

JUST ECOSOCIAL TRANSITIONS
POLS692, Fall 2025
(Revised, October 28/November 13, 2025)

Classroom: Eddy 108

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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11-12
Tuesday 3-4 and by appointment

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I. Content of Seminar: This seminar explores questions of social and environmental justice during sustainability transitions, broadly construed, through the lens of the concept of just transition. A just transition is one that is socially and ecologically just towards the people and natures vulnerable due to a transition. Such a transition may be due to environmental or social factors, a disaster or a crisis. Assuming that all social transitions are also environmental and all environmental transitions are also social allows us to broaden and deepen ecosocial thought and practice. This is not a seminar exclusively and narrowly on just transition but, rather, uses the concept to explore broader debates in the political economy/ecology of ecosocial justice and sustainability transitions.

Upon completion of the seminar students will have a sophisticated understanding of the central issues and debates amongst scholars in the field of green political economy/ecology and will have advanced their own research agendas. Specifically, students will be able to:

- Address questions of just green transitions from various theoretical and methodological approaches;
- Address questions of socioecological justice and just transition, also from various theoretical and methodological approaches;
- Address questions of sustainability transitions, also from various theoretical and methodological approaches;
- Identify the key concepts and debates that comprise these areas of academic study;
- Be aware of key issues and approaches on which these areas are silent;
- Research, analyze and write about these issues as a social scientist.

II. Course Materials: While I will provide significant background and advance guidance I will not lecture.

The class material, including your work, will be posted on Canvas. A large number of readings consists of articles and a smaller one of chapters. Because the debates about just transition are emergent we will also read a number of reports, review a number of websites and see recorded webinars. If our library has electronic versions of the journals you will be expected to get the articles directly from the journals [electronic]. Articles and chapters that are not readily available will be placed on Canvas.

III. Format, Contact Hours and External Work: The seminar will meet from 3:00pm to 5:50pm MST every Thursday. Attendance expectations are those of any seminar, i.e., absences kept to the absolute minimum and for emergency reasons only. During class meetings we are going to often use breakout sessions and other ways to enhance interaction. I welcome suggestions. Students are expected to invest at least 3 hours of external work every week for every credit hour.

IV. Academic Integrity. This course adheres to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. Colorado State University has long upheld values of academic and scholastic integrity. The General Catalog's "Policies and Guiding Principles" asserts that CSU "expects students to maintain standards of personal integrity that are in harmony with the educational goals of the institution" - citing "principles of academic honesty" as the first example. (1.6 Page 1).

V. Evaluation. Your evaluation will be based on 6 précis (of which the 5 best will be counted), (6% of your grade each – total 30%); class facilitation and participation (30%); and a research project (40%).

VI. Guidance for Class Discussions, Facilitations, and Précis.

The key goal of the weekly meetings is for you to learn how to organize readings/writings around key concepts, issues or themes while aiming to relate them to broader themes on just transitions. Stated differently, you should view weekly readings as steps towards understanding broader themes and not as ends in themselves.

- a. ***Analysis of Specific Readings (primary)***. What is the purpose of each reading or why did the author write it? What is the specific argument that the author makes about transitions? How does the author support her argument or what is her evidence (you should follow the reading's outline).
- b. ***Connections***. How do some or all of week's readings relate to previous readings or other material you are familiar with? Suggestions of readings for future iterations of this seminar are welcome. Do any of these themes or any of the readings help you with your research agenda?
- c. ***Synthesis or Overarching Themes (primary)***. What is a central theme that brings together all of the readings? The goal here is to organize and compare the readings around one or two key ideas, issues, questions, dimensions, debates, continuum/range, difference and so on. The fewer these are, the better. Tables and other visuals are always welcome and encouraged.
- d. ***'Hidden figures'***: What are any important silences in our readings? This does not refer to topics not covered by a week's readings (given the length of time there are many). Rather, it refers to actors, issues and questions that ought to be covered.

