, S.N. Golder (2017): Principles of Comparative Politics. 3rd Edition. Sage

Budge, I. (2019): Politics. A Unified Introduction To How Democracy Works. Routledge

Lijphart, A. (2012): Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries. 2nd Edition. Yale University Press → e-book available [here](#)

Hassel, A., Wegrich, K. (2022): How to do Public Policy. Oxford University Press → e-book available [here](#)

Mayntz, R. (2003): [From government to governance: Political steering in modern societies](#).

Lindvall, J. (2022): [Political Science as Architecture](#). European Political Science Review

Stern, N. (2006): [Stern Review. The Economics of Climate Change](#). Executive Summary. 1-27.

Nordhaus, W. (2015): The Climate Casino: Risk, Uncertainty, and Economics for a Warming World. Yale University Press → e-book available [here](#)

5. Course Sessions and Readings

All course readings can be accessed on the course Moodle page.

Session 1: The Climate Problem	
Required Readings	Watch pre-recorded slides: Class overview & logistics Budge (2019, Ch. 1+2) Edenhofer & Flachsland (2024) <i>Skim</i> : Flachsland & Kesten (2024 a, b, c)
Optional Readings	Stern (2006), Dunn (2012), Mayntz (2003)
Optional Podcasts	Nordhaus

Session 2: Agenda setting & seeding

Required Readings	Downs (1972) Klüser & Radojevic (2019)
Optional Readings	Wasow (2020), Beyer et al (2022), Klüver & Spoon (2016), Gause (2022), Jacobs et al (2021), Sieberer (2006), Wappenhans et al. (2024)
Optional Podcasts	Wasow, Wasow

Session 3: Normative perspectives on policy formulation

Required Readings	Sunstein (2024) Adler (2019, Ch. 1)
Optional Readings	Coyle (2020, Ch. 1+2), Bowles (2017), Bueno de Mesquita (2016, Ch. 4-6 , skim formal parts), Chetty (2015), HM Treasury (2022), Bowles & Polanía-Reyes (2012), Bueno de Mesquita (2019), Juhász et al (2023), Candel & Biesbroek (2016), Edmondson et al. (2024), van den Bergh et al (2021)
Optional Podcasts	Talbot, Glaeser, Chetty, Weyl, Weyl, Oliver, Hémous, Lane, Frick

Session 4: Political economy perspectives on policy formulation

Required Readings	Oye & Maxwell (1994) Juhász & Lane (2024)
Optional Readings	Baron (2012, Ch. 2+8+12), Jacobs (2016), Klüser et al (2023), Klüser (2022), Polk (2023), Brunner et al (2012), Golden & Min (2013), Jacobs & Matthews (2017), Dechezleprêtre et al (2022), Kennard (2020), Flachsland & Levi (2021)
Optional Podcasts	Boushey, Tirole, Edenhofer/Victor/Cullenward, Shapiro, Lane, Furman, Jenkins, Jenkins

Session 5: Decision-making - elite politics

Required Readings	Lijphart (2012, Ch. 1+2+3) Clark et al (2017) p. 679-688 Lindvall (2017, Ch. 1+2)
Optional Readings	Jacobs (2011, Ch. 1+2+11), Cox & McCubbins (2001), Clark et al (2017, Ch.15), Tsebelis (1995), Pierson & Hacker (2014), Saunders (2022), Sheffer et al. (2023), Martin & Vanberg (2020), Saiegh (2018), Meckling & Nahm (2022), Drüner et al (2018), Madden (2014)
Optional Podcasts	Yes Minister, Yes Prime Minister, Saunders

Session 6: Decision-making - mass politics	
Required Readings	Clark et al (2017, p423-434, p712-726) Iversen & Goplerud (2018)
Optional Readings	Clark et al (2017 Ch. 11+12+13+14) , Budge (2019, Ch. 5+9+10) , Caramani (2024, Ch. 14) , Alesina and Giuliano (2011) , Elkjaer and Iversen (2023) , Martin & Vanberg (2020) , Auslen & Philipps (2024) , Grossman & Slough (2022) , Lupu & Pontusson (2023, Ch.2) , Powell (2019, Ch. 1+9) , Persson (2024)
Optional Podcasts	Sen, Warshaw & Richardson, Mesquita, Soroka & Wlezien, Bartels, Powell

