ICRR Seminar Series:

Professor Christopher Wright

Title: Confronting the fossil fuel hegemony in an era of climate crisis: The politics of mitigation, adaptation and suffering.

Climate change is the most critical issue now facing humanity. As global temperatures rise, floods, fires and storms are becoming more intense and frequent. People are suffering. Yet, despite over 30 years of international climate negotiations, emissions continue to increase and as the UN Secretary-General António Guterres has bluntly stated, “We have a choice. Collective action or collective suicide. It is in our hands.” This seminar presentation provides an overview of how corporations, governments, and civil society organisations have organised past and present climate responses in terms of mitigation, adaptation, and suffering. This has occurred within what we term a “fossil fuel hegemony” in which exponential growth of the capitalist system has been based upon a capital-state nexus which ensures the continued dominance of fossil energy. However, this hegemonic position is now coming under threat as new and innovative social movements have emerged, including the fossil fuel divestment movement, Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion and others. In exposing the inadequacies of current climate policies and pointing to the possibilities of new social and economic systems, we highlight how the worst impacts of climate change might be avoided.

Speaker Bio:

Christopher Wright is Professor of Organisational Studies at the University of Sydney Business School where he teaches and researches organisational change, management innovation and sustainability. He is also a key researcher at the Sydney Environment Institute, where he heads a group examining corporate climate transition. His current research explores organizational and societal responses to climate change, specifically in regard to corporate environmentalism, organizational justification and compromise, risk, and future imaginings.
His research has appeared in a broad range of leading journals including: The Academy of Management Journal, Organization Studies, Journal of Management Studies, Research Policy, Environment & Planning A, Human Relations, and the British Journal of Sociology. As well as chapters in edited collections, he is the author of several monographs including Climate Change, Capitalism and Corporations: Processes of Creative Self-destruction (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and most recently Organising Responses to Climate Change: The Politics of Mitigation, Adaptation and Suffering (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

7 May 2024

10:30am - 12:00pm

Climate Change Research Centre Seminar Room

Level 4, Mathews Building, UNSW Sydney

UNSW Institute for Climate Risk & Response

UNSW SYDNEY

ICRR Seminar Series:

Professor David Stern

The Macro-Economic Impacts of Weather-Related Disasters and Climate Change

Disasters, such as floods or droughts, and climate change are short-term and long-term meteorological phenomena that are expected to have important economic effects. The measured effects of weather-related disasters on economic activity could be negative or positive depending on how the economy recovers from the disaster. Working with Xueting Jiang, I find that floods have a positive long-term effect on GDP in a panel of 179 countries, particularly in developing countries, while other types of disasters do not have statistically significant effects. Increased government expenditure is the main channel through which the positive effect manifests. Existing research shows that the estimated impact of climate change on GDP is model dependent, with some approaches better equipped than others to capture long-term effects and adaptation. I will present preliminary results applying the long differences estimator to a global country panel data set. This method should be particularly good at capturing long-run effects while avoiding pitfalls inherent in other popular models

Speaker Bio:

David Stern is a professor in the Arndt-Corden Department of Economics in the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University. David is an energy and environmental economist, whose research focuses mostly on the macroeconomics of energy, air pollution, and climate change. He also works on research assessment using meta-analysis and bibliometrics. David has published widely in economics and natural science journals including articles in Nature and the Journal of Economic Literature. He is co-editor in chief of the Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. David was a lead author for the chapter on Drivers, Trends, and Mitigation in Working Group III's contribution to the IPCC's 5th Assessment Report and a review editor on the 6th Assessment Report.

19 June 2024

10:30am - 12:00pm

Climate Change Research Centre Seminar Room

Level 4, Mathews Building, UNSW Sydney

UNSW Institute for Climate Risk & Response

UNSW SYDNEY

ICRR Seminar Series:

Dr Samantha Stanley

Using social psychology to understand public responses to climate change and climate migration

Academics and activists are increasingly recognising climate change as not only an environmental and health issue, but also as a justice issue. Those facing its worst consequences typically have not had access to high-emission lifestyles, or the means to adapt to the challenges climate change brings. In this seminar, I will talk about some of the ways that my collaborators and I use social psychology to try to understand how people respond to climate change. This will include some work on the ideological barriers to acceptance and action on climate change and the various emotional responses people have to environmental change. I argue that recognising that climate change already disproportionately affects vulnerable communities requires moving beyond a focus on the determinants of support for mitigation measures. The main part of the talk will give an overview of our emerging research on public attitudes towards funding adaptation measures in communities vulnerable to climate impacts and providing resettlement opportunities for those at risk of displacement who want and need to relocate.

Speaker Bio:

Samantha Stanley is a social and environmental psychology researcher. She recently joined the University of New South Wales as an ARC DECRA fellow at the UNSW Institute for Climate Risk & Response. Samantha's research applies social psychological theory and research to study how people think, feel, and act in relation to climate change. This includes examining ecological emotions, (in)effective climate change communication, political polarisation on climate change, the psychology of meat consumption and abstention, and attitudes towards climate policy reform. Her DECRA research aims to understand public attitudes towards providing funding and migration pathways for those most affected by climate change.