VII. Weekly Seminars. Each week's seminar will be divided into 3 parts. During the **first part** we will discuss the individual readings along with connections, mostly in facilitated groups, to be followed by class discussion. During the **second part** we will discuss the synthesis and hidden figures, also mostly in facilitated groups, followed by open class discussion. While quality of contributions is more important than quantity you should contribute every week and frequently. The value of a seminar is not only to engage issues that we feel strongly or confident about but, equally importantly, to engage issues and views on which we feel less certain. I would ask that those of you who are more comfortable talking in public to be attentive to the class dynamics. During the **third part** I will provide some guidelines for the subsequent week's material. These will be brief as this is not a lecture class.

VIII. Facilitators/Rapporteurs. Each week several of you will serve as facilitators/rapporteurs. Your goal will be to facilitate group discussions, ensuring everyone participates, and summarize some main points or debates that were raised in your group. The facilitator is not the one primarily responsible for reading and discussing the readings. Everyone must be ready for that. The goal of the facilitator/rapporteur is not to provide a summary or a synthesis of the readings but, rather, to keep the discussion moving on and centered on the key issues. S/he will summarize the main divergences and convergences and any other interesting issues that emerged during the discussion but will not summarize the discussion or the readings. Innovative ways to organize and move the discussions forward are most welcome. Each one of you should be able to do 3-4 facilitations spread throughout the semester.

IX. Précis. The précis should focus on a synthesis of the weekly readings. You are expected to write six (6) précises of about 250 words each (not including references), even if you are satisfied with your grades. I will count only the five (5) best ones. Please avoid writing two sequential précis – unless there is a reason related to your research interests. In that case, please let me know. Please write a précis for each seminar you miss, even if that results in more than six précis. Précis should provide frequent and appropriate references to the readings. Please see samples in Sample Learning Module.

X. Research Project. *Research/writing project and presentations (Total 40% - Research Idea 5%; Research Question 5%; Short Research Proposal 10%; Research Paper 20%):* The project will reflect your state of preparation and degree to which you have settled on a research agenda. For some of you the best option may be a

literature review, for others a research or grant proposal, for still others a full draft of a paper you can present at a meeting and include in your thesis or dissertation— hence the research/writing format. The project will take place in stages and should be strongly articulated to the rest of your class work. In all cases this research/writing project will help you make progress in terms of your research agenda. Please see Steps of Research Process in Research Module. We will start discussing this at our second meeting. **The various components are due on specific times noted in syllabus.**

XI. Readings. We will mostly read articles, chapters and reputable online material. Chapters from books, articles from journals we do not subscribe to or other material that is not available electronically will be posted on Canvas. Articles in journals we subscribe to electronically can be accessed directly.

SCHEDULE

August 28

**Introductions
Individual Background and Interests
Logistics and Goals**

The Origins of Explicit Just Transitions

This and next week's readings provide a historical overview of the explicit use of just transition (more on implicit in class). This provides an important foundation for understanding subsequent political and theoretical developments.

Tony Mazzocchi (1993) An Answer to the jobs-environment Conflict? At <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/answer-jobs-environment-conflict>

Les Leopold (1995) Address to the Great Lakes International Joint Commission. [Canvas Readings Module]

Samantha Harvey, Samantha (2018) Leave No Worker Behind. *Earth Island Journal*. At http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/magazine/entry/leave_no_worker_behind/

Labor Network for Sustainability (2021) *Love, it Hate it: You've Heard the Term now Hear the Story*. Go to <https://www.labor4sustainability.org/just-transition-listening-project/> and click forward until you get to the one with the title above.

