Creative climate communications
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30AM–10:45AM ~ Theatre C240

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Course Web Page: http://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/students/envs3173/index.html

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The objectives for this course are (1) to generate quality multimodal compositions on the subject of climate change and (2) engage meaningfully with various dimensions and issues associated with climate, environment and sustainability. We work to deepen our understanding of how issues associated with climate change are communicated creatively by analyzing previously created expressions from a variety of media (interactive theatre, film, fine art, performance art, television programming, blogs for examples). We then integrate insights gained into the process of creating our own work. Throughout the semester, we appraise and extract effective methods and techniques in ongoing student work. We then apply them to the larger Inside the Greenhouse (ITG) project.

The chosen title of larger project – Inside the Greenhouse – acknowledges that, to varying degrees, we are all implicated in, part of, and responsible for greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. So in the course we treat this ‘greenhouse’ as a living laboratory, an intentional place for growing new ideas and evaluating possibilities to confront climate change through a range of mitigation and adaptation strategies.

In this Spring 2019 semester, we harness the tools and perspectives from Environmental Studies, ATLAS and the Department of Theater and Dance in order to accomplish these goals. The interdisciplinary approach taken up here seeks to capture, value and interrogate the complexity of multi-scale and contemporary climate science, policy and politics as well as the challenges of performance and communication of these issues. Our motivations here spring from an expansive view of climate science and policy in society, where more formal scientific and policy work is part of, rather than separate from, public uptake. Representational practices of various sorts play key roles in interpretation, framing climate change for policy, politics and the public, and drawing attention to how to make sense of the changing world. Mediated portrayals – from television news to live performance – are critical links between people’s everyday realities and experiences, and the ways in which these are discussed at a distance between science, policy and public actors.

COURSE MATERIALS

Throughout the term we will also read, watch and discuss additional academic journal articles, book chapters and multi-modal climate communications. We will also look to gray literature (newspaper and magazine reports etc.). These are available through the class webpage; readings will be added as we go.

*Selected Equipment Checkout Procedures:*
Students must return equipment to ENVS in SEEC. We will explain the specific details/rules in class.

**IMPORTANT NOTE about equipment:** You will not receive a final grade in this class – you will get an ‘incomplete’ – if you do not return all of the equipment on time and in good working order.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

class attendance and participation 10 pts
video interview of partner 10 pts
reading responses (3 points each x 8 times during the semester) 24 pts
Composition #1 25 pts
Composition #2 25 pts
Contribution to Final Showing of Trash the Runway videos on May 8 6 pts

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total: **100 points**

# there will be 1-point extra credit opportunities (up to 2 points total) for attendance & participation in seminars on selected Wednesdays at noon in CSTPR conference room during the term (January 23, February 6, February 20, March 13, April 17), information is here [https://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/news/seminars_spring2019.html](https://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/news/seminars_spring2019.html) or for attending CU Museum Family Day on Saturday March 16th, based on Drawdown solutions, Young Women’s Voices for Climate

**Attendance**
All who are enrolled in the course must mindfully, productively and enthusiastically participate in each session. This is critical to the success of the class, and it requires that everyone is consistently present in each class, arriving prepared to critically engage with the class topics, concepts, activities and materials of the day. Our class-time interactive explorations and discussion inevitably will build upon previous sessions. Two unexcused absences are allowed before your grade is then dropped by 1/3 for each additional unexcused absence (Ex. Dropping by 1/3 means a B would become a B-, or that an A- would become a B+) Also arriving late to three sessions = one unexcused absence.

**Class Participation**
Participation will be evaluated through your engagement in the class discussions, contributions through class preparation and group activities, participation in guest visits (e.g. preparing to ask one question of each guest), collaborative efforts in composition work, and involvement in additional class activities (e.g. the stand-up comedy rehearsal April 24 at 7:30pm and event April 25 at 6pm; the Trash the Runway event at Boulder Theater March 12 at 7pm and the post-show event at the CU Museum of Natural Science, May 8 at 4:30pm).

