

Canadian History of Climate Change

HIST 3780, May 10 to June 17, 2021 (CRN 2303),
History Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Manitoba

class time: Mondays to Thursdays, 9–10:15am
location: Zoom (meeting ID: 938 2878 1428; passcode: 068001)
instructor: Dr. Jocelyn Thorpe (she/they – please call me Jocelyn)
office hours: after class on Zoom and/or by appointment (set by messaging me on Teams)

Territorial Acknowledgement

The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. The university is located on Treaty 1 territory. This course focuses in part on the social and environmental effects of the history of colonization. An understanding of this history is a necessary part of decolonizing relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and the territories we have come to share.

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Course Description: Or, is this course for you?

In this class, we will focus on answering the following question: How do we know what we know about climate change, and who is we? The different texts for the course will point us in different directions for how to answer this question, and ultimately we will draw our own informed conclusions, even as we will also likely realize how much more we have to learn. Just as history is important in creating something that we now commonly understand as “Canada,” so too history is important in constituting “climate change” as a concept that we understand and as a phenomenon we can measure. As we examine climate change from a variety of perspectives, we will concentrate on the territory now called Canada, even as we also understand that climate change is global rather than national in scope.

Course Goals

I hope students leave this course with a strong comprehension of what climate change is, how it came to be understood as a problem and how we might collectively move to a more environmentally just future. I also hope students gain an appreciation for the degree to which an analysis of history is key to comprehending present-day environmental concerns, and to connecting social and environmental issues.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- define climate change and how and when it came to be understood as a problem
- explain relationships between the environmental and social aspects of climate change
- evaluate the necessity of considering “the environment” as an integral part of history
- appraise the degree to which the histories of colonialism, Canada and climate change must be understood together
- think critically and write succinctly and analytically about course materials and concepts
- improve listening and/or speaking skills in the virtual classroom

The Most Important Things to Know Right Away

Online learning is strange and different from real-life learning, and yet here we are, still. For this course, I have adapted the lessons of Dr. Patrick Watson, who teaches remotely all the time, not just because of a pandemic. He has written a very helpful blogpost called “How to Teach without a Classroom,” in which he states that all members of a learning community have key questions they need answered. Immediately below are those questions and their answers, written in the spirit of us working together to build a “warm, fair, open, and just online community” (in Watson’s lovely words. If you’re curious about his blogpost that has been central to the development of this course, you can check it out here: <https://medium.com/@patrickdkwatson/how-to-teach-without-a-classroom-ff6a1f074e90>). Here we go:

What is expected of me?

There are two kinds of work required of you in this course: prep work and a take-home exam. **Prep work** is meant for you to practice the skills of the course: careful reading, critical thinking, and thoughtful writing and speaking. You will be expected to do prep work for each class and to show evidence of that prep work through handing in small assignments twice a week on Teams (on Mondays and Thursdays). Prep work does not have to be perfect, but it does need to be written in full sentences (unless otherwise stated) and to show consistent engagement with course material. In general, each prep work assignment that you hand in will be 1 to 2 double-spaced pages in length, but further details about each week’s prep work will be posted on Teams under the date the assignment is due. **Your prep work is due any time before class on the assignment date.** If, during class, you have new thoughts and find that you’ve changed your mind about what you wrote, you are welcome to add comments to your prep work after class. You don’t need to change your

original post. The **take-home exam** will test the skills you have built during the course, asking you to apply what you have learned to new content.

How do I know if I am succeeding?

In this course, I aim to evaluate your consistent, reliable effort: what you put into the course. The grades work in a simple way that you can keep track of on your own. There are no tricks.

Everyone will begin with an A. If you complete all prep work to a satisfactory level in advance of the deadlines, you will maintain an A in 70 percent of your final course grade. Each time you miss a deadline or turn in poor-quality work, your grade will drop half a letter grade. A (85) becomes A- (82) becomes B+ (78) becomes B (75) becomes B- (72) and so on. There are no extensions and no make ups.¹ If you miss a deadline, you don't need to offer an excuse; I will assume you have missed it for a good reason. We all have competing priorities and we all need to figure out how to balance our responsibilities. Missing one assignment is no big deal; this system of grading makes it clear what the cost is. Missing several assignments will ensure that you will not pass the course. If your prep work is consistently excellent and handed in on time, you will earn an increase of half a letter grade on your total grade for prep work.

