

**Pacific Islands Studies 492**  
**Waves of Change:**  
**Climate Change in the Pacific**  
**University of Hawai'i at Manoa**

Spring 2014

Lecturer: Joshua Cooper

Classes (Moore 109): Friday 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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*"As human beings, we are vulnerable to confusing the unprecedented with the improbable. In our everyday experience, if something has never happened before, we are generally safe in assuming it is not going to happen in the future, but the exceptions can kill you and climate change is one of those exceptions."*

**--Al Gore**  
**Nobel Peace Laureate, U.S. VP**

*"I find people are more compassionate than governments. We keep asking the international community to act and to give more focus to our part of the world because you've don't this to us and what are you going to do about it? I've been waiting for an answer quite some time and we are running out of time."*

**--Anote Tong**  
**President of Kiribati**

*"Doing all we can to combat climate change comes with numerous benefits, from reducing pollution and associated health care costs to strengthening and diversifying the economy by shifting to renewable energy, among other measures."*

**--David Suzuki**  
**Educator**

*"If we do not change our negative habits toward climate change, we can count on worldwide disruptions in food production, resulting in mass migration, refugee crises and increased conflict over scarce natural resources like water and farm land. This is a recipe for major security problems....Investing now in safe-guarding people by helping them to adapt to climate change, will help save money and lives while building resilience."*

**--Michael Franti**  
**Musician**

*"If we are ever to halt climate change and conserve land, water and other resources, not to mention reduce animal suffering, we must celebrate Earth Day every day -- at every meal. "*

**--Ingrid Newkirk**

*"Beyond the borders of wealthy countries like the United States, in developing countries where most people in the world live, the impacts of climate change are much more*

*deadly, from the growing desertification of Africa to the threats of rising sea levels and the submersion of small island nations."*

**--Amy Goodman  
Democracy Now**

*"I must emphasize the importance of urgency. We cannot afford to have endless meetings and endless reasons for not doing anything. Most importantly, we cannot afford to be held hostage by countries finger-pointing on climate change, particularly those causing climate change...This is life and death survive issue for Tuvalu. It is now time to act, time to agree, time to move forward, time to save Tuvalu and the world."*

**--Enele Sopoaga Tuvalu PM**

*"It is clear that climate change affects us all, from Manhattan to Mumbai. We are all part of the problem and the solution. However, climate change does not affect us equally. The poor, most vulnerable people, who have contributed least, suffer first and worst."*

**--Ban Ki-Moon, UN SG**

## **I. Course Description**

Waves of Change examines the latest challenge facing the peoples of the Pacific. Waves of Change is a cutting-edge course covering developments in island communities and at the United Nations regarding climate change in the promotion and protection of human rights. Waves of Change offers an opportunity to study one of the most compelling issues in global affairs impacting each region of the world, particularly Oceania. The class will clarify the main challenges regarding climate change from the main international institutions to the community point of view. The goal will be to study specific country strategies to secure the right of self-determination in the face of the climate crisis. The course will examine the various adaptation projects and specific civil society campaigns guaranteeing climate justice in Oceania. There will also be a thorough analysis of the United Nations councils, agencies, programs and funds attempts to assist impacted Pacific Islands States.

The course will highlight the need for global action to address climate change and the adaptation strategies of Pacific rooted in indigenous knowledge. The community campaigns to the climate crisis will be analyzed as well as the international legal responses to defend the dignity of Pacific Islanders.

It is understood that a coordinated global response as well as country and citizens in each region must address issues at the intersection of sustainability and survival. Drawing on global developments, island community case studies, new international institutions and academic literature analysis, the course covers core challenges of climate change in the Pacific.

The course provides opportunity to study the ideas and initiatives related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals resulting from the Rio+20 conference and the current

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations. There will also be review of the Small Islands States role in global organizations. The course will allow students to read the most recent United Nations documents prepared by experts to understand sustainability and social justice in world affairs. There will also be a juxtaposition of the main international instruments aiming to address the climate crisis and the most positive developments in international initiatives. The course will allow students to review case studies of campaigns at the grassroots and global level. The course will also feature global discussion on topics including adaptation, mitigation, migration and self-determination.

From the citizen, community and global civil society perspective, we will look at the issues of climate change in the Pacific in its historical and current context and also focus on the importance of human rights in an era of globalization.