**Video Interview of a Partner** (due in class Feb 14)
You will each be creating a video interview of a partner based on what is at stake for each person regarding climate change. This is broadly conceived and intended to be open-ended. Ideally, the interview
questions you design will deepen each student’s consideration of what they care about most deeply, to energize their commitment to creative climate communication, and explore what specific aspects of climate/sustainability/environmentalism rise unbidden from each person’s heart. Attempt to embed this in a story. Gather b-roll footage to augment and enhance your interview. Consider a music track that compliments or contrasts this interview. Be creative. Each video must be **under 2 minutes.**

**Reading Responses**
What central question arose from the reading for you? (clearly and concisely write the question as the header, write a robust question to inspire a meaty answer) Then, provide your answer to that question. Make evident that you meaningfully engaged with the reading. To that end, draw from the readings specifically to substantiate the answer to your question. **These are limited to 300-350 words each response, note word count**

**Compositions**
Students will create two Compositions over the semester. These Compositions are original expressions that will take forms to be discussed in class. Each Composition involves **four steps/parts:**

1. A “Pitch and Feedback” session- your group will describe what you are intending to do for the class and will receive feedback; For interviewing a partner and for Composition 1, come prepared with your interview questions, be prepared to refer to your research/idea already richly explored; underconsidered ideas will be poorly evaluated, well-considered ideas will earn good credit (4 points)

2. A ‘Completed Draft’, a fully completed version of your composition by the deadline (15 points); in the case of Composition #1, one person from the group must successfully deliver the video recording from your hard drive to our designated external hard drive, clearly marked ‘2019Spring_composition1_[title]_[lastname(s)]’.

3. A Composition Description (see Appendix I) also due when you deliver/present each Composition (6 pts). These 2-3 page descriptions are intended to deepen your critical engagement with your creative process. In the description, **these seven elements are also required:**
   a. list authors (students) names
   b. project title
   c. 50-word description of topics covered in the interview/composition
   d. name(s) and credentials of anyone interviewed (relevant for composition #1)
   e. date it is turned in for posting
   f. list any music credits, and any additional photo or video footage credits
   g. attach all release forms for reproduction of your composition: these are required for anyone who is featured in your compositions, even yourself (we will discuss this in class), label what composition the release applies to and give a brief description when necessary

4. A completed Confidential Peer Assessment form, with feedback from your group activities (for groups in which there was discrepancies in what each group member contributed; these are not required; they are available if needed)

See Appendix II below for the grading rubric for each composition.
These compositions are designed to build skills in collaboration and critique. Compositions will require us to also consider not only the work itself, but how we will make it resonant, meaningful and appealing to an audience, both live and in its final (recorded) format as appropriate.

Thus, as part of this process, we will work throughout to identify our target audience.

**Composition #1 Trash the Runway with Recycled Couture (RR10)**

In this first composition, individuals or pairs will shadow a young Boulder designer (grades 6-12) and interview them as well as document their work leading up to the evening show on Tuesday March 12, 2019 in the historic Boulder Theater. Groups will gather b-roll, documentation of process and interviews of the designers during two scheduled sessions. Editing will take place in the weeks following the show, and completed drafts will be shown during an event with designers and their families at the CU Museum of Natural Science at 4:30 on May 8th. Products will be up-to-2 minute videos on each designer (to be shown at the event on May 8th), and two small group projects both with up-to-2 minute videos (one depicting process, to be shown at the RR10 show on March 12; another depicting the overall RR10 project to be shown at the event at 4:30 on May 8th). Students will select one of these options in class.

This program, subtitled ‘teens transforming trash’ because they make garments and accessories from found materials, is now in its tenth year. Trash the Runway is a guided independent study workshop for teens to make garments from found materials that culminates in an impressive fashion showcase for the Boulder community. Workshops are led from February by Rachel Lubanowski and Tanja Leonard at Common Threads in downtown Boulder. More information to be discussed in class.

**Composition #2 – Stand Up for Climate—(Drawdown, Stand Up!) Comedy about Climate Change**

In this second composition, we will be stepping beyond video to embrace and confront multi-modal forms of creative climate communication and focusing on humor/comedy as a vehicle for creative climate communication through the live performance of comedy. We will provide the framework of a show that is focused on activating specific Drawdown solutions (ideally within our local context). You will be creating the content with skits, stand-up comedy, or structured improve. Importantly, our work on composition #2 will culminate in a performance at historic Old Main auditorium on Thursday April 25th at 7pm, plan accordingly (and for a tech rehearsal April 24 at 7:30pm). That evening of April 25, we will record these performances – limited to about 2-4 minute acts each (unless a special appeal for more time is made in advance) – and those will serve as the final products for this composition. More information to be discussed in class.
University Recommended Syllabus Statements: Additional Logistics

Accommodation for Disabilities
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior here https://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior and the Student Code of Conduct here https://www.colorado.edu/osccr/

Honor Code
All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office site here https://www.colorado.edu/osccr/honor-code

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation
The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website here https://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Holidays
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. See the campus policy regarding religious observances for full details https://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams
OUR SCHEDULE: subject to change in response to class needs that arise as we progress through the semester

Week 1

Tuesday, January 15
- introduction of wider ITG project
- review schedule, goals, objectives, logistics, expectations, plans & aspirations for the course
- exercises to inspire expressiveness and creativity (get a feel for what you’re in for)
- discuss gender fluidity and Queer Ecology

Thursday, January 17
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up (assessing skill sets, strengths and aspirations)
- a creative climate communications session (intro of compositions – generating questions)
- other logistics (e.g. release forms, confidential peer assessment forms)

Provided Reading:

Week 2

Tuesday, January 22
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- book check in
- reading discussion and active processing of reading material

Reading Response #1 due on Canvas before class
Hawken, Paul (2017) Drawdown pages ix-xv
Neal, Lucy (2015) Playing for Time: making art as if the world mattered Oberon Books, pages 3-16

Thursday, January 24
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- introduce assignment to create interviews of a partner

optional weekend event, choreographed by Danielle Garrison (class TA, Spring 2016)
Ethered and Tethered: a liminal space
MFA candidate Danielle Garrison invites audiences into a performative laboratory that engages the body with news stories on grief. Through this gallery-style performance, audiences are welcomed to create feedback loops with aerial dance, photography, film, live sculpture, biometrics and kinesthetic sound, all while exploring the question: what exists behind screens?

CU Presents:
https://cupresents.org/event/11538/cu-dance/ethered-and-tethered--a-liminal-space/

Week 3

Tuesday, January 29
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
Reading Response #2 due on Canvas before class

Thursday, January 31
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- Body outlining with tape installation in the halls—we are part of the natural environment, our reasoning on climate is embodied (Draw from the work of Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought and the work of Una Chaudhuri with Theorizing Ecocide)

Week 4
Tuesday, February 5
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- discuss and process readings

Reading Response #3 due on Canvas before class

Thursday, February 7
- composition #1: group formations, designer selections
- in class time on assignment to create interviews of a partner

Guests: Trash the Runway team = Ricki Booker, Rachel Lubanowski and Tanja Leonard

Week 5
Tuesday, February 12
Guest: Lily (Shafroth) Forbes, Sustainable Fashion

Reading Response #4 due on Canvas before class

Thursday, February 14
- create interviews of a partner assignment due; class showing
Week 6

Tuesday, February 19
- in class time to work on composition #1
- distribution of selected new articles for Thursday discussion

Reading Response #5 due on Canvas before class

Thursday, February 21
- in class activity: exploring the ecological impacts of the fashion industry through discussion of selected news articles (& creating comic scenes)
- in class time to work on composition #1

Week 7

Tuesday, February 26

Guest [invited]: Max Edkins, World Bank Connect4Climate

Reading Response #6 due on Canvas before class

Thursday, February 28
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- composition #1 pitch and feedback (come with interview questions ready)

Guest [invited]: Shannon Mancus, Colorado School of Mines

Week 8

Tuesday, March 5
- in class work

Thursday, March 7
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- composition #1 in-class work time

Week 9

Tuesday, March 12
- composition #1 in-class work time
- day of event preparations (shooting, sharing footage etc)
Trash the Runway event = 7pm @ Boulder Theater

**Thursday, March 14**
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- in class work on Composition #1, adding in event footage
- Trash the Runway event reflections

**Week 10**

**Tuesday, March 19**
- turn in composition #1 materials due (parts 2, 3 & 4)
- watch videos in class, part one

**Thursday, March 21**
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- planning for Tuesday, May 8 event at CU Museum of Natural History
- watch videos in class, part two (and celebrate!)

**Week 11 – Spring Break 2019!**

**Week 12**

**Tuesday, April 2**
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- introduce Composition #2 Stand Up for Climate

**Reading Response #7 due on Canvas before class**

**Thursday, April 4**
- distribution of video shorts for reading response #8 (due Tuesday, April 9)
- in class brainstorming/work on composition #2

**Week 13**

**Tuesday, April 9**
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- in class work on composition #2

**Reading Response #8 due on Canvas before class**
Chattoo, C. B. (2017). The laughter effect: The serious role of comedy in social change. Center for
Media and Social Impact, School of Communication, American University
watch selected video shorts = to be distributed to class on Thursday, April 4

**Thursday, April 11**
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- composition #2 pitch and feedback

**Week 14**

**Tuesday, April 16**
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- in class work on comedy event

**Guest:** Professor Peter McGraw, Psychology and Marketing, University of Colorado

**Provided Reading:**

**Thursday, April 18**
- vocal, physical, improvisational work/warm-up
- in class work on composition #2 & comedy event

**Provided Readings:**

**Week 15**

**Tuesday, April 23**
- rehearsal in Old Main

**Thursday, April 25**
- rehearsal in Old Main

**Provided Readings:**


**Week 16**

**Tuesday, April 30**

- reflection on comedy event

**Thursday, May 2**

- review of effective approaches and useful techniques for creative climate communication

**FINAL EXAM** – **Tuesday May 8, 4:30pm,** event for *Trash the Runway*
Appendix I: A *Composition Description* is due when you deliver/present each Composition (6 pts). These 2-3 page descriptions are intended to deepen your critical engagement with your creative process.

**Composition Description for Trash the Runway Video**

**Fill this out as a group**—each person submits your group’s response via Canvas so we can assign you each a grade.

In the description, **these seven elements are also required:**

(a) list authors (students) names  
(b) project title  
(c) 50-word description of topics covered in the interview/composition  
(d) name(s) and credentials of anyone interviewed (relevant for composition #1)  
(e) date it is turned in for posting  
(f) list any music credits, and any additional photo or video footage credits  
(g) attach all release forms for reproduction of your composition: these are required for anyone who is featured in your compositions, even yourself (we will discuss this in class), label what composition the release applies to and give a brief description when necessary (ex. young woman in yellow shirt in composition entitled “El Verde”)

1. Name of Designer:

2. How were your interview questions designed to deepen your designer’s considerations of sustainability? Excellence and expression through art & design? Importance and relevance of this event for community engagement?

3. What is one unexpected thing that surprised you during the process, perhaps something not planned but significant that rose up during the process?

4. Articulate what was uniquely contributed by your designer’s video that is of worth and towards what does it contribute?

5. In what interesting ways did you use this assigned medium to express your given content?

6. How does this composition advance you in developing as a climate communicator?

7. How did creating this video from start to finish impact your views on issues related to sustainability and climate? Be specific.
Composition Description for Stand Up for Climate

Fill this out as a group (if you are working alone, do your own)—each person submit your group’s response via Canvas so we can assign you each a grade.

In the description, these seven elements are also required:

(a) list authors (students) names
(b) project title
(c) 50-word description of topics covered in the interview/composition
(d) name(s) and credentials of anyone interviewed (relevant for composition #1)
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1. What Drawdown climate solution are you communicating through your composition?

2. What way are you proposing for activating this solution in a local context?

3. What did you do to prepare/research for this composition?

4. What aspect(s) of comedy/humor did you employ to get to the funny?

5. How did you balance the environmental messaging with the funny to get it to float?

6. Describe one way in which you (or your group) fully committed to this climate communication through performance?

8. How does this composition advance you in developing as a climate communicator?

9. How did creating this composition from start to finish impact your views on the use of comedy/humor to communicate climate solutions? Be specific.
## Appendix II: Rubric for Grading Compositions [scaled to 3 pts each = 15 pts]

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Additional Comments: