

# SIS 419 Syllabus

## Official Name of Course

***Climate Ethics: Cause and Responsibility in the Anthropocene***

## Listed Title

***Climate Crises: Cause and Blame***

Fall 2025

Wednesdays 2:30 to 5:20pm

Location: SIS 102

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**Bio:** Ribot is a professor of environmental politics with a focus on climate and vulnerability. He taught in the Department of Geography at University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign from 2008 to 2018. Before 2008, he was a senior associate of the World Resources Institute, and earlier taught in the Urban Studies and Planning department at MIT. He is an Africanist studying local democracy, resource access, social vulnerability and hunger. See [www.JesseRibot.com](http://www.JesseRibot.com).

## Course Descriptions

### ***My “Official” Course Description***

In the face of climate change some people are vulnerable, at risk, prone, fragile, precarious. Others are coping, secure, adapted, resilient. Understanding the causes of vulnerability can help us to respond in ways that reduce insecurity and increase equity. Frames of causal analysis matter deeply, as different frames focus on different causal elements. By the causes they indicate, analytic frames have implications for what we can do and who should do it. The ability to respond (illuminated by knowledge of cause) creates response-ability (while also pointing fingers of blame). The choice of analytic frames, which point to different causes and blame, is therefore contentious. Despite claiming scientific neutrality, analysts (and donors or policy makers) choose frames normatively – based on the causes and social structures they prioritize. So, there is moral content in the choice of analytic models or theories of disaster causality. This integrative course explores the moral basis of climate disaster analytics. We will explore 1) the relation between models and causes, and 2) between cause and blame.

In this capstone course we will explore the multiple policy and analytic approaches to evaluating vulnerabilities of poor and marginal populations, drawing on cases primarily from the developing world – although applicable everywhere. The capstone project for this seminar-style course will be the writing of a policy brief or a research proposal – each requiring deep background research into the problem you focus on. The capstone course provides students with a critical theoretical base and policy-analytic skills applicable to increasing security and wellbeing of the precarious. In this course you should learn to: 1) apply critical thinking to evaluation of the causes of climate-related risks; 2) critically read and understand theories and models concerning the moral issues within the climate-related literature; 3) identify and ask policy-relevant social-science research questions about climate-related crises; and 4) to improve your writing.

## ***Listed Course Description***

### **419-012 Climate Crises: Cause and Blame (3)**

This integrative course explores the moral basis of climate disaster analytics. It focuses on the relation between models and causes of crises, and between these causes and blame or responsibility. Students examine multiple policy and analytic approaches to explain climate-related vulnerabilities of poor and marginal populations, drawing on cases primarily from the developing world. Students select a crisis, conduct a deep review of its social causes, and write an essay about the relations between cause, responsibility, and response. The course provides students with a critical theoretical base for analyzing climate vulnerability. Students read and understand a select literature on moral issues embedded within climate-crisis-related causal theories and models; identify and ask policy-relevant research questions about climate-related crises and their social explanations; and improve their writing.

### **SIS Undergraduate Program Learning Outcomes *Relevant to Capstones***

- Learning Outcome #1: Demonstrate critical thinking as evidenced through both written work and oral presentations.
- Learning Outcome #2: Understand and apply theories and models from appropriate disciplines including political science, history, and economics to international affairs.

### **AU Core Learning Outcomes required for Capstones**

- Application: Build on prior knowledge, skills, or dispositions in a new context.
- Synthesis: Identify and execute a significant project that addresses a substantive disciplinary or professional concern.
- Reflection: Articulate the knowledge, skills, or dispositions gained during the student's undergraduate experience or used in the project.

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## A Few Relevant Quotes to Ponder

Nobody has the right to obey.

- Hannah  
Arendt 1963



Where all are guilty, nobody in the last analysis can be judged.

Hannah Arendt  
"Organized Guilt and  
Universal Responsibility"  
In *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954*. 1944:126  
Quoted in Iris Marion Young 2011:76

Where all are guilty, nobody is. Guilt, unlike responsibility, always singles out; it is strictly personal.

Hannah Arendt  
"Collective Responsibility,"  
In *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith  
and Thought of Hannah Arendt*. 1987:43  
Quoted in Iris Marion Young 2011:76

In "Organized Guilt" Arendt labels the likes of Eichmann "Family men." The "family man" is a man oriented primarily to private life and to ensuring the personal and economic security of those who depend on him for support. In his society, the family man is the epitome of virtue. He is concerned for his career, not so much because he is after fame or great power, but because he takes his primary duty to be to protect his family and himself from distress. People who fall into the family man type are people who do their job conscientiously and expect compensation for that, but otherwise mind their own business and try not to call attention to themselves. They are their families and friends keep to themselves, and on the whole are indifferent to others outside their private circle. They expect the same from others. Arendt claims that "under the pressure of the chaotic economic conditions of our time" the family man (and woman) would be prepared to do almost anything to ensure security and a comfortable life.

Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

Immanuel Kant 1993 [1785].  
*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

For since reason is not sufficiently fit to guide the will reliably with regard to its objects and the satisfaction of all our needs (which in part it does itself multiply) – an end to which an implanted natural instinct would have led much more reliably – but reason as a practical faculty, i.e. as one that is meant to influence the *will*, has yet been imparted to us, its true function must be to produce a *will that is good*, not for other purposes *as a means*, but good in itself....

Immanuel Kant 2012[1785]:12 Cambridge University Press

...I just ask myself, can you also will that your maxim become a universal law? If not, then it must be rejected....

Immanuel Kant 2012[1785]:18 Cambridge University Press

Not all facts about a person's circumstances, as distinct from her choices, are morally arbitrary. To the extent that they derive from actions, policies, institutional organization, and the combined consequences of these factors that make some people vulnerable to domination, exploitation, or deprivation, they raise specific issues of justice that implicate other people in the circumstances of those vulnerable people. Injustice in this sense concerns more than simply the fact that people suffer fates they do not deserve. It concerns how institutional rules and social interactions conspire to narrow the options many people have.

Iris Marion Young 2011:34  
*Responsibility for Justice*  
Oxford: Oxford University Press

By referring to circumstances beyond a person's control that are a source of disadvantage as bad luck, Dworkin wishes to suggest that they are morally arbitrary. Because they are morally arbitrary, a proper conception of justice requires the state to compensate for such undeserved disadvantages. This formulation inappropriately collapses the idea of injustice with the idea of undeserved fate. The idea of injustice is not identical to the idea of undeserved misfortune. Making a judgment of injustice involves a stronger and more specific judgment than that a person suffers undeserved misfortune.

Iris Marion Young 2011:32

*Responsibility for Justice*  
Oxford: Oxford University Press

...the root of the concept of the person in the I-You encounter and the priority of first-person knowledge both in creating the relation between us and in showing us exactly who and what we are.

...

My freedom is not an uncaused eruption into the world of human events. It is a product of my social condition, and it brings with it the full burden of responsibility to the other and the recognition that the other's voice has just as much authority as mine.

...

There is at the heart of the human community, the "common pursuit" of reason that will be valid for all of us. [This is the social contract – the common reason that produces society and expectations within it.]

Roger Scruton 2017:110-11  
*On Human Nature*

The general idea of this conception of moral economy is that what is produced, disseminated, appropriated, or contested is values and affects.

Didier Fassin 2020:218  
*Humanity*

Too much in love with axiomatic-deductive modelling, neoclassical economists especially tend to forget that accounting for causation — *how* causes bring about their effects — demands deep subject-matter knowledge and acquaintance with the intricate fabrics and contexts. As Keynes already argued in his *A Treatise on Probability*, statistics (and econometrics) should primarily be seen as means to describe patterns of associations and correlations, means that we may use as *suggestions* of possible causal relations.

Lars P. Syll 2023  
[Statistics & Econometrics<sup>1</sup>](#)

Aristotle conceived efficient causes as 'things responsible' in the sense that an efficient ['agential' or 'motive'] cause is a thing that by its activity brings about an effect in another thing.

Menno Hulswit 2002  
*A Short History of 'Causation'<sup>2</sup>*

The idea of cause is originally a legal idea in the exact sense that the search for the cause is, originally the process which leads to assigning responsibilities.

...the absence of a language in social sciences which bears authentic testimony to the reality of human affliction (Das, 1997) is itself symptomatic of the peculiar components of a culture whose intellectual and technical achievements all too readily obscure 'the brute fact that suffering exists' (Weber, 1970:354). This difficulty is exacerbated by the 'mediation' of contemporary forms of popular culture, which tends to desensitize our capacity to communicate and emphasize with the traumatic consequences of violence and suffering on a global scale (Kleinman and Kleinman, 1996). But, perhaps more disturbing, is the extent to which, while routinely exposed to media images of disaster and misery, there is apparently no compulsion to explain the disparity between the escalating burden of suffering and the belief that we live in, if not the best, then at least one of the most progressive of all social worlds.

David Morgan and Ian Wilkinson 2001:201  
*European Journal of Social Theory*<sup>4</sup>

A unique method sets aside all the others. Compared to them, they give the impression of being indigent, of making up at most preliminary stages. You have to go back down to the sources, to see them all next to each other, those which were neglected and those which were preferred.

Wittgenstein 1984:74  
quoted in Pierre Bouda 2011:79<sup>5</sup>

Authentic human development has a moral character.  
Pope Francis 2015  
*Laudato Si'*

There is no pure, disinterested, theory-free observation.

Karl R. Popper 1994:8  
*The Myth of the Framework: In Defense of Science and Rationality*

*The future depends upon ourselves.* It is we who bear all the responsibility. ... The future is open. It is not predetermined and thus cannot be predicted – except by accident. The possibilities that lie in the future are infinite. When I say 'It is our duty to remain optimists', this includes not only the openness of the future but also that which all of us contribute to it by everything we do; we are all responsible for what the future holds in store.

Karl R. Popper 1994:xiii

*The Myth of the Framework: In Defense of  
Science and Rationality*

The concept of the empirical world is anthropocentric. The world is what men [sic.] can experience. But the couple of this concept, and from a realist metaperspective necessary to sustain it, is the absence of the concept of the antecedent social activity necessary to make experience significant in science. ... Now it is central to the argument of this study that the concepts 'empirical' and 'sense-experience' belong quite unequivocally to the social world of science.

Roy Bhaskar 1998:42  
*Philosophy and Scientific Realism*

Understanding how blame is present in cultural models about climate, in climate politics and in the local institutionalized ways of addressing crises is, from an anthropological perspective, necessary if the discipline is to make effective contributions to the international debate on climate change.

Renzo Taddei 2008  
*Anthropology News*

There are powerful forces aligned against the kind of historical endeavor I am proposing. The universalism of the human rights campaign demotes history to mere context, irrelevant to criminal justice. Neoliberalism, the handmaiden of human rights, depoliticizes everything. In the neoliberal view, the only group identity that is presumed to exist – and, indeed, is naturalized – is that of the nation. And then there is modernist political theory, which naturalizes and universalizes the nation and assumptions of progress regardless of the specific histories of the various peoples and places political thinkers write about.

Mahmood Mamdani 2020  
*Neither Settler nor Native: The Making  
and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities*

...the debate on development has changed its colour in the subsequent decades; overcoming hunger, illness, and misery is not seen any longer as a matter of charity or solidarity, but as a matter of human rights. The need-centered approach in development has thus been largely replaced by a rights-centered approach.

Wolfgang Sachs 2008:334  
*Development*

Countries and regions within countries are disproportionately affected for basically two reasons: higher impacts and higher vulnerability.

Wolfgang Sachs 2008:335  
*Development*

...it is the compounded effect of economic insecurity and climate stress for large numbers of people that centres around the question of how much climate change should be allowed into a human rights issue.

Wolfgang Sachs 2008:335  
*Development*

- ...climate-related human rights are matched only by imperfect, not by perfect duties. Just as a violation of the right to food, health, or shelter can often not be traced back to the action of a clearly identifiable duty-bearer, also climate effects cannot be attributed to a culprit with name address.

Wolfgang Sachs 2008:335  
*Development*

A strictly legal conception, which maintains that there are no rights unless they are justiciable, misses out on the universalist nature of human rights entitlements.

Wolfgang Sachs 2008:335  
*Development*

'Governments must recognize their extraterritorial obligations towards the right to food. They should refrain from implementing any policies or programs that might have negative effects on the right to food of people living outside their territories'.

UNCHR, 2005 as cited by Wolfgang Sachs 2008:335  
*Development*

In risk society there is a new moral climate of politics, one marked by a push and-pull between accusations of scaremongering on the one hand and of cover-ups on the other. A good deal of political decision-making is now about managing risks—risks which do not originate in the political sphere, yet have to be politically managed.

Anthony Giddens 1999:5  
*Risk and Responsibility*

Risk is always related to security and safety. It is also always connected to responsibility. It isn't surprising therefore that as we move towards a world dominated by manufactured rather than external [environmental] uncertainty, there is a renewed discussion of the nature of responsibility.

Anthony Giddens 1999:7-8  
*Risk and Responsibility*

...infrastructure does its violence in ways that make it peculiarly hard to ascribe responsibility. If a policeman kills my baby, I know who to blame; if a team of urban planning consultants does it, neither the planners nor I may have any idea of the connection. The violence that is built into the massive inequalities that dominate our societies today is often naturalized, made invisible, or made to seem inevitable, by the walls, pipes, wires, and roads that so profoundly shape our urban environments, even as we take them for granted.

James Ferguson 2012:559  
*Ethnography*

...there are strong reasons to retain the concept of 'society', and even to fight for its continuing relevance. At a minimum, one should hesitate to join Margaret Thatcher and Bruno Latour in asserting that it does not exist.

James Ferguson 2012:560  
*Ethnography*

Responsibility is a key term in climate justice, as in any other arena. But over time, discussions of responsibility seem to have become less central in climate-action politics. Governments in the global North and South alike are now blaming the climate and weather for crises that stem from inequality—avoiding blame for conditions that they created and could redress. This is not to deny that they are changing the climate; they certainly are. But they also created the precarities on the ground that allow ordinary or new climate events to cause disasters.

Kashwan and Ribot 2021  
*Current History*

What we should do depends largely on what we value and how we think about our values.