The other 30% of your grade will be evaluated in the take-home exam, which will be graded according to the following grading scheme:

A+ Exceptional (90–100%)	C+ Satisfactory (65–69%)
A Excellent (80–89%)	C Adequate (60–64%)
B+ Very good (75–79%)	D Marginal (50–59%)
B Good (70–74%)	F Failure

The take-home exam is mandatory; if you do not complete it, you will not pass the course. If you wish to appeal a grade given for term work, you must do so within ten working days after the grade for the term work has been made available to you.

Where do we gather?

Our online community will gather in two places:

1) **Teams!** I have added you to the "History of Climate Change (HIST 3780)" team on Microsoft Teams. You have access to Microsoft Teams through your U of M email address. Simply go to the Microsoft Teams website (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>), click "sign in" and you will be taken to your U of M sign-in page. Use your U of M email address and login ID to access Teams. There is a simple download to do so that you will have easy access to our team. Everything related to the course will be posted there and you will hand in your assignments there in the dated prep work channels.

¹ Medical and compassionate reasons are the only exception to this rule. Because of the COVID–19 pandemic, students who are unable to meet a course requirement due to medical circumstances do not need to submit a medical note. You do, however, need to contact me as soon as you can so that we can figure out what to do.

Since we have no physical classroom, Teams will be our virtual gathering place and our workspace. If you're doing readings for class or are working on an assignment and find yourself stuck, ask a question on Teams. Everyone gets stuck sometimes! If you come across a good article or video related to the course, post it on Teams. Others will be glad to see it too! When in doubt, look on Teams. I will check Teams every day and it's a good place to ask me questions too.

2) **Zoom!** The pandemic has shown many of us that a lot can still happen without meeting in person. It's also shown many of us that things are simply not the same without getting to see one another face-to-face. Humans, as it turns out, need human interaction. In this class, we will use Zoom to interact with one another and to learn as a community. Be prepared to discuss prep work, concepts and ideas with your classmates all together and in small groups. I expect you to ask questions and to discuss key concepts, readings and other course materials with your classmates. Connect, learn and discuss course ideas. This is what our not-quite-face-to-face time together is for.

Our **Zoom meetings will take place Mondays to Thursdays from 9–10:15am**. We will use the same meeting ID and passcode for each session: **meeting ID – 938 2878 1428; passcode – 068001**. I can also meet you one-on-one for phone or video conference either on Zoom or Teams. Please send me a message on the chat function of Teams to set up a meeting.

Is there a textbook?

There are three required books to purchase, available at the university bookstore. I will post additional readings and/or viewing materials to Teams. The required books are:

1. Edwards, Paul N. *A Vast Machine: Computer Models, Climate Data, and the Politics of Global Warming*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2010.

I chose this book because it tackles a big question – how do we know what we know about climate change? – in a readable, historically informed way. It promises to teach us both about the history of climate change and about the history of measuring and knowing something we have come to understand as the global climate.

2. Daschuk, James. *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Indigenous Life*. Regina: University of Regina Press, 2019.

I chose this book because it is important to remember that while climate change may be a global phenomenon, its effects are felt locally. It is also key to examine, as this book does, the relationship between European colonization of Indigenous lands and changes to the environment. This text allows us to focus locally while also examining broadly the effects of colonialism as part of the bigger story of climate change.

3. MacKinnon, J. B. *The Once and Future World: Nature as it was, as it is, as it could be*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, Penguin Random House, 2014.

And this one I chose because a close friend of mine and Environmental Studies professor, Dr. Stephanie Rutherford, recommended it highly. It's about the relationship between history and what we know as nature, and I hope it leaves us feeling that the world is a beautiful place we can't help but love and respect. I'm excited to dive into these books with you.

How much time should I expect to spend on this course?

Summer courses are compressed in time but give you as much class time and the same number of credits as courses in fall and winter. That means that you are expected to do the same amount of work in half the time. Yikes! I hope this means that you are taking fewer courses than you might in the fall or winter. I expect that you will spend about 16 hours a week on this course, including class time. That means about 2.5 or 3 hours of prep work per class.

What are the tech requirements for this course?