Pacific Islands civilizations are vulnerable to current impacts of climate change. Various communities are already experiencing ecological, economic, social and political impacts. An analysis of the legal questions being raised regarding human rights and sovereignty will also be explored to understand most positive alternatives for the Pacific Islands States. The global phenomenon provides opportunities and obstacles for the peoples of Oceania that must be thoroughly contested to provide insight for optimal policymaking and diplomacy campaigns to promote and protect the rights of people in Oceania.

We will learn the basic international instruments guaranteeing fundamental freedoms and study different case studies of islands adopting adaptation strategies in a human rights framework. We will expand our toolbox of knowledge beyond textbooks and use our expanding educational experiences to better understand climate change in the Pacific, including Prime Minister Cabinet Preparatory and Crisis Meetings class discussions and interactive dialogue with communities impacted by climate change.

Through readings, class discussions, guest speakers, role plays, films and small group work, students will gain a better understanding of climate change in the Pacific campaigns in international law and how to implement the most effective international human rights instruments in regard to the climate crisis in our communities and the countries of the world.

## **II. Course Objective**

Examine the science and societal response to global climate change; Review history and current challenges relating to emerging global institutions relating to climate change in Oceania; learn the relevant instruments as well as other standards in international public law; develop understanding of daily working of international institutions dealing with climate change & human rights promotion and protection; study the ability of Pacific Islands States in international organizations, study the role of NGOs in international politics; engage in examining multilateral diplomacy and decision-making relating to climate change governance, citizen participation in public life; understand ability of self-empowerment through education and experience; begin process of envisioning possible

solutions for climate justice; and engage in human rights advocacy to realize rights relating to climate change in Oceania.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- 1) Understand and describe historical, cultural, social and political diversity of Oceania
- 1) Comprehend basics of international climate change and human rights law through clear and comprehensive research and reflection papers
- 2) Identify the important historical and emerging issues relating to climate change and human rights including international organizations attempts to address the core challenges from multicultural perspective
- 3) Analyze current global affairs including ethical reasoning to balance profit, people and planet and the process of change in the Pacific region
- 4) Explain the major issues addressed through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Rio+20 demonstrating knowledge of social sciences reached through ethical reasoning
- 5) Integrate personal experiences to understand contemporary challenges facing communities and countries from multicultural and world view perspectives specifically Pacific Islands States
- 6) Assist student to interact in a personal role of individual ability from grassroots to global perspective to contribute to world affairs relating to their role as future leaders
- 7) Engage student to gain sense of personal self and empowerment with oral and written skill set to participate interactively on multiple levels in public life as citizens of Oceania and the world

### **III. Course Requirements**

#### **Grading Scheme**

- 10% Attendance, Participation, Prime Minister Cabinet Preparatory & Crisis Meetings, Class Room Readings Discussions
- 85% Written & Oral Exercises  
Journal (10%)  
Climate Change Country Report (15%)  
Climate Change Adaptation Project (15%)  
United Nations Council, Specialized Agencies, Programs and Funds Best Practices Model Addressing Climate Change in Oceania (15%)  
Climate Justice Campaigner in Oceania (15%)  
Service Learning Sustainability Project in Hawai'i / Oceania (15%)
- 5% Role Play and Social Justice Simulation  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (5%)

### **IV. Texts**

Burkett, Maxine. In Search of Refuge: Pacific Islands, Climate-Induced Migration, and the Legal Frontier. East-West Center. Asia Pacific Issues, No. 98, January 2011.

Finucane, Melissa. Why Science Alone Won't Solve the Climate Crisis: Managing Climate Risks in the Pacific. East-West Center. Asia Pacific Issues, No. 89, August 2009.

Poffenberger, M & Smith-Hansen, Kathryn. Forest Communities and REDD Climate Initiatives. East-West Center. Asia Pacific Issues, No. 91, October 2009.

Shea, Eileen. Living With a Climate in Transition: Pacific Communities Plan for Today and Tomorrow. East-West Center. Asia Pacific Issues, No. 66, March 2003.

Tanaka, Shelley. Climate Change. Toronto: Greenwood Books, 2006.

Amnesty International. Human Rights for Human Dignity. Oxford: Alden, 2005.

Transparency International. Climate Change Global Corruption Report. London: Earthscan, 2011.

United Nations. The Right to Water. Geneva: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010.

United Nations. The Right to Food. Geneva: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010.

United Nations. The Right to Health. Geneva: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010.