James Garvey 2008:33  
*The Ethics of Climate Change: Right and Wrong in a Warming World*

The trouble, ... is that we live in a failed system. Capitalism does not permit an even flow of economic resources. With this system, a small privileged few are rich beyond conscience and almost all others are doomed to be poor at some level. ... That's the way the system works. And since we know that the system will not change the rules, we're going to have to change the system.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. quoted in Olúfemi O. Táíwò 2022:149  
*Reconsidering Reparations (Philosophy of Race)*  
Oxford University Press

In one sense, to say that Hurricane Katrina was intensified by climate change is to make a scientific claim about how our natural systems are responding to global carbon emissions. After all, scientists using sophisticated modelling approaches have made estimates of the contribution of climate change induced sea-level rise to the damage made by the hurricane and found that flood elevations would have been substantially lower under the diminished sea levels of previous years.

But this is just one part of the story. For a more complete picture, we have to include our political systems.

Part of the story of Hurricane Katrina goes by way of canals and marshes; part of it goes by way of developments of corporate and state institutional power and their agendas; part of it goes by way of racial animus embedded in norms, laws, and property. But all of these flow through the aqueduct of history constructed by global racial empire. The accumulated weight of history carved canals of financial power through the political Louisiana terrain just as surely as it carved canals into its literal soil. It built levees that blocked fertile sedimentation of opportunity in Black neighborhoods and neglected to construct or to reinforce the floodgates that would protect them for disaster; for others, it created seawalls of insurance schemes and government protection that would ward off the worst impacts for some and divert that destruction toward others.

Olúfhemí O. Táíwò 2022:150

*Reconsidering Reparations (Philosophy of Race)*

Oxford University Press

As climate impacts accelerate, we can expect them to perversely distribute the costs and burdens of climate change, disproportionately impacting those who have been rendered most vulnerable given the accumulated weight of history.

Olúfhemí O. Táíwò 2022:161

*Reconsidering Reparations (Philosophy of Race)*

Oxford University Press

If we want insight into how the climate crisis will interact with global racial empire's distribution of advantages and disadvantages, one place to start is an investigation of how global racial empire already distributes environmental risk and vulnerability.

Olúfhemí O. Táíwò 2022:163

*Reconsidering Reparations (Philosophy of Race)*

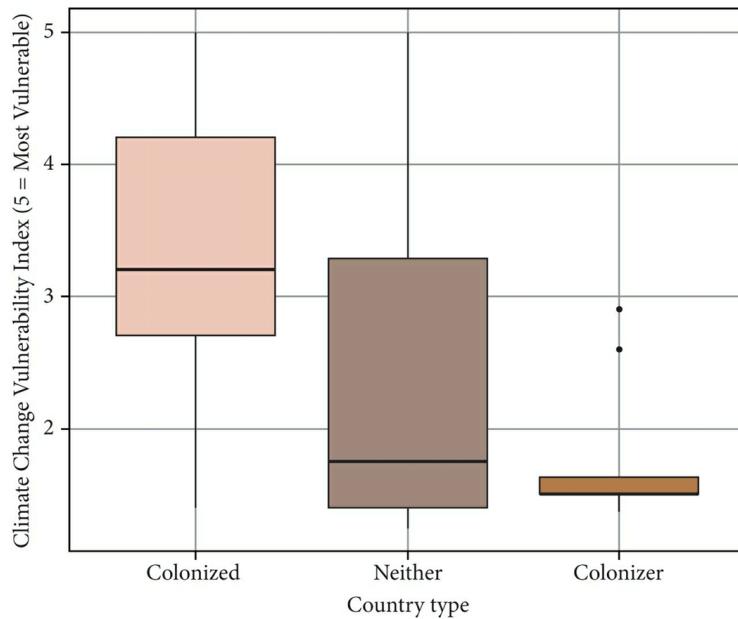
Oxford University Press

...our world economic system tends to move energy and biophysical resources from poorer to richer countries, and this material distribution has consequences for the distribution of ecological risk.

Olúfemi O. Táíwò 2022:165

*Reconsidering Reparations (Philosophy of Race)*

Oxford University Press



**Figure 5.2** How climate vulnerability is distributed.

Source: Táíwò 2022:170<sup>6</sup>  
Táíwò, Olúfemi O. 2022. *Reconsidering Reparations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Quantification is a portmanteau term that holds a multitude of meanings. It is part of our number fetishism that we seldom distinguish among them.

Lorraine Daston 1995:8  
*The History of Science Society*

Most forms of objectivity share an enmity towards the personal, but which aspect of the personal—judgment, inarticulable skill, an intense aesthetic response to nature, partiality towards one's own pet ideas—depends on the particular kind of objectivity. In

contrast to a perspectival objectivity, which combats idiosyncrasies of individuals, mechanical objectivity battles the general, all-too-human tendencies to aestheticize, anthropomorphize, judge, interpret, or in any other way "tamper" with the givens of nature.

Lorraine Daston 1995:19-20  
*The History of Science Society*

"It is not the bullet that kills you, it's the hole"

Laurie Anderson

<https://genius.com/Laurie-anderson-its-not-the-bullet-that-kills-you-its-the-hole-lyrics>

Only an Expert – Laurie Anderson: [Click here to for Lyrics](#) and [Click here to Listen](#).

## Assignments and Grading

### ***Course Assignment Summary (detailed descriptions in Annex A)***

- **Read Syllabus – including Annexes** and come to the 1<sup>st</sup> class with questions about the assignments.
- **Weekly readings** – you must read the assigned readings. If you cannot find them. Write TA or prof. There is no excuse for not finding them.
- **Weekly written 75-word maximum comments on readings** – to be submitted on Canvas. Include at least one discussion question and at least one quote from the readings that surprised or struck you. Due at noon on the day prior to each class. See Annex A for format of the file title and this assignment. This assignment must not exceed 75 words total (this is not ‘per article’). FYI, this paragraph is 72 words.
- **Reading Discussants on Weekly Assigned Readings** – Each of you must volunteer to be discussant on readings during the semester. So, as there are about 80 readings during the semester and there are 15 to 25 students in the class, please try to volunteer at least 4 times during the semester – or, about once every 3 or 4 weeks.
- **Term Paper** – This is a 1500-word maximum writing assignment. The final project is due by 6pm on the Friday after our final class of the semester. Annex A details format and content. The project will also include:
  - **An abstract**, due Week 4.
  - **A 1-page single-spaced term-paper summary** – to be distributed to the class the Monday before your presentation. Please follow summary instructions in Annex A.
  - **Term Paper Presentation** – You will each present your term papers in class. To prepare this presentation also see instructions in Annex A.
  - **Term Paper Discussant** – Each of you will also act as a discussion leader on someone else’s term paper. See Annex A for discussant roles.
- **Individual ‘office’-hour meetings** – You can meet with me individually on Zoom. Set up an appointment by e-mailing me some proposed times. Best times are 11:30am to 2pm. Write ‘office hours’ in the email subject line!

### ***Obtaining Weekly Assigned Readings***

Each week we will read mostly articles and book chapters. All required readings are available on Canvas under ‘Course Reserves’ or ‘Files’ (if it is a piece I uploaded), or their URL is in this Syllabus. ***If readings are not available*** on Canvas or you cannot access them on the Canvas system, **you are responsible** to let me know (e-mail me), so I can fix the problem or send you a copy. Most readings should also be accessible through the library system, even if you cannot get them on Canvas. Note that I may change the readings as the semester progresses – as we

discover new and interesting readings to include, and as our focus develops, we may drop some readings. Changes in the readings will be announced in class.

### ***Grading***

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>	<b>N.B.</b>
Weekly 75-word comment and comments/questions on readings	20% (2% each)	You can miss 4 without penalty – extra credit for handing in all of them
Term Paper	45%	Term Paper Abstract is included in this grade
Term-paper Presentation	15%	Includes Presentation and your 1-Page Overview
Participation in class	20%	Includes your interventions in class, your discussant roles (on readings and on your fellow student's presentations).

Fifty percent of the grade in each assignment is based on the instructor's judgment of progress from where each of you start at the beginning of the semester and the effort you put into learning. The grades will then be based on resulting assignment scores. The course is not graded on a curve; thus, it is not possible to give a grading chart.

Some of you want a sense of your grade halfway through the semester. I do not provide this, but if you are worried, please drop me a note and I will let you know my assessment of your progress.

## Class Schedule for Semester

NB: Readings may change during the semester as the areas we are covering will evolve with our discussions.

NB: IF YOU ARE SICK OR UNABLE TO MAKE CLASS, BUT YOU ARE WELL ENOUGH TO SIT IN FRONT OF A SCREEN, YOU MUST ZOOM INTO CLASS. The Prof. or TA WILL SET UP A LINK FOR YOU SO THAT YOU CAN JOIN THE DISCUSSION – OR OBSERVE AT A MINIMUM. YOU MUST EMAIL US TO REQUEST THAT WE SET UP THE LINK. IN THIS PART OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, THERE ARE FEW EXCUSES FOR MISSING CLASS.

### ***Week 1 (Aug 27): Introduction – Social Causality & Responsibility***

The empirical problem is the repeatedly observed avoidance by natural scientists and other climate modelers of the social sciences. They leave social causality out of disaster studies and continuously model the damages that follow either natural hazards or anthropogenic climate (and other) hazards as being the direct result of the hazard itself – with, at best, minimal attention to the social causes of loss and damage. We know – or at least know how to study and identify – the multiple causes of hunger, famine, dislocation and economic loss. Why then are these causes systematically excluded from climate-related discourses and models? There are several reasons for this occlusion. First is a notion that science is ‘objective’ and does not deal with the subjectivities and norms of the social. Yet human norms and values that guide actions or inactions have biophysical implications – they are causes. Other reasons for this choice of analytic myopia are discernable. First, causes rooted in the social world can indicate responsibility and blame. Second, causes identified have all kinds of implications for action, and thus are imbued with purposes of those who choose their scientific frames of analysis. Indeed, the analytic frame that is chosen has implications for responsibility and for instrumental outcomes. In this sense, the choice of analytic frame is always a normative choice.

We want to understand causes of problems in order to identify solutions. Indicating causality, however, is contentious because it can lead to responsibility, blame, and liability, and because not everyone values the same implied actions. So, what we find through analysis bends back to shape the analysis that is chosen. The science of causality is shaped by the causes it finds. We choose our science based on outcomes the analyst values. While those indicated as responsible may not like it, *responsibility is key, to response* – it identifies who should act and provides incentive (as in potential reward/affirmation or punishment). This course is designed to help us think through the relation between cause and response. This relationship is at the core of responsibility – and thus, it is contentious and often then pushed out of conversations. Nobody likes the fingers pointed at them. So, nobody wants causal analyses that make them responsible or liable. This means that causes are often hidden in ways that make solutions difficult. This

semester we will discuss this contentious arena in which denial of the social, via the denial of causality, becomes another part of the cause of climate-related crises.

How do we know who is responsible for what? What are the moral codes that enable us to link actions and outcomes with intentions?

This course will break down how we approach the explanation and attribution of causality before and after climate-related disasters – crises that follow floods, droughts, storms, etc.

## Introduction

- In preparation for today's class please also look over the syllabus

### ***Big Questions***

- What are *Ethics and Morality*?
- How are these related to Justice?
- How are these related to Causality?

### ***Structure of the Course***

- The Syllabus
- Focus on The *Causes* of Crisis as a Problematic Category of Analysis
- Case studies of 'climate-related' crises will include Migration and Famines
- Assignments
  - Readings – will likely change during semester
  - Discussant Roles – discussant on readings; presenter/discussant on proposals
  - Written Commentaries on Readings
  - Term Papers – an essay (or research proposal) on climate ethics
    - Presentation with Discussant
    - Some Project Ideas
- Assign Week 2 Reading Discussants

### ***Some Course Content***

- What is the role of climate and climate change in crises?
- What is vulnerability – your understandings from things you have read?
- What is vulnerability – my understanding, framings
  - Definitions of Vulnerability
    - Identifying Vulnerability
    - Quantifying Vulnerability
    - Explaining Vulnerability
    - Effects and Functions of Vulnerability
- Reading Vulnerability
  - Multiple meanings derived from context – indicator or analytic & which analytic
- Discipline your minds to think, read and write differently! Use words with great care! I will take points off your grades for misuse of words like:

- ‘Natural Disaster’
- ‘Vulnerability to Climate Change’

### ***Admin***

- Canvas – YOU MUST View Announcements!
- Format – Follow format for all submissions
  - Word, Filename
  - Word count, Font
- Managing Up: Bug me!
  - If I do not send you comments on abstract one-pager or term paper: bug me. If you don’t bug me, it’ll be your loss.
  - If I am not clear about requirements/assignments/expectations, ask me! Otherwise, suffer the consequences!
- Plagiarism: I will flunk you. ***No Mr. Nice Guy!*** I will not give second chances. If you have any questions about plagiarism, ask me! My policy is No Tolerance for cheating (plagiarism or ChatGpt)
  - All quotes must be in quotation marks with reference.
  - All literature-derived materials not in quotes must be paraphrased *and* cited too!
  - Only your own original reflections, questions and synthesizing remarks can be without citation.
  - I consider AI-generated writing cheating. I will not tolerate it. It is easy to identify. It has no soul! If I suspect Chat or any other AI, I will interview you about your writing of the paper. Concerning this kind of cheating, see: AU’s Academic Integrity Code, specifically article II.A.4 “dishonesty in papers” and article II.A. 6 “fabrication of data.” I will consider data or writing from AI to be dishonest fabrication.
  - If I suspect you used AI for any writing, I will immediately (within 18 hours of suspecting it) interview you about the contents of your papers. The burden of proof will be on you. I will also file a report with the Office of Academic Integrity ([academicintegrity@american.edu](mailto:academicintegrity@american.edu)).

### **Today’s Required Readings – For “Locating Causality and Links to Responsibility”**

Required Reading Page Count: 2+5+29+14=50 pages

- O’Keefe, Phil, Ken Westgate and Ben Wisner. 1976. “Taking the naturalness out of natural disasters. *Nature*,” 260: 566-567. Pp. 2
- Kashwan, Prakash and Jesse Ribot. 2021. “Violent Silence: Erasing History and Justice in Global Climate Negotiations & Action.” *Current History*. November Issue: 326-331. Pp. 5
- Cronon, William. 1992. A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative. *The Journal of American History*, (March), 1347-1376. Pp. 29
- Lund, Christian. 2021. “Chekhov’s Gun and Narrative Topography in Social Science Texts,” *Anthropology and Humanism* 46(1):54–68, online ISSN 1548-1409. Pp. 14.

