# APSC 498T - Policy Debate Activity

January 24, 2019

## Activity Description

The class will be divided into two groups based - the Environmentalists and the Cornucopians. This is an extremely binary division that obscures many important distinctions and intricacies, but for the purposes of this activity we will keep things simple. Take the guiding principles to be:

**Environmentalists:** Believe humans are only a piece of the ecological web, and we have a duty to protect, uphold, and live in harmony with the environment.

1. Melissa
2. Alexis
3. Taran
4. Peter
5. Jackson

**Cornucopians:** Believe humans are intelligent, important, and all powerful, and our environmental problems are manageable within our current framework.

1. Michael
2. David
3. Katie
4. Antonio
5. Ash

## Activity Structure

**Part 1:** As a group you will have ~10 minutes to develop a problem definition for climate change. As defined in the Judith Layzer reading, a problem definition includes:

- The scientific basis of understanding
- Social and economic costs and benefits of proposed solutions
- Risks of action or inaction

We will then come together as a class to present and debate problem definition from each viewpoint for ~10 minutes. We will then read the problem statement from the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and take it to move on to Part 2 of the activity.

**Part 2:** For the next ~20 minutes we will again break into groups and develop a position and short laundry list of policy prescriptions (now-2030 timeframe) for the following items, as described in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

- **2.0 Pricing Carbon Pollution**
  "Carbon pricing is broadly recognized as one of the most effective, transparent, and efficient policy approaches to reduce GHG emissions. Many Canadian provinces are already leading the way on pricing carbon pollution. British Columbia has a carbon tax, Alberta has a hybrid system that combines a carbon levy with a performance-based system for large industrial emitters, and Quebec and Ontario have cap-and-trade systems. With existing and planned provincial action, broad-based carbon pricing will apply in provinces with nearly 85 per cent of Canada's economy and population by 2017, covering a large part of our emissions."
- **3.3 Transportation**
  "The transportation sector accounted for about 23 percent of Canada's emissions in 2014, mostly from passenger vehicles and freight trucks. Transportation emissions are projected to decline slightly by