



Kuwait University
College of Business Administration
Economics Department



Course Syllabus
ECON 1030470 – Seminar in Economics

Spring 2023-24
Dr. Michail Skourtos

Lecture Time and Location

Monday and Wednesday 2:00pm – 3:15pm Room 1003 C3

Contact Information

Location: Economics Department – 3rd Floor – Zone A – Office A3 1020
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Office Hours: Mon and Wed, 1:00pm – 2:00pm and by appointment

Course Description

This course integrates the economic principles and methodologies learned in core economics coursework and econometrics by focusing on the economics of climate change. A strong emphasis is given to the economic modelling of externalities, discounting, policy uncertainty and intergenerational justice. We will apply the models in important areas for MENA, GCCs and Kuwait and test their adequacy in highlighting several questions in the core of today's public agenda (e.g., decarbonization, energy transition, justice between generations etc). The course is organized as a *seminar*. Students are expected to engage with economic literature through readings and discussions of academic papers from economics journals and reports published by specialized economic institutions. They are also expected to explore a range of economic topics, culminating in a term paper project guided by the instructor. Emphasizing critical thinking and empirical investigation, this course equips students with the research skills essential for addressing economic research questions specifically in the realm of climate change but generally in the wide area of economics.

E-Learning System: Moodle and (occasionally) MS Teams.

Course Website: <http://moodle.ku.edu.kw>

Prerequisites

Econ210 Microeconomic Theory and Econ211 Macroeconomic Theory

Course Learning Objectives (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- CLO1.** Acquire a sufficient understanding of factors and processes contributing to global warming.
- CLO2.** Model and analyze the economy/climate interactions using integrated assessment modeling.
- CLO3.** Understand the equity issues involved in combating climate change.
- CLO4.** Understand how economics can contribute to the design and evaluation of climate policies.
- CLO5.** Understand the limitations of economic approaches to addressing climate change and the role of wider social science approaches.

CLO Mapping to CBA Skill Based Competency Goals¹

CLO	Competency Goal
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¹ CBA Competency Goals can be found at the end of this document

	Analytical	Communication	Information Technology	Business Ethics
1	I			
2	I			
3				R
4	I			
5	R			

Type of Emphases:

- (I)ntroduce: Students will be introduced to the skill and their grasp of it assessed in the course.
- (A)pply: The course will not cover the skill. Students should have a high-level grasp of the skill and are required to apply it in the course.
- (R)einforce: Students should have an introductory-level grasp of the skill and the course will improve their mastery to a higher level.

Required Material

For this course there is no specific textbook to follow. I will upload to Moodle two books that can be consulted Richard Toll. Climate Economics, Edward Elgar Publishing, (2019) (advanced) and Harris et al (2017). The economics of global climate change (introductory). Students are required to keep notes in the lectures. Lecture slides and supplementary reading material will be made available through Moodle. Readings are drawn from a variety of sources. There is a fair degree of duplication of material across these references. As such, you do not need to read all these references. However, you should read as many of them as necessary to thoroughly understand the topics discussed.

Course Requirements

Students' assessment will be based on reading assignments, a research project, and student's participation and attendance.

A) There will be three academic journal readings assigned to you. You are required to read, summarize, discuss, and present these three papers in class. These three assignments are meant to encourage you to read academically published papers in Economics Journals.

B) You will undertake a research project and write a term paper on a climate change issue to be chosen from a list that I'll provide. The objective of this is for you to develop the writing skills needed to analyze and explain an applied, public economic issue. Upon completing the paper and presentation, you will have acquired the skills to identify a research question, construct an economic hypothesis, apply the theory to the question, identify and describe the data that you would use to answer your question, and present your ideas in a way that keeps your audience engaged. Papers should be well written, provide both a theoretical and an empirical part, be on average 20 pages, double-spaced with normal margins and type face, excluding the title page and references.

Your paper should have the following sections:

- o An introduction that presents your issue and why this issue is important. Your introduction should be explicit and be clear about the issue you are addressing/question you are answering.
- o A brief analysis of previous literature on the topic and a discussion of how your paper summarizes, criticizes and/or extends this body of knowledge.
- o A description of the theory/model that applies to your question.
- o A discussion of the data that you use in an empirical analysis and an econometric specification, including a description of variables, why they belong in your model and the impact you expect the dependent variables to have on your independent variable. An original econometric analysis of data should be included.
- o A brief conclusion that summarizes what you learned and areas for future research.

I encourage you to ask a classmate to read your paper for grammar, spelling, and clarity. Because this exercise is designed to develop your writing and oral communication skills, I will grade you on the quality of your writing, how effectively you incorporate comments from your reviewers, and on your presentation, including your PPT slides.

Refer to https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html for your assignment and report writing style. Refer to the English Language Center for help.

Each student will present her/his term paper in the class plus one or more of the assigned journal articles. The presentation should clearly describe the research question and its importance/relevance for the course, discuss

the existing literature, present the theoretical concepts and model(s) to be used, comment on the availability of empirical data, and any other issue. The presentation will help you get feedback from your peers and the instructor while improving your skill of oral communication.

C) For you to have the best results, an active participation in the class is essential. Your grade will be adversely affected if you are not present when called upon for a class activity. Your notes on the lectures should be organized and well written. They will be used to evaluate you with respect to your participation and attendance.

Course Policies

- Attendance and Participation: Every student in this course must abide by the Kuwait University Policy on Attendance (published in the Curriculum System Bylaws, Chapter 3, Section 13). A copy of the student guide can be accessed online on:
http://vpaa.ku.edu.kw/en/documents/KU%20ByLaws/Students/Curriculum_Regulations.pdf
- Cheating and Plagiarism: Every student in this course must abide by the Kuwait University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (published in the Curriculum System Bylaws, Chapter 3, Section 14). A copy of the student guide can be accessed online on:
http://vpaa.ku.edu.kw/en/documents/KU%20ByLaws/Students/Curriculum_Regulations.pdf
- Please carefully note all sources and assistance when you turn in your work. Under no circumstances should you take credit for work that is not yours. You should neither receive nor give any unauthorized assistance on any deliverable. If you have any questions about what constitutes “unauthorized assistance” please email me before the deliverable is submitted. Please note: copy/paste of foreign text into the assignments is not allowed. Always translate it into your own words!

Grading

The scores in this course will be the weighted average of the following items:

Weight	Description
30%	Readings
50%	Research project
20%	Attendance and participation (including notes)
100%	TOTAL

Grade Distribution

Grade	Range
A	≥ 95
A-	≥ 90 and < 95
B+	≥ 87 and < 90
B	≥ 83 and < 87
B-	≥ 80 and < 83
C+	≥ 77 and < 80
C	≥ 73 and < 77
C-	≥ 70 and < 73
D+	≥ 65 and < 70
D	≥ 60 and < 65
F	< 60

Course Outline (indicative)

Title	Topics	Reading	Week
1. Introduction and basic concepts	Climate, weather, and economic activity The science of climate change [IPCC, GHGs, energy balance, radiative forcing, albedo, etc.] Main concepts and tools used [externality, deep uncertainty, intertemporal optimization, very long discounting, impact of market and non-market assessment, scenarios, IAMS, carbon pricing IPCC, Paris agreement, COP28, etc.] Structure of the lectures [DPSIR]	Toll, ch 1, UG Video and Quiz. Hsiang and Kopp 2018	1 and 2
2. Emissions	What drives emissions? [lifestyle, use of fossil fuels, energy production and use, agriculture, transport, etc.] IAMS and Scenarios	Toll, ch. 2, UG Video and Quiz.	3

	Main insights from scenarios run [trends of emissions, spatial distribution, continents, countries, trade, carbon leakages]	Reading to be announced	
3. Impacts assessment	Expected change in mean temperature. A typology of impacts [typing points, regime shift, extreme events, ice melting, work productivity, health, economy, ecosystems, trade, defense, sovereign rating, business profitability, emigration, poverty, conflicts, positive and negative etc.] Methods of quantifying and monetizing impacts [%GDP, top-down, bottom-up, non-market valuation, etc.] Social cost of carbon [and its policy uses] Impact on individual and firm behavior [firm level emissions, impacts on business, relocation, scarcity of raw material, etc.]	Toll, ch. 5 and 6, UG Video and quiz. Dell, Jones, and Olken (2014). What Do We Learn from the Weather? The New Climate–Economy Literature Journal of Economic Literature 2014, 52(3), 740–798	4, 5 and 6
4. Mitigation of emissions	Command & Control policies Incentive policies Cap & Trade policies Geoengineering Costing the mitigation options	Toll, ch. 3 and 4, UG Video and Quiz. Reading to be announced	7 and 8
5. Adaptation	Typology of adaptation Planned adaptation [managed retreat, new building codes, etc] Autonomous adaptation [cooling, relocation, migration, etc.] Costing the adaptation options	Toll ch. 8, UG Video and Quiz.	9 and 10
6. Climate change and the energy transition	Energy transitions in history The promise of renewables [net-zero society, decarbonization, pledges, cost of renewable electricity, etc.] Preparedness and planning for energy transitions [fair transition, stranded assets, income loss, etc.]	To be announced	11 and 12
7. Summary and wrap-up	-----		13
8. Project presentations	-----		14

Important Dates

Date	Event
5/02/2024	First day of classes
6/04/2024	Interim submission of research project
22/04/2024	Final submission of research project
8/05/2024	Oral presentations
13/05/2024	Last day of classes

CBA Competency Goals

1. Analytical Competency: A CBA graduate will be able to use analytical skills to solve business problems and make a well-supported business decision.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 1.2 Use appropriate analytical techniques to solve a given business problem.
- 1.2 Critically evaluate multiple solutions to a business problem.
- 1.3 Make well-supported business decisions.

2. Communication Competency: A CBA graduate will be able to communicate effectively in a wide variety of business settings.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 2.1 Deliver clear, concise, and audience-centered presentations.
- 2.2 Write clear, concise, and audience-centered business documents.

3. Information Technology Competency: A CBA graduate will be able to utilize Information Technology for the completion of business tasks.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 3.1 Use data-processing tools to analyze or solve business problems.

4. Ethical Competency: A CBA graduate will be able to recognize ethical issues present in business environment, analyze the tradeoffs between different ethical perspectives, and make a well-supported ethical decision.

Student Learning Objectives:

4.1 Identify the ethical dimensions of a business decision.

4.2 Recognize and analyze the tradeoffs created by application of competing ethical perspectives.

4.3 Formulate and defend a well-supported recommendation for the resolution of an ethical issue.

5. General Business Knowledge: A CBA graduate will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the main business disciplines' concepts and theories.

Student Learning Objectives:

5.1 Acquire a fundamental understanding of knowledge from the main business disciplines (e.g., finance, accounting, marketing, and management information systems, among others).