## Lecture: Wallowing in Adaptation While Neck Deep in Vulnerability

### First Assignment (for next week): Bring in an Article for Discussion in Class Next Week

Identify an article (from a newspaper or journal) on a climate-related disaster. It needs to address cause and responsibility for the crisis (where disaster or crisis refers to the actual losses and damages). Bring this article into class. For example, the article you bring in could focus on California forest fires, migration from Syria or Latin America, drought in the Sahel, Floods in Pakistan or Texas, etc. Do not bring in articles on the causes of 'climate change' itself. Find something on the causes of climate-related crisis or disaster – causes of the damages. Come into class and tell us the article's causal argument – what do they identify as the causes of the crisis?

- How do they define the crisis/problem?
- What is its theory of causality?
- What is its theory of or implication for responsibility?

### Week 2 (Sept. 3): Cause and Responsibility in the Anthropocene

We want to understand causes in order to identify solutions. Indicating causality, however, is contentious because it can lead to responsibility, blame, and liability. While those indicated as responsible may not like it, *responsibility is key, to response* – it identifies who should act and provides incentive (as in potential punishment). This section is designed to help us think through the relation between cause and response. This relationship is at the core of responsibility – and thus, it is contentious and often then pushed out of conversations. Nobody likes the fingers pointed at them. So, nobody wants causal analyses that make them responsible or liable. This means that causes are often hidden in ways that make solutions difficult. Here we will discuss this contentious arena in which the social, via the denial of causality, becomes another part of the cause of climate-related crises.

#### Required Reading on Cause and Responsibility<sup>vii</sup>

Page Count: 1+17+20+15+5+16+22+11 = 107

- Taddei, Renzo. 2008. "Blame: The hidden (and difficult) side of the climate change debate," *Anthropology News*, pp. 45-6. Pp. 1
- Rudiak-Gould, Peter. 2015. "The social life of blame in the Anthropocene," *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*, 6, 48-65. Pp. 17
- Schwartz, Scott W. 2019. "Measuring Vulnerability and Deferring Responsibility: Quantifying the Anthropocene," *Theory, Culture and Society* 36(4):73-93. Pp. 20
- Sayer, Andrew. 2012. "Power, causality and normativity: a critical realist critique of Foucault," *Journal of Political Power*, 5:2, 179-194, DOI: 10.1080/2158379X.2012.698898. To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2012.698898>. Pp. 15
- Ferguson, James. 2012. Structures of responsibility. *Ethnography* 13(4), 558-562. Pp. 5

- There is a tension between individual, institutional and societal responsibilities. How do we manage this tension? Where does cause lie when the agency is a collective project of an institution or of society itself – however ‘society’ is constituted or conceptualized? As Ferguson (2012:559) states “The concept of infrastructural violence ... is useful because it allows ‘a concrete way of discussing society’s responsibility’ for suffering caused by anonymous structural processes; it provides ‘a productive means through which to talk about society’s responsibility for this suffering and its obligation to work toward concrete changes’.”
- Hulme, Mike. 2023. *Climate Change isn’t Everything*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
  - Introduction: Civil War, Racist Tweets and Flood Devastation. Pp. 1-16. Pp. 16
  - Ch. 1: From Climate to Climatism: How an Ideology is Made. Pp. 17-39. Pp. 22
- Hughes, David McDermott. 2013. “Climate Change and the Victim Slot: From Oil to Innocence,” *American Anthropologist* 115(4): 570–581, ISSN 0002-7294, online ISSN 1548-1433. Pp. 11

#### Discussion: What is this Term Paper?

Assignment: Bring in a popular Article for Discussion Today in Class

- What is its theory of causality?
- What is its theory of or implication for responsibility?
- See description of this assignment above – under Week 1.

PROJECTS: For next week, please bring in a term-paper problem to discuss with class (see Annex A for ideas)

What problem do you want your term paper to address? Think of a problem concerning the causes of climate-related disasters that you want to interrogate. Be concrete. Be specific. Tell us where this problem is and for whom it is a problem. Tell us of more than one causal explanation for the crisis.

### **Week 3 (Sept. 10): Morals and Ethics of Environment & Security**

Nobody has the right to obey.  
- Hannah Arendt

What do we mean by Morals and Ethics? What does ‘should’ mean? Hannah Arendt considered it surprising that these words are rooted in mores and etiquette. Are Morals and Ethics merely what we do? Or, are they products of principled action. The answer is not self-evident and this is not a topic we could cover in a single day or a single semester. Let’s start, as a way in, with ‘Could’, ‘Should’ and the ‘Social Contract’.

‘Could’, in a moral world, is a pre-condition for ‘should’. It is only when one could get vaccinated that failure to vaccinate became a cause of disease (Calebresi 1975, 105). Should, a social or

moral judgement that, when agreed upon or viewed as legitimate (in law or less formally via custom or convention), generates a legal or social contract; it establishes some of the obligations we call responsibility. Moral principles of action – the ‘shoulds’ of our contracts – have many roots (from platinum or golden rules to shared vulnerability or shared humanity – a la Arendt 1963; Butler 2009; Hobbes in Ferrarese 2016, 5; Mill’s harm principle as noted by Jamieson 2015, 26; Nyerere as represented in Shivji 2020; to Samafal, *a la Carruth 2021*; Kant 1993 [1785]). Along with such moral tenets, the analysis of the causes of vulnerability, and of the damages that vulnerabilities enable, is always a first step in establishing responsibility – in both senses: identifying the ability to respond, the ‘could,’ and the contract of ‘should.’ What principles come into play in these readings? What are the roots of ‘should’ and what are the ‘social contracts’ at stake?

### Today's Required Readings – On “Morals and Ethics”<sup>viii</sup>

Required Reading Page Count:  $15+9+26+16+5++14+29+7+7+5 = 133$  pages

General Readings:

- Young, Iris Marion. 2011. *Responsibility for Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
  - Martha C. Nussbaum’s “Foreword.” Pp. ix – xxv. Pp. 15  
[This is a book we should read in its entirety. If it appeals to you all, let’s think about whether we can fit it in.]
- Pope Francis. 2015. *Laudato Si’: On Care for our Common Home*. Huntington, In: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing.
  - “Laudato Si’”, pp. 7-16. Pp. 9
  - “What is Happening to our Common Home,” pp. 17-43. Pp. 26
- Davis, Mike. 2001. *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*.
  - “Preface,” pp. 1-16. Pp. 16
  - “A Note on Definitions,” pp. 17-22. Pp. 5
- Watts, Michael. 2021. “Black Acts” *New left Review* 9(May-June):125-139. Pp. 14.
- Ribot, Jesse. 2022. “Violent Silence: Framing out Social Causes of Climate-related Crises,” *Journal of Peasant Studies*. Vol. 49, No. 4, Pp. 683-712. Published Online 23 June 2022. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03066150.2022.2069016> . Pp. 29

Sample Research Proposals to Discuss:

- Lopez Briana. 2024. “Washed Away – Why Unincorporated Communities Present Increased Vulnerabilities When Crisis Occurs.” Pp. 7
- Christopher Unruh. 2023. “A Spectacle of Vulnerability: The 2010 Haitian Earthquake.” Pp. 7
- Arielle D Hershkowitz. 2023. “Hurricane Mitch: Categorizing Vulnerability and Responsibility in Honduras.” Pp. 5

Discussion of your term paper ideas in class today

## **Week 4 (Sept. 17): Structural Causality in Political Economy – Famine and Precarity**

There are districts in which the position of the rural population is that of a man standing permanently up to the neck in water, so that even a ripple is sufficient to drown him.

James C. Scott 1976  
*The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*  
New Haven: Yale University Press

Beyond correlations there are causes that trace out across space and back through history. How do we identify these and how do we attribute responsibility for the disasters that follow? Is the man up to his neck drowned by the ripple? What really killed him?

### **Film: Morte e Vida Severina (1977) – View in Class**

Director: Zelito Viana

Author of text (text is the reading of a poem): João Cabral de Melo Neto

The internet told me that this film is “The story of Severino, a man who tries to escape the misery and the drought prevailing in the rural backcountry of the Northeast of Brazil. He heads for Recife, passing through desert and forest regions, expecting to find a better life.” But, discuss in class whether this is really flight from drought or from something else? What are the causes of the protagonist’s flight?

Also discuss in class how to balance the cause of drought/weather with the causes of precarity when evaluating what causes damage when a storm or a drought arrives.

### **Today’s Required Readings – For “Structural Causality”<sup>ix</sup>**

Required Reading Page Count: 13+8+24+18+6+2+11 = 82 pages

- Guldi, Jo and David Armitage. 2014. *The History Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
  - Introduction: The Bonfire of the Humanities? Pp. 1-13. Pp. 13
- Sen, Amartya. 1980. “Famines,” *World Development* 8(9): 613–621.<sup>x</sup> Pp. 8
- Galtung, Johan. 1969. “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* V. 6, Pp. 167-91. Pp. 24
  - Read this article for his definition of violence and how he relates it to the structural. What are the implications of this piece for the analysis of the causes of climate-related vulnerabilities? What analytic tools does it give us?
- Ribot, Jesse. 2023. “Access Failure: Deep Explanation of Climate-Related Crises,” in *Oxford University Press Handbook on Land*, Jun Borras and Jennifer Franco (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197618646.001.0001>. Pp. 18

- Edkins, Jenny. 2002. "Mass Starvations and the Limits of Famine Theorizing," *IDS Bulletin* 33(4): 12-18. Pp. 6 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2002.tb00039.x>
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1997. La précarité est aujourd'hui partout : Intervention lors des Rencontres européennes contre la précarité. Grenoble. 12-13 décembre 1997. *Contre-feux*, Ed. Liber Raisons d'agir, Grenoble. [available online : [http://natlex.ilo.ch/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/ed\\_dialogue/-/actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_161352.pdf](http://natlex.ilo.ch/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/ed_dialogue/-/actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_161352.pdf)]. Pp. 2 [If you do not read French, someone who does will explain the piece in class.]
  - Read this too with an eye to how the idea of precarity helps us understand the causes of vulnerability as structural.
- Orjuela, Camilla & Swati Parashar. 2024. "Memory and Justice after Famines: an introduction," *Third World Quarterly*, 45(2): 247-258, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2023.2236954. Pp. 11

Discussion more of your term paper ideas in class today

**PROJECTS:** Your Project Abstracts are Due by Class Next Week

Schedule Research Presentations for week 6 to 14: Presentation Schedule Table

Week	Presenter 1 + Discuss.	Presenter 2 + Discus	Presenter 3 + Discus	Presenter 4 + Discus
6				
7-No Class				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

### **Week 5 (Sept. 24): Hungry Season?**

The articles today relate more broadly to agrarian politics. But the topic is the 'hungry season' – that period before the harvest when farmers run out of food and money and cannot feed themselves or their families. What causes the hungry season? Why does causality matter? Today we will discuss how we measure and how we view the causes of hunger.

#### **Today's Required Readings – For "Hungry Season?"**

Required Reading Page Count: 9+28+15+9+70(really 5) = 131(really 66) pages

- Lappé, Frances Moore, Jennifer Clapp, Molly Anderson, Robin Broad, Ellen Messer, Thomas Pogge, and Timothy Wise. 2013. "How We Count Hunger Matters," *Ethics & International Affairs* 23(3):251-9. Pp. 9 [Question for Students: Is this still the definition used today? What has changed?]
- Borras, Saturnino M. Jr., Ian Scoones, Amita Baviskar, Marc Edelman, Nancy Lee Peluso & Wendy Wolford. 2021. "Climate change and agrarian struggles: an invitation to contribute to a JPS Forum, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*," DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2021.1956473. To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2021.1956473>. Pp. 28
- Green, Kristin M., Anene H. Beaudreau, Maija K. Lukin, and Larry B. Crowder. 2021. Climate change stressors and social-ecological factors mediating access to subsistence resources in Arctic Alaska. *Ecology and Society* 26(4):15. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-12783-260415>. Pp. 15
- Nébié, Elisabeth Kago Ilboudo, Diaba Ba, Alessandra Giannini. 2021. Food security and climate shocks in Senegal: Who and where are the most vulnerable households? *Global Food Security* 29(100513):9. Pp. 9
- Dr. Seuss. 1971. *The Lorax*. New York: Random House. Pp. 70 ☺ - really 5. [I will post this on Canvas.]

**Lecture:** Causes of the Hungry Season in Senegal

**PROJECTS:** Your Project Abstracts are Due by Class Today – post to Canvas & bring in a copy

Discussion of more of your term paper ideas in class today

### ***Week 6 (Oct. 1): Famine and Responsibility***

Famine is different from Hunger. How different? What are its causes? What are its effects? Why is it seen differently?

#### **Today's Required Readings – For “Famine and Responsibility?”<sup>xi</sup>**

Required Reading Page Count: 17+21+7+5+24 = 74

- Sen, Amartya. 1981. *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. Oxford: Oxford/Clarendon.
  - Ch. 8: "Drought and Famine in the Sahel." Pp. 113-130. Pp. 17
- Drèze, Jean and Amartya Sen. 1991. *Hunger and Public Action*. Oxford: Oxford/Clarendon.
  - Ch. 11 "China and India." Pp. 204-225. Pp. 21

- de Waal, Alex. 1997. *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*. Oxford: James Curry.
  - Intro. Pp. 1-7. Pp. 7
- de Waal, Alex. 2024. "I Said the Era of Famines Might Be Ending. I Was Wrong." 9 March, NYT. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/09/opinion/famine-war-gaza.html>. Pp. ~5 [We need to get a copy of this that is accessible without subscription.]
- Jennifer Clapp & William G. Moseley. 2020. "This food crisis is different: COVID-19 and the fragility of the neoliberal food security order," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 47:7, 1393-1417, DOI: [10.1080/03066150.2020.1823838](https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1823838). Pp. 24

Discussion of your abstracts in class today

**Exercise for Next Week:** Bring in the first three sentences of your 1-pager

- Please bring in the first three opening sentence of your one-page sketch (the one for your upcoming presentation). These three sentences should capture the attention and interest of the reader. It must contain (in any order that makes sense): the problem (i.e. damage to whom where), causal conundrums (distinct claims to explain the difference of), new insight your paper will generate. The idea is to have an introduction to your project that really shows that something new and interesting is being explored in a real place and time. Show us something surprising. This is a writing exercise. Bring your three-sentence introduction to class and we will go over as many of them as we have time for.

## ***Week 7 (Oct 8): Climate-related Migration: Empirics of Causality and Response***

Why do people migrate? Why does causality matter? Is it related to climate? Is it related to climate change. The Groundswell Report is full of assumptions on how we model the relation between climate change and migration. How do we make sense of this? What are its assumptions? Are they plausible. Causes must be understood if we are to successfully adapt – the call of the Paris Agreement. So, what does this kind of causal model tell us for response? How does it guide us? What does it hide? This week we will read some articles on the causes of climate-related migration. Next week we will dissect the Groundswell report.

### **Today's Required Readings – For "Climate-related Migration"<sup>xii</sup>**

Required Reading Page Count: 18+35+4+9+30+18+2+9 = 125 pages

- Draper, Jamie. 2023. *Climate Displacement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
  - Ch. 1: The Moral Challenge of Climate Displacement. Pp. 1-18. Pp. 18
- de Haas, H. 2021. A Theory of Migration: The aspirations-capabilities framework. *CMS* 9(8):1-35. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00210-4>

<https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40878-020-00210-4>. Pp. 35.

- Huang, Lawrence. 2023. "Climate Migration 101: An Explainer," Migration Policy Institute Policy Brief. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/climate-migration-101-explainer?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=eedf3c10-39fd-4b5b-a65d-f0a9bc26135d>. Pp. ~4
- Ribot, Jesse, Papa Faye and Matthew Turner. 2020. "Climate of Anxiety in the Sahel: Emigration in Xenophobic Times," *Public Culture*. Vol. 32, No. 1. Pp. 45-75. Pp. 30
- Cottier, Fabien, Marie-Laurence Flahaux, Jesse Ribot, Richard Seager, Godfreyb Ssekajja. 2022. "Re-framing the Frame: Cause and Effect in Climate-related Migration," *World Development*. Published Online 6 July 2022. 46(12):2585–2601. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X22002066?dgcid=author>. Pp. 9
- Turner, Matthew, Emily Fornof, Anika M. Rice and Jesse Ribot. 2025. "Putting migration in context: a review of how theory and methods shape climate-induced migration research findings." *Frontiers in Climate* 7:18. Pp. 18. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fclim.2025.1549686>.
- Nicholson, Calum T. M. 2014. Climate change and the politics of causal reasoning: the case of climate change and migration. *The Geographical Journal*, 180(2), 151-160. Pp. 9
- WASCAL. 2024. Migration Under (Multi)Hazards. BULLETIN NO 1, ISSUE 1, 2024. WASCAL. [www.wascal.org](http://www.wascal.org). Pp. 2

### Video to Watch

- Ribot, Jesse. 2018. Climate Refugees. Four-minute video. ICLD: <https://vimeo.com/292115641>
- Mbaye, Mame Cheikh. 2024. Dark Waters: Africa's Deadliest Migration Route <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajX6NaVks3w>

Discussion of more of your abstracts in class today

**Exercise:** Bring in the first three sentences of your 1-pager to discuss in class

### **Week 8 (Oct 15): Causality as Assumed and Contentious**

Causality is a contentious category of mind. It is contentious, especially when associated with pain and suffering, because of its relation to responsibility. How do we understand how causality is framed in the context of these tensions?

#### **Required Readings on "Causality as Assumed and Contentious"<sup>xiii</sup>**

Required Reading Page Count: 18+15+16+18+15 = 82

- Need a short reading to preface Douglas on what is cultural theory – the 4 categories....

- Douglas, Mary. 1992. *Risk and Blame. Essays in Cultural Theory*.
  - Ch. 1, "Risk and Blame," pp. 3-21. Pp. 18
  - Ch. 2, "Risk and Justice," pp. 22-37. Pp. 15
  - Ch. 3, "Risk and Danger," pp. 38-54. Pp. 16
- Beck, Ulrich. 1986. *Risk Society: Toward a New Modernity*.
  - "Introduction" Pp. 1-18. Pp. 18.
- Tabassum, Nowrin. 2022. The Politics of Climate Change Knowledge: Labelling Climate Change-induced Uprooted People. New York: Routledge.
  - Ch. 1: "The Puzzle and Method." Pp. 1-15. Pp. 15.

Scheduled Research-Proposal Presentations in Class – see Annex A for Presentation Instructions

## **Week 9 (Oct. 22): On Causality**

How do we think of causality? Is it mere correlation? Is it processes traced back through time and out across space? What is this thing we call cause? How does it differ in the social and natural sciences?

### **Today's Required Readings – For “On Causality”**

Required Reading Page Count: 20+9+21+9+18 = 77 pages

- Boyd, Emily, Friederike Otto, Salvatore Paolo de Rosa, Rupert Stuart-Smith, Luke Harrington, Emanuel Raju, Richard G. Jones, Rachel James, Cedervall Lauta. 2023. "Socialising attribution of climate events: Progress, myths and future outlook," Mimeo. Swedish National Research Council (FORMAS), project 2018-02800 "Global Attribution Models, Mediation and Mobilisation (GAMES)." Pp. 20
- Pierre Bouda, (2011:77) "Reason and Cause: Wittgenstein Versus the Myth of Causal Explanation in the Social Sciences," Ch. 4, pp. 77-86 in (Jean-Bernard Ouédraogo and Carlos Cardoso) *Readings in Methodology: African Perspectives*. CODESRIA: Dakar. Pp. 9 [This piece generates a few insights – 1) that cause is linked to responsibility; 2) that there are different ways of knowing; 3) that some frames occlude others (*a la* Wittgenstein); and 4) that reason and cause are not the same.]
- Dessai, S., & Hulme, M. (2004). Does climate adaptation policy need probabilities? *Climate Policy*, 4(2), 107–128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2004.9685515>. Pp. 21
- Faxon, Hilary Oliva and Christian Lund. 2025. "Post-Agrarian Questions," *Antipode* 0(0):1-9 ISSN 0066-4812. Pp. 9
- Lund, Christian and Hilary Faxon. 2025. "Agrarian Modernity—Coda" *Antipode* 0(0):1-18 ISSN 0066-4812. Pp. 18

Scheduled Research-Proposal Presentations in Class

**Discussion:** How is everyone doing? Are you ahead or behind? Are you getting a good grade?

## **Week 10 (Oct. 29): Non-Events: On ‘The Social’ and ‘The Social Contract’**

What constitutes the social – the set of relations in which we are embedded and that both guide and constrain us? What is it that shapes our behaviors toward each other? Is social the same as moral or predicated on morals? Is the contract a moral creature? Is it a mere calculus?

In Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, the family is defined as a sphere of pious obligations, and civil society, as a sphere of free choice and contract.

Roger Scruton 2017:126-7

Grotius and Hobbes stand together at the head of that “school of natural law” that, in accordance with the tendencies of the Enlightenment, tried to construct a whole edifice of law by rational deduction from a hypothetical “state of nature” and a “social contract” of consent between rulers and subjects. John Locke (1632–1704) departed from Hobbesian pessimism to the extent of describing the state of nature as a state of society, with free and equal men already observing the natural law.

Encyclopedia Britannica online<sup>xiv</sup>

### **Today’s Required Readings – For “On ‘The Social’ and ‘The Social Contract’”<sup>xv</sup>**

Required Reading Page Count: 2+3+11+3+17+5+15 = 56 pages

- Shafer-Landau, Russ. 2013. *Ethical Theory: An Introduction*. Second Edition. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.
  - Part X: Contractarianism “Introduction,” pp. 553-554. Pp. 2
  - Part X, Ch. 62. “Leviathan” by Thomas Hobbes, pp. 555-558. Pp. 3
  - Part X, Ch. 64. “A Theory of Justice” by John Rawls, pp. 81-92. Pp. 11
- Adger, W.N., T. Quinn, I. Lorenzoni, C. Murphy and J. Sweeney. 2013. Changing social contracts in climate-change adaptation. *Nature Climate Change* 3: 330–333. PP. 3 [Also relevant for issues of responsibility.]
- O’Brien, K., B. Hayward and F. Berkes. 2009. Rethinking social contracts: Building resilience in a changing climate. *Ecology and Society* 14(2), Article 12. Pp. 17
- Kampis, George. ND. “*Causal Intentionality*.” Japan Advanced Institute for Science and Technology & Eotvos University Budapest. Online essay. [https://www.jaist.ac.jp/~g-kampis/Intentionality/Causal\\_Intentionality.html](https://www.jaist.ac.jp/~g-kampis/Intentionality/Causal_Intentionality.html). Pp. ~5
- Khan, G.A. 2012. “Vital Materiality and Non-Human Agency: An Interview with Jane Bennett.” Pp. 42-57 in Browning, G., Prokhorovnik, R., Dimova-Cookson, M. (eds.) *Dialogues with Contemporary Political Theorists*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137271297\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137271297_3). Pp. 15

Scheduled Research-Proposal Presentations in Class

## **Week 11 (Nov. 5): 'The Social' and 'The Social Contract' Continued**

### **Today's Required Readings – For “On ‘The Social’ and ‘The Social Contract’ Continued”**

Required Reading Page Count:  $2+3+11+3+17 = 36$  pages

- Hulme, Mike. 2023. *Climate Change isn't Everything*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
  - Introduction: Civil War, Racist Tweets and Flood Devastation. Pp. 1-16. Pp. 16
- Watts, Michael. circa2016. “Social Contracts in Africa: Some Thoughts and Framings,” Unpublished manuscript. Pp. 10 [Available in Canvas under ‘Files’]
- Bernstein, Sara. 2015. “The Metaphysics of Omission,” *Philosophy Compass* 10/3 (2015): 208–218, 10.1111/phc3.12206. Pp. 10
  - Abstract: “Omissions – any events, actions, or things that do not occur – are central to numerous debates in causation and ethics. This article surveys views on what omissions are, whether they are causally efficacious, and how they ground moral responsibility.”
- Scruton, Roger. 2017. *On Human Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
  - Ch. 4, first two sections of “Sacred Obligations,” 13-17. Pp. 5 [NOT WORTH READING AGAIN – Reactionary. ]
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1985. “The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups,” *Social Science Information* 42(2): 195-220. Pp. 25

Scheduled Research-Proposal Presentations in Class

## **Week 12 (Nov. 12): On Risk**

What is this thing we call ‘risk’ and how is it related to ‘responsibility’?

### **Today's Required Readings – For “On Risk”<sup>xvi</sup>**

Required Reading Page Count:  $15+8+8+10+30 = 71$  pages

- Douglas, Mary and Aaron Wildavsky. 1982. *Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
  - Introduction: Can We Know the Risks We Face? Pp. 1-15. Pp. 15
- Bernstein, Peter L. 1986. *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk*. New York: Wiley and Sons.
  - “Introduction,” Pp. 1-8. Pp. 8
  - Ch. 19, “Awaiting the Wilderness,” Pp. 329-337. Pp. 8
- Giddens, Anthony. 1999. Risk and Responsibility. *The Modern Law Review* 62(1):1-10. Pp. 10
- Beck, Ulrich. 1986. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Los Angeles: Sage.
  - Ch. 1, “On the Logic of Wealth Distribution and Risk Distribution,” Pp. 20-50. Pp. 30<sup>xvii</sup>

### **Week 13 (Nov. 19): From Theodicy to Sociodicy**

In his 1710 writings, “*Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l’homme et l’origine du mal*,” the Enlightenment philosopher Leibnitz wanted to convince us that we live in “the best of all possible worlds.” Despite evil, the goodness of God is supreme, thus, all is good. This was lampooned in the book *Candide* – where Voltaire’s Pangloss saw every horror and act of evil and malice as part of a greater good. Monotheism, of course, leaves us with a dilemma. If God is good, then why is there evil – if God created all? Put that in your pipe and smoke it.

In 1882, Nietzsche told us of the death of God – leaving us responsible for our own actions. His writings, for those who believe him, force us to take responsibility for pain and suffering. It is no longer an act of God (or nature). It is something we must carry and manage as our own. So, when is responsibility for pain and suffering a matter of human action, human will, social process and organization? Must we always explain pain and suffering as a social outcome? This is an open question. When is loss, damage, destruction, disaster, crisis, pain and suffering social? When is it random or a product of nature?

Further, this links to causality itself – why and when and how do we see causality? Causality is not just an objective relation of cause and effect, our assessment of it is also shaped by the will and notions of responsibility – in instances where there is damage. Think of causality in the law and its links to intentionality. Think of Kant’s ‘categories of mind’ (we always assume causality) and Mary Douglas on cause and responsibility (some cultures always see human intention).

#### **Today’s Required Readings – For “On Theodicy and Sociodicy”**

Required Reading Page Count: 1+15+18+8+12 = 54 pages

- Sociodicy entry in Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociodicy>. Pp. 1
  - Perhaps use New piece I saw on Sociodicy
- Alciati, R. (2022). If Theodicy is Always Sociodicy: Bourdieu and the Marxian Critique of Religion. In: Paolucci, G. (eds) Bourdieu and Marx. Marx, Engels, and Marxisms. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06289-6\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06289-6_14). Pp. 313-325. Pp. 12.
- Morgan, David and Iain Wilkinson. 2001. “The Problem of Suffering and the Sociological Task of Theodicy,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 4(2): 199-214. Pp. 15
- Bell, Daniel. 1966. "Sociodicy: A Guide to Modern Usage," *American Scholar*. 35: 696–714. Pp. 18
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. "Symbolic Power," *Critique of Anthropology*. 4: 77–85. Pp. 8
- Alciati, Roberto. 2022. ["If Theodicy is Always Sociodicy: Bourdieu and the Marxian Critique of Religion,"](#) Pp. 313-325 in Gabriella Paolucci (ed.) *Bourdieu and Marx: Practices of*

Scheduled Research-Proposal Presentations in Class

***Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 26)***

***Week 14 (Dec. 3): Cause and Blame in the Anthropocene – a Review***

Synthesis Discussion

**PROJECTS:** Final term-paper project is due by 6pm on the Friday after this last class via email & on Canvas

Required Reading Page Count: = 33+18 = 51

- Fraser, Nancy. 2021. "Climates of Capital: For a Trans-Environmental Eco-Socialism" *New Left Review* 127:94-127. Pp. 33
- Velicu, Irina and Gustavo García-López. 2018. Thinking the Commons through Ostrom and Butler: Boundedness and Vulnerability," *Theory, Culture & Society* Vol. 35(6) 55–73. Pp. 18

## Annex A: Course Assignments

### ***Class Assignment Format and Submission Procedures***

***IMPORTANT NOTE:*** All assignments must be in **12-point font and single-spaced**. All assignments must be posted on Canvas. The electronic copies of all assignments must be submitted in **Word** (NO [N.O.] GOOGLE DOCS or PDFs), and the file title must start with your **last name**, followed by the **assignment title** and **course number**. So, if you are Anna Eggplant, then the file should be titled: **Eggplant Anna Week 3 Reading Comment 419.doc** (or **.docx**), or **Eggplant Anna Abstract 419.doc**. Inside the Word document, you must also always have your name, the assignment, the course number, and submission date written at the top of the page.

