Course Information

Year	AY 2025-2026	School	UNU-IAS
Course Title	Climate Justice and the Right to Education		
Instructor & Contact Information	insebayeva@unu.edu		
Term/Day/Period	AY 2026 Spring / Wednesdays / 4th period / 15:50-17:30 (both 3rd and 4th period only on specified weeks - see course outline)		
Category	Core Course	Eligible Year	1st year and above Credits 2
Classroom	Lecture room, 6th floor in the UNU building	Campus	UNU-HQ, Tokyo, Japan
Main Language	English		
Class Modality Categories	On-Campus		
Course Code	512028		
Level	Graduate-level	Types of lesson	Seminar

Syllabus Information

Subtitle	
Course Description (Word limit: 200)	With its devastating impacts on ecosystems, communities and people, climate change presents a great threat to human rights worldwide. With nearly a quarter of a billion children experiencing schooling disruptions as a result of climate crises in 2024 (UNICEF), it is clear that climate change threatens the right to education, making it impossible to achieve the global sustainability goal of leaving no one behind.

This course is dedicated to exploring the complex relationship between climate justice and the right to education. Throughout the semester, students will examine the ethical, social, and political dimensions of climate change, deepening their understanding of how vulnerable populations – particularly in the Global South – are disproportionately affected by the rapidly changing global environment. Students will be introduced to relevant theoretical frameworks and case studies that highlight the core principles of climate justice, including equity, historical responsibility, and human rights.

The course stresses the important role education plays as both a tool for climate mitigation and adaptation and as a means of empowerment. Students will work on individual and group assignments that critically assess the challenges and opportunities associated with building climate resilient education systems. The course will culminate in a final project, where students will work in groups to develop practical, evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at addressing the intersection of climate change, education, and social justice. By the end of the course, students will have a comprehensive understanding of climate justice, the role of education in climate change, and the tools needed to create impactful policies for resilient education systems. |
| Objectives and Learning Goals | By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand key concepts of climate justice and its interconnectedness with the right to education;
- Analyse pertinent climate justice issues in their local contexts (region, country, community, etc.);
- Apply interdisciplinary approaches to creating solutions to injustice issues in education faced by marginalized and vulnerable communities in the context of climate change;
- Develop data-informed policy recommendations for building climate-resilient and inclusive education and lifelong learning systems for all. |

| | Requirements | The course requirements include active class participation, individual assignments, and a final group report, detailing policy recommendations for building inclusive and climate-resilient education systems of a selected country. Students will then make a group presentation based on their report, highlighting key findings and policy recommendations.

1. **Class attendance and in-class participation (10%):** 80% of the attendance is required. 2% deducted per absence. Active in-class participation is one of the key assessment criteria. Students must come to class prepared and engage in in-class activities and exercises
2. **Individual reflection (30%):** Individual writing assignment (2,500 words max, excluding references) reflecting on student's own school and its vulnerability to climate change impacts. More details will be provided during the course.
3. **Final presentation (20%):** Oral group presentation of the final report
4. **Final report (40%):** Group assignment to write a report (4,000 words max, excluding references) for a government of a selected country, containing practical and feasible policy measures and recommendations for ensuring climate-resilient inclusive education systems. More details will be provided during the course. |

Course Outline

	Outline	Date/Time	Instructors
1	**Introduction to CJRE** • Overview of climate change and its global impact	1 Apr (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Nafissa Insebayeva
2	**Unequal impacts of climate change** • Socio-economic and demographic factors and vulnerability	8 Apr (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Nafissa Insebayeva
3	**Theories of justice** • Existing approaches to climate justice and their implications	15 Apr (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Nafissa Insebayeva
4	**Climate justice movements** • Global and local responses to climate change and climate policies	22 Apr (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Nafissa Insebayeva
5	**Role of technology in the face of climate change** • Nexus of AI and emerging technologies and climate change	29 Apr (Wed) 15:50-17:30	David Daou, UNU-EHS
6	**The state of education in country contexts** • Closer look at the status of education in select countries	13 May (Wed) 14:00-15:40	Abhinav Kumar, UNESCO New Delhi*
7	**Education as a fundamental human right** • SDG4 Quality education • Rights-based approaches to education	13 May (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Rolla Moumne and Agathe Charles-Bray, UNESCO*
8	**Frameworks for building climate resilient education systems** • What does resilient education system mean?	10 Jun (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Nafissa Insebayeva
9	**Education in the face of climate change and displacement** • Main barriers in education related to displacement and potential solutions	17 Jun (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Jonghwi Park
10	**Inclusive education** • Indigenous knowledge and inclusive education	24 Jun (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Gio Miole, JSPS Fellow, UNU-IAS/University of Tokyo
11	**Best practices in building resilience in education** • Case studies and policy recommendations	1 Jul (Wed) 15:50-17:30	Nafissa Insebayeva
12	**Group project work** • Peer review session and group work on the final report and presentation	8 Jul (Wed) 14:00-15:40	Nafissa Insebayeva
13		8 Jul (Wed) 15:50-17:30	
14	**Final presentations** • Policy proposals related to climate justice and education	15 Jul (Wed) 14:00-15:40	Nafissa Insebayeva
15		15 Jul (Wed) 15:50-17:30	

Please note that the lecture sequence may change due to instructors' availability. Students will be informed in advance of any such changes.

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Course Readings	Reading materials will be shared on Moodle during the course
Reference	

Grading Policy

Rate	%	Evaluation Criteria
Attendance and in-class participation	10	80% of the attendance is required. 2% deducted per absence.
Individual assignment	30	Individual reports will be evaluated on structure and clarity, quality of data, analytical insight
Final presentation	20	Format and delivery, quality of analysis, group work
Final report	40	Final report will be evaluated on structure and clarity, quality of data, analytical insight and quality of group work

United Nations University Grades			
Grade Meanings	Letter Grade	Numerical Scale of Marks	Grade Point Average
Excellent	A	90-100%	4
		80%-89%	3
Good	B	70-79%	2
Adequate	C	60-69%	1
Inadequate	D	0-59%	0

Class Conduct & Etiquette

Students are expected to arrive on time and not to engage in disruptive behaviours during class, e.g., private conversations, using cell phones and other electronic devices, and reading newspapers. Cell phones should be switched off and stored in a bag. We wish to create an atmosphere of open and tolerant discussion in the classroom and request students recognise every individual's right to have an opinion.

The lecturer and other students should be treated with dignity and respect, particularly in discussions on contentious political issues where diverse opinions are likely to arise. However, we also recognise that there are limits to tolerance, and the lecturer reserves the right to request disciplinary action against any student who violates this policy or repeatedly shows disruptive behaviours in class.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

If evidence of academic misconduct on tasks and the final report, including the use of Gen AI to produce writing, should be found, the student may receive a failing grade for the entire course and will be reported to the appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.

Please be aware that the consequences of plagiarism are severe, and students found guilty of academic misconduct will be punished in accordance with UNU's academic honesty policies. The lecturer reserves the right to run all assignments through an anti-plagiarism software provided by the UNU. If evidence of academic misconduct on the assignments should be found, the assignment will receive a failing grade. In case of repeated violations of academic conduct, the student may receive a failing grade for the entire course and will be reported to the appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.

Note / URL if any	