

# Seminar in Environmental Sustainability: The Political Economy of Climate Change as a Case in Point

EVD5100, 3 units  
Winter 2018

**Professor:**

David Runnalls

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**Office hours:**

*Tuesday 15:00-17:00, by appointment*

**Course schedule:**

*Thursday, 8:30-11:30*

*GSD 307*

## Course description:

Sustainable Development is a concept first developed by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) 29 years ago. The Commission reviewed the state of the planet and concluded that the planet's environment and its economy are so closely interlinked that policies in one sphere which ignore the other are bound for failure. It recommended a development path that provided for the needs of the present without jeopardizing the prospects for future generations. More than two decades later there has been some progress, but the state of the planet is much worse. Is sustainability still the best solution?

The course will examine the history of sustainable development and the reasons for its successes and failures. It will seek to analyze sustainability through the lens of the most serious threat to the planet's future.

Climate change and the shift to a low carbon economy are perhaps the two most pressing economic and political issues facing us over the next fifty years. This seminar will review the science of planetary boundaries created by rising emissions of greenhouse gases, the loss of biodiversity, disruptions of the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, ocean acidification and their implications for national and international policy. It will trace the origins of the concept of sustainable development in the Brundtland Report and the series of international conferences that have followed it. It will seek to understand the links between science and public policy.

It will examine whether or not the Paris Climate Conference and subsequent international agreements represent a sufficient breakthrough in efforts to control and ultimately reduce, GHG's. And it will examine the challenges facing Canada as it seeks to bring Canada's climate policies in line with the promises made in Paris. And what of the influence of the Trump Administration on global climate policy?

This is a seminar, so a premium will be placed on participation in class and knowledge of the readings. The readings will be posted separately on the class website. This is not a theory course and we will be bringing in a number of practitioners with real world experience with these issues. Normally, the first

half of class will be a presentation of the topic at hand, followed by at least an hour of class discussion, led by students. We will work out a schedule for student participation when we have a full roster of participants. I will also finalize the guest speakers at that point.

### **Evaluation methods:**

The principal requirement of this course is a 25 page policy research paper to be submitted at the end.

**60% of final mark**

Participants will be required to submit a detailed outline of the paper to be discussed with the instructor

**10% of final mark**

Participants will also be required to lead a class presentation on one of the topics for the seminar, demonstrating a familiarity with the readings. **10% of final mark**

This will be a seminar, not a lecture course and class participation is essential for its success. **20% of final mark**

### **Instructor:**

The Course will be taught by David Runnalls, Visiting Professor at the Institute for the Environment and Senior Fellow, Sustainable Prosperity. Runnalls has spent most of his professional life with civil society organizations working on the intersection between environment and development. With the British Economist and writer, Barbara Ward, he founded the International Institute for Environment and Development in London. He was the Director of IIED's London office from 1974-1981 when he moved to Washington to run the office in the US. He returned to Canada in 1988 as the Director of the Sustainable Development Program at the Institute for Research on Public Policy. Most recently, Runnalls has served as the President of the International Institute for Sustainable Development, one of Canada's largest think tanks with offices in Winnipeg, Ottawa, New York and Geneva. Runnalls is now a Fellow of SPI a green economy think tank at the Institute for the Environment and a Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo. He is Chair of the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (Geneva) and of the Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development (Calgary).

A Political Scientist and International Relations specialist by training, Runnalls has been present at most of the significant international discussions on sustainable development and has written and spoken widely about the challenges of implementing sustainable development.

### **Course materials:**

TBD

### **Summary of topics:**

- Introduction : Climate negotiations and the Science of Climate Change
- The Politics of Sustainable Development
- The Economics of Sustainable Development

- The Keys to Green Economy

## Detailed schedule:

**This schedule is subject to change. None of the presenters has yet been invited, although all have spoken before. Some of the sessions may have to be moved around to accommodate schedules.**

**January 11:** *Introduction and Ground Rules for the Seminar and: Where it all started. The Brundtland Report and the International Climate Negotiations*

**January 18:** *The Science of Climate Change*

Guest Lecturer: Dr. John Stone, Carleton University and member, IPCC

### **The Politics of Sustainable Development**

**January 25:** *The International Politics of Sustainability: from Kyoto to Marrakesh*

**February 1:** *Climate Change in the Trump era*

**February 8:** *The Canadian Politics of Climate Change and the Pan Canadian Framework*

**February 15:** *The role of the provinces/states.*

### **The Economics of Sustainable Development**

**March 1:** *Economics of Sustainability Part 1*

**March 8:** *Economics of Sustainability Part 2: Environmental Markets*

Guest: Dale Beugin, Research Director, Ecofiscal Commission

### **The Keys to the Green Economy**

**March 15:** *The Role of Civil Society*

Guest: Elizabeth May M.P., Leader of the Green Party of Canada

**March 22:** *The Role of Cleantech and Innovation*

Guest: Celine Bak: Analytica Advisors

**March 29:** *The Role of the Private Sector: Voluntary Standards and Corporate Social Responsibility: The influence of business on domestic and international policy*

**April 5:** *Stranded Assets? Investors and the Green Economy:*

## uOttawa Virtual Campus:

Course outline, lectures and readings and other information will be made available online on the course website, which can be accessed via uOttawa's Virtual Campus. Brightspace is our new platform for course delivery. Help in accessing is available from [www.uottawa.ca/cybersos/](http://www.uottawa.ca/cybersos/).

## **Accommodations and Student Support:**

Students requiring short-term accommodation (eg. due to acute illness or family emergencies) or long-term accommodation (eg. due to permanent or ongoing concerns such as a disability) should communicate with the MES Program Director (Luc Juillet).

Students requiring special arrangements for examinations or academic support due to health concerns, learning disabilities or other conditions that influence learning are encouraged to contact Access Services:

<b>In person:</b>	Desmarais Building, Room 3172 (3rd floor)
<b>By phone:</b>	562-5976
<b>TTY:</b>	562-5214
<b>Email:</b>	adapt@uottawa.ca
<b>Webpage:</b>	<a href="http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/acces/">www.sass.uottawa.ca/acces/</a>

## **Other Resources:**

There are many resources on campus available to you (bibliographic research workshops at library, writing center, career center, financial aid etc...) – too numerous to list here. Please do not be afraid to ask about these student resources.

## **Academic Integrity:**

All students are subject to the university regulations pertaining to academic integrity. It is the student's responsibility to understand and comply with the regulations. Please consult the website to familiarize yourselves with the rules and your responsibilities: <http://web5.uottawa.ca/mcs-smc/academicintegrity/home.php>

And related documents:

<http://www.uottawa.ca/vice-president-academic/sites/www.uottawa.ca.vice-president-academic/files/academic-integrity-students-guide.pdf>