



# Empowering Climate Action:

Exploring Climate Risk and Pathways to Adaptation

Summer School for Bachelor's Students

**3 - 7 August 2026**

Online sessions on 20, 22, 24, 27 and 29 July 2026

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

BERLIN • GERMANY

## PROGRAMME

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**Circle U.**  
European University Alliance

# Course Information

The Summer School "Empowering Climate Action: Exploring Climate Risk and Pathways to Adaptation" is organized as a blended format, with online sessions running on 20, 22, 24, 27 and 29 July 2026 and in situ classes in Berlin from 3 - 7 August 2026.

During the online part, students will engage with key concepts in climate science and research around climate change and risks. They are going to work in local teams to research climate policies at their respective universities, and present their findings during the final online session. During their stay in Berlin, they are going to work in mixed teams with students from other Circle U. universities. Students investigate real scenarios, work with practical data, and learn how climate risks intersect with food systems, health, infrastructure, and social justice. They also gain experience in designing feasible local adaptation measures, guided by university mentors and visiting experts.

Aside from the academic program, the Summer School proposes a cultural program: a welcome event with a roundtable discussion, and subsequent reception. Moreover, students will have the opportunity to visit the German Parliament and partake in social activities.

## Expected Learning Outcomes

This summer school provides participants with insights into a wide range of topics such as the impact of climate change, climate science and climate policies.

Having completed this course, students:

- demonstrate an understanding of climate change and climate risk assessment
- can critically assess and understand information
- can work and communicate across disciplines
- have experienced problem-based learning
- understand how climate risk intersect with food systems, health, infrastructure, and social justice
- will understand the importance, and need of climate change mitigation actions
- can engage with stakeholders in defining and addressing real-world challenges
- have developed new networks and collaborations

## Workload, Assessment and ECTS

The summer school corresponds to 47 face-to-face hours of academic classes (contact hours) and comprises 125 study hours in total (including self-study, research on policies, reading, group work, tasks etc.).

Attendance and active participation in all sessions is required in order to receive the Circle U. Certificate. Moreover, students' participation in the summer school will be assessed by a learning portfolio of tasks. The written part of the portfolio will be completed online (submission via HU-Moodle). Additionally, students will have to present their findings in group presentations and participate in an UN negotiation simulation on-site.

The portfolio is formative (assessed on a pass/fail basis). Successful participants will receive a Circle U. Certificate of Completion, Certificate Supplement and Transcript of Records (5 ECTS) issued by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Students that need a grade will have to contact the teaching team immediately (after being selected to participate) and will have to hand in an essay.



## Empowering Climate Action: Exploring Climate Risk and Pathways to Adaptation

| ONLINE PHASE TBA           |               |      |                |   |   |
|----------------------------|---------------|------|----------------|---|---|
| Day 1: MON<br>20 July 2026 | Time          | Room | Format         | Topic   | Lecturer(s)   |
|                            | 10:00 - 10:15 | ZOOM |                | <b>Check-In &amp; Introductions</b><br><br>This session will serve as the technical and social check-in for the online part of the Summer School. Students will be introduced to the main teaching tools as well as the core teaching team. |   |
|                            | 10:15 - 11:00 | ZOOM |                | <b>Breakout-Sessions:</b><br>Meet your Fellow Students  |   |
|                            | 11:00 - 11:15 |      |                | <b>BREAK</b>  |   |
|                            | 11:15 - 12:00 | ZOOM |                | <b>Introduction of the Preparatory Challenge for Local Teams</b><br><br>Students will receive written instructions and research policies at their own universities  | Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL<br>Dr. Wendy Morel, HU<br>Lilli Rupprechter, KCL<br>Prof. Marcel Robischon, HU<br>Wolfgang Deicke, HU<br>Isabelle Mensching, HU |
|                            | 12:00 - 13:00 |      |                | <b>LUNCH BREAK</b>  |   |
|                            | 13:00 - 14:00 | ZOOM |                | <b>Meeting of mentors</b><br><br>all groups are formed on the basis of university, and each has a mentor  | Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL<br>Dr. Wendy Morel, HU<br>Lilli Rupprechter, KCL<br>Prof. Marcel Robischon, HU<br>Wolfgang Deicke, HU<br>Isabelle Mensching, HU |
|                            | 14:30 - 16:30 |      | offline        | <b>Set reading on "Climate Change Science" and Risk Report</b>  |   |
| Day 2: WED<br>22 July 2026 | Time          | Room | Format         | Topic   | Lecturer(s)   |
|                            | 10:00 - 11:00 | ZOOM | Lecture        | <b>Introduction to Climate Change Science</b>   | Prof. Hermann Lotze-Campen, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, tbc  |
|                            | 11:00 - 12:00 | ZOOM | Lecture        | <b>Climate Risk</b>   | Dr. Hans Sanderson, AU  |
|                            | 14:00 - 16:00 |      | offline        | <b>Set reading on "Infrastructure"</b>  |   |
| Day 3: FRI<br>24 July 2026 | Time          | Room | Format         | Topic   | Lecturer(s)   |
|                            | 10:00 - 10:50 | ZOOM | Lecture        | <b>Infrastructure: Extreme Heat</b>   | Prof. Xiaofeng Guo, UPC   |
|                            | 11:00 - 12:00 | ZOOM | online         | <b>Work on group presentations</b>  |   |
|                            | 13:00 - 15:00 |      | offline        | <b>Set reading on "Challenges of Climate Policy"</b>  |   |
| Day 4: MON<br>27 July 2026 | Time          | Room | Format         | Topic   | Lecturer(s)   |
|                            | 10:00 - 11:50 | ZOOM | Lecture & Talk | <b>Challenges of Climate Policy</b>   | Lilli Rupprechter, KCL  |
|                            | 12:00 - 13:00 |      |                | <b>BREAK</b>  |   |
|                            | 13:00 - 14:00 | ZOOM | Lecture        | <b>Economy &amp; Finance</b>  | TBA   |
|                            | 14:00 - 15:00 | ZOOM | online         | <b>Finalize group work on local &amp; university policies</b>   |   |
| Day 5: WED<br>29 July 2026 | Time          | Room | Format         | Topic   | Lecturer(s)   |
|                            | 10:00 - 11:00 | ZOOM |                | <b>Group presentations: Round 1</b>   |   |



|  | 11:00 - 11:15 |             | <b>BREAK</b>              |   |                               |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | 11:15 - 12:15 | ZOOM        |                           | <b>Group presentations: Round 2</b>   |                               |
|  | 12:15 - 12:45 |             | <b>BREAK</b>              |   |                               |
|  | 12:45 - 13:45 | ZOOM        |                           | <b>Group presentations: Round 3</b>   |                               |
|  | 14:00 - 15:00 | ZOOM        | <b>Briefing</b>           | <b>Simulation Briefing</b>  | Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL       |
|  | 15:00 - 15:30 | ZOOM        |                           | <b>Feedback &amp; Preparation for in-situ phase</b>   |                               |
| <b>BERLIN SUMMER SCHOOL WEEK 3 - 7 August 2026</b> |               |             |                           |   |                               |
| Day 6: MON<br>3 August '26                         | Time          | Room        | Format                    | Topic   | Lecturer(s)                   |
|  | 09:45 - 10:45 | Senate Hall |                           | <b>Registration &amp; Reception</b><br>Student registration, Meet & Greet, Programs will be handed out, Coffee (with PhD school)  | HU Circle U. Team             |
|  | 11:00 - 12:00 | Senate Hall |                           | <b>Introduction to the Programme</b>  | HU Circle U. Team             |
|  | 12:00 - 13:00 |             | <b>LUNCH BREAK</b>        |   |                               |
|  | 13:30 - 15:00 | Senate Hall | <b>Lecture &amp; Task</b> | <b>Agriculture: Food (Footprint)</b>  | Prof. Marnik Vanclooster, UCL |
|  | 15:00 - 15:15 |             | <b>BREAK</b>              |   |                               |
|  | 15:15 - 16:30 | Senate Hall | <b>Lecture &amp; Talk</b> | <b>Ecosystems</b>   | Prof. Marcel Robischon, HU    |
|  | 18:00 - 20:00 | Senate Hall | <b>Welcome Event</b>      | <b>Reception with Roundtable &amp; Quiz</b>   | TBA                           |
| Day 7: TUE<br>4 August '26                         | Time          | Room        | Format                    | Topic   | Lecturer(s)                   |
|  | 09:00 - 10:00 | Auditorium  | <b>Lecture</b>            | <b>Planetary Health</b>   | TBA                           |
|  | 10:15 - 12:30 | Auditorium  | <b>Seminar</b>            | <b>International Climate Politics</b>   | Dr. Maeve Ryan, KCL, tbc      |
|  | 12:30 - 13:30 |             | <b>LUNCH BREAK</b>        |   |                               |
|  | 13:30 - 15:45 | Auditorium  | <b>Workshop</b>           | <b>Policy Papers</b>  | Lilli Rupprechter, KCL        |
|  | 15:45 - 16:00 |             | <b>BREAK</b>              |   |                               |
|  | 16:00 - 17:30 | Auditorium  | <b>Briefing</b>           | <b>Getting into Character: Meet your Fellow Negotiators</b>   | Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL       |
| Day 8: WED<br>5 August '26                         | Time          | Room        | Format                    | Topic   | Lecturer(s)                   |
|  | 09:00 - 12:00 | Auditorium  | <b>Simulation</b>         | <b>Simulation of UN Climate Negotiations</b><br>Students will get to explore the necessary speed and level of action that nations must take to address global climate change. Students will play the role of delegates representing countries. In groups, students will work through rounds negotiating amongst themselves and with other teams to propose climate pledges, and we will use software that informs the real UN debates to calculate and analyze the impact of each group's actions as they add up. | Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL       |
|  | 12:00- 13:30  |             | <b>LUNCH BREAK</b>        |   |                               |
|  | 13:30 - 14:30 | Auditorium  | <b>Simulation</b>         | <b>Simulation of UN Negotiations</b>  | Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL       |
|  | 14:30 - 15:00 |             | <b>BREAK</b>              |   |                               |
|  | 15:00 - 15:45 | Auditorium  | <b>Debriefing</b>         |   | Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL       |



|                                    |                      |                |                  |   |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------|---|----------------------------|
|                                    | 17:00 - 18:30        |                | <i>OPTIONAL</i>  | <b>Visit of the German Parliament*</b><br>A guided tour "explaining the functions, working methods and composition of Parliament, as well as the history and architecture of the Reichstag Building." | HU Circle U. Team          |
| <b>Day 9: THU</b><br>6 August '26  | <b>Time</b>          | <b>Room</b>    | <b>Format</b>    | <b>Topic</b>  | <b>Lecturer(s)</b>         |
|                                    | <b>09:00 – 16:30</b> |                | <b>Excursion</b> | tba   | Prof. Marcel Robischon, HU |
| <b>Day 10: FRI</b><br>7 August '26 | <b>Time</b>          | <b>Room(s)</b> | <b>Format</b>    | <b>Topic</b>  | <b>Lecturer(s)</b>         |
|                                    | <b>09:00 - 11:00</b> | tba            |                  | <b>Climate Risk Assessment Clusters - Lesson by PhDs</b>  | PhDs                       |
|                                    | <b>11:00 - 11:20</b> |                |                  | <i>BREAK &amp; ROOM CHANGE</i>  |                            |
|                                    | <b>11:30 - 13:00</b> | Auditorium     | Workshop         | <b>Climate Agency Workshop</b>  | Dr. Wendy Morel, HU, tbc   |
|                                    | <b>13:00 - 14:00</b> |                |                  | <i>LUNCH BREAK</i>  |                            |
|                                    | <b>14:00 - 15:00</b> | Auditorium     | Debriefing       | Evaluation, Handing out of Certificates and Transcripts   | Circle U. Team             |
|                                    | <b>15:00</b>         |                |                  | <i>Departure</i>  |                            |

Programme may be subject to change.

Students are advised to consult their local Examination Office and/ or study advisor regarding course recognition in their study programme.

# Introducing our Lecturers

**Hillary Briffa** is a Senior lecturer in National Security Studies at King's College London. She is also a founding member of the Centre for Grand Strategy, where she leads the Climate Change and International Order portfolio.

**Xiaofeng Guo** is Professor at the Faculty of Sciences, Université Paris Cité and an expert on energy engineering. He has worked on waste energy recovery for heating and cooling as well as on energy audit methods hybridizing big data with physics.

**Hermann Lotze-Campen** is an agricultural economist and Head of Research Department 2 "Climate Resilience" at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. He is also Professor of Sustainable Land Use and Climate Change at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

**Wendy Morel** is based at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She has worked in formal education in natural sciences in Mexico for more than 20 years and has developed and facilitated programmes and international teachers training in Education for Sustainable Development during the last ten years.

**Marcel Robischon** is a forest scientist, plant biologist and head of the Division of Agricultural Ecology at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. His scientific focus includes agricultural ecology and in particular developmental biology and ecology of woody plants. He is currently the Academic Director of Circle U's Climate Knowledge Hub.

**Lilli Rupprechter** is a PhD researcher in the Department of Geography at King's College London. Before joining King's, she spearheaded the development of national climate change communication strategies and researched risk perception of climate change within society at the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES) in Vienna.

**Maeve Ryan** is a Reader in History and Foreign Policy at the Department of War Studies at King's College London, where she co-directs the Centre for Grand Strategy.

**Hans Sanderson** chairs a center for climate services at Aarhus Universitet focusing on climate and transitional risks. His research interests range from sustainability, environmental risk analysis and climate risk assessment to international environmental policies.

**Marnik Vanclooster** is professor and the head of the Earth and Life Institute at Université catholique de Louvain. He develops research projects in the area of water resources engineering, agricultural water management and vadose zone hydrology.