

Sustainable Cities: London in the Era of Climate Change



Faculty Contact Information

Name:

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Course Information

Course Description

The consequences of man-made changes to the climate that are beginning to be experienced now are going to continue having a significant impact on urban areas and populations therein. Understanding, predicting, and mitigating the social effects of climate change is a growing concern for policy-makers, practitioners, and scholars worldwide, engulfing and remaking societal conceptions of sustainability. Who is in charge of envisioning a sustainable future, and what information are they using to make their decisions? Sustainable for who? And who is being excluded from this vision?

This course investigates the global and local changes associated with climate change from the perspective of urban sociology. It examines the ways we can make sense of climate change's impact on human societies. This course will consider the history and future of urban settlement, with a particular focus on how cities are being remade in the era of climate change.

Course Goals

In this course students will critically engage ideas of urban social problems and social change in order to analyse projects and discourses responding to climate change under the project of sustainability. They will consider how the social changes associated with climate change are connected to and discrete from existing power. Students will gain a particular understanding of local manifestations of these global processes in and around London.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Define and evaluate current and prospective urban interventions in terms of sustainability,
2. Describe the local and global manifestations of climate change,
3. Analyse proposed interventions in relation to urban histories and institutions, and dynamics as they have been constituted through time.

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	

Essay	25%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Vignettes	15%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Group Presentation	15%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Research Essay	25%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

[Brief Assessment Overview](#)

Assessment 1: Essay: Defining the Terms

Due:

In 2,000 words describe the differing approaches taken by scholars we have read in defining and engaging the terms 'sustainability' and 'the city.' What are the key problematics in understanding each term, respectively?

Assessment 2: Vignettes

Due:

You will produce 4 short vignettes (maximum 400 words each) in response to the field visits, of which you will submit the three best for grading. In preparation for writing such, for each field visit you will need to consider how to articulate your response to the experience and, most importantly, how to make connections to broader issues of sustainability and urban social change.

Assessment 3: Group Presentation

Due:

Research a planned urban development project somewhere in the world that describes sustainability as part of its remit. Provide background on the project and analyse the vision of sustainability this project relies upon.

Identify a group of stakeholders who will be adversely affected by this development. Describe their opposition, as well as any response. Analyse their perspective to design an alternate plan for the development that is inclusive of their perspective.

Assessment 3: Research Essay: 'Climate future'

Due:

In 2,000 words describe the 'climate future' of a city of your choice. Research how climate change is affecting a city in the robust way we have learned to discuss in this course. Describe the discourse around threats and interventions, how they mobilise and are mobilised by the city's history. What is the future being envisioned for the city, and by whom? What exclusions are being made?

[Grading](#)

Grade	Knowledge & Content	Methodology & Structure, Language & Style	Understanding, Reflection & Critique	Integrative thinking & demonstration of experiential learning
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A (93- 100%) A- (90-92%)	Interesting topic handled with intelligence, originality, and depth; wealth of supporting material, smoothly integrated into the text; tone is evident and maintained throughout; no factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; organization is clear, logical and purposeful throughout the essay; well-chosen examples. Uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors	Well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	Gives full insight into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves complete integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue. Shows clear understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
B+ (87-89%) B (83-86%) B- (80-82%)	Content is above average; worthwhile topic; satisfactory depth of development; supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences are specific, concrete, and plentiful; has only minor factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; pattern of organization is clear, logical, and well executed; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively	Pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	Gives some insights into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves partial integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue; some understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
C+ (77-79%) C (73-76%) C- (70-72%)	Worthwhile topic; supporting material for thesis and topic sentences is general and abstract rather than specific and concrete; most information is correct	Organization is clear, logical, and coherent; some ideas unsupported; fails to integrate quotations appropriately. More frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences; imprecise use of words or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors	Only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to integrate quotations appropriately	Able to explain to a limited extent, the quality of a performance, event, or artifact; gives few insights into event, experience; discusses few qualities of an experience; a limited understanding of cultural impact with few examples
D (60-69%)	Trivial subject; very few supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences; has some correct & incorrect information	Not logically organized; digresses from one topic to another; no clear organizational pattern. Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés	Frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Little integration of experience and narrative; limited insight of issues and insufficient understanding of cultural impact

F (0-59%)	Consists of unsupported generalities and/or the repetition of commonplace ideas; lacks originality and insight; information is inaccurate or absent	Does not follow the instructions; rambling, disorganized and incoherent. Numerous grammatical errors	Little or no development; may list incorrect facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	Little or no integration experience and narrative; lack of insight and fails to understand cultural impact
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Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise noted. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission from the faculty. Credit is not given for work received late, except in exceptional circumstances of personal illness or similar (which must be made known to FIE at the time). Documentation of exceptional circumstances from a third party, such as a doctor's note, may be required. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be committed to writing and include information on the exceptional circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings: This section is optional, for faculty to amend, add or remove as required.** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.

- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

All required readings will be provided on MyStudy. Key reference texts include:

Bridge, Gary and Sophie Watson. 2010. The Blackwell City Reader, 2nd edition.

Cohen, Daniel Aldana. (2017) The Other Low-Carbon Protagonists: Poor People's Movements and Climate Politics in Sao Paulo. In M. Greenberg and P. Lewis (Eds.), The City is the Factory: New Solidarities and Spatial Strategies in an Urban Age (pp. 140-157). Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Pacione, Michael. 2009. Urban Geography: A Global Perspective. Abingdon: Routledge.

Additional Resources and Readings

Please see the list on MyStudy.

MyStudy@FIE

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

FIE's Values in the Curriculum

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

Topics

- Urban planning and economics
- Environmental sustainability
- Capitalism and climate change

- 'Smart cities'
- Adaptation vs. mitigation
- 'Green gentrification'

Possible co-curricular activities

- Kew Gardens
- Coal Drops Yard at Kings Cross
- 'Rubbish' Walking Tour of East London
- Smart Mobility Living Lab (SMLL)
- Beddington Zero Emissions Development (BedZED) community
- London Museum Docklands
- A working, urban farm in London
- Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park
- The Crystal

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty

member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE's qualified and accredited counselor is Dr Deborah Hill, who offers appointments via video call and over the phone. The first three appointments are free of charge and ongoing sessions can be arranged directly with Dr Hill. To make an appointment with Dr Hill, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk.

If you have a counselor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.