



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.



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



	11:00 - 11:15		<i>BREAK</i>		
	11:15 - 12:15	ZOOM		Group presentations: Round 2	
	12:15 - 12:45		<i>BREAK</i>		
	12:45 - 13:45	ZOOM		Group presentations: Round 3	
	14:00 - 15:00	ZOOM	Briefing	Simulation Briefing	Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL
	15:00 - 15:30	ZOOM		Feedback & Preparation for in-situ phase	
BERLIN SUMMER SCHOOL WEEK 3 - 7 August 2026					
Day 6: MON	Time	Room	Format	Topic	Lecturer(s)
3 August '26				Registration & Reception	
	09:45 - 10:45	Senate Hall		Student registration, Meet & Greet, Programs will be handed out, Coffee (with PhD school)	HU Circle U. Team
	11:00 - 12:00	Senate Hall		Introduction to the Programme	HU Circle U. Team
	12:00 - 13:00		<i>LUNCH BREAK</i>		
	13:30 - 15:00	Senate Hall	Lecture & Task	Agriculture: Food (Footprint)	Prof. Marnik Vandooster, UCL
	15:00 - 15:15		<i>BREAK</i>		
	15:15 - 16:30	Senate Hall	Lecture & Talk	Ecosystems	Prof. Marcel Robischon, HU
	18:00 - 20:00	Senate Hall	Welcome Event	Reception with Roundtable & Quiz	TBA
Day 7: TUE	Time	Room	Format	Topic	Lecturer(s)
4 August '26					
	09:00 - 10:00	Auditorium	Lecture	Planetary Health	TBA
	10:15 - 12:30	Auditorium	Seminar	International Climate Politics	Dr. Maeve Ryan, KCL, tbc
	12:30 - 13:30		<i>LUNCH BREAK</i>		
	13:30 - 15:45	Auditorium	Workshop	Policy Papers	Lilli Rupprechter, KCL
	15:45 - 16:00		<i>BREAK</i>		
	16:00 - 17:30	Auditorium	Briefing	Getting into Character: Meet your Fellow Negotiators	Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL
Day 8: WED	Time	Room	Format	Topic	Lecturer(s)
5 August '26					
	09:00 - 12:00	Auditorium	Simulation	Simulation of UN Climate Negotiations 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		<i>LUNCH BREAK</i>		
	13:30 - 14:30	Auditorium	Simulation	Simulation of UN Negotiations	Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL
	14:30 - 15:00		<i>BREAK</i>		
	15:00 - 15:45	Auditorium	Debriefing		Dr. Hillary Briffa, KCL



	17:00 - 18:30		OPTIONAL	Visit of the German Parliament* 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
Day 9: THU	Time	Room	Format	Topic	Lecturer(s)
6 August '26					
	09:00 – 16:30		Excursion	tba	Prof. Marcel Robischon, HU
Day 10: FRI	Time	Room(s)	Format	Topic	Lecturer(s)
7 August '26					
	09:00 - 11:00	tba		Climate Risk Assessment Clusters - Lesson by PhDs	PhDs
	11:00 - 11:20	<i>BREAK & ROOM CHANGE</i>			
	11:30 - 13:00	Auditorium	Workshop	Climate Agency Workshop	Dr. Wendy Morel, HU, tbc
	13:00 - 14:00		<i>LUNCH BREAK</i>		
	14:00 - 15:00	Auditorium	Debriefing	Evaluation, Handing out of Certificates and Transcripts	Circle U. Team
	15:00		<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.