*If Canvas says something surprising – like the wrong deadline, or that Word Files are not admissible. Do you listen to Canvas or to the professor's Syllabus? The latter!!! So, if you find something amiss, please write me. We often have canvas problems. If it contradicts what I said above, then write me. Believe the syllabus before you believe Canvas. Also, we often put later deadlines on canvas than we state on the Syllabus. This is so that if someone is, by accident or necessity, late, they can still submit. We do not want to have to monkey around with Canvas to enable that late submission.*

### ***Written Comments on Weekly Readings***

Weekly comments on the readings must not exceed 75 words per week (minimum 12-point font, single spaced, 1.5-inch margins). That means 75 words per week, not per article! These can be in a paragraph format or in bullet points, as you prefer. Please submit these to me on Canvas by noon of the day before class. You can try to touch on multiple articles, just one, just a couple. The key is to identify a few items that struck you.

- Some ideas for what to include in your comments:
  - a. Include at least one discussion question and at least one quote from the readings that surprised or struck you – i.e., what do you find new and surprising.
- Think about the following when you read:
  - b. What do the articles contribute to theory – what is new in them?
  - c. What are the key questions the articles evoke?
  - d. Vis-à-vis your own interests, what do you find surprising, new and interesting in the articles, and why?
  - e. What are some strengths and shortcomings of the articles?
  - f. Compare and contrast the arguments or theoretical positions of the different articles where possible.

- g. What was incomprehensible to you in the articles? What did you not understand?
- h. From the readings, is there a memorable quote that strikes you?

This assignment is designed so that you come in with good discussion questions grounded in the readings. 75 words gives you plenty of space. You must read all of the required readings each week. You should touch on as many of the readings as you can in your comment, but if you have something more to say about one or two or contrast two, that is fine. Just be certain to have read everything – without doing so, you will be lost in the class discussions.

### ***Term-Paper Writing Project***

The writing assignment for this course is a **1500-word (Maximum) Term Paper**. [If you choose to do this in the form of a research proposal, there are instructions in Annex C. The project as outlined here results in some research questions, but is not in the form of a formal research proposal.] The final term paper is due the last week of class. This project will include a **150-word Abstract** to be handed in early in the semester – date is specified on syllabus, above. You will also include a 150-word abstract on the final term paper (a re-re-re-revised version of the first submitted, or a whole new one if that topic was not what you ultimately took up).

#### **Note on in-Text Reference Style**

Please use in-text references in all of your writing assignments. So, Ribot (2014:667) said “Vulnerability is, by definition, the social precarity found on the ground when hazards arrive. It does not fall from the sky.” Then republicans announced that the world is a dangerous rhombus with spikes and that people are damaged by climate events because they are not neoliberals (Trump 2019:45; Giuliani 2020:2). Note that all claims must be supported by a reference, an observation, or an argument. When there is a quote, please put in the page number you got it from. When it is paraphrased, use the page number. No page number is needed if you are citing a whole article or a whole book – as in when you say that Sen (1981) argued that famines are caused by entitlement failures. No page number is needed for documents without page numbers.

#### **Note on Bibliography Style**

Be consistent. Use a reference style in your reference list or bibliography that gives the full citation as you would see it in an article or book. You can also use the style I use in this syllabus. Choose a style and stick with it.

#### **Your Abstract**

Everyone must submit a 150-word abstract that describes your intended project on the week specified in the syllabus. Start with a title for your project! Provide a good pithy project title that reflects something to catch the interest of the reader – a title that indicates that the reader

will discover something new and interesting. This abstract is designed to start your dialogue with me and the class on your topic and on the problem you are choosing to focus on.

### ***Cause and Responsibility Term Paper Concept and Structure***

Project: Identify a major climate-related disaster. Some examples would be flooding (deaths and displacement and economic loss) in New Orleans, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Mozambique; heat waves (deaths) in the US and Europe; Droughts (crop failures and hunger and famine) in Africa, India, China (like great famine of China<sup>xviii</sup>); Cyclones (and deaths or property loss), like Bohla, Hyan and others; migration from Syria, the Sahel, Latin America; civil war in Syria.... There is plenty of literature available on any one of these. [It is also possible to focus on a non-climate related 'natural' disaster. For example, Italy, Turkey, San Francisco, Haiti earthquakes – Explore how causality is attributed to the quake itself and to society. It could also be very productive to compare the San Francisco and the Haiti quakes – both 7.1 magnitude, but with totally different outcomes. How do the explanations of damages that are given by governments and other agencies and those you come up with attribute responsibility and response?]

General Outline of your Term Paper:

- Title – that catches attention and indicates your argument
- Abstract – 150 words max
- Introduction
  - Tell us the primary question you are asking
  - Tell us which crisis you are examining – where and when and why it is of importance
  - Introduce and analyze the biophysical climate event ('hazard') and how it may be related to this outcome,
  - Analyze the vulnerabilities in place that were necessary for the crisis to unfold,
  - Outline the explanations available for the crisis
- Review the literature on the causes of this crisis – what do different sources say
- Explore how different groups explain the causes (and how/why do they choose their approach to explanation):
  - Explore how climate scientists explain the cause of the crisis/damages,
  - Explore how the United Nations or World Bank explains the crisis/damages,
  - Explore how social scientists/geographers/political ecologists explain the crisis,
  - Explore how the affected people explain the causes of the crisis/damages,
  - Explore how the government in place (can be local or national) explains the crisis/damages,
- Analyze how through these different explanations cause is presented and responsibility is allocated/attributed,
  - Evaluate how the literature weighs or compares biophysical and vulnerability's causal roles,

- Discuss how you might weigh the relative importance of different factors,
- Propose two research questions on the choice of causal models by those who explained this crisis (these questions should have both a practical and a theoretical significance.)
  - How are they chosen? How is the choice rationalized/justified?
  - What are their implications for practice? What is illuminated and what is obscured?
- Propose a hypothesis about what you believe you will be able to demonstrate.
- Suggest what data you would need to interrogate these questions,
- Suggest what methods you would need to gather that data.

Alternative Projects:

- Attribution Conundrums: Identify an emerging area of climate-related responsibility, such as treatment of the causes of climate-related disasters in the law. Is there a split between attributing responsibility to the climate increment vs. vulnerabilities? Is there a debate on the use of attribution sciences? How is responsibility or liability placed?
- Practitioner Choice: Look at the question of how practitioners apportion causality between hazard and vulnerability? This could be done by analyzing of the recent legal cases brought against oil companies for how responsibility is established or rejected. It could be analyzed via the ways that actuaries at insurance companies are dealing with climate-related disasters? How do they attribute causality and do they attribute responsibility? Do they take vulnerabilities into account, and how? How do they weigh the biophysical vs. the social causes of crises?
- Comparative Attribution: Choose a disaster that has occurred in history (recent or ancient). Explain it in two different frames. Then compare the explanations that you have generated – compare how they are justified, compare their implications for policy and practice.
- Sahel Historical Drought/Famine Responsibility: We now know that the Sahel Droughts from the 1970s and 80s were caused by aerosol forcing from European effluents. Conduct the background research on whether the Sahel has a legal case against Europe for reparations from the damages caused by their effluents. Does aerosol forcing data create grounds for retroactive loss and damages claims?
- Groundswell Model Causal Assumptions: Conduct an analysis of the assumptions and the notions of causality in the Groundswell model. What do they include? What do they leave out? How do they justify their choice of models? What are the implications of these choices?
- WDR 2023 climate-migration relations: Conduct an analysis of the assumptions and the notions of causality in the WDR 2023 climate-migration model. What do they include? What do they leave out? How do they justify their choice of models? What are the implications of these choices?

For all projects, finish with a paragraph on the ethical implications of your findings. What are the normative inputs to causal model choice? What are the practical implications of model outputs?

### ***Class Term Paper Presentations – How to Structure***

#### **Time Allotment in Sessions**

Total time is about 30 minutes per proposal organized as follows:

- **Your Presentation:** 10 minutes max (you can use less time and that will allow more for discussion)
- **Discussant:** 5 minutes max
- **Class Discussion without author intervening (author is 'gagged'):** 15 minutes minimum [I added 5 minutes!]
- **Class Discussion with author intervening:** last 5 minutes

#### **Presenter Role & One-page Summary**

Synopsis: Share with the whole class (and the professor) ***a 1-page single-spaced term paper summary*** that states the Problem, your Questions, the Case to be studied and your approach to it. Include a bibliography, if you cite articles in the one-pager, but do not include it in the one page. This is due on the Monday prior to class. This can be a slightly expanded and redeveloped version of your abstract.

#### **Presentation**

Each of you will be expected to present your project to the class. In class you will present your work in less than 10 minutes. Please be sure to include in your presentation the key points in the outline below.

Please use the following outline (or the sample term paper outlines above) to structure your presentation – just to make sure that these elements are present in your presentation. Discussants and the class can also use these outlines to make sure you have covered what you should have touched on.

You can use power point if you like. You do not have to.

#### **Outline for Term Paper Presentation**

Be certain to evoke the key elements in the term-paper outline above. In short, they would include:

- Title – that catches attention and indicates your argument
- Which crisis you are examining – where and when and why it is of importance
- Your primary question(s)
- Who has examined this crisis and say a little about their perspective on causes (e.g. climate scientists, UN, WB, social scientists/geographers/political ecologists, effected people, local or national governments),
- Can you see in your initial dive into the literature if these actors have differences in how they:

- Analyze causality of crisis,
- Weigh or compare biophysical and vulnerability's causal roles,
- Do you have preliminary research questions on the choice of causal models by those who explained this crisis,
  - How are they chosen? How is the choice rationalized/justified?
  - What are their implications for practice? What is illuminated and what is obscured?
- Can you yet propose a hypothesis about what you believe you will be able to demonstrate about how and why different models of causality are chosen?

### Project Presentation Discussant Role

The discussant will take 3 to 5 minutes to comment. Then the class, facilitated by the discussant, will discuss the presented work for about 10 more minutes without the presenter intervening. Presenter can then enter discussion for the last 5 minutes. Elements in the outline below. It is also often helpful for the discussant to try to simply repeat back to the author what they understand the core problem to be. The discussant also plays the role of facilitating class engagement.

The discussant's role is to give some constructive feedback on your project and to help lead a discussion. Discussants should ask about whether each of the elements of a proposal are present and what more needs to be done to develop the question, hypotheses, or arguments. The discussant should repeat back to the author what they understand the core problem and question to be. This is usually a very productive exercise for the author.

### Checklist for Grading of Term Papers

When I grade your proposal, the following is the checklist I will use. Be sure to understand this.

#### **Grading Checklist:**

- Is the abstract well-structured and clear: Y/N
- Is the gist of the term paper made clear in the first few sentences of the introduction:
- Does the case amene itself to analysis of more than one causal approaches:
- Is the background of the crisis well presented:
- Is the literature on causality well reviewed:
- Are the causal analyses clearly identified and laid out:
- Is the term paper cogently and clearly argued:
- Is the term paper clearly written:
- Did the term paper use references correctly (i.e. supporting every claim with a source):
- Did the writer submit this in the required Word Format:

➔Grading decision will be based on these elements above.

### Annex B: Important Themes that will NOT be Covered this Semester

## ***Causality in the Law***

Law gives us some interesting perspectives on causality. In tort law, causes of damages that link to intentionality are what count. Are all meaningful causes linked to human action – when are causes social? When are they mere facts of nature? Are causes of damages always social? Yes when we ask what is a damage – as damage only has meaning due to social or individual evaluation and valuation. Perhaps when we ask what directly lead to the damage – as it depends on a) whether those acts were done by people and b) whether people could have foreseen and prevented them. No when they are random and unforeseeable acts of ‘nature’. This introduces one more question – is nature natural anymore? What nature is natural? What is the ‘nature’ of nature? What is the human element of environment?

### **Today's Required Readings – For “Causality in the Law”**

Required Reading Page Count: 39+48+8=95 pages

- Calabresi, Guido. 1975. “Concerning Cause and the Law of Torts: An Essay for Harry Kalven, Jr,” *The University of Chicago Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 69-108. Pp. 39.
- Hart, H.L.A and Tony Honoré. 1959. *Causation in the Law*. Second Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
  - “Preface to the Second Edition,” Pp. xxxiii – lxxxi. Pp. 48
  - “Introduction,” Pp. 1-8. Pp. 8

### ***On Revolution – from moral economy of the peasant to existential threat to the planet***

This week I want to talk about moral economy (E.P. Thompson & James Scott), the erasure of posterity (Gunter Anders), and whether the existential crisis of climate change is cause for revolution (a moral economy predicated on threats to existence rather than threats to subsistence). War and violence are also relevant. When do people start viewing others as subject to elimination without grief? How does an existential crisis reshape our view of others – when does it create solidarity or division? How are categories of meaning and belonging being reconfigured by the change of nature to something other than itself and how will this set of changes interact with multiplied crises?

### **Today's Required Readings – For “On Revolution”**

Required Reading Page Count: 32+32+11 = 64 pages

- Butler, Judith. 2009. *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* Edinburgh: Verso.
  - Introduction: “Precarious Life, Grievable Life. Pp. 1-32, Pp. 32
- Abembe, Achille. 2019[2016]. *Necro-politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ch. 1: “Exit from Democracy,” pp. 9-41. Pp. 32
- Bello, Walden. 2019. *Counter Revolution: The Global Rise of the Far Right*. Blackpoint Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishers.
  - Preface + Ch. 1: “Understanding Counter Revolution,” Pp. 1-11. Pp. 11

### ***On Causality and Causal Inference***

- Ege: Something more relevant came to my mind, however—you might particularly enjoy this one because it distinguishes theories of causation and what they mean for causation in the social world: <https://www.phenomenalworld.org/analysis/disparate-causes-i/>
- Bhaskar – something from recent 2008 book.
- Consider: Turner et al. 2025.