Session 7: Policy implementation	
Required Readings	Clark et al (2017, p499-509) Fernández-i-Marín et al (2023)
Optional Readings	Gailmard (2014) , Dahlström & Lapuente (2022) , Charron et al (2017) , Christensen et al (2019) , McDonnell (2017) , Patty (2023) , Pepinsky et al (2017) , Peters (2018) , Miller & Whitford (2016, Ch. 2+3)
Optional Podcasts	Potter & Dwidar, Rahman, Meyer

Session 8: Policy evaluation and learning: Ideas, experts and evidence in the policy process	
Required Readings	Esterling (2004, Ch. 2+3+6) Edmondson et al. (2024)
Optional Readings	Manski (2013, Ch. 1+6) , Averchenkova et al (2021) , Ober (2013) , Gailmard & Patty (2012) , Andersen & Moynihan (2016) , Bovens et al (2008) , Little & Backus (2023) , Pepinsky (2012a) , Bistline et al (2023) , Moe & Caldwell (1994) , Opalo (2024)
Optional Podcasts	Slough & Blair, Zelizer & Fong, Manski, Neal, King

Session 9: International and multi-level climate policy	
Required Readings	Barrett (1990) Putnam (1988) Falkner (2016)
Optional Readings	Ostrom (2012) , Barrett (2016) , Allan et al (2021) , Bechtel & Urpelainen (2015) , Jakob (2023) , Clausing & Wolfram (2023) , Aklin & Mildemberger (2020) , Hirshleifer (1983) , Kennard & Schnakenberg (2023)
Optional Podcasts	Ostrom, Dröge, Pandalai-Nayar, Nordhaus, Fearon, Murtazashvili

Session 10: Democracy vs. autocracy	
Required Readings	Guriev & Treisman (2023, Ch. 1+2)

	Przeworski (2008)
Optional Readings	Horowitz (2021 , Ch.1), Meng et al (2023), Schumpeter (2008 Ch.21+22), Clark et al (2017) Ch.5+15, Beramendi et al (2022), Munck (2023), Meng (2024), Ganghof (2015), Przeworski et al (1999), Illing (2017), Myerson (1995), Matthews (2022), Svulik (2012 , Ch. 1+2), Haber (2008), Stein (2022), Albertus (2024), Bueno de Mesquita & Smith (2022), Gohdes (2023) – available as a print book at the Hertie School library and as an e-book
Optional Podcasts	Bartels & Achen , Levi , Kuran , Mesquita , Przeworski , Truex , Kung

Session 11: Crisis of democracy & Right-Wing populism

Required Readings	Bartels (2023 , Ch.1+8) De Vries & Hobolt (2020 , Ch. 1-3) Guriev & Papaioannou (2022) – <i>skim for core arguments</i>
Optional Readings	Scheiring et al. (2024), Danieli et al (2022), Cohen (2020), Shayo (2020), Krause et al (2023) Silva & Wratil (2023), Valentim (2021), Wuttke et al (2020)
Optional Podcasts	Valentim , Rodrik , Abou-Chadi

Session 12: Perspectives on Social Change

Required Readings	Treisman (2020) Seyler (2021)
Optional Readings	Goldin (2023), Acemoglu (2003), Schelling (2006 , Ch. 1+4), Mesquita & Shadmehr (2023), Berman & Fox (2023 , Ch. 2+3+8), Bursztyn et al (2020), Besley et al (2017), Evans (2022), Bursztyn et al (2023), Fouka (2020), Kuran (1989), Teele et al (2018), Ziblatt (2006)
Optional Podcasts	Sunstein , Brown , Engerman , Ashworth , Doepke , Redding