

**Un-Common Read: *How To Avoid A Climate Disaster:
The Solutions We have and the Breakthroughs We Need***
An Honors Program Course

IDH 2930 (1 Credit; Section 26754; Class No. 2509) – Fall 2025

VERSION 1

Syllabus

Instructor: Joseph J. Delfino, PhD, BCES (a.k.a. for class: Dr. D.)

Courtesy Professor Emeritus, Environmental Engineering Sciences and ESSIE, UF Faculty, UF Honors Program

Important Notes: General Comments –

Please be aware of infectious diseases: seasonal flu; Covid-19; etc. that may spread on and off campus, among your friends, classmates, or living group.

During this semester, if you get sick, do not come to class. Contact Dr. D. at delfino@ufl.edu so I will know your current situation. Call your primary health care provider or the UF Student Health Care [SHC] Center at 352-292-1161. Get tested, especially for Covid, and then receive instructions from your medical provider about attending class. The UF Student Health Center offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who is sick or has tested Covid-positive.

There is no on-line section for this course. Only one class session is held each week. If you miss class due to illness, you will need to make up missed class material by consulting with Dr. D. If you learn that you will miss a class when you are scheduled to make a presentation, you will need to arrange a “presentation swap” with a classmate. Written documentation of your illness is required, preferably from a medical professional or, optionally, from someone else who can attest to your illness.

Contact Information: Correspond or meet with Dr. D., as needed:

- Before or after class or via E-mail to delfino@ufl.edu.
- By appointment – Schedule with Dr. D. to meet in 525M Weil Hall. Dr.D.’s office is on the West end of the 5th floor of Weil Hall. Weil Hall is located across the street from the South Endzone of Ben Hill Griffin football stadium. Please arrange meetings in advance via email or before/after a regular class meeting.
- “Drop-in” office visits: OK on Wednesdays from 9:45 to 10:45 AM.

Class Time and Location:

- Class meets on Wednesdays, 11:45 AM – 12:35 PM (5th Period) in Room 117 Little Hall. The first class session will be on Wednesday, August 27, 2025.
NOTE: Most UF classes will begin the previous week on Thursday August 21 but not our class!

Course Narrative:

- Climate change caused by natural and/or human activities that produce carbon dioxide [CO₂] has seemingly led to: (1) human health (heat related) illness; (2) vegetation desiccation (drying out forests and grasses leading to forest fires); (3) excessive precipitation in certain geographical areas leading to severe flooding, land erosion and coastal storm surges.

Course Details:

- This is a one credit seminar-style discussion course that meets for one class period each week on Wednesday at 11:45 AM [5th Period] in **Little Hall Room 117**. If circumstances require a change, an alternative time/place will be announced in advance by email or in class. I suggest that students check e-mail at least once each day.
- Each student will be responsible for leading at least one discussion period covering assigned text material and information related to the (Un)Common reading book [***How to Avoid A Climate Disaster***, see p. 5]. Class presentations will summarize information included in the reading assignment(s). Student presenters will provide questions to start discussions.
- **Buy the required course book before class begins if possible. Check with the UF Campus Book Store in the Reitz Union.** Alternatively, books can be found on-line at reasonable prices. Check Amazon, Book Finder or other sources but make sure you can get timely delivery . The UF Book Store should have copies but their inventory isn't always sufficient to supply every student in the course.
- PowerPoint slides, handout materials, etc.: use to support presentations.
- Written assignments, e.g., a term paper or other possible written assignments, will be discussed during the September 17th class.

- Some course materials may be posted in Canvas but other course material will be managed in-class each week or sent by email from the instructor.

Course Objectives: To learn and discuss:

(a) possible reasons for observed changes in the earth's climate; (b) the ways in which human development activities have led to considerable greenhouse gas [GHG] production; and (c) arguments provided in Bill Gates' course reading book regarding GHGs; and (d) other materials that may be provided by Dr. D.

Course Grading:

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. (Exception: Honors Quest I and II sections require a C). Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Milestone/Completion Credit.

- Final letter grades will be issued based on: (a) preparation, delivery and discussion quality of student classroom presentations; (b) student attendance and participation in class discussions when others are making their presentations; (c) written assignments; and (d) a final wrap-up discussion with the instructor to be scheduled prior to the end of the course. Points for each requirement are indicated in the next section.
- **Letter grades** will be calculated using points earned for these student requirements:
 - a) Classroom presentation (30 pts);
 - b) Attendance in class each week (15 pts);
 - c) Active participation in classroom discussions (15 pts);
 - d) Written assignment(s) (30 pts);
 - e) End of semester discussion with the Instructor (10 pts).