### ***On Responsibility for Climate Change: Policy vs. Industry vs. Consumer?***

- Hughes, David McDermott. 2013. "Climate Change and the Victim Slot: From Oil to Innocence," *American Anthropologist* 115(4): 570–581, ISSN 0002-7294, online ISSN 1548-1433. Pp. 11

### ***Climate Change and Human Rights***

- Sachs, Wolfgang. 2008. Climate change and human rights. *Development*, 51, 332-337. Pp. 6
  - [Excellent summary of biophysical impacts/consequences of climate change.](#)
  - [How do these translate into human rights issues?](#)
  - [Cause cannot be traced directly to culprits; but responsibility can be attributed through human rights frames.](#)
- Kashwan, Prakash. 2020. "American environmentalism's racist roots have shaped global thinking about conservation." *The Conversation*. September 2, 2020. <https://theconversation.com/american-environmentalisms-racist-roots-have-shaped-global-thinking-about-conservation-143783>. Pp.~5
- Rockström, J., Gupta, J., Qin, D. et al. Safe and Just Earth System Boundaries. *Nature* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06083-8> [Technocratic Piece on Climate Justice]

### ***Blaming Capitalism?***

- Foster, John Bellamy. 2021. "The Capitalinian: The First Geological Age of the Anthropocene," *Monthly Review*, 73(4): 1-16. Pp. 16
- Harvey, David. 2004. "The 'New' Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession." *Socialist Register*, 40: 71-90 [63-87]. Pp. 19
- Patel, Raj and Jason W. Moore. 2017. *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature and the Future of the Planet*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
  - "Cheap Nature," pp. 44-63. Pp. 19 [Should have used Introduction – if anything. This is not really good for this class. ]

### **Case: Causes of US Climate Crises – The Dust Bowl & Katrina**

- Cook, Benjamin I., Ron L. Miller, and Richard Seager. 2009. "Amplification of the North American 'Dust Bowl' drought through human-induced land degradation," PNAS vol. 106 no. 13 4997–5001. Pp. 4
- Steinbeck, John. 1939. *The Grapes of Wrath*. New York: Penguin Books. Chapters 1-5. Pp. 39.
- Cronon, William. 1992. "A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative." *The Journal of American History*, 1347-1376. Pp. 29
- Smith, Neil. 2006. "There is no such thing as a natural disaster," on SSRC's website on Understanding Katrina: <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Smith/>. [or <https://items.ssrc.org/understanding-katrina/theres-no-such-thing-as-a-natural-disaster/>] Pp. 4
- Bullard, Robert D. and Beverly Wright. 2009. "Introduction," pp. 1-14 in *Race, Place and Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to Reclaim, Rebuild, and Revitalize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast*. Boulder: Westview Press. Pp. 14

#### More Recommended Dust Bowl Readings:

- Abatzoglou, John T., and A. Park Williams. 2016. "Impact of anthropogenic climate change on wildfire across western US forests," *PNAS* 113(42):11770–11775. Pp. 5
- Video: Trouble the Water. 2008. 90-minute academy award-nominated documentary film on Katrina (<http://www.troublethewaterfilm.com/>).  
[https://tubity.com/movies/462757/trouble-the-water?utm\\_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed](https://tubity.com/movies/462757/trouble-the-water?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed).
- Naomi Klein Film: [This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate. YouTube video](#) of a one-hour lecture by Klein on her book with that title – if you are interested. The link to the film is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xb4wp4QK2PU>.
- Newkirk II, Vann R. 2020. "The story of an unnatural disaster," *The Atlantic*  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/podcasts/floodlines/>.

### **Research Methods as Causal Frames**

- Burawoy, Michael. 2009. *The Extended Case Method: Four Countries, Four Decades, Four Great Transformations, One Theoretical Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1998. The Extended Case Method. *Sociological Theory* 16(1): 4-33. Pp. 29
- Bhaskar, Roy. 1975. *Realist Theory of Science*. London: Verso.
  - Introduction & Ch. 1: Philosophy and Scientific Realism, pp. 12-62. Pp. 50

### **The Bases of Ethics and Morality – of Good and Evil**

This section will introduce the notion of a social contract – some agreements among people that make for a world of respect and reciprocity. It will explore how a social contract reconfigures the notion of causality from that of the natural sciences (where what did not happen cannot be cause) to that of the social sciences.

Readings or a section on Social Contracts – the Shoulds to which we submit and that discipline us.

- The article on the gardener – did he cause the flowers to die or did Obama?
- Hobbs
- Arendt
- Lara, Maria (2001). *Rethinking Evil: Contemporary Perspectives*. University of California Press.
- Wrangham, Richard (2019). *The Goodness Paradox: The Strange Relationship Between Virtue and Violence in Human Evolution*. New York: Random House.

### ***On Legitimacy***

When asked what to read on Legitimacy, Christian Lund gave this reply:

This is not easy. But let me say a few things.

Legitimacy is always contextual. There is no transcendental legitimacy, so you need to know the important values in society in question (status, what is honorable, what is good and worthy, what holds value, etc). This is always equivocal. This means that it is futile to ask if some claim or other is legitimate. You cannot tell, and it is not your job. It is always better to ask how a particular claim is legitimated. With this question, it is possible to go through some of the texts you have already read, and ask this question. Maybe read a few books on the society you want to work on and see how different claims are underpinned or justified with reference to religion, tradition, the business form, expediency, development, modernity, the mores of society, and so on. Do this first.

There is a very good text by Carola Lentz (1998). We make reference to it in the attachment. She uses legitimacy in an easy and good way.

Otherwise, I suggest you do read some Weber from Economy and Society. It is in his ideal typical style, but it is a foundational text, and when would you read it otherwise. Weber connects this to rationalities. If you want to remain in the Frankfurt School a little, Habermas' *Legitimation Crisis* is worth a couple of hours. As is Honneth: (1995) *The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

That would be enough German to start with.

*Powers of Exclusion* by Hall, Hirsch and Li, has some useful thoughts. Li's paper on the 'tribal slot' is also very good (attached).

Bourdieu also comes to mind. He is not working directly on legitimacy, but his idea that we possess different quantities of different capitals includes 'cultural capital' which is in same greater family of concepts influencing behaviour and relations.

Mary Douglas' *How Institutions Think* is very good. It is a little dry, but chapter 4 is very good. She argues that institutions work by analogy – they must refer to or resemble something we know and appreciate already. And best of all, if institutions have an axiomatic quality, i.e. no one knows where the values come from – they are just there as natural features of society (like private property, justice, religion, nationalism, and so on).

Eventually, you may run into Gramsci. His idea of hegemony as a form of generalized consent, is very much rubbing shoulders with the whole legitimization question. But I suggest you leave him for a little later.

Otherwise, browse Ernest Gellner, Norbert Elias, EP Thompson, Charles Tilly, Catherine Boone,

He attached three pieces:

- Sikor, Thomas and Christian Lund. 2009. "Access and Property: A Question of Power and Authority," *Development and Change*, 40(1): 1–22 (2009).
- Li, Tania Murray. 2000. "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42(1): 149-179.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1985. "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," *Social Science Information*, 42(2): 195-220.

### **General Readings on Moral Philosophy**

Garvey, James. 2008. *The Ethics of Climate Change: Right and Wrong in a Warming World*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

- We can consider morality as merely those values passed on to us by our parents and communities. I was taught not to steal. I was taught stealing is bad. We can also consider morals to be a cultural inheritance from the long evolution of arrangements of sociality that allow for productive co-existence. They can be viewed as the evolution of principals that allow continued peaceful production and reproduction – respect authority, violence is only justified in self-defense, etc. All of these can be considered as moral codes that do not require reasoned foundations. Some even take them to be genetic – the selfish gene. They are taken as tenets as they are functional and viewed as stemming from practice and belief. These taken codes, however, do not preclude reasoned explanation of these codes or of new codes and principles that may also be functional and rational.
- We can follow moral commands. But they become part of our human nature when we reason them and have a foundational justification that makes sense to us. Thought is what is fundamental to being human (Chomsky predicates this on our having language – a unique characteristic of humans).

- They can also be seen as the will of an external force – the strong or God or whatnot, even genes or culture. In short, they are a ‘given’. Here the individual has purposes and objectives only within the context of a greater imposed order or scheme. Morality is an imposed set of rules.
- The question of how far we must go with ‘reason’ or with process tracing for the linking of cause to outcomes is pertinent here. We can ask what is the basis of a moral position – not harming the innocent. This may be that it is not just. What then is justice? Why does it matter that someone is innocent? We can spiral downward forever finding reason for each sub-position. This is also true of causality of damages or explanations of historical outcomes. There are always antecedents. How far do we go? If all historical events have preceding cause, and all justifications have tenets that require justification, then how far must we go? I give this one answer myself. You go as far back as you have time and energy to go. Then you come back to the present moment or decision and you act.

## Annex C: Research Proposal Term-Paper Writing Project—OPTIONAL project

If you choose to do a research proposal for the class, this is a more structured project and it is described in this section. Like the above term paper, a research proposal is **1500-words (Maximum)**. The final proposal is due the last week of class. This project will include a **150-word Abstract** to be handed in early in the semester – date is specified on syllabus, above. You will also include a 150-word abstract on the final proposal (a re-re-re-revised version of the first submitted, or a whole new one if that topic was not what you ultimately took up).

### Note on in-Text Reference Style

Please use in-text references in all of your writing assignments. So, Ribot (2014:667) said “Vulnerability is, by definition, the social precarity found on the ground when hazards arrive. It does not fall from the sky.” Then republicans announced that the world is a dangerous rhombus with spikes and that people are vulnerable to climate change because of their own irresponsibility (Trump 2019:45; Giuliani 2020:2). Note that all claims must be supported in a text by a reference or supported by an observation or an argument. When there is a quote, please put in the page number you got it from. When it is paraphrased, use the page number if there is one. No page number is needed if you are citing a whole article or a whole book – as in when you say that Sen (1981) argued that famines are caused by entitlement failures.

### Note on Bibliography Style

Be consistent. Use a reference style in your reference list or bibliography that gives the full citation as you would see it in an article or book. You can also use the style I use in this syllabus. Choose a style and stick with it.

### Note on Identifying a Problem to Address

Research Proposals are about problems. **But, what is a problem?** You must identify a problem. A *problem* is defined as an instance in which someone or some group either suffer losses or damages or cannot attain something they need. When you identify a problem, you must state or identify for whom it is a problem. For, if there is nobody who cares about this phenomenon you are looking at, it is not a problem. Problems are human/social. If you say the problem is that animals are suffering. Then you have to tell us why this problem matters and to whom. It is not the animals themselves suffering that is the problem. It is that someone cares about it. If the problem is 'climate-related migration' then you have to tell us who is concerned (specific groups in specific places) and for what reasons (i.e. losses, damages or changes that might hinder their gaining benefits they desire or need).

All problems are social – as it is a social judgment to call something a problem. Their solutions are also social – as someone or some group must act to solve the problem. This is a social-science assignment. This means we are looking at the causes of a social problem (i.e. a problem that involves individuals and groups and the ways they suffer from or generate losses and damages or deprivations).

Be specific when you choose a problem! Your problem cannot be something generic such as 'climate change' or 'famine'. It must be something you can identify and then explain that is happening or happened in a specific place and time. So, you might ask a question such as: what were the causes of young farmers embarking on dangerous emigration from Tambacound, Senegal toward Europe in 2015 to 2020; or how was climate change used to shield government from blame for famine in Tigre Province, Ethiopia during the civil war; or did lack of access to shelters caused tornado deaths in Oklahoma. In each question is an implicit, but very specific problem: death in migration, avoiding blame for famine, tornado deaths.

### Components of a Policy Research Proposal

A policy research proposal identifies a problem and asks an unanswered question (related to climate adaptation or vulnerability reduction) for which the answer will have policy relevance – i.e. it must be about the effects of existing policy or is amenable to resolution by policy intervention. The question should also have theoretical relevance – answering it should contribute to the broader understanding of this problem for instances other than your particular case (that is, it should provide abstractable and generalizable answers<sup>1</sup>). At a minimum, your proposal should identify a problem where better understanding is likely to help us to formulate a better solution for the problem you have identified. Great if it also helps solve a larger set of problems.

### Your Research-Proposal Abstract

Everyone must submit a 150-word abstract that describes your intended project on the week specified in the syllabus. Start with a title for your abstract! Provide a good pithy project title

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<sup>1</sup> To understand 'abstraction' and 'generalization' see: Lund, Christian. 2014. "Of what is this a case? Analytical movements in qualitative social science research." *Human Organization*, 73 (3), 224-34. We will read this in class during the semester.

that reflects something to catch the interest of the reader – a title that indicates that the reader will discover something new and interesting. This abstract is designed to start your dialogue with me and the TA on your topic and on the problem you are choosing to focus on.

Your social science Research Proposal Abstract must include:

- The title of your project,
- The problem you are studying,
- Your research question,
- The case to be studied, and
- Why it is important or interesting.
- Bibliography (see below – not counted in the word count of the abstract)

You must develop a question about a specific problem in a specific place. In the first two sentences of the abstract (and in the intro to the proposal) you must state clearly the unsolved problem, conundrum, puzzle, issue that you are going to study. Pull the reader in! Your problem needs to be something that can be studied in the real world or assessed and evaluated and responded to in the real world. So, if you want to study a ‘global’ problem, you must tell us where global is – so you can go there and study it. Be specific about the case through which you will study ‘global’ – or anything else.

Once you state the problem in the first sentences, you state the question you are to ask about that problem. The question must be designed to help us to understand **why** it is happening – and thus, once answered, it might help us address how we can potentially solve it. **A research question is NEVER about ‘how to’ fix something. A research question is about ‘why’ something is happening or ‘why’ it is problematic.** It is about causality. If you state that you are going to figure out how to fix something, you must also ask why it is happening in order to do so. So, your basic social-science research question remains ‘why’. The research proposals you will write for this class are all to be about *why* something is happening – causality is central and it is what you are aiming to understand via your question.

Please also include a bibliography after your abstract with at least five key documents you will use for the background – add a line under each that says what you expect to use that article/document for. I will provide feedback in the week after you submit your abstracts.

Be prepared to informally discuss your abstract/project idea in class – tell us the problem you’ll work on, why it is a problem and for whom, the main question or issue, and why you think it is important. Please also be prepared to tell us who your audience is.

