

GEOG4024 Winter 2019
Globalization and Climate Change
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Climate change offers a particularly useful lens through which to study globalization due to a myriad of climate change and the various processes and aspects of globalization are interlinked.

In this course, we will study, for example, how industrialization has been the main driver of climate change in the past and how this has been exacerbated by the dramatic increase in the movement of goods around the world in the context of economic globalization and the ever-increasing consumption in industrialized countries and the emerging middle classes everywhere, which also drives deforestation, another main contributor to climate change, through demand for example for tropical timber or beef. We will also investigate the power of multinational corporations vis-à-vis nation states, including how international trade agreements give corporations power to limit governments' ability to implement environmental regulations, and how the ability of corporations to shift their activities to other countries undermines climate policies.

Another portion of the class will deal with the issue of climate justice and how it relates to the inequalities between nations (including due to the lasting impact of the colonial project) and the inequality of societies within nations and intergenerational justice. In this context we will discuss how climate change is constraining developing countries' ability to develop, to lift their populations out of poverty, since climate change has now largely foreclosed the only proven path to wealthy modern societies (via fossil-fuel-powered industrial development) while countries now also have to deal with adaptation to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, putting further strains on their development.

We will also study how global civil society and transnational social movements are trying to make inroads on the issues and we'll look at various institutions of global governance that aim at addressing climate change and factors limiting their success to date. In this context, we will spend one week's class time to run a simulation of a United Nations climate summit, where students take the roles of government negotiators from around the world to experience the difficulties of trying to reach a global agreement to successfully address the issue.