September 4

History of Explicit Just Transitions

Hampton, Paul (2015) *Workers and Trade Unions for Climate Solidarity: Tackling Climate Change in a Neoliberal World*. Routledge. Ch 3, especially pp. 58-93. [Canvas, Readings]

Stavis, Dimitris (2023) *Just Transitions: Promise and Contestation*. Cambridge University Press, Elements, parts 1&2. [Canvas, Readings Module]

Rosemberg, Anabella (2020) No Jobs on a Dead Planet': The International Trade Union Movement and Just Transition. In Edouard Morena, Dunja Krause and Dimitris Stavis (eds). 2020. *Just Transitions: Social Justice in the Shift Towards a Low-Carbon World*. Pluto Press, pp. 32-55. [Canvas Readings Module]

Pucheta, Mauro and Ana Belen Sanchez (2022) *Just Transition in the Global South: Perspectives from Latin America*. At https://etui.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Just%20transition%20in%20the%20Global%20South-Perspectives%20from%20Latin%20America_2022.pdf

Hizliok, Setenay, and Antonina Scheer (2024) What is the just transition and what does it mean for climate action? At <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/what-is-the-just-transition-and-what-does-it-mean-for-climate-action/>

September 11 The Diffusion of Just Transitions: Actors and Issues

The readings for this week provide a sense of the proliferation of the strategy of just transition from labour environmentalism and climate justice to other actors and other issue areas.

Stavis, Dimitris (2023) *Just Transitions: Promise and Contestation*. Cambridge University Press, Elements, part 3. [Canvas, Readings Module]

Climate Justice Alliance. Just Transition Principles. At https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CJA_JustTransition_highres.pdf

Climate Investment Funds (2022). *Just Transition*. Read landing page and guidance note. At <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/topics/just-transition>

C40 (2022) Why a Just Transition is essential for advancing ambitious city climate action? At https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Why-a-just-transition-is-essential-for-advancing-ambitious-city-climate-action?language=en_US

Just Transition and Care Network. 2024. *Care Work in the Just Transition: Providing for People and Planet*. Policy Brief. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. At <https://www.unrisd.org/en/library/publications/care-work-in-the-just-transition-providing-for-people-and-planet>

Stavis, Dimitris, Dunja Krause and Edouard Morena (2021). Towards a Just Transition from All: Lessons from the Pandemic. *International Journal of Labour Research*, 10(1–2), 52–64. (Canvas)

&

Medicare for All and Just Transition. At <https://djdinstitute.org/m4a-and-just-transition/>

*****September 15-17 Consultations in Research Ideas (virtual or in person)*****

September 18 Theoretical Approaches

This and next week will focus on the development of theoretical approaches towards the study of JT. This week starts some systematic reviews of the literature – useful examples of how to do literature reviews- and next week follows with some key readings.

Wang, Xinxin and Kevin Lo (2021) Just Transition: A Conceptual Review. *Energy Research and Social Science* 82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2021.102291>

Stark, Anthony, Fred Gale and Hannah Murphy-Gregory (2022) Just Transitions' Meanings: A Systematic Review. *Society and Natural Resources* 36(10): 1277-1297.

Wilgosh, Beccam, Alevgul Sorman and Inaki Barcena (2022, March) When Two Movements Collide: Learning from Labour and Environmental Struggles for Future Just Transitions. *Futures* 137. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2022.102903>

Stavis, Dimitris (forthcoming) Just Transition as a Contested Ecosocial Strategy. In Karen Bell, Emma Foster and Silpa Satheesh (eds) *SAGE Handbook of Eco Social Policy and Politics*. London: SAGE. (Canvas)

*****September 22 (M) Research Ideas Due on Canvas by 8pm. See Steps of Research process in Research Module*****

September 25 Genealogy or Theoretical Perspectives [Virtual Meeting]

Peter Newell and Dustin Mulvaney (2013) The Political Economy of the “Just Transition. *The Geographic Journal* 179 (2): 132-140. (Canvas, Readings).

