

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION: GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND POLICY OPTIONS

Professor: **Tancrède VOITURIEZ**

Session: **July 2025**

Language of instruction: **English**

Number of hours of class: **36h**



Objective of the Course

This course will provide intellectual material for students to understand the rationale for and challenges behind sustainable development and climate action. Students will develop a critical sense of the drivers of actions and the factors of inaction in these domains. They will explore the relationships between knowledge and beliefs, science-based policy prescriptions and contemporary politics. Additionally, students will debate on propositions made by scholars from different academic fields to tackle the most pressing environmental and development-related challenges of our time.



Summary

Available evidence of environmental changes in the 21st century has revealed that said changes pose a major threat to our economies and societies. To ring the alarm, some scholars even coined a new term, the “Anthropocene”, to describe the unprecedented influence of human activities on the Earth system.

In 2015, the United Nations solemnly agreed with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to strengthen the universal response to the threat of global warming by keeping a global temperature rise in this century well below 2°C. The same year, UN member countries set the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and decided on 17 new and universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Yet burning questions remain on the amount of change delivered by global commitments. How do rich and poor societies confront and act on climate change targets today? What is the theory of change for civil societies, CEOs and scientists confronted with inertia, denial or obstruction? Is litigation a way out? Can climate change policies frame a new social contract and deliver stability in international

relations in the coming decade, as the rejection of international cooperation has become a popular and populist argument among the biggest emitters? Students will encounter these questions throughout the course.

In the first part, we will identify various environmental and development-related challenges and map out the policy responses at global level. We will discuss the contemporary politics of global environmental and development changes, and observe that which has been achieved so far. In the second section of the course, we will look at different academic disciplines and stakeholders' initiatives in order to flesh out options likely to solve the challenges of implementation. A negotiation simulation game will conclude the course.



Organization of the course & Bibliography

- **Theme 1: Sustainable development challenges and global policy responses**
- **Theme 2: Options to solve implementation challenges**

Theme 1: Sustainable development challenges and global policy responses

Session 1: Introduction – two narratives on “Development”

Suggested reading

- Steffen, W. et al. (2011). The Anthropocene: From Global Change to Planetary Stewardship. *Ambio* 40, 739–761.
- Voituriez T. (2020). Environmental changes. In Dirk Berg-Schlosser, Bertrand Badie, Leonardo Morlino (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science – A Global Perspective*, Part 7, chapter 85, London., SAGE.

Session 2: Leaving no one behind: can poverty be history?

Suggested reading

- Edward, P., Sumner, A. (2015). Philanthropy, Welfare Capitalism, or Radically Different Global Economic Model: What Would It Take to End Global Poverty within a Generation Based on Historical Growth Patterns? CGDEV Working Paper 413.

Session 3: Taking income inequality reduction seriously

Suggested readings

- Chancel L., Hough A., Voituriez T. (2018) Reducing inequalities within countries: Assessing the potential of the sustainable development goals. *Global Policy*, 9 (1): 5-16.
- Chancel, L., Piketty, Th. (2021). Global Income Inequality, 1820–2020: the Persistence and Mutation of Extreme Inequality. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, Volume 19, Issue 6, December 2021, Pages 3025–3062, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvab047>

Session 4: Inserting the environment in the development equation

Suggested reading

- Chancel, L. Global carbon inequality over 1990–2019. *Nat Sustain* 5, 931–938 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-022-00955-z>
- Chancel, L., Bothe, P. & Voituriez, T. The potential of wealth taxation to address the triple climate inequality crisis. *Nat. Clim. Chang.* 14, 5–7 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-023-01891-2>

Sessions 5&6: Climate action as a litmus test for sustainable development

Suggested readings

- IPCC (2023). Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 1-34, doi: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647.001
- UNEP (2024). Emission gap report 2024. Executive Summary. UNEP, Geneva, Switzerland.

Session 7: Getting to net-zero emission and the case of hard-to-abate sectors

Suggested readings

- Edelenbosch, O.Y. (2022). Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions in hard-to-abate sectors, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, The Hague.
- IEA (2021). Net Zero by 2050. Executive summary.
- Rosa, L., Gabrielli, P. (2023). Achieving net-zero emissions in agriculture: A review. *Environ. Res. Lett.* 18 063002 <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/acd5e8>

Theme 2: Options to solve implementation challenges

Session 8: Carbon border adjustment and carbon clubs

Suggested reading

- Sartor, O., Cosbey, A., and Shawkat, A. (2022). Getting the transition to CBAM right: Finding pragmatic solutions to key implementation issues. Agora Industry 250/01-I-2022/EN.
- What can Least Developed Countries and other climate vulnerable countries expect from the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)? Report authored by Tim Gore (IEEP), Eline Blot (IEEP), Tancredè Voituriez (IDDRI), Laura Kelly (IIED), Aaron Cosbey (IISD), 2021.
- World Bank (2024). State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2024. The World Bank, Washington:DC.

Session 9: To offset or not to offset?

Suggested reading

- Guizar-Coutiño, A., Jones, J., Balmford, A., Carmenta, R., Coomes, D.A. (2023). A global evaluation of the effectiveness of voluntary REDD+ projects at reducing deforestation and degradation in the moist tropics. *Conservation Biology* 36(6).
- Seddon, N., et al. (2020). Understanding the value and limits of nature-based solutions to climate change and other global challenges. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc.* <http://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2019.0120>

Session 10: Leveraging development finance

Suggested readings

- Fay, M., Hallegatte, S., Vogt-Schilb, A., Rozenberg, J., Narloch, U., Kerr, T. (2015). *Decarbonizing Development: Three Steps to a Zero-Carbon Future*. Climate Change and Development. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Planet Tracker (2023). *Financial markets roadmap for transforming the global food system. A guide for the financial sector*. March.

Session 11: Greening trade with trade wars?

Suggested reading

- Mazzucato, M. and Rodrik, D. (2023). Industrial Policy with Conditionalities: A Taxonomy and Sample Cases. UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, Working Paper Series (IIPP WP 2023-07). Available at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/public-purpose/wp2023-07>
- Voituriez, T. (2023). We Need More Hybrid Trade And Environment Agreements. IISD Policy Analysis.

Session 12: Is climate litigation the way out?

Suggested readings

- Bouwer, K. (2018). The Unsexy Future of Climate Change Litigation. *Journal of Environmental Law*, Volume 30, Issue 3, November 2018, Pages 483–506, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jel/eqy017>
- Setzer, J., Higham, C. (2023). Global trends in climate change litigation: 2023 snapshot. London: Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment and Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Setzer, J., Vanhala, L. C. (2019). Climate change litigation: A review of research on courts and litigants in climate governance. *WIREs Climate Change*, 10(3), 1–19.

Session 13: What civil society can and cannot do

Suggested readings

- Gulliver, R.E. et al. (2025). Media ownership and coverage patterns of established, disruptive, and unconventional climate advocacy groups. *Climatic Change* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-025-03865-z>
- IIED (2012). Southern voices on climate policy choices. Analysis of and lessons learned from civil society advocacy on climate change.
- Scheuch, E.G., Ortiz, M., Shreedhar, G. *et al.* The power of protest in the media: examining portrayals of climate activism in UK news. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* **11**, 270 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02688-0>
- Tobias Ide (2025). Rethinking climate conflicts: The role of climate action and inaction, *World Development*, volume 186, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2024.106845>.

Session 14&15: Getting to yes – A simulation game

Suggested reading

- Fisher, R., Ury W.L., Patton, B. (2011). Getting to Yes. Penguin Books.

Session 16: Conclusion and evaluation



Requirements for validation

Oral participation: 20%

Mid-term paper: 30% providing a critical analysis of one of the suggested readings of the course

Final essay: 50% mapping out the controversies around one particular session's topic



Professor's Biography



Tancrède Voiturez has a PhD in Economics and is Senior researcher on Global Governance at Iddri. His research focuses on trade and green innovation relationships, and on the causes of inertia in the implementation of sustainable development policies. Tancrède Voiturez has been involved as a coordinator and/or expert in numerous research projects on globalisation and sustainable development for the European Commission, the European Parliament, the China Council for International

Cooperation on Environment, among others. He has been teaching at Sciences Po since 2005.