United Nations. Realizing the Right to Development. Geneva: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2013.

Climate Vulnerability Monitor: A Guide to the Cold Calculus of a Hot Planet. Madrid, Spain: 2012.

Waves of Change: Climate Change & Human Rights Reader. Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies, 2014.

## **V. WorthWhile Websites**

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme [www.sprep.org](http://www.sprep.org)  
Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership [HYPERLINK "http://www.majurodeclaration.org" www.majurodeclaration.org](http://www.majurodeclaration.org)  
Alliance of Small Island States [HYPERLINK "http://www.aosis.org" www.aosis.org](http://www.aosis.org)  
Climate Vulnerable Forum [www.daraint.org](http://www.daraint.org)  
Global Island Partnership [HYPERLINK "http://www.glispa.org" www.glispa.org](http://www.glispa.org)  
UN Bureau of Small Island States [HYPERLINK "http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/sid/aosis.htm" www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/sid/aosis.htm](http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/sid/aosis.htm)  
UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)  
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)

## **VI. Videos**

11th Hour  
Age of Stupid  
An Inconvenient Truth  
Chasing Ice  
Shift  
Do the Math  
Polar Apocalypse  
Stories of Trust: Calling for Climate Recovery Series  
Fever: Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change Series  
Conversations with the Earth: Indigenous Voices on Climate Change Series  
Community Conversations on Climate Change: Four Short Films on Climate Change & Indigenous Peoples  
Living in a Climate Changed World: Perspectives from the United Nations University Series  
Confronting the Global Triple Crisis Series  
Waves of Change: Climate Change in the Pacific Islands and Implications for Hawai'i Series Episodes 1 - 10

## **VII. Course Outline & Activities**

### **Writing Assignments**

**All papers are due on dates specified in syllabus. Reports should include sources**

#### **Journal (10 – 20 pages)**

- a) review readings, classroom discussions
- b) current events (read newspapers, articles)
- c) personal experiences in politics and daily living
- d) soul searching reflections on relevant course topics relating to future of humanity

#### **Climate Change Country Report (5-6 pages)**

- a) select Pacific Islands State and review how climate change is impacting all aspects of society
- b) research and write about how communities are responding, UN assisting and elected officials leading
- c) identify most compelling changes and emerging best practices
- d) explore alternative futures paradigms based on global indicators

**Climate Change Adaptation Project (4 – 5 pages)**

- a) select Pacific Islands State and review how climate change is impacting all aspects of society
- b) research and write about how communities are responding, UN assisting and elected officials leading
- c) discuss the philosophy of the people of Oceania sharing the perspective of the climate change
- d) identify most compelling changes and emerging best practices
- e) explore alternative futures scenarios based on global indicators

**UN Councils, Committees, Specialized Agencies, Programs and Funds Best Practices Model Addressing Climate Change in Oceania (4-5 pages)**

- a) study, read and pick one of the UN bodies to identify how they have met objectives in Oceania
- b) review the role of the Pacific Islands States in the UN body
- c) examine the most holistic approach and positive results
- d) analyze possibilities for next step by UN body

**Climate Justice Campaigner in Oceania (4-5 pages)**

- a) select an individual or peoples movement similar to New Flags Flying showing how people of Pacific stand up for right of self-determination of their nation-state
- b) identify inspiration to pursue passion to protect island nation and review the philosophy and worldview on cc
- c) review the results from the campaign and vision for new steps to combat climate change

**Service Learning Sustainability Project in Hawai'i / Oceania (4-5 pages)**

- a) survey area of opportunity to serve community seeking solutions to high carbon society
- b) brainstorm, plan and organize activities to raise awareness, persuade personal choices and change public policy
- c) share potential community project with classmates and wider campus
- d) apply readings and class discussion into service learning project
- e) author paper that shares lessons learned and indicate initial findings of service learning project

**Role Playing & Simulations**

## **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

- a) review handouts, select role and begin group work
- b) prepare statements to present positions
- c) discuss and debate issues important to the negotiations to meet the climate crisis
- d) contemplate root challenges and propose recommendations for states, UN agencies and UN Forum

### **Roles to Play**

- a) NGOs
- b) UN Specialized Agency, Program and Fund
- c) UN Member State
- d) Transnational Corporation