Stavis, Dimitris and Romain Felli (2016) Green Transitions, Just Transitions? Broadening and Deepening Justice, *Kurswechsel* Heft 3: Klimapolitik und Systemwandel: 135-145 (Canvas, Readings)

Evans, Geoff and Liam Phelan (2016) Transition to a Post-carbon Society: Linking Environmental Justice and Just Transition Discourses. *Energy Policy* 99: 328-339. (electronic)

McCauley, Darren and Raphael Hefforn (2018) Just Transition: Integrating Climate, Energy and Environmental Justice. *Energy Policy* 119:1-7. [https://www.sciencedirect-com.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/science/article/pii/S0301421518302301?via%3Dihub](https://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/science/article/pii/S0301421518302301?via%3Dihub)

Abram, Simone et al. (2022) Just Transitions: A Whole Systems Approach to Decarbonization. *Climate Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2022.2108365>

October 2 To be rescheduled

October 9 Just Transitions From

The week of October 9 we will examine transitions from sunseting practices and industries, such as coal. The week of October 16 we will focus on emerging industries and technologies, such as renewables and AI. During the week of October 23, we will examine sectors that

are undergoing transitions but are neither sunseting or new, e.g., automobiles or healthcare.

Ritchie, Hannah and Pablo Rosado (2024) Fossil Fuels. Our World in Data. At <https://ourworldindata.org/fossil-fuels> [This is empirical background on fossil fuels. Good site for various kinds of data).

Newell, Peter and Andrew Simms (2021) How Did We Do That? Histories and Political Economies of Rapid and Just Transitions, *New Political Economy* 26 (6): 907-922 (Canvas)

Diluiso, Francesca et al. (2021) Coal transitions—part 1: a systematic map and review of case study learnings from regional, national, and local coal phase-out experiences. *Environmental Research Letters* 16(11). DOI 10.1088/1748-9326/ac1b58 (and Canvas)

Harry, Stephen, Tomas Maltby and Kacper Szulecki (2024) Contesting Just Transitions: Climate Delay and the Contradictions of Labour Environmentalism. *Political Geography* 112. <https://doi-org.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/10.1016/j.polgeo.2024.103114>

*****Oct 8-10 Consultations on Research Questions (virtual or in person)*****

October 16 Just Transitions To

Ritchie, Hannah, Max Roser and Pablo Rosado (2024) Renewable Energy. Our World in Numbers. At <https://ourworldindata.org/renewable-energy>.

Mulvaney, Dustin (2023) Renewable Energy and Just Transition. In Jeannie Sowers, Stacy VanDeveer and Erika Weinthal (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Environmental Politics*, pp. 679-695 (Canvas)

Riofrancos, Thea (2023) The Security–Sustainability Nexus: Lithium Onshoring in the Global North. *Global Environmental Politics* 23(1): 20-41.

Bastos Lima, Mairon (2022) Just transition towards a bioeconomy: Four dimensions in Brazil, India and Indonesia. *Forest Policy and Economics* 136. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2021.102684>

October 20 (M) Research Questions due by 8pm on Canvas. See Steps of Research Process in Research Module.

October 23 Just Transitions In

Anderson, Jeremy (2021) Part 1: Defend and transform – mobilizing workers in all sectors for climate justice. At <https://globallabourcolumn.org/2021/09/02/part-1-defend-and-transform-mobilising-workers-in-all-sectors-for-climate-justice/>

Anderson, Jeremy (2021) Part 2: Just transition beyond the industry shutdown scenario. At <https://globallabourcolumn.org/2021/09/05/part-2-just-transition-beyond-the-industry->

[shutdown-scenario/](#)

Atkins, Ed (2025) Green Jobs, Just Transition and the Future of Work. In Julie MacLeavy and Frederick Harry Pitts (eds) *The Handbook for Future of Work*. Routledge, 375-387.

Schwanen, Tim (2021) Achieving Just Transitions to Low Carbon Urban-Mobility. *Nature Energy* 6: 685-687. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-021-00856-z>

Silva, Jannifer, Sanya Carely and David Konisky (2023) “I earned the Right to Build the Next American Car”: How Autoworkers and Communities Confront Electric Vehicles. *Energy Research & Social Science* 99. <https://doi-org.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/10.1016/j.erss.2023.103065>

Tschersich, Julia and Christiaan Kok (2022) Deepening Democracy for the Governance Toward Just Transitions in Agri-Food Industries. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 43: 358-374.

*****Oct 24- Oct 28 Consultations on Short Research Proposals (in person or virtual)*****

October 30 Absence due to professional travel

November 6 The Breadth of Just Transitions: Spatial and Temporal Scales

Adam, Barbara. 2008. Of Timescapes, Futurescapes and Timeprints. Talk at Lüneburg University, 17 June 2008 (Canvas, Readings)

Massey, Doreen (2006) Space, time and political responsibility in the midst of global inequality. *Erdkunde* 60 (2): 89-95. (Canvas, Readings)

Stavis, Dimitris (2023) *Just Transitions: Promise and Contestation*. Cambridge University Press, Elements, part 4. [Canvas, Readings]

Zografos, Christos and Paul Robbins (2020) Green Sacrifice Zones or Why a Green New Deal Cannot Ignore the Cost Shifts of Just Transitions. *One Earth* 3(5): 543-546. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2020.10.012>

Andreucci, Diego, Gustavo García López, Isabella M. Radhuber, et al. (2023) The Coloniality of Green Extractivism: Unearthing Decarbonisation by Dispossession through the Case of Nickel. *Political Geography* 107 (November): 102997. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2023.102997>

November 13 The Depth of Just Transitions: Nature and Society

During this week we will examine the social and ecological priorities of just transitions

Stavis, Dimitris (2023) *Just Transitions: Promise and Contestation*. Cambridge University Press, Elements, part 5. [Canvas, Readings]

Heffron, Raphael (2022) The JUST Framework. Ch 2 in his *Achieving a Just Transition to a Low Carbon Economy*. SpringerNature. At <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-89460-3> and on canvas.

Schwanen, Tim (2021) Achieving Just Transitions to Low Carbon Urban-Mobility. *Nature Energy* 6: 685-687. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-021-00856-z> [review]

Vucetich, John et al. 2018. Just Conservation: What is It and Should We Pursue It? *Biological Conservation* 221: 23-33.

Walk, Paula (2024) From parity to degrowth: Unpacking narratives of a gender-just transition. *Energy Research & Social Science* 112.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2024.103513>

November 19 (W) Short Research Proposals Due on Canvas by 8pm. See Steps of Research Process in Research Module. Each of you will also be asked to provide more focused comments on one short research proposal due by 8pm, Friday, November 21. Please send comments to me.

Nov 20-21 Consultations on Research Proposals

November 20 The Ambition of Just Transitions

Stavis, Dimitris (2023) *Just Transitions: Promise and Contestation*. Cambridge University Press, Elements, part 5 and Conclusion. (Canvas, Readings)

Satgar, Vishwas (2018) The Anthropocene and Imperial Ecocide: Prospects for Just Transitions. In Vishwas Satgar (Ed) *The Climate Crisis: South African and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives*. Wits University Press. (Canvas, Readings)

Temper, Leah et al. (2018) A Perspective on Radical Transformations to Sustainability: Resistances, Movements and Alternatives. *Sustainability Science* 13: 747-764. (electronic)

Eckersley, Robin (2021) Greening States and Societies. From Transitions to Great Transformations. *Environmental Politics* 30 (1-2): 245-265.

5:00 -6:00 Rapid (3 minutes/2-3 slides plus 3 minutes comments) presentations of short research proposals.

November 27 Thanksgiving Break

**Dec 4 [TBF] Research and Writing
Consultations with Instructor**

Dec 11	Presentations of Research Project [No Change]
Dec 15 (M)	Research Project Due on Canvas (8pm)