

GV3L2: The Politics and Policy of Climate Change and Sustainability

Video Blogs

Students will submit two video blog posts in total, one during the first five weeks of the term and one during the last five weeks of the term. At the end of the term, students will select one of their two video blog posts to be assessed. Students will receive feedback on both video blog posts prior to selecting their best work for summative assessment. If a student fails to submit at least one video blog post, they will be awarded a Zero Incomplete for the whole course and cannot be awarded the degree until they submit the work at resit.

Each video blog post will consist of 1) a 4–6 minute video and 2) written talking points. In the video, students must state a clear interpretation of a recent event relating to climate change and sustainability and justify their position with explicit reference to at least one course concept (and associated readings(s)). Students should assume the audience is already aware of the facts of the event. Students must use the talking points to guide their remarks, which must be delivered in a conversational and extemporaneous manner.

In addition to other marking criteria (see Department of Government BSc marking criteria), a strong submission will make a credible argument about the meaning, cause, or effect of the event, anticipate and rebut at least one alternative position a reasonable person could take, and use a conversational tone. If it appears a student is reading directly from a written script, they will be asked to re-record the video (without penalty) or receive a 50% penalty.

Note: As of 2025-26, students must record their video's using Moodle's Poodll plug-in – this is to mitigate the risk of AI-generated videos

Assessed Research Design

For the assessed research paper, students will select one of eight pre-selected policy interventions for climate and sustainability (e.g., carbon taxes), formulate an argument about the political causes of differing climate and sustainability policy across jurisdictions, and produce a research design for empirically testing their argument. Successful essays will put forward an original causal argument about the politics and policy of climate change and sustainability, as well as articulate a compelling and plausible approach to evaluating its empirical support.

The essay will be 2500 words in length and is due in the Spring exam period.

Students will also be required to submit a formative (unassessed) outline of the research paper of at least 3 pages in length describing their plans for the research paper. The outline will consist of a) a tentative title, b) a research question, c) an explanation of how this question relates to knowledge gaps in the existing literature, d) a presentation and motivation for one or more hypotheses, e) an analytical framework and methodology for testing the hypotheses, f) empirical evidence and sources to be used, and g) a detailed outline of the paper's structure. The formative research paper will be due at the end of Week 6.

Note: To provide support on research design, students are provided with the recordings of two online lectures on research methods.