Letter grade assignments will be based on the number of points earned, using 100 points as the maximum earnable points and the following ranges:

- A and A- (100 – 90 pts) D+, D (69 – 60 Pts)
- B+, B (89 – 80 pts) E (< 60 pts).
- C+, C (79 – 70 pts)

- **Attendance and Absences.** Attendance at every scheduled weekly class is **required** since there is only one class meeting each week during the semester. Unexcused absences will be reflected in the attendance portion of the course grade; each such absence results in a 5-pt. grading penalty. After **three unexcused absences**, no points will be awarded for class participation or attendance. If appropriate, with advance approval from the Instructor, written assignment(s) may substitute for a class meeting.
- Everyone in the class is responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as stated in this Syllabus. Absences will count beginning with the second meeting of this course, i.e., starting on September 3, 2025.
- Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements for other courses (e.g., field trips, professional conferences), documented military obligations [e.g. ROTC, and reserve activity under orders], severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences for court-ordered legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) will be excused in advance.
- Students should discuss with the Instructor any optional assignment required to make up the material or activities covered in any class that was missed due to an excused absence.
- Students cannot participate in classes unless they are officially registered. The Office of the University Registrar provides official class rolls.
- If a student does not attend at least one of the first two class meetings of the course in which they are registered, **and** he/she has not contacted the Honors Program or the Instructor to indicate their intent to remain in the course, the student may automatically be dropped from the course. Any questions about this, contact the Honors office or the Instructor.
- The university recognizes the right of the individual Instructor to make attendance mandatory. After unexcused absences and due warning (this Syllabus constitutes such notice), Instructors can prohibit further attendance and then assign a failing grade for unexcused absences.

- **Course Reading Book:** *How to Avoid A Climate Disaster* by Bill Gates, First Vintage Books Edition, 2022; Paperback ISBN 978-0-593-08185-3
- Students at UF commit themselves to uphold the Honor Code, and have accepted the pledge: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code."* All homework, reports, and papers must represent a student's own individual work unless otherwise directed by the instructor.
- Plagiarism in writing assignments is not acceptable and violates the Honor Code. Such violations will receive grading penalties and will be reported to the Dean of Students as well as the student's College Dean and the Honors Program Director. Students have the responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. See the Honor Code website:
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/resources/shca>.

Class Schedule:

<u>Week</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u><i>How to Avoid A climate Disaster Readings</i></u>	<u>Leader(s)*</u>
1	Aug 27	Student & Course Introductions	Dr. D.
2	Sep 3	Ch. 1 Why Zero?	TBA
3	Sep 10	Ch. 2 This Will Be Hard	TBA
4	Sep 17	Ch. 3 Five Questions	Dr. D.
5	Sep 24	Ch. 4 How We Plug In	TBA
6	Oct 8	Ch. 5 How We Make Things	TBA
7	Oct 15	Ch. 6 How We Grow Things	TBA
8	Oct 22	Ch. 7 How We Get Around	TBA
9	Oct 29	Ch. 8 Keeping Cool and Warm	TBA
10	Nov 5	Ch. 9 Adapting to Warmer World	TBA
11	Nov 12 ^	Ch. 10 Government Policies Matter	TBA
12	Nov 19^	Ch. 11 Plan Getting to Zero	TBA
13	Nov 26	No Class - Thanksgiving Holiday	Travel Safely
14	Dec 3^	Ch. 12 What Each of Us Can Do	TBA

^ Individual discussions with the instructor will take place between Nov 12 and December 3 with time and location TBA (To Be Announced)

Software Use:

- All faculty, staff and students at the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Campus/Academic Resources:

Honors Program Contact Information:

Honors Program Office, 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519

Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email advisor@honors.ufl.edu

Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings:

<https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>

- Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance:
 - *University Counseling and Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1601, www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/ Counseling Services, Groups and Workshops, Outreach and Consultation, Self-Help Library, Training Programs, Community Provider Database.*
 - *Career Resource Center, 1st Floor, J. Wayne Reitz Union, 392-1601, www.crc.ufl.edu*

Students with Disabilities Act:

- Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resources Center (352-392-8565) or www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/ by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations:

- Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing an online evaluation at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically opened during the last two or three weeks of the semester; students will generally be given specific times when they are open. A summary of results of these assessments will be available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Religious Observations:

- Requests for excused absences from class to allow participation in religious observations should be made to the instructor as a courtesy in advance of the absence. If a student requesting this absence is scheduled to be leading a discussion on that day, it is the student's responsibility to arrange with another student in the class to switch the dates and topics of their previously established requirements. Please inform the instructor of this "trade" in advance of the class period in which it is to occur.
- Cell Phone Management - Please turn cell phones off during class.