### Structure of your 1500-Word Policy Research Proposal

Please identify a problem and a related research question that you would want to pursue were you doing a Ph.D. Write a full research proposal. A great approach is to identify a funding agency and use their template (you may actually want to apply for a grant – such as a Fulbright or other funding to do field research). I suggest that you use the SSRC or NSF formats or the format of a grant you actually intend to apply for. You can also follow my outline of a research proposal presented below. The research proposals will be judged and ranked as if they were

submitted to an actual funding agency. If you choose to apply to a real program for funding, then use their format and questions, but the length is still limited to 1500 words and you still must address the elements of a proposal in the outline below. As it must be a research grant you apply for, the elements of the outlines below would still need to be present in your proposal.

This project requires:

1. identifying your problem;
2. identifying the audience you are writing to;
3. developing a policy research question and/or hypothesis;
4. locating the problem and question within the literature;
  - a. What do previous studies have to say?
  - b. What causal arguments have been made about it?
5. explaining its broader policy significance (that is, making it clear why anyone should care about what is being investigated and what might be found);
6. explaining what data are necessary for answering the question;
7. explaining the methods to be employed for obtaining and analyzing the data (i.e. tracing out how empirical observations will be related to the question or hypothesis);
8. estimating a timeline; and
9. estimating funding needs.

**The following is a suggested proposal outline.** A typical policy-research proposal has the following components. This is just an example—you can use a different outline if you wish. Nonetheless, you must somehow include each of these elements.

- I. Title
- II. Abstract—150 words max
- III. Introduction
  - a. Problem statement
    - i. What is the problem to be explored?
    - ii. Why is it important and to whom is it important?
  - b. Summary of debates around the problem
  - c. Summary of hypothesis and research questions
- IV. Background—What does the literature have to say about your problem
  - a. What others say about it
  - b. What theories might help you understand it
- V. Research Questions and Hypotheses
- VI. Data required to address your Hypotheses – to measure the independent and dependent variables.
- VII. Case
  - a. Where you are going to study your problem
  - b. Why this is an advantageous place for studying your problem
- VIII. Merit
  - a. Intellectual merit

- i. Contribution to applicable knowledge
  - ii. Contribution to theory
- b. Broader merit
  - i. Contribution to change in the world – in your case and generally

IX. Methods

- a. How you get from your questions to answers
- b. Timeline [not included in your word count]

X. Budget [not included in your word count]

XI. Bibliography [not included in your word count]

One useful way to organize a methods discussion is to break down the problem as follows:

### Climate Change Question Example

Hypothesis or Primary Research Questions	Operational Questions	Data Required to answer operational questions	Methods for gathering data
<p>Q: How many deaths did Cyclone Idea cause?</p> <p>H1: The number of deaths attributable to the cyclone is dependent on the analytic frame chosen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A hazards frame will attribute all deaths to the cyclone</li> <li>• A social-causal frame will attribute deaths to underlying vulnerabilities in place</li> </ul> <p>H2: Better communication would reduce fatalities that follow cyclones in this region</p>	<p>H1Q1: How many deaths are attributed to the cyclone under a Vulnerability model?</p> <p>H1Q2: How many deaths are attributed to the cyclone under a Hazards model?</p> <p>H1Q3: What assumptions in the models explain differences found?</p> <p>H2Q1: In places deaths occurred following the storm, what early warnings were communicated.</p> <p>H2Q2: In places with different early warning messages were linked differences in death tolls?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post cyclone death statistics</li> <li>• A vulnerability analysis of causes of death</li> <li>• A hazards assessment of damages following the storm</li> <li>• Documents with the analyses that can be evaluated for the assumptions explicit and implicit in the frames used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical analysis</li> <li>• Analytic methods of vulnerability and of hazards analysis</li> <li>• Document review and analysis – discourse analysis</li> <li>• Interviews of those who conducted analyses of damages and deaths</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data on early warning practices place by place</li> <li>• Data on who in official positions knew what when</li> <li>• Data on who in affected places heard what when</li> <li>• Data on damages and deaths in each of these areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government documents</li> <li>• Interviews with those in government communications roles</li> <li>• Interviews of those in affected zones</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Document review</li> </ul>

### Some Useful literature on proposal writing

- Professor Michael Watts' essay "The Holy Grail: In Pursuit of the Dissertation Proposal" is, well, just that – a "holy grail" – essay dedicated to demystifying the process and offering concrete advice on the dos and don'ts:  
<http://iis.berkeley.edu/sites/files/pdf/inpursuitofphd.pdf>
- NSF grant reviewer tells all  
<http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2003/04/nsf-grant-reviewer-tells-all>
- NSF Merit Review – look over.  
Criteria that NSF grant reviewers hold the proposals to. Note that these are kind of flexible depending on what discipline and sub-discipline we may apply to. The section "Merit Review Facts" may be useful. [http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit\\_review/](http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/)
- Some useful resources for helping in proposal writing – look over:  
<http://iis.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>

- Lund, Christian. 2014. Of what is this a case? Analytical movements in qualitative social science research. *Human Organization*, 73 (3), 224-34.
- Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon. 2008. "The Art of Writing a Proposal." <http://www.arch.mcgill.ca/prof/adams/arch627/fall2008/pdf/The%20Art%20of%20Writing%20Proposals.pdf>

Some useful additional methods books/articles

- Sayer, Andrew. 1992. *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*, Second Edition. New York: Rutledge.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent, Todd Landman, Sanford Schram. 2012. *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1998. "The Extended Case Method" *Sociological Theory* 16(1).
- Burawoy, Michael. 2009. *Extended Case Method: Four Countries, Four Decades, Four Great Transformations, One Theoretical Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Brady, H.E. and D. Collier. 2004. *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Becker, Howard S. 2017. *Evidence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ribot, J. and N. L. Peluso. 2003. A theory of access: Putting property and tenure in place. *Rural Sociology*. 68: 153-181.
- Bennett, A. 2010. Process tracing and causal inference. Ch. 10 in Henry Brady and David Collier (eds.). *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Cronon, W. 1992. A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative. *The Journal of American History*, (March), 1347-1376.
- Lund, Christian. 2014. "Of What is This a Case?: Analytical Movements in Qualitative Social Science Research." *Human Organization* 73(3): 224-234.
- Bates, Robert, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, Barry R. Weingast. 1998. *Analytic Narratives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Introduction, pp. 3-23. Pp. 21

## Annex D: University-Wide Policies You Should be Familiar With

### Academic Integrity

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the university's Academic Integrity Code. By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Academic Integrity Code and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly and disciplinary action will be taken should violations occur. This includes cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism.

### Defining and Reporting Discrimination and Harassment (Title IX)

American University expressly prohibits any form of discrimination and discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and

stalking. The University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. AU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information, or any other bases under federal or local laws in its programs and activities.

As a faculty member, I am required to report discriminatory or harassing conduct to the university if I witness it or become aware of it – regardless of the location of the incident. There are four confidential resource on campus if you wish to speak to someone who is not required to report: Counseling Center, victim advocates in OASIS, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center. If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with [University Police](#) (202-885-2527), the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) (dos@american.edu or 202-885-3300), or the [Title IX Office](#) (202-885-3373 or TitleIX@american.edu). For more information, including a list of supportive resources on and off-campus, contact OASIS (oasis@american.edu or 202-885-7070) or check out the [Support Guide on the Title IX webpage](#).

### **Emergency Preparedness**

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the University be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or the use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU email and Canvas, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any emergency-related absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU email regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the [AU website](#), and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college specific information.

### **Incomplete Policy**

At the discretion of the faculty member and before the end of the semester, the grade of I (Incomplete) may be given to a student who, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete the course during the semester. The grade of Incomplete may be given only if the student is receiving a passing grade for the coursework completed. Students on academic probation may not receive an Incomplete. The instructor must provide in writing to the student the conditions, which are described below, for satisfying the Incomplete and must enter those same conditions when posting the grades for the course. The student is responsible for verifying that the conditions were entered correctly.

Conditions for satisfying the Incomplete must include what work needs to be completed, when the work must be completed, and what the course grade will be if the student fails to complete that work. At the latest, any outstanding coursework must be completed before the end of the following semester, absent an agreement to the contrary. Instructors will submit the grade of I and the aforementioned conditions to the Office of the University Registrar when submitting all other final grades for the course. If the student does not meet the conditions, the Office of the University Registrar will assign the default grade automatically.

The Associate Dean of the Academic Unit, with the concurrence of the instructor, may grant an extension beyond the agreed deadline, but only in extraordinary circumstances. Incomplete courses may not be retroactively dropped. An Incomplete may not stand as a permanent grade and must be resolved before a degree can be awarded.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

The central commitment of American University is the development of thoughtful, responsible human beings in the context of a challenging yet supportive academic community. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) is designed to benefit the American University community and to assist in forming the highest standards of ethics and morals among its members. By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Student Code of Conduct and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code.

### **Religious Observances**

Students will be provided the opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. Please send this notification through email to the professor. For additional information, see American University's [religious observances policy](#).

### **Use of Student Work**

The professor will use academic work that you complete for educational purposes in this course during this semester. Your registration and continued enrollment constitute your consent.

## **Annex E: Academic Support Services You Should be Familiar With**

### **Academic Support**

All students may take advantage of the [Academic Support and Access Center \(ASAC\)](#) for individual academic skills counseling, workshops, Tutoring and Writing Lab appointments, peer tutor referrals, and Supplemental Instruction. The ASAC is located in Mary Graydon Center 243.

Additional academic support resources available at AU include the Bender Library, the

Department of Literature's Writing Center (located in the Library), the Math Lab in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics, and the Center for Language Exploration, Acquisition, & Research (CLEAR) in Anderson Hall, Room B-101. A more complete list of campus-wide resources is available in the ASAC.

### **International Student & Scholar Services**

[International Student & Scholar Services](#) has resources to support academic success and participation in campus life including academic counseling, support for second language learners, response to questions about visas, immigration status and employment and intercultural programs, clubs and other campus resources. (202-885-3350, Butler Pavilion 410).

### **Writing Center**

The [Writing Center](#) offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. (202-885-2991, Bender Library – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Commons).

## **Annex F: Student Support Services You Should be Familiar With**

### **Center for Diversity & Inclusion (CDI)**

[CDI](#) is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, multicultural, first-generation, and women's experiences on campus and to advancing AU's commitment to respecting and valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. It is located on the 2nd floor of Mary Graydon Center (202-885-3651, MGC 201 & 202).

### **Counseling Center**

The [Counseling Center](#) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources. (202-885-3500, MGC 214).

### **Dean of Students Office**

The [Dean of Students Office](#) offers individual meetings to discuss issues that impact the student experience, including academic, social, and personal matters; making referrals to appropriate campus resources for resolution. Additionally, while academic regulations state that medical absences are to be excused, if faculty require documentation to verify the student's explanation, such documentation should be submitted to the Dean of Students. The office will then receive the documentation and verify the medical excuse. Faculty have the discretion to approve absences and do not need permission from the Dean of Students to excuse absences. Students should be sent to the Dean of Students only if faculty require further proof or if they have concerns about the impact of absences on the student's ability to succeed (202-885-3300, Butler Pavilion 408).

### **Food and Housing Insecurity Statement**

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the [Dean of Students \(dos@american.edu\)](mailto:dos@american.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources that they may possess.

### **Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence**

[OASIS](#) provides free and confidential advocacy services for students who have experienced sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, sexual harassment, and/or stalking. Please email or call to schedule an appointment with a victim advocate in OASIS. ([oasis@american.edu](mailto:oasis@american.edu), 202-885-7070, Health Promotion and Advocacy Center – Hughes Hall 105). Students can also book an appointment with one of our two confidential victim advocates.

### **Respect for Diversity**

As stated in the [American University Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy](#):

"American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy or parenting, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under applicable federal and local laws and regulations (collectively "Protected Bases") in its programs and activities. The University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking."

The above website includes further details, including how to report instances of discrimination and your responsibilities as a member of the campus community in relation to the policy; you are strongly encouraged to familiarize yourself further with this policy.

Class rosters and University data systems are provided to faculty with the student's legal name and legal gender marker. As a student, you are able to change how your preferred/proper name shows up through email, Canvas, and on your AU ID Card. This option is helpful for various student populations, including but not limited to: students who abbreviate their first name; students who use their middle name; international students; and transgender students. As a faculty member, I am committed to using your proper name and pronouns. We will take time during our first class together to do introductions, at which point you can share with all members of our learning community what name and pronouns you use, as you are comfortable. Additionally, if these change at any point during the semester, please let me know and we can develop a plan to share this information with others in a way that is safe for you.

Should you want to update your preferred/proper name, you can do so by looking at the [guidelines and frequently asked questions](#) from the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended. To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360 or [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu), or drop by MGC 243. For more information, visit AU's [Disability Accommodations web page](#).

## **Annex G: What is a Capstone Course**

The official description is: The capstone course is specifically designed to provide the summative academic experience for our undergraduate students. The capstone affords them the opportunity to sum up their accumulated learning. A Senior Capstone class should itself be integrative, as well as giving students the opportunity to work on a summative project of their own: readings should draw on international studies broadly understood, assembling whatever conceptual pieces are needed to make sense of the topic of the class, regardless of subfield, thematic area, discipline, or whatever. Professors should be bold, demanding, but supportive and fair in their design of these peak SIS undergraduate experiences. Capstone projects should be designed to enable students to integrate their previous coursework and allow them to demonstrate the skills and competencies that they have gained during their time with us. For some students this may be a research paper; for others, a documentary film; for still others, a piece of international service on which they reflect in a systematic way. Capstone courses are topical, much like First Year Seminars; they are not specifically tied to any thematic area, and they have as their prerequisite only the successful completion of at least one of the 300-level core courses in one of the thematic areas, and the successful completion of the second-level methodology requirement through SISU-306 Topics in IR Research or an approved equivalent, so that the student will have had the experience of doing some original research in an upper-division course before plunging into the capstone course.

Capstone Courses officially have the following two learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate critical thinking as evidenced through both written work and oral presentation.
2. Understand and apply theories and models drawn from appropriate disciplines, including political science, history, and economics to international affairs.

I approach the capstone experience by giving you readings and assignments that bring theory and practice together in both oral presentation and in a written term paper.

## Endnotes: Recommended Additional Readings

<sup>1</sup> [The limited epistemic value of ‘variation analysis’](#) 23 May, 2023 at 07:20 | Posted in [Statistics & Econometrics](#)

See:

<https://larspsyll.wordpress.com/?s=%22causality+in+economics+and+other+social+sciences+can+never+solely+be+an+question+of+statistical+inference%22>

<sup>2</sup> [http://see.library.utoronto.ca/SEED/Vol4-3/Hulswit.htm#\\_edn1](http://see.library.utoronto.ca/SEED/Vol4-3/Hulswit.htm#_edn1)

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bouda. 2011:77. “Reason and Cause: Wittgenstein Versus the Myth of Causal Explanation in the Social Sciences,” Ch. 4 in (Jean-Bernard Ouédraogo and Carlos Cardoso) *Readings in Methodology: African Perspectives*. CODESRIA: Dakar.

<sup>4</sup> David Morgan and Ian Wilkinson. 2001. “The problem of Suffering and the Sociological Task of Theodicy,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 4(2): 199–214.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Bouda. 2011:77. “Reason and Cause: Wittgenstein Versus the Myth of Causal Explanation in the Social Sciences,” Ch. 4 in (Jean-Bernard Ouédraogo and Carlos Cardoso) *Readings in Methodology: African Perspectives*. CODESRIA: Dakar.

<sup>6</sup> Concerning references similar to the Taiwo diagram – mainstreaming Climate Response into Development:

- Milman, A., & Arsano, Y. 2014. Climate adaptation and development: Contradictions for human security in Gambella, Ethiopia. *Global Environmental Change*, 29, 349–359.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2013.11.017> Pp. 10
- Robinson, S. 2019. Mainstreaming climate change adaptation in small island developing states. *Climate and Development*, 11(1), 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2017.1410086>. Pp. 12
- Schipper, E. L. F., Tanner, T., Dube, O. P., Adams, K. M., & Huq, S. 2020. The debate: Is global development adapting to climate change? *World Development Perspectives*, 18, 100205.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wdp.2020.100205>. Pp. ???
- Ayers, J., Huq, S., M. Faisal, A., & Tanveer Hussain, S. 2014. Mainstreaming climate change adaptation into development: A case study of Bangladesh. Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: *Climate Change* (Vol. 5).  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.226>. Pp. ???

<sup>vii</sup> Related readings on responsibility (and some on irresponsibility)

- Hulme, Mike. 2011. Reducing the future to climate: A story of climate determinism and reductionism. *Osiris* 26, 245–266. Pp. 21
- Rose, Nicholas. 1996. Death of the Social? Re-figuring the Territory of Government. *Economy and Society*. Vol. 25, No. 2, Pp. 327-54. Pp. 28
- Farmer, P. 2004. An Anthropology of Structural Violence. *Current Anthropology*, 45(3), 305-25. Pp. 20
- Latour, B. (2014). Agency at the time of the Anthropocene. *New Literary History*, 45, 1-18. Pp. 18 [To critique for absence of any concept of responsibility.]
- Orlove, Ben, H. Lazarus, G.K. Hovelsrud, and A. Giannini. 2014. Recognitions and responsibilities: On the origins and consequences of the uneven attention to climate change around the world. *Current Anthropology*, 55(3), 249-75. Pp. 26
- Loftus, A. 2012. *Everyday environmentalism: Creating an urban political ecology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Ch. 1: “The Urbanization of Nature: Neil Smith and Posthumanist Controversies,” Pp. 1-19. Pp. 19 [Read as humanism’s relation to responsibility].
- Castree, N. 2014. The Anthropocene and Geography I: The back story. *Geography Compass*, 8(7), 436-449. Pp. 13
- Giddens, Anthony. 1999. Risk and Responsibility. *The Modern Law Review* 62(1):1-10. Pp. 10
- de Waal, Alex. 1997. *Famine crimes: Politics and the disaster relief industry in Africa*. Oxford: James Currey. Pp. 25
  - Introduction. Pp. 1-6
  - Ch 1: “Rights and Entitlements: The Conquest of Famine in South Asia,” 7-25. Pp. 19

<sup>viii</sup> Additional Readings on Morals and Ethics

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- [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-responsibility/). 2024. "Moral Responsibility," First published Wed Oct 16, 2019; substantive revision Mon Jun 3, 2024. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-responsibility/>. Pp. 44
- Wapner, Paul. 2010. *Living through the End of Nature*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
  - Ch 7. "Nature of Climate Change," pp. 169-199. Pp. 30
- Garvey, James. 2008. *The Ethics of Climate Change: Right and Wrong in a Warming World*. London: Continuum Books.
  - Ch 2: Right and Wrong. Pp. 33-56. Pp. 23
  - Ch 3: Responsibility. Pp. 57-88. Pp. 31
- Levinas. 1972. *Humanisme de l'autre homme (Humanism of the Other Man)*. Montpellier: Morgana.
- Schlosberg, David and Lisette B. Collins. 2024. "From environmental to climate justice: climate change and the discourse of environmental justice" *WIREs Climate Change* 2014, 5:359–374. doi: 10.1002/wcc.275. Pp. 15

<sup>ix</sup> Additional Readings on Structural Causality

- Rangasami. A. 1985. "Failure of Exchange Entitlements," theory of famine: A response' *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 20, no. 41, Pp. 1747-52, 1797-801. [On Famine Codes] Pp.
- Davis, Mike. 2001. *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*.
- Tweet on the pressures to produce Selective Truths:
  - <https://twitter.com/PatrickTBrown31/status/1699016555844035045?t=DIkNFBuQwbKy-Ztr-79RWQ&s=08>
- Follow up on tweet:
  - Meyer, Robinson. 2023. "An Interview with the Climate Scientist at the Center of a Scandal," *Heatmap*. <https://heatmap.news/climate/patrick-brown-nature-climate-scientist>.
- Munck, Ronaldo. "The Precariat: A View from the South" *Third World Quarterly* 34(5):303-19. Pp. 16
- Sneyd, Adam. 2024. *Hidden Politics in the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishers.
  - "Goal 2, Zero Hunger." Pp. 20-28. Pp. 8

<sup>x</sup> Consider also: Sen, Amartya. 1977. In *Cambridge Journal of Economics*. Vol. 1. [origin of the above piece], Intro to Drèze and Sen could be good here.

<sup>xi</sup> Famine Additional Readings

- Edkins, J. 2000. Whose Hunger Concepts of Famine, Practices of Aid. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>xii</sup> Migration Additional Readings

- de Haas, Hein. 2021. "A theory of migration: the aspirations-capabilities framework," *Comparative Migration Studies* 9(8):1-63. Pp. 63
- Murombedzi, James and Chikozho, C. 2023. Westphalian Sovereignty and the Free-Rider Conundrum in the Atmospheric Commons: Examining Global Governance Regimes for Addressing Climate Change Adaptation. *International Journal of the Commons* 17(1):12–21. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1159>. Pp. 16
- Romankiewicz, C., Doevenspeck, M., 2015. Climate and mobility in the West African Sahel: Conceptualising the local dimensions of the environment and migration nexus. In: Greschke, H., Tischler, J. (Eds.), *Grounding Global Climate Change*. Springer, Dordrecht, Netherlands, pp. 79–100. Pp. 21
- Butler, Judith. 2009. *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* Edinburgh: Verso.
  - Introduction: "Precarious Life, Grievable Life. Pp. 1-32, Pp. 32
- Turner, Matthew, Soumaila Abdoulaye Sambo, Jesse Ribot and Papa Faye. 2023. "The causal nexus of Trans-Saharan migration: A political ecology approach from Niger" *Geoforum* 144(103792).

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- Black, Richard, Alice Bellagamba, Ester Botta, Ebrima Ceesay, Dramane Cissokho, Michelle Engeler, Audrey Lenoël, Christina Oelgemöller, Bruno Riccio, Papa Sakho, Abdoulaye Wotem Somparé, Elia Vitturini and Guido Nicolas Zingari. 2022. "Migration drivers and migration choice: interrogating responses to migration and development interventions in West Africa." *Comparative Migration Studies* 10(10): 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-022-00283-3>. Pp. 18
- Rigaud, Kanta Kumari; Alex de Sherbinin, Bryan Jones, Susana Adamo, David Maleki, Anmol Arora, Anna Taeko Casals Fernandez, Tricia Chai-Onn and Briar Mills. 2021. *Groundswell Africa: Internal Climate Migration in the Lake Victoria Basin Countries*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. "Executive Summary," pp. xxiii – xxxviii. Pp. 15
- Collier, Stephen J. and Andrew Lakoff. 2021. *The Government of Emergency: Vital Systems, Expertise, and the Politics of Security*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
  - Introduction: "The New Normalcy," Pp. 1-35. Pp. 35
- WDR (World Development Report). 2023. Migrants, Refugees & Societies: The Match-Motive Matrix. Washington: The World Bank.
  - Ch. 1, "The Match and Motive Matrix," Pp. 21-34. Pp. 13
  - Ch. 3, subsection "Climate change: New risks of distressed movements," Pp. 78-83. Pp. 5.
- Schewel, Kerilyn. 2023. "Who Counts as a Climate Migrant?" *Migration Information Source*. Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute. July 20<sup>th</sup> Issue. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/who-is-a-climate-migrant>. Pp. 9
- de Sherbinin, Alex. 2023. "Climate Impacts as Drivers of Migration," *Migration Information Source*. Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute. October 23rd Issue. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/climate-impacts-drivers-migration>. Pp. 12
- Schewel, Kerilyn. 2023. "Who Counts as a Climate Migrant?" *Migration Information Source*. Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute. July 20<sup>th</sup> Issue. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/who-is-a-climate-migrant>. Pp. 9
- Saunders, Patricia L. 2000. "Environmental refugees: the origins of a construct," Ch. 10, Pp. 218-246, in (Philip Stott and Sian Sullivan, eds.) *Political Ecology: Science, Myth and Power*. London: Arnold Press. [file:///Users/ribot/Documents/Administrative%20Personal/Talks%20and%20Meetings/Nairobi%20June%202023/Environmental%20refugees%20chapter%20from%20Stott%20\(2000\)%20Political\\_ecology\\_science,\\_myth\\_and\\_power.pdf](file:///Users/ribot/Documents/Administrative%20Personal/Talks%20and%20Meetings/Nairobi%20June%202023/Environmental%20refugees%20chapter%20from%20Stott%20(2000)%20Political_ecology_science,_myth_and_power.pdf). Pp. 28.
- WFP/IFPRI/MIT lecture: <https://www.ifpri.org/event/migrants-move-risks-west-africa-migration>.
- Migration Data from West Africa see: <https://www.Migantsmove.migration.mit.edu>.
- WDR (World Development Report). 2023. Migrants, Refugees & Societies: The Match-Motive Matrix. Washington: The World Bank.

<sup>xiii</sup> Additional Readings on Causality as a Special Category

- Wilkinson, Iain. 2010. *Risk, Vulnerability and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge.
- Wilkinson, Iain. 2020. "The Sociological Problem of Suffering: Ever More Exacerbated and Confounding." In Rowland Atkinson and Dan Goodley (eds.) *Humanity Under Duress*. Multiple Press, Sheffield, UK, pp. 61-63. ISBN 978-1-916342-70-5. Pp. 5
- Wilkinson, Iain M. 2017. "Social Suffering and Public Value: A Spur to New Projects of Social Inquiry and Social Care," in A. Lindgreen, N. Koenig-Lewis, M. Kitchener, J. Brewer, M. Moore and T. Meynhardt (eds.) *Public Value: Deepening, Enriching, and Broadening the Theory and Practice*, London: Routledge, pp. 75-86. ISBN 978-1-138-05966-5. E-ISBN 978-1-315-16343-7. ([KAR id:65223](#)). Pp. 11 [OK, but not worth reading again]
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<sup>xiv</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/natural-law/Natural-law-in-the-Enlightenment-and-the-modern-era>

<sup>xv</sup> Additional Readings on The Social and Social Contracts

- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1973[c1762]. *The Social Contract and Discourses*. London: Everyman.

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- Li, Tania Murray. 2000. "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42(1): 149-179. Pp. 30

<sup>xvi</sup> On Risk and Uncertainty

- Scoones, Ian. 2019. What is Uncertainty and Why Does it Matter? STEPS Working Paper 105, Brighton: STEPS Centre. Pp. 33. [https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/14470/STEPSWP\\_105\\_Scoones\\_final.pdf](https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/14470/STEPSWP_105_Scoones_final.pdf)

<sup>xvii</sup> This book listed below will be made available at the Circulation and Course Reserves desk for students to borrow:

Title: Risk society : towards a new modernity /

Author: Beck, Ulrich,

ItemID: 266797

Course: Climate Crises: Cause/Blame - 2023F (SISU-419-012)

- Some Social Contract Sources Identified by Michael Watts (2016)
  - Cook, Linda J., and Martin K. Dimitrov. 2017 The Social Contract Revisited: Evidence from Communist and State Capitalist Economies. *Europe-Asia Studies* 69.1 : 8-26.
  - Haggard, Stephan, and Robert Kaufman. 2004 Revising social contracts: Social spending in Latin America, East Asia, and the former socialist countries, 1980-2000. *Revista de ciencia política* (Santiago) 24.1: 3-37.
  - Hickey, Sam, and Sophie King. 2016 Understanding social accountability: politics, power and building new social contracts. *The Journal of Development Studies* 52.8 1225-1240.
  - Kelsall, Tim. 2016 Thinking and working with political settlements. *Fragile states forum*. London: ODI Briefing Paper.
  - Nugent, Paul 2010. States and social contracts in Africa. *New Left Review*, (63), 35-68.

<sup>xviii</sup> On Great Famine see:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/09/books/review/tombstone-the-great-chinese-famine-1958-1962-by-yang-jisheng.html#:~:text=In%20%E2%80%9CTombstone%2C%E2%80%9D%20an%20eye,then%20comes%20to%2076%20million.%E2%80%9D>
- Also see Jisheng, Yang. 2012. *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine 1959–1962*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
  - Mirsky, Jonathan. 2012. "Unnatural Disaster," NYT. Review of Yang 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/09/books/review/tombstone-the-great-chinese-famine-1958-1962-by-yang-jisheng.html#:~:text=In%20%E2%80%9CTombstone%2C%E2%80%9D%20an%20eye,then%20comes%20to%2076%20million.%E2%80%9D>
- Look at Amartya Sen's book comparing China and India famines.