



LAW 543

Climate Change Law

S2 Day 2015

Dept of Law

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Contact via alexander.zahar@mq.edu.au

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

(6cp in LAW or LAWS units at 300 level) or (39cp including ENV267)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Co-badged with LAW851.

Unit description

Climate change is a vast subject that has been shaped by scientists, economists, inventors, environmental activists, policy-makers, and politicians... as well as by judges, legislators, and lawyers. Almost daily we encounter a new development or opinion concerning climate change, but what do we know about the legal framework that has formed around the subject? This unit is an introduction to the broader subject of climate change with a particular focus on its legal aspects. It is designed to help students understand the fundamentals of climate change law at both the international and domestic level.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Demonstrate familiarity with basic concepts on the physical aspects of climate change, including its causes and impacts, as a foundation from which to engage with other aspects of the field.

Demonstrate an understanding of Australian laws and international treaties aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by states or helping communities adapt to a changing climate.

Explain and critically analyse the rationale for, and legal elements of, carbon pricing, carbon trading, and other emission-reduction and offset models.

Demonstrate an ability to analyse and make legal submissions for and against state-supported or private initiatives that impact on climate change.

Demonstrate an understanding of the evolution of climate law in Australia, with an ability to express analytical and substantiated views about its current and future applications.

Critically compare legal and policy developments in Australia with those in other countries and regions.

Express supported views on options for formulating long-term legal responses to climate change at the domestic and international levels, including orally in class.

Display engagement with justice/ethical considerations particular to the field of climate change and climate change law, including orally in class.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Early reflection essay</u>	20%	Monday 17 August
<u>Research paper outline</u>	0%	Tuesday 1 September
<u>Class participation</u>	30%	Throughout session
<u>Research paper</u>	50%	Thursday 5 November

Early reflection essay

Due: **Monday 17 August**

Weighting: **20%**

A short essay for the purposes of early assessment of student progress, on a legal, philosophical, moral, or historical topic related to climate change. Suggested topics will be posted on iLearn in Week 1. This is meant as a reflective "ideas essay" (a student's own ideas!), rather than a research essay, but some reading and referencing will be required. The unit's essay-writing instructions must be carefully followed. **Length: 1,200 words.** To be submitted through Turnitin as a Word document (no PDFs accepted).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Display engagement with justice/ethical considerations particular to the field of climate change and climate change law, including orally in class.

Research paper outline

Due: **Tuesday 1 September**

Weighting: **0%**

A **one-page** plan (Word, not PDF) on how you plan to tackle your choice of research topic, structured in accordance with the information in the essay-writing instructions to be provided. The outline is to be emailed to the Convenor by the end of the day on which it is due. While no marks are awarded for this item, it is compulsory. The Convenor will give you feedback on your outline. Its purpose is to ensure that you are on track to complete a high-quality research paper.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the evolution of climate law in Australia, with an ability to express analytical and substantiated views about its current and future applications.

Class participation

Due: **Throughout session**

Weighting: **30%**

Students are expected to critically comment on the readings and lecture materials in class during the semester. Students are also expected to: engage with other students and the Convenor in an appropriate way that involves analysis of the assigned material; and attempt informed responses to questions posed by the Convenor or other students in class or online. Students will not be awarded the class participation mark unless they actively engage with class activities. This is a large chunk of marks and you must show that you are on top of the reading material to earn it.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with basic concepts on the physical aspects of climate change, including its causes and impacts, as a foundation from which to engage with other aspects of the field.
- Explain and critically analyse the rationale for, and legal elements of, carbon pricing, carbon trading, and other emission-reduction and offset models.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse and make legal submissions for and against state-supported or private initiatives that impact on climate change.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the evolution of climate law in Australia, with an ability to express analytical and substantiated views about its current and future applications.
- Express supported views on options for formulating long-term legal responses to climate change at the domestic and international levels, including orally in class.
- Display engagement with justice/ethical considerations particular to the field of climate change and climate change law, including orally in class.

Research paper

Due: **Thursday 5 November**

Weighting: **50%**

Detailed instructions on topics and formatting and stylistic requirements will be posted early in the session and will be included in the essay-writing instructions. Please make sure that you read all instructions, both before you start writing your research paper and before you submit it. You might also propose your own topic with the Convenor's prior approval. This is intended to be a thought-provoking exercise to stimulate students to explore in depth a topic of genuine interest to them. **Length: 3,800 words.** To be submitted through Turnitin as a Word document (no PDFs accepted). **No extensions will be given**, so plan ahead and keep working on this task throughout the semester!

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of Australian laws and international treaties aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by states or helping communities adapt to a changing climate.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse and make legal submissions for and against state-supported or private initiatives that impact on climate change.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the evolution of climate law in Australia, with an ability to express analytical and substantiated views about its current and future applications.
- Critically compare legal and policy developments in Australia with those in other countries and regions.

Delivery and Resources

Compulsory weekly readings: You will find these on iLearn.

Recommended textbook: A. Zahar, J. Peel, and L. Godden, *Australian Climate Law in Global Context*, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Several copies are held in the Library.

Lectures will be recorded and made available through iLearn.

Policy on late submissions. In the absence of a successful application for disruption of studies, any assessment task submitted after its published deadline will not be graded and will **receive a mark of zero**.

Unit Schedule

Week 1

Introduction and sources. (All readings will be on iLearn.)

Week 2

Elementary outline of the science of climate change.

Week 3

Legal elements of the international climate change regime, Part I: Framework Convention.

Week 4

Legal elements of the international climate change regime, Part II: Kyoto Protocol.

Week 5

Legal elements of the international climate change regime, Part III: Current developments.

Week 6

Australian climate change law.

Week 7

International mechanisms engaging developing countries, Part I: The Clean Development Mechanism.

Week 8

International mechanisms engaging developing countries, Part II: Forest protection (REDD).

Week 9

Adaptation to climate change.

Week 10

International climate finance as a key legal obligation.

Week 11

Holding countries to account: International verification and compliance.

Week 12

Transition to a low-carbon life: Can it happen fast enough?

Week 13

No lecture/tutorial this week. Students are to use the time to finalise and submit their research papers.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Demonstrate an ability to analyse and make legal submissions for and against state-supported or private initiatives that impact on climate change.

Assessment tasks

- Class participation
- Research paper

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Express supported views on options for formulating long-term legal responses to climate change at the domestic and international levels, including orally in class.
- Display engagement with justice/ethical considerations particular to the field of climate change and climate change law, including orally in class.

Assessment tasks

- Early reflection essay
- Class participation

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate familiarity with basic concepts on the physical aspects of climate change, including its causes and impacts, as a foundation from which to engage with other aspects of the field.
- Demonstrate an understanding of Australian laws and international treaties aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by states or helping communities adapt to a changing climate.

Assessment tasks

- Class participation
- Research paper

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate familiarity with basic concepts on the physical aspects of climate change, including its causes and impacts, as a foundation from which to engage with other aspects of the field.
- Demonstrate an understanding of Australian laws and international treaties aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by states or helping communities adapt to a changing climate.

Assessment tasks

- Class participation
- Research paper

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and

systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Demonstrate an understanding of Australian laws and international treaties aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by states or helping communities adapt to a changing climate.

Assessment task

- Research paper

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Explain and critically analyse the rationale for, and legal elements of, carbon pricing, carbon trading, and other emission-reduction and offset models.
- Critically compare legal and policy developments in Australia with those in other countries and regions.

Assessment tasks

- Class participation
- Research paper

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of the evolution of climate law in Australia, with an ability

to express analytical and substantiated views about its current and future applications.

- Express supported views on options for formulating long-term legal responses to climate change at the domestic and international levels, including orally in class.

Assessment tasks

- Research paper outline
- Class participation
- Research paper

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Display engagement with justice/ethical considerations particular to the field of climate change and climate change law, including orally in class.

Assessment tasks

- Early reflection essay
- Class participation

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Display engagement with justice/ethical considerations particular to the field of climate change and climate change law, including orally in class.

Assessment tasks

- Early reflection essay
- Class participation