Wednesday 24th July 2024

10:30am - 11:30am

Climate Change Research Centre Seminar Room

Level 4, Mathews Building, UNSW Sydney

UNSW Institute for Climate Risk & Response

UNSW SYDNEY

ICRR Seminar Series:

Eliza Northrop and Angelique Pouponneau

Climate Change Diplomacy and Australia's potential role in shaping the future of the UNFCCC

Australia is currently bidding to host the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC in 2026. If successful, Australia will host COP31 in partnership with the Pacific, creating the first regional COP Presidency. What will this mean for Australia and the region if we're successful? What will it mean for global climate diplomacy and the future structure of the UNFCCC? Fundamentally, what is a COP and how are they used to shape domestic and international climate ambition? In this seminar, we will tackle these questions and aim to articulate a potential pathway for Australian leadership on key regional issues such as resilience, ocean-climate action and gender equality. We will also provide insights and lessons learned from climate change negotiations, focusing on various tactics used and strategies to overcome them. We will explore systemic and everyday issues arising in UNFCCC negotiations, illustrated through real-world examples. We will cover text interpretation, the structural challenges and equity considerations, navigating trust dynamics in negotiation groups and what the UNFCCC will need to tackle as impacts worsen and inequality continues to be exacerbated. The next few years will be critical in shaping the future of international and regional climate governance and Australia could play a defining role.

Speaker Bio:

Eliza is the Director of the UNSW Centre for Sustainable Development Reform within the Faculty for Law and Justice. She's an international environmental lawyer, specialising in climate change and ocean governance. Before joining UNSW she helped established the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, a group of 18 serving heads of state and government. She has published extensively on multilateral treaty design, supported governments in developing national climate commitments and established global coalitions on decarbonisation. She holds an LLM in Environmental Law from NYU, MBA from the University of South Australia, LLB with Honours from the University of Adelaide and Bachelor of Arts (Environmental Studies) from the University of Adelaide. She's admitted to the New York Bar

Angelique is a lawyer from the Seychelles and holds an LLM in Environmental Law specialising in the law of the sea and natural resources law. She is currently pursuing a PhD investigating an enabling legal environment for the sustainable ocean economy in SIDS. She was the Chief of Staff to the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Climate Action and Just Transitions. She previously served as a policy and strategy adviser on ocean and climate matters to the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States and prior to that held the position of Chief Executive Officer of the Seychelles' Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust. In 2021, The New African Magazine recognised her as the 100 most influential Africans. Angelique has worked in different countries in the Caribbean, Pacific and the Indian Ocean on a wide range of projects relating to sustainable fisheries, and sustainable management of marine biodiversity within and beyond national jurisdiction. She serves on the advisory board of the UN Ocean Decade.

Wednesday 21st August 2024

10:00am - 11:00am

Climate Change Research Centre Seminar Room

Level 4, Mathews Building, UNSW Sydney

UNSW Institute for Climate Risk & Response

UNSW SYDNEY

ICRR Seminar Series:

Scientia Professor Shan Pan and Ms Marion Cooray

Leveraging Historical Data for Climate Prediction In Vietnam: An Imprinting Perspective

Although data science offers a promising avenue in climate prediction, the lack of adequately downscaled climate projections with diverse local contexts remains a significant challenge. Although history has left behind a wealth of data captured in human archives, there is a discernible gap in understanding how they can be used to develop climate projections. We present a case study of a project that used historical records to develop a long-term climate data series for Vietnam. Our preliminary insights highlight how historical imprints can be leveraged to navigate present uncertainties by synthesizing the past with the present.

Speaker Bio:

Scientia Professor Shan L Pan is Deputy Head of School (Research) at the School of Information Systems and Technology Management, UNSW Business School. He is the founding director of the Digital Sustainability Knowledge Hub (DS Hub), which specialises in research on digital sustainability and aims to contribute to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). He is also a chief investigator at the ARC Next-Gen Manufacturing ITTC Centre, Australian Research Council (ARC). Shan's research interests include digital technologies' enabling roles in sustainability and climate resilience, focusing on the Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) and Agriculture sectors. He is the chief investigator at the UNSW Institute of Climate Risk and Response (ICRR). As a design science researcher, Shan has invented a sustainability intelligence system that tracks leading business organisations' Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) performance.

Ms Marian Cooray's research interests lie in the role of digital technology in addressing climate change, with a particular focus on developing countries. She is also passionate about data analytics and AI for social good and how digital solutions can include minority groups. Before commencing her PhD at UNSW Business School—School of Information Systems/ Technology Management, she held over a decade of industry experience at the C-suite level. She has a multidisciplinary background as a professional accountant with a Master's in Business Administration and a Bachelor's in Business Economics.

Wednesday 25th September 2024

10:30am - 11:30am

Climate Change Research Centre Seminar Room

Level 4, Mathews Building, UNSW Sydney

UNSW Institute for Climate Risk & Response

UNSW SYDNEY

ICRR Seminar Series:

Assoc. Professor Kristle Romero Cortes

Banking on Resilience: Integrating Climate Risk into Bank Stress Testing

This project uses finance factor modeling to quantify banks' exposure to climate risk, offering insights into their resilience to climate change. By pinpointing areas of vulnerability, the project aims to support financial institutions in bolstering their adaptability to climate risks and to guide regulatory updates for a more resilient financial system. Additionally, these insights contribute to developing improved stress-testing frameworks.

Speaker Bio:

Dr. Kristle Cortés is an Associate Professor in the School of Banking and Finance in the Business School at the University of New South Wales. Her research interests include financial intermediation, empirical corporate finance, entrepreneurial finance, and the structure, optimization, and regulatory practices of the financial services industry. Dr. Cortés previously worked for the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland where, in addition to her research, she took part in the Federal Open Market Committee process. Her work has been published in the Journal of Financial Economics, The Review of Economics and Statistics and The Review of Corporate Finance Studies. Dr. Cortés has a PhD in finance from Boston College and a BA in economics and philosophy from Northwestern University.

Wednesday 13th November 2024

10:30am - 11:30am

Seminar room 2093

Level 2, Quadrangle Building, UNSW Sydney

UNSW Institute for Climate Risk & Response

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