

ENVIRONMENT HOUSE

Climate Change Policy '09 basic issues & this year's debates



A five-session course

presented by Peter Vintila¹

for online details see www.postkyoto.org

Supported by Alison Xamon, Greens MLC for East Metro

Suffering information overload?

Finding it hard to see the climate for the weather?

Would appreciate these issues potted up for you?

Want to know

- How much warming can the Earth take before Hell breaks loose?
- Who's doing what to speed it up or slow it down?
- Are the UNFCCC, (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) & Kyoto Protocol helping or hindering?
- What's happening in Copenhagen in December this year?
- Could the world go to war over water or food shortages?

Where

@ Environment House, 125 King William St Bayswater (river end).

15 mins walk Bayswater Stn, 4 mins Guildford Rd buses, inc Circle Route

www.environmenthouse.org.au (08) 9271 4488

(Sustainable Saturday EcoShop open 10-4 Saturday)

When

on **WEDNESDAYS 2, 9, 16 and 23rd Sept 5.30-7.30**

(inc light meal break - eg share pizza)

Repeated **SATURDAYS 4-5.30pm 5, 12, 19, 26th Sept. and Oct. 3rd**

If you miss a session in your main timeslot, you can attend at the alternative time.

Book

Bookings now open! (Max 20 per session.)

brenda@environmenthouse.org.au Tel 9271 4488

Course fee: \$60 /\$20 concession (low-cost pilot run!)

Payable by credit card (phone or in person), cheque, cash, EFT



See over.....

¹ Peter Vintila is an independent researcher. Recent publications can be seen at <http://www.postkyoto.org>. He taught politics for 20 years and is working on a book on climate change policy and figures he might as well share as he goes.

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY '09

course outline

Week 1. How many degrees of warming?

What recent climate science tells us about what may soon happen to the planet & the major strategic responses to the science:

- continuing denial or skeptical arguments and their do-little policy positions;
- mainstream lightweight civilian economy response;
- the emerging politics of emergency – “Climate Safe Australia”;
- mitigation vs adaptation – a renewed debate.

Week 2. What can one nation do?

The merits and limits of:

- climate change mitigation policy instruments – carbon trading, carbon taxes, emission & efficiency standards & regulation, and public investment in various forms;
- scaling up the use of these normal/mainstream instruments;
- Climate Safe Australia - what instruments would it use and what would it imply for state and society more generally?

We also ask to what extent neo-liberal ideology and its fear of the state may itself be a serious obstacle to effective climate policy.

Week 3. From Kyoto to Copenhagen and beyond

This week is about importance of international co-operation in resolving the problems of our changing climate. The UN and its instruments, the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) and UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, meeting in Copenhagen later this year) as well as the Kyoto Protocol we all know – how are these going?

A couple of background points are worth noting:

- By mid-century, around 80% of global emissions will come from developing world economies. Yet it is the 20% world of the rich that is filled with most of the policy “sound and fury”. Where is the serious discussion covering the 80% world?
- The only possible solutions call for peace, generosity and extended international co-operation. These principles register a weak presence in UN policy but mainstream developed world policy wants that weak presence watered down yet further.



Cherry Blossom in Kyoto – the carbon neutral world of the future began its life in this beautiful place.

Week 4. What does the global financial crisis mean for climate change & what does climate change mean for the global financial crisis?

Q1 How can climate politics overcome constraints or even extract advantage from the circumstances of global credit shortage. eg stimulus packages packed with green goodies or projects instead of just spending money on anything. Less well understood is the background theory of the stimulus package – called counter cyclical demand management by Keynesians. We'll have a beginner's look at that.

Q2 How does a finite planet (one that reveals its exhaustion in climate change) contribute to crises (recession? depression? collapse?) in market economies.

Week 5. Climate change war & climate change peace

A neglected issue is that sooner or later climate change-induced shortages and dislocation are likely to cause wars - wars over the planet's diminishing life support capacities as human societies lose their grip on peaceful dispute resolution processes. A number of other observations follow from this:

- future climate wars are more likely if current climate change resolutions are weak and competitive in spirit – and that's where they seem to be headed;
- future climate wars will seriously undermine the basis of any subsequent post-war treaty making endeavours – if, by then, treaties still have a point. Trust is always war's first casualty and without trust, no treaty of any kind. Once they start, climate wars are unlikely to stop. Nor can there be much in it for winners:
- future climate wars will actually exacerbate climate change because of the savage carbon intensity of modern industrial weapons system. It's significant.

As for climate change peace, it works comprehensively to the opposite effect at every point. We'll end on this more hopeful note!



A climate changing world is full of nasty surprises.