## **VIII. Class Schedule**

### **Week 1**

**January 17**

Review Syllabus  
Film: Waves of Change Series Episode 1  
Keynote Address

### **Week 2**

**January 24**

Reading: Climate Change Ch 1 - 3, p. 1 - 45  
Reading: In Search of Refuge EWC p. 1 - 7  
Reading: Waves of Change Reader  
Film: The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour  
Film: Stories of Trust Series  
Film: Waves of Change Series Episode 2  
Pacific Islands and Changing Climate Pt 1

### **Week 3**

**January 31**

Reading: Climate Change Ch 4 - 6, p. 46 - 89  
Reading: Why Science Alone EWC p. 1 - 7  
Reading: Amnesty International, HR for HD p. 1 - 33  
Film: The Age of Stupid  
Film: Waves of Change Series Episode 2  
Pacific Islands and Changing Climate Pt 2

### **Week 4**

**February 7**

Reading: Climate Change Ch 7, p. 90 - 114  
Reading: Forest Communities EWC p. 1 - 7  
Reading: Living With a Climate EWC p. 1 - 7  
Reading: Right Development Ch 1p. 1 - 16  
Film: Waves of Change Series Episode 7

Climate Change and Issues  
Film: Conversations with the Earth Series

**Week 5**  
**February 14**

Reading: Right to Water p. 1 - 46  
Reading: TI Climate Change p. xiv - 26  
Reading: Right Development Ch 2 p. 17 - 48  
Film: Waves of Change Series Episode 8&9  
Climate Change and Indigenous Knowledge  
Film: Fever Series

**Assignment Due: Climate Change Country Report**

**Week 6**  
**February 21**

Reading: Right to Food p. 1 - 39  
Reading: TI Climate Change p. 23 - 37  
Reading: Right Development Ch 5-6 p. 95 - 103  
Film: Revolution Green  
Film: Kilowatt Ours

**Week 7**  
**February 28**

Reading: Right to Health p. 1 - 39  
Reading: TI Climate Change p. 45 - 50, p. 83 - 100  
Reading: Waves of Change Reader  
Reading: Right Development Ch 8 p. 117 - 125  
Films: Waves of Change Series Episode 10  
Waves of Change and Future Horizons

**Week 8**  
**March 7**

Reading: Climate Vulnerability Monitor,  
Introduction - Recommendations p. 14 - 35  
Reading: TI Climate Change p. 166 - 170, p. 180 - 187  
Reading: Right Development Ch 14 p. 179 - 193  
Reading: Waves of Change Reader  
Film: Fever

**Week 9**  
**March 14**

Reading: Climate Vulnerability Monitor,  
Key Issues p. 40 - 59  
Reading: TI Climate Change p. 215 - 220, p. 270 - 288  
Reading: Right Development Ch 23 p. 321 - 337  
Reading: Waves of Change Reader

Film: Stories of Trust

**Assignment Due: Climate Change Adaptation Project**

**Week 10**  
**March 21**

Reading: Climate Vulnerability Monitor,  
Climate p. 104 - 153  
Reading: TI Climate Change p. 297 - 328  
Reading: Right Development Ch 28 p. 385 - 400  
Reading: Waves of Change Reader  
**Assignment Due: Journal**

**Spring Break**

**Enjoy Article 24 and See Nature As We Love Her**

**Week 11  
April 4**

Reading: Climate Vulnerability Monitor,  
Climate p. 154 - 175  
Reading: TI Climate Change p. 329 - 351  
Reading: Waves of Change Reader  
Film: Waves of Change Series  
**Role Play: UN Framework Convention Climate Change**

**Week 12  
April 11**

Reading: Climate Vulnerability Monitor,  
Carbon p. 228 - 253  
Reading: Waves of Change Reader  
Film: Stories of Trust  
**Assignment Due: UN Best Practices in Oceania**

**Week 13  
April 18  
April 22**

**Good Friday - Good Day To Appreciate Nature  
Earth Day -- SustAINAbility Dialogue**

**Week 14  
April 25**

Reading: Climate Vulnerability Monitor,  
Carbon p. 254 - 271  
Reading: Waves of Change Reader  
**Assignment Due: Climate Justice Campaigner Oceania**

**Week 15  
May 2**

Reading: Waves of Change Reader  
**Assignment Due: Service Learning Sustainability  
Project  
Assignment Due: Journals Final Reflections (Final)**

**Week 16**

**May 9**

**Pa'ina Potluck**