

NR 5884 TS: Climate Change Policy
Offered: Summer I (12-week)

INSTRUCTOR: Wil Burns, Ph.D., wilburns@vt.edu

REQUIRED TEXT: All readings will be provided by the instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Climate change has emerged as the keystone environmental issue of this generation, and likely many generations to come, with extremely serious ramifications for human institutions and ecosystems. This course focuses on policy responses that attempt to mitigate, adapt to, or “geoengineer” the climate. It initially focuses on international instruments, including the United Nation’s Framework Convention on Climate change and the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the role of other pertinent regimes, e.g., the Montreal Protocol and the World Trade Organization. The second portion of the course will focus on US responses, with emphasis on efforts to address climate issues under the Clean Air Act. It concludes with a look at potential benefits and threats posed by climate geoengineering.

SUBJECT MATTER:

International climate regimes to address climate change: the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and potential successor regimes to the UNFCCC

The role of REDD+ in addressing climate change

International regimes outside the realm of pertinent to address climate change

US climate law—the role of the Clean Air Act

US climate law—regional and state approaches

Plan B?—the potential role of climate geoengineering