We are going to try to keep things simple in this course. As stated above, we will use Zoom to meet and we will use Microsoft Teams to ask and answer questions, to chat, to share links and readings, and to submit work. Based on the above, in order to participate fully in this course, you will need:

- access to high-speed internet and a device to use for course connection and work
- a device that has a webcam and audio so that we can see and hear you
- a @myumanitoba.ca email address so that you can use Microsoft Teams, which you can access with your @myumanitoba.ca email account
- Zoom downloaded and installed

One goal I have for this course is to make it feel like a community even without the classroom. We will harness the technology we need in service of this goal, and we will try not to let the technology get in the way of our learning. If you need tech support, please contact the Information Services and Technology Service Desk through this website: <http://umanitoba.ca/ist/help/>.

How do I handle the awkwardness of Zoom conversations, plus what are the rules?

We spoke in our second class about how to develop our skills as both talkers and listeners. We established that it takes a fair amount of confidence to speak in class, and that active listening is one way to show people speaking that we value their comments. Please feel free to use the chat function on Zoom to add to and/or reinforce what your classmates are saying. Please also feel free to have your cameras on to show your active engagement. I know this is not always possible and you are not required to have your cameras on during class. In general, I would like us to create a mutually respectful classroom environment in which we encourage and support one another's learning. Please treat each other and me respectfully in all interactions, including on Teams, in the chat on Zoom and in live discussions. To handle the awkwardness of Zoom, we will try to be explicit about our cues ("I'm done speaking now.") and we will make use of the available technologies (hand raising function, breakout rooms, chat) to make class run as smoothly as possible.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change, depending on your learning needs, as the course unfolds. I will give you at least one week's notice of any changes. Required readings listed below will be supplemented by other material, for example podcasts and/or videos, posted on Teams under "prep work" for each class.

Date	Class Content	Required Readings	Evaluation/Action
May 10	introductions, syllabus design		
May 11	talker/listener exercise, prior knowledge check		
May 12	knowing the past, thinking globally (through space and time)	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , chapters 1 and 2	
May 13	standardization, theorizing change	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , chapters 3 and 4	see Teams channel “prep work for May 13”
May 17	data, computation and weather prediction	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , chapters 5 and 6	see Teams channel “prep work for May 17”
May 18	climate models	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , chapter 7 (it’s a long one)	
May 19	global data and power	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , chapters 8 and 9	
May 20	making data meaningful	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , chapters 10 and 11	see Teams channel “prep work for May 20”
May 24	no class (university closed)		
May 25	the past revisited, the limits of knowledge	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , chapters 12 and 13	see Teams channel “prep work for May 25”
May 26	the arrival of the climate crisis, how we know what we know	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , chapters 14 and 15	
May 27	what we have learned so far	<i>A Vast Machine</i> , conclusion	see Teams channel “prep work for May 27”

Date	Class Content	Required Readings	Evaluation/Action
May 31	grounding a history of climate in place	<i>Clearing the Plains</i> , chapters 1–3	see Teams channel “prep work for May 31”
June 1	conflict, environment, health	<i>Clearing the Plains</i> , chapters 4 and 5	
June 2	Treaties, disease and famine	<i>Clearing the Plains</i> , chapters 6 and 7	
June 3	“climate” of a nation	<i>Clearing the Plains</i> , chapters 8 and 9	see Teams channel “prep work for June 3”
June 7	what we have learned so far	<i>Clearing the Plains</i> , conclusion	see Teams channel “prep work for June 7”
June 8		<i>The Once and Future World</i> , Part 1	
June 9		<i>The Once and Future World</i> , Part 2	
June 10		<i>The Once and Future World</i> , Part 3	see Teams channel “prep work for June 10”
June 14	to be determined by June 1... (for rest of course)		see Teams channel “prep work for June 14”
June 15			
June 16			
June 17			see Teams channel “prep work for June 17”
June 25			take-home exam due

Student Rights, Responsibilities, Services and Supports

As a student of the University of Manitoba you have **rights and responsibilities**. It is important for you to know what you can expect from the University as a student and to understand what the University expects from you. Please become familiar with the policies and procedures of the University and the regulations that are specific to your faculty, college or school.

The **Academic Calendar** (<https://umanitoba.ca/registrar/academic-calendar>) is one important source of information. Please note in particular the sections *University Policies and Procedures* and *General Academic Regulations*, some of the content of which is included below. First, the University is committed to a respectful work and learning environment. You have the right to be treated with respect and you are expected to conduct yourself in an appropriate respectful manner. Policies governing behavior include these: **Respectful Work and Learning Environment** (http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/230.html), **Student Discipline** (http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/students/student_discipline.html), **Intellectual Property** (https://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/235.html), and **Violent or Threatening Behaviour** (http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/669.html)

If you experience **Sexual Assault**, or know a member of the University community who has, please know that there are supports and resources available to you whether or not you choose to report the assault. The University of Manitoba wants to be a safe and supportive place for people to disclose sexual assault and receive the best care and referral possible. Information and resources can be found at the Sexual Assault site (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/sexual-assault/>), and the **Sexual Assault** policy may be found here: http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/230.html.

Please contact an **Academic Advisor** within your faculty, college or school for questions about your academic program and regulations: <http://umanitoba.ca/academic-advisors/>. Please contact Student Advocacy (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/advocacy/>) if you want to know more about your rights and responsibilities as a student, have questions about policies and procedures, and/or want support in dealing with academic or discipline concerns.

The **Academic Learning Centre** (ALC) services may be helpful to you as you fulfill the requirements for this course. Through the ALC, you may meet with a study skills specialist to discuss concerns such as time management, reading and note-taking strategies, as well as test-taking strategies. You may also meet one-on-one with a writing tutor who can give you feedback at any stage of the writing process, whether you are just beginning to work on a written assignment or already have a draft. Writing tutors can also give you feedback if you submit a draft of your paper online. (Please note that the online tutors require 48 business hours to return your paper with comments.) All Academic Learning Centre services are free for U of M students. For more information, please visit the Academic Learning Centre website at <http://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/academic-learning>.

The University recognizes the **right of all students to observe recognized holidays of their faith** which fall within the academic year. Please notify me at least three weeks in advance of any accommodation you will need for religious reasons.

You are expected to view the General Academic Regulation section within the Academic Calendar and specifically read the **Academic Integrity** regulation. Visit the Academic Integrity Site for tools and support: <http://umanitoba.ca/academicintegrity/>. Arts-specific information is available here: http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student_resources/student_responsibilities.html. Ignorance of the regulations and policies regarding academic integrity is not a valid excuse for violating them. The Faculty of Arts also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism. FYI (and, YES, this is meant to scare you away from plagiarism!), the minimum penalty for plagiarism on a written assignment is F on the paper and may result in F-DISC (discipline) in the course. This notation appears on a student's transcript. For repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension from the Faculty of Arts for a period of up to 1 year.

The University of Manitoba is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. **Student Accessibility Services (SAS)** is the office that works with students who have permanent, chronic, or temporary disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, medical or temporary), you are invited to contact SAS to arrange a confidential discussion: (204) 474-7423 (V), (204) 474-9790 (TTY) or Student_accessibility@umanitoba.ca. If you are registered with SAS and have a letter requesting accommodations, please contact me early in the semester to discuss the accommodations outlined in their letter. Additional information is available at the Student Accessibility Services website: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/>.

For 24/7 mental health support, contact the Mobile Crisis Service at 204-940-1781.

Please contact the **Student Counselling**

Centre (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/index.html>) if you are concerned about any aspect of your mental health, including anxiety, stress, or depression, or for help with relationships or other life concerns. The centre offers crisis services as well as individual, couple, and group counselling. Please contact **Student Support Case**

Management (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/case-manager/index.html>) if you are concerned about yourself or another student and don't know where to turn. People there help connect students with on and off campus resources, provide safety planning, and offer other supports, including consultation, educational workshops, and referral to the STATIS threat assessment team.

Please contact the **University Health Service** (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/health/>) for any medical concerns, including mental health concerns. Please contact our **Health and Wellness Educator** <http://umanitoba.ca/student/health-wellness/welcome.html> or Katie.Kutryk@umanitoba.ca if you are interested in information on a broad range of health topics, including physical and mental health concerns, alcohol and substance use harms, and sexual assault. For comprehensive information about the full range of health and wellness resources available on campus, visit the **Live Well @ UofM** site: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/livewell/index.html>.

In the interest of creating a respectful learning environment as well as to protect intellectual copyright, we do not allow audio or video recording of course lectures or presentations in any format, openly or surreptitiously, in whole or in part, without the course instructors' prior

permission. If you would like to record any part of the course, please send a message on Teams and we will talk about it. Also, please keep in mind that the University of Manitoba and the instructors hold copyright over the course materials, and that course materials are meant only for your private study and research.