



# 1. Model UNFCCC – A cross-school initiative

**Global Collective Action Problem.** Climate change constitutes one of the most complex collective action challenges faced by the international community. Its causes and impacts transcend national borders, requiring coordinated responses among states with diverse economic structures, development levels, and political priorities. As a result, climate change is fundamentally a challenge of international governance, negotiation, and institutional design.

**States and the International Climate Regime.** National governments are the central actors in the global climate regime. They set mitigation and adaptation targets, design and implement domestic policies, and engage in international cooperation within the framework of the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**. This framework provides the primary multilateral arena for negotiations on emission reductions, climate finance, technology transfer, and mechanisms addressing loss and damage, while balancing environmental objectives against economic development and political feasibility.

**Political Economy of Climate Negotiations.** Climate policy under the UNFCCC is not a purely technical exercise driven by scientific evidence alone. Instead, it emerges from political negotiation under conditions of uncertainty, asymmetric information, and unequal power relations. Divergent national interests, historical responsibilities, and varying levels of vulnerability to climate impacts shape negotiation positions and outcomes.

**Course Objective and Perspective.** The Model UNFCCC roleplay course is designed to provide students with a structured understanding of international climate governance. It introduces the scientific foundations of climate change, the institutional architecture of the UNFCCC, and the political economy of international climate negotiations. Through an immersive roleplay in which students represent delegations of randomly assigned countries, participants gain insight into the positions, interests, and argumentation patterns that characterize real-world climate diplomacy.

**Course Structure and Content.** The course is structured in two main parts. The first part provides the conceptual foundations for engaging with international climate policy, covering climate science, key negotiation issues within the UNFCCC process, and the role of economic actors within the climate policy landscape. The second part focuses on targeted roleplay preparation. Through assignments, students acquire detailed knowledge of the background and negotiation positions of the country they represent, alongside structured training in negotiation and diplomacy skills. The in-depth knowledge and negotiation skills are then combined in the roleplay, where students can apply these skills in a realistic negotiation setting.

**Cross-School Collaboration and Scale.** Since 2009, the course has been offered simultaneously at the University of St. Gallen, ESADE Barcelona, and other leading European business schools. In 2026, participating institutions include Corvinus University of Budapest, Rotterdam School of Management, the University of Cologne, Stockholm School of Economics, Warsaw School of Economics, University College Dublin, the Norwegian School of Economics, and the London School of Economics. Approximately 200 students will participate, representing more than 100 countries as well as non-governmental organizations and special interest groups.

**The Model UNFCCC roleplay will take place from 11–13 May 2026 in St. Gallen.**

## 2. Administrative Information

<b>Title</b>	Model UNFCCC – Climate Change Strategy Roleplay
<b>Number</b>	14289.0803 14289.5006 (Incomings)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Lecturer</b>	Prof. Dr. Marc Oliver Bettzüge Marlene Bröcker, M.Sc. Chair in Economics, Energy and Sustainability at the University of Cologne <a href="http://www.energie.uni-koeln.de">http://www.energie.uni-koeln.de</a>
<b>Credits</b>	6
<b>Mode of examination and grades</b>	Exam type: <b>Planspiel</b> (Roleplay), see 3. Examination Exam registration: register for the examination via KLIPS. The registration deadline will be announced in the first session.

## 3. Examination: Planspiel (Roleplay)

<b>Background Paper</b>	40 Pts	Group work with an indication of individual contributions of the respective sections.
<b>Position Paper</b>	20 Pts	Group work with an indication of individual contributions of the respective sections.
<b>Reflection Paper</b>	Pass/ fail	Individual reflection paper on the draft agreement in light of previous group work.

**All parts must be passed in order to pass the course.**

### Assignments

All assignments and instructions will be provided via ILIAS.

All submissions are made via digital upload.

Details and deadlines will be announced in the first session.

## 4. Organization, Administration & Contact

For questions, please reach out to:

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<http://www.energie.uni-koeln.de>

## 5. Schedule and Submissions

Date	Start	End	Topic
16.03.2026	9:00	12:30	Kick-off
18.03.2026	9:00	12:30	Guest Lecture: Scientific Foundations of Climate Change
20.03.2026	9:00	12:30	History of International Agreements, Market Mechanisms
<b>20.03.2026</b>	<b>14:00</b>		<b>Deadline to register and deregister for the examination</b>
23.03.2026	9:00	12:30	Adaptation & Just Transitions, Climate Finance
25.03.2026	9:00	12:30	Guest lecture: Business & Climate Change
27.03.2026	9:00	12:30	Economics of CC/ Mitigation
30.03.2026	4:00	07:30	tba
<b>10.04.2026</b>	<b>23:59</b>		<b>Examination Part 1: Submission Background Paper</b>
13.04.2026	4:00	07:30	Background Paper Presentations first half (for Bonus points only, not mandatory). Q&A UNFCCC Guest.
20.04.2026	4:00	07:30	Background Paper Presentations second half (for Bonus points only, not mandatory). Negotiation Theory, Negotiation Games.
<b>26.04.2026</b>	<b>18:00</b>		<b>Submission First Draft Position Paper</b>
27.04.2026	4:00	07:30	Decorum, UNFCCC Negotiation Training
<b>04.05.2026</b>	<b>09:00</b>		<b>Examination Part 2: Submission Final Position Paper</b>
04.05.2026	4:00	07:30	Q&A, Opening Statements
<b>11.-13.05.2026</b>			<b>Model UNFCCC Roleplay in St. Gallen</b>
<b>27.05.2026</b>	<b>18:00</b>		<b>Examination Part 3: Submission Reflection Paper</b>
01.06.2026	4:00	07:30	Reflection Session