

L32 Pol Sci 337  
Fall 2021

## TOPICS IN POLITICS: CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICT

Instructor: Prof. William G. Nomikos  
[wnomikos@wustl.edu](mailto:wnomikos@wustl.edu)

TA: Ipek Ece Sener  
[isener@wustl.edu](mailto:isener@wustl.edu)

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**Meeting Times:**  
(Tuesdays asynchronous)  
Thursdays 4:00-5:20PM  
(Recording available on Zoom)

**Office Hours:**  
Thursdays 2-3:50PM over [Zoom](#)  
[Sign up in advance](#)

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### Course Overview

We will be meeting in-person (woohoo!) every Thursday from 4:00-5:20. In addition, the course will incorporate an asynchronous course component through the [Magnify action network](#), which will connect global topics in the course to concrete actions that the students will take at WashU, in the St. Louis area, nationally, or internationally.

### Course Description

In this course we will learn about how climate change creates conflict around the globe. We will focus on conflict within civil wars and other forms of intrastate violence. Climate change is the single most important long-term threat to the peace and stability of the planet. The conflicts of the sort we look at in this class may be the most important short-term threat. Are they linked? If so, how? By the end of this class, students will be prepared to answer these questions.

We will begin by looking the idea of climate change itself, to make sure we understand what exactly that concept means. Next, we will overview conflict and its causes. After that, we will analyze the debates in the academic literature about climate-conflict linkages.

### Texts, Media, and Other Course Materials

All of our course materials, including readings and lectures, will be available entirely on Canvas.

## Assignments and Grading

1. **Attendance and Participation (15 points):** You are expected to attend in-person class regularly, to be on time, and to remain in class for its duration. You are also expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material you have read. I will *not* be taking attendance in this course. However, it is
2. **Magnify weekly participation (15 points):** Student participation will also be recorded via the Magnify app and downloaded at the end of the course. Students should join Magnify via [this link](#). Our class page can be found [here](#). Magnify is accessible through desktop or mobile browser but optimized for use as a mobile app (iOS and Android compatible).  
  
Each week, students will be required to complete a project on the Magnify app. Each project has an action associated with it. To be able to see the task, 'follow' the project. You will need to make an account before you can take the action. Once you've set up the account, you can access Magnify and our class page through the website above. Should you have any problems, you can ask us via email
3. **Policy Briefs (15 points):** Students will write two policy briefs (750 words) over the course of the semester. Each brief will require the student to apply academic material learned in class to an urgent policy question.
4. **Group Project (35 points total):** Students will develop and propose a concrete project through Magnify, which they will also present in front of their classmates.
  - (a) Project proposal (5 points)
  - (b) Presentations (10 points)
  - (c) Magnify project (10 points)
5. **Final paper (20 points)** Students will write a final paper related to the question of whether climate change causes conflict.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93-100	90-93	87-90	82-87	80-82	77-80	72-77	70-72	67-70	62-70	60-62	<60

## Inclusivity and Learning Climate

The course is grounded in fostering an inclusive learning climate where everyone feels welcome and can participate. The best learning environment is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every student has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities and experiences.

The University has a process through which students who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice, or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. To report an instance of bias, visit <https://students.wustl.edu/bias-report-support-system/>.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. If possible, we encourage students to speak directly with their instructor or TA about any suggestions or concerns they have regarding a particular instructional space or situation. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted adviser or administrator (such as an academic adviser, mentor, department chair or dean). All classroom participants who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online [Bias Report and Support System](#).

## Communication

Should you have any questions about the course, Magnify, or anything else, you should never hesitate to do the following:

1. Post your question in the "Troubleshooting" project on our Magnify class page. Your classmates can usually answer most questions you'll have. If not, Ipek and I will be receive a notification on our phones and can answer quickly.
2. Email Ipek, your TA. Ipek will likely be able to answer your questions quicker than I.
3. Email me. I love talking to students and tou are welcome to email me at any time. However, I will only respond to student messages between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM from Monday to Friday. Please allow 24 hours for a response. If I have not responded within 24 hours, please send me a follow-up message. Don't be shy about this! I get a lot of messages. Seriously, my Inbox is a disaster. You can also come to my virtual office hours. You are welcome to sign up for office hours in advance if you need to talk to me over Zoom.

## **COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols**

Exceptions to course attendance policies, expectations, and requirements because of a COVID-19 diagnosis, symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or exposure to a person with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 diagnosis that requires quarantine or isolation will be made in collaboration between us should you become exposed. In these cases, please notify me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

While on campus, it is imperative that students follow all public health guidelines established to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within our community. The full set of University protocols can be found at <https://covid19.wustl.edu/health-safety/>. This includes:

- Completing a self-screening using the WashU COVID-19 Screening app every day before coming to campus or leaving your residence hall room. If you do not receive a green check and pass the screening, you are not permitted to come to campus or leave your residence hall room. You must contact the COVID Call Center (314-362-5056) or the Habif Health and Wellness Center (314 935-6666) immediately. Note: In addition to the symptoms listed in the screening tool, everyone also should pay attention to symptoms that are new or different for you, including things like headache and congestion, particularly in combination with diarrhea. These can also be signs of COVID-19. Call the COVID Call Center or Habif to report these symptoms.
- Complying with universal masking. All individuals on campus must wear disposable masks or cloth face coverings while occupying indoor public settings, including: multi-person offices, hallways, stairwells, elevators, meeting rooms, classrooms and restrooms. Masks are encouraged but not required for outdoor activities, particularly at large events or in crowded settings. Students with disabilities for whom masked instructors or classmates create a communication barrier are encouraged to contact Disability Resources ([www.disability.wustl.edu](http://www.disability.wustl.edu)) or talk to their instructor for assistance in determining reasonable adjustments. Adjustments may involve amplification devices, captioning, or clear masks but will not allow for the disregard of mask policies.
- Maintaining physical distancing as needed. While distancing requirements have been removed for vaccinated students, those who are not fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged, for their own health, to maintain a distance of 6 ft from others in the classroom. If you are not able to be vaccinated or have conditions that may put you at increased risk of failed immunity and classroom activities would bring you in frequent proximity to other students, contact your instructor to discuss alternatives.
- Practicing healthy personal hygiene, including frequent handwashing with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds and/or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

## Course Policies

### Reporting Sexual Harassment

If a student discusses or discloses an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if a faculty member otherwise observes or becomes aware of such an allegation, the faculty member will keep the information as private as possible, but as a faculty member of Washington University, they are required to immediately report it to the Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Cynthia Copeland, the University's Associate Title IX Coordinator, at (314) 935-3411, [cmcopeland@wustl.edu](mailto:cmcopeland@wustl.edu). Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards or by contacting WUPD at (314) 935-5555 or your local law enforcement agency. See: [Title IX](#)

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## Reasonable Accommodations for Disabled Students

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Washington University in St. Louis supports the rights of enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity and, in compliance with federal, state, and local requirements, is committed to reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities. Disabled students for whom accommodations may be necessary must be registered with, and provide their instructors official notification through, WUSTL's Disability Resources ([www.disability.wustl.edu](http://www.disability.wustl.edu)). Once established, responsibility for disability-related accommodations and access is shared by DR, faculty, and the student. Please contact Disability Resources at 314.935.5970 or [disabilityresources@wustl.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@wustl.edu).

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## Statement on Military Service Leave

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Washington University recognizes that students serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and their family members may encounter situations where military service forces them to withdraw from a course of study, sometimes with little notice. Students may contact the Office of Military and Veteran Services at (314) 935-2609 or [veterans@wustl.edu](mailto:veterans@wustl.edu) and their academic dean for guidance and assistance. See: <https://veterans.wustl.edu/policies/policy-for-military-students/>.

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## Preferred Name and Gender Inclusive Pronouns

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In order to affirm each person's gender identity and lived experiences, it is important that we ask and check in with others about pronouns. This simple effort can make a profound difference in a person's experience of safety, respect, and support. See: <https://students.wustl.edu/gender-pronouns-information/>, <https://registrar.wustl.edu/student-records/ssn-name-changes/preferred-name/>.

Emergency Preparedness Before an emergency, familiarize yourself with the building(s) that you frequent. Know the layout, including exit locations, stairwells and the Emergency Assembly Point (EAP). Review the "Quick Guide for Emergencies" that is found near the door in many classrooms for specific emergency information and instructions. For additional Information and EAP maps, visit [emergency.wustl.edu](http://emergency.wustl.edu). To ensure that you receive emergency notifications, make sure your information and cell phone are up-to-date.

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## Other Resources for Students

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### **Confidential Resources for Instances of Sexual Assault, Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, or Stalking**

The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations (e.g. a no-contact order, course changes) to students who are victims of relationship or sexual violence, regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. If a

student needs to explore options for medical care, protections, or reporting, or would like to receive individual counseling services, there are free, confidential support resources and professional counseling services available through the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center. If you need to request such accommodations, please contact RSVP to schedule an appointment with a confidential and licensed counselor. Although information shared with counselors is confidential, requests for accommodations will be coordinated with the appropriate University administrators and faculty. The RSVP Center is located in Seigle Hall, Suite 435, and can be reached at [rsvpcenter@wustl.edu](mailto:rsvpcenter@wustl.edu) or (314) 935-3445. For after-hours emergency response services, call (314) 935-6666 or (314) 935-5555 and ask to speak with an RSVP Counselor on call.

### **Mental Health Services**

Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect a student's academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide. See: <https://students.wustl.edu/mental-health-services/>. Additionally, see the mental health services offered through the RSVP Center listed above.

WashU Cares, specializes in connecting students to mental health, medical, financial and academic resources by using supportive case management. We seek to empower students to be successful through life's challenges and to have ownership of their experiences. Our services are designed to support Danforth Campus students. If you feel concerned about a students who may need help connecting to resources, we accept referrals from all students, faculty, and staff. If you are concerned about a student, you can file a report here: <https://washucares.wustl.edu/> and a WashU Cares Case Manager will reach out to you to get more information about your concern.

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center offers free writing support to all Washington University undergraduate and graduate students. Staff members will work with students on any kind of writing project, including essays, writing assignments, personal statements, theses, and dissertations. They can help at any stage of the process, including brainstorming, developing and clarifying an argument, organizing evidence, or improving style. Instead of simply editing or proofreading papers, tutors will ask questions and have a conversation with the writer about their ideas and reasoning, allowing for a higher order revision of the work. They will also spend some time looking at sentence level patterns to teach students to edit their own work. The Center is located in Mallinckrodt and open Sunday through Thursday from 11:00am-9:00pm and Friday from 11:00am- 5:00pm. Students are seen primarily by appointment, but walk-ins will be accepted as the schedule allows. To make an appointment, go to [writingcenter.wustl.edu](http://writingcenter.wustl.edu). Email: [writing@wustl.edu](mailto:writing@wustl.edu).

### **Engineering Communications Center**

The Engineering Communications Center offers students in the McKelvey School of Engineering one-on-one help with oral presentations, writing assignments, and other communications projects. They are located in Urbauer Hall, Rm. 104. To schedule an appointment, please email the ECC faculty at [ecc@seas.wustl.edu](mailto:ecc@seas.wustl.edu).

### **The Learning Center**

The Learning Center works collaboratively with University partners to provide undergraduate students key resources, like academic peer mentoring, to enhance their academic progress. Contact them at <https://ctl.wustl.edu/learningcenter/> to find out what support they may offer for your classes.

### **Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI)**

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) supports and advocates for undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students from underrepresented and/or marginalized populations, collaborates with campus and community partners, and promotes dialogue and social change to cultivate and foster a supportive campus climate for students of all backgrounds, cultures, and identities. Visit: <https://diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/>.



## Course Schedule

Come to each meeting having read the materials listed below each date. Material is subject to change. This syllabus is current as of September 8, 2021.

- Thursday, August 26th: NO CLASS

### Week 1: Class Introduction, Magnify, and Local-Global Linkages

- Magnify Project—Week 1: Learning about Magnify.
- September 2nd: Hope (Guest Lecture by Prof. Betsy Sinclair)

*Extra credit this week:* Complete the “Introduce Yourself!” project on Magnify.

### Week 2: The Domestic Politics of Climate Change

- Magnify Project—Week 2: Play Cranky Uncle
- September 9th: The Politics of Information and Climate Change (Guest Lecture by Prof. Taylor Carlson)
  - No readings required. Recommended: Lewandowsky, Stephan. [Climate Change Disinformation and How to Combat It](#). *Annual Review of Public Health*. 2021 42:1, 1-21.

### Week 3: The Science of Climate Change

- Magnify Project—Week 3: The Science of Climate Change
- September 16th: (NO CLASS, YOM KIPPUR)
  - We will hold no class on September 16th in observance of Yom Kippur. Instead, please complete the Magnify project entitled “Week 3 SPECIAL”

### Week 4: Civil War

- Magnify Project TBA.
- September 23rd: Causes of Conflict in Civil Wars

#### Required:

- Blattman, Christopher, and Edward Miguel. 2010. “Civil War.” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 48 (1): 3-57.
- Walter, Barbara F. 2015. Why bad governance leads to repeat civil war. *J. Confl. Resolut.* 59:1242-72
- Gopal, Anand. “The Other Afghan Women.” *The New Yorker*.

#### Recommended:

- Collier and Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War.”
- Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2003. “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.” *American Political Science Review* 97 (1): 75-90.



- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62, no. 1 (2010): 87-119.

### Week 5: Communal Conflict

- Magnify Project TBA
- September 30th: Causes of conflict at local level

#### Required:

- Carter, Kate M., and Scott Straus. "Changing Patterns of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2019.
- Boone, Catherine. "Land-Related Conflict and Electoral Politics in Africa." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2019
- Krause, Jana. "Stabilization and local conflicts: communal and civil war in South Sudan." *Ethnopolitics* 18, no. 5 (2019): 478-493.

#### Recommended:

- Klaus, K., & Mitchell, M. I. (2015). Land grievances and the mobilization of electoral violence: Evidence from Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(5), 622-635.
- Higazi, Adam. (2016). Farmer-pastoralist conflicts on the Jos Plateau, central Nigeria: Security responses of local vigilantes and the Nigerian state. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 16(4), 365-385.
- Eck, Kristine. (2014). The law of the land: Communal conflict and legal authority. *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(4), 441-454.

### Week 6: Climate Change-Conflict Linkages

- Magnify Project
- October 7th: Overview
  - Mach, K.J., Kraan, C.M., Adger, W.N. et al. "Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict." *Nature* 571, 193-197 (2019).
  - Koubi, Vally. "Climate change and conflict." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (2019): 343-360.

**\*\*POLICY BRIEF 1 DUE OCTOBER 8TH\*\***

### Week 7: Climate and Conflict in Africa

- Magnify Project
- October 14th: Does climate change explain conflict in Africa?
  - Burke, Marshall B., Edward Miguel, Shanker Satyanath, John A. Dykema, and David B. Lobell. "Warming increases the risk of civil war in Africa." *Proceedings of the national Academy of sciences* 106, no. 49 (2009): 20670-20674

- Buhaug H (2010) Climate not to blame for African civil wars. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(38):16477-16482
- Hendrix, C.S. and Salehyan, I., 2012. "Climate change, rainfall, and social conflict in Africa." *Journal of peace research*, 49(1): 35-50.
- Schultz, Kenneth A., and Justin S. Mankin. "Is temperature exogenous? The impact of civil conflict on the instrumental climate record in Sub-Saharan Africa." *American Journal of Political Science* 63.4 (2019): 723-739. Read only the

## Week 8: The Debate over the Effects of Climate Change

- Magnify Project
- October 21st: Understanding the debate
  - Read this first: Hsiang, S.M., Burke, M, and Edward Miguel. "[Weather and Violence.](#)"
  - Then check out the academic study: Hsiang, S.M., Burke, M. "Climate, conflict, and social stability: what does the evidence say?" *Climatic Change* 123, 39-55 (2014).
  - Then read a response: Busby, Josh. "[Why Do Climate Changes Lead to Conflict? Provocative New Study Leaves Questions.](#)"
  - And the academic research that supports the response: Buhaug, H., Nordkvelle, J., Bernauer, T. et al. One effect to rule them all? A comment on climate and conflict. *Climatic Change* 127, 391-397 (2014).

## Week 9: Economic Shocks I

- Magnify Project—Week 10: Understanding Climate Effects on Conflict in Nigeria
- October 28th:
  - Begin with the following: Miguel, Edward, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti. "Economic shocks and civil conflict: An instrumental variables approach." *Journal of Political Economy* 112.4 (2004): 725-753.
  - Eberle, Ulrich et al. (2020). Heat and Hate, Climate Security and Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Africa (ESOC Working Paper No. 22). Empirical Studies of Conflict Project.
  - Nunn, Nathan and Eoin McGuirk. "How climate shocks trigger intergroup conflicts: Evidence from Africa's transhumant pastoralists." *VoxDev* (2021).
  - Ero, Comfort and Nnamdi Obasi. "Nigeria: Livestock reform is key to solving farmer-herder conflict." *The Africa Report* (2021).

**\*\*POLICY BRIEF 2 DUE OCTOBER 29TH\*\***

## Week 10: Economic Shocks II

- Magnify Project

- November 4th: Food Security
  - Jones, Aled. “Food Security: How drought and rising prices led to conflict in Syria.” *The Conversation* (2017).
  - Jun, Tackseung. “Temperature, maize yield, and civil conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa.” *Climatic Change* 142 (2017).
  - Maystadt, Jean-Francois, and Olivier Ecker. “Extreme weather and civil war: Does drought fuel conflict in Somalia through livestock price shocks?” *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 96.4 (2014): 1157-1182.
  - Wheeler, Tim and Joachim von Braun. “Climate Change Impacts on Food Security.” *Science* 341.508 (2012): 508-513.

### Week 11: Migration

- Magnify Project—Week 12: The Great Conflict Migration
- November 11th:
  - Koubi, Vally, Tobias Bohmelt, Gabriele Spilker & Lena Schaffer (2018) The determinants of environmental migrants’ conflict perception. *International Organization* 72(4): 905-936.
  - Kelley, Colin P., et al. “Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112.11 (2015): 3241-3246.
  - Abel, Guy J., et al. “Climate, conflict and forced migration.” *Global Environmental Change* 54 (2019): 239-249.

**\*\*PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE NOVEMBER 12TH\*\***

### Week 12: Political Institutions and State Capacity

- Magnify Project
- November 18th: Institutions as Mediators
  - Agrawal, Arun. “The Role of Local Institutions in Adaptation to Climate Change.” The World Bank (2008).
  - Jones, Benjamin T., et al. “Food scarcity and state vulnerability: Unpacking the link between climate variability and violent unrest.” *Journal of Peace Research* 54.3 (2017): 335-350.
  - Ide, Tobias, Brzoska, Michael, Donges, Jonathan F, Schleussner, Carl-Friedrich (2020) Multi-method evidence for when and how climate-related disasters contribute to armed conflict risk. *Global Environmental Change* 62(May): 1020-63.

**\*\*POLICY BRIEF 3 DUE November 19th\*\***

### Week 13: NO CLASS

- No Magnify Project

- November 25th: NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

**Week 14: Final Presentations**

- December 2nd: Final Presentations.

**Week 15: Final Presentations/Class Wrap-Up**

- December 9th: Final Presentations.

**\*\*FINAL PAPERS DUE DECEMBER 13TH\*\***