

MPH/PRVM 6413: The Impacts of the Climate Crisis on Health and Clinical Medicine

Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

What is this elective about?

Students will learn about the global impact that the climate crisis is having on health systems, health equity and justice, patient populations, and the incidence and prevalence of disease. Students will also learn about how healthcare professionals are addressing the climate crisis, the challenges that they face, and how climate change will impact the students in their future clinical practice. By the end of the course, students will be competent in informing action plans that will help mitigate the problems facing healthcare and local communities due to the climate crisis in their role as future physicians and healthcare professionals.

Who can enroll in this elective?

This elective has been approved for enrollment for both MPH students and medical students (MSI – MSIV) at Upstate. Students enrolled in other programs or institutions (e.g., SUNY ESF) may consult their registrar and the course instructor for more information on enrolling.

How many credits is this elective worth?

Students can take this course for 1.0 credit or 3.0 credits. MPH taking this course as their main Spring 2025 elective must take the course for 3.0 credits.

How do the credit options differ?

	1.0 Credit	3.0 Credits
Attend all 7 required class sessions	X	X
Attend at least 3 topic student-led discussion presentations of your choosing	X	X
Lead 1 student-led discussion presentation	X	X
Participate in class activities	X	X
Review all asynchronous material and complete pre-class session quizzes with a passing grade	X	X
Complete the Applied Final Project		X
Attend Project Check-In Sessions throughout the semester		X

When is this elective?

This elective is offered each spring semester. The course meets on 7 Mondays from 5:30–7:30pm. The course will meet on January 6, January 13, January 27, February 10, February 24, April 14, and April 21. From March 3–April 7, students will prepare and present student-led discussion presentations. You will be able to sign up and select presentation times that align with your schedule. Those students taking the course for 3.0 credits will also need to attend Project Check-In Sessions throughout the semester.

What will the applied project include?

This final project will allow students to build and demonstrate competencies in climate change and health. The project will include domains of evaluating the climate and health literature, sustainability planning, working with climate and health data, understanding health benefits of climate action, and strategically designing communication and advocacy plans for the project topic. Students will meet with the instructor throughout the semester to check-in on their final project status. Students will present on their final projects on Monday April 21st and submit the remainder of their project on April 23rd.

How is the elective graded?

Pre-session quizzes, class activities, attendance and participation, and the student led presentation will each be worth 10 points. The applied final project will be worth 40 points. Medical students taking the course will be graded as Pass/Fail and must receive a 70% or above in the course to pass. MPH students taking the course for 3.0 credits will be graded out of 80 points.

What will this elective *not* include?

This elective will not include a history of climate policy or an in-depth overview of the science of climate change. While we will touch on these topics as they pertain to health, the structure of the course will not allow a comprehensive overview of these topics. Students may ask for additional resources if they'd like to learn more. The elective will also focus specifically on climate change, including mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. While other factors of environmental may relate tangentially to climate change, they will not be the focus of this class.

How do I learn more?

If you are interested in learning more, have additional questions, or want to allow students in your program to enroll in this elective, you can email the course director, Dr. Augusta Williams at williaau@upstate.edu.

How do I register?

You can register in My Upstate / Banner. If you have trouble registering, please reach out to the course director, Dr. Augusta Williams at williaau@upstate.edu.

Who teaches this elective?

This elective is taught by Dr. Augusta Williams, who is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. Dr. Williams has received her MPH in Environmental Health and a Certificate in Climate and Health from Columbia University and her Doctorate of Science in the same field from Harvard University.

