

Lesson Plan for the Middle Option

Overview: main features of this option

- Homework before Session 1 – Two science videos
- Session 1 – video “A Sociology of Climate Change” and organization of research assignment
- Between sessions 1 and 2 – students do research, and
 - write a paper or prepare a video
- Session 2 – comments and discussion

Homework to assign before Session 1

Before students get to the sociological analysis, it is important that they get a baseline understanding of the science.

Assign videos:

Szasz, “Introduction to the Climate Module”

<https://youtu.be/y32F2aE14Rc>

Kiehl, “The Physical Dimensions of Climate Change”

<https://youtu.be/KFy0XSLHjIg>

Loik, “Ecological Consequences of Climate Change”

<https://youtu.be/X1taZTx7VLY>

[NB: If that’s too many, prioritize Szasz and Kiehl]

A reading-based alternative (should you not wish to assign videos)

For the physics:

Students read, on line: World Meteorological Organization, “The State of the Global Climate 2018,” <https://wmo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=855267a7dd394825aa8e9025e024f163>

and: U. S. Global Change Research Program, “Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I,” 2017, Chapter 2, “Physical Drivers of Climate Change.” PDF can be downloaded from: <https://science2017.globalchange.gov/>

For the ecology:

Nolan, *et al*, “Past and future global transformation of terrestrial ecosystems under climate change,” *Science* 31 Aug 2018: Vol. 361, Issue 6405, pp. 920-923.

Session 1

Explain why do a climate module in this course:

- An Intro to Sociology course should not just teach an overview of the discipline but also demonstrate why Sociology matters;
- Sociology has, from its beginnings concerned itself with understanding the greatest problems of “modernity;”
- As students will discover in this segment of the course, climate change is, today, one of those greatest problems;
- Studying climate change is worth doing, on its own merits, exactly because it will impact everything about the rest of their lives, and it is interest to see how Sociological ideas can help deepen their understanding of various aspects of climate change.

Explain the sequence of events:

- Purpose of the homework was to make sure everyone understands the science
- This session: video “A Sociology of Climate Change”
- Explain the research assignment:
- What are students expected to produce? A paper? A video?
- Session 2: comments and discussion

Show video “A Sociology of Climate Change”

<https://youtu.be/tCA6taOMOGE>

Organize the research projects:

Assign students to groups (if research is to be done in groups); Assign topics;
Ask them to watch the video, “Using the module website for research”

<https://youtu.be/daaAOcS6-vo>

Review expectations for the papers (or other products) and the presentations.

Session 2

Discussion

[Note: If you are looking for a way to organize the discussion, you might wish to show one or both of the videos “Suggestion for a final class discussion.”]

https://youtu.be/QDb4_VzmxAI

https://youtu.be/LwQT2_ocvXs

Variations: Modifying the middle option lesson plan to suit your situation

You should, of course, feel free to adjust the lesson plan to make it work in your specific circumstances. Here are some choices you might need to think about (there may be others ...).

-- Differing levels of instructor's preexisting knowledge of physics, climate change:

The lesson plan does not assume that you will write your own lectures on climate science (homework before session 1) or on the sociological aspect of climate change (session 1). The default assumption is that you will mostly depend on the videos we have made and uploaded to youtube. However, if you know the science and the sociology and want to write and deliver your own lectures instead of showing videos, feel free to do so. Design your own mix of lecture and videos.

-- Research paper or a youtube video?

Although many of us still want students to improve the quality of their writing, students might be more engaged if asked to report their findings in formats more in keeping with the times: a mixed format of paper and powerpoint; a short video appropriate for uploading. If you choose to assign making a video, students can both upload them to youtube and show them to the class in Sessions 2 and 3.

-- Research done individually or in small groups?

It is important to learn how to successfully work in teams, doing research and reporting findings, but that format can also break down (e.g., issues with fair distribution of workload, with coordination, etc.), requiring you to spend time and effort consulting with troubled teams.

-- Class size too small?

Too few students? For the research, I have divided the Sociology of Climate Change into 25 different topics. A class may be too small for students to be assigned all 25 (whether they work individually or in groups).

- Skip topics 1-2, the "social causes" category; the two other categories are more important.
- Assign only some of the "societal impacts" topics, # 3 through 12. (Personally, I would not start cutting here; understanding impacts is important.)
- Assign only some of the "societal responses" topics, # 13-25. (I would let go of #13, first. If you have to drop others, too. I would definitely try to keep: activism, climate denial, on line media, public opinion, the policy topics, techno innovation – but, of course, what to drop vs what to keep is your call.

-- Class size too big?

Too many students to have all individuals or teams present their research to the class?

- While all individuals or teams submit their findings in writing, you could select only a subset of individuals or teams to present their findings in class.