

ESP 891/ SOC 950

Climate Change and Society

Instructor: T. Dietz

3 credits

Global warming is unequivocal, and the resulting climate change, and our efforts to respond to it, will affect nearly every aspect of every contemporary society. This seminar will examine the state of the science of human dimensions of climate change. Readings will be drawn from recent and emerging assessment reports, such as the Fourth Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and *Global Climate Impacts in the United States* as well as from the emerging literature. The seminar will begin with an overview of the history of climate modeling and the current state of climate science. We will examine social aspects of a variety of forms of mitigation, including recent work on geoengineering, as well as the vulnerability of coupled human and natural systems to climate change. We will also examine public perceptions of climate change, the climate skeptics movement, the anthropogenic drivers of climate change, human health effects and international agreements on climate change. Major theoretical approaches to human dimensions of climate change will be a theme throughout the course. The course will also engage with the ESPP/ MAES sponsored climate change distinguished lecture series being conducted during the 2009/2010 academic year.

Course requirements: Active participation in course discussions and a research paper.

Thomas Dietz has worked on human dimensions of global environmental change for more than two decades. He served as chair of the U.S. National Academies Committee on Human Dimensions of Global Change and is currently Vice Chair of the Panel of Advancing the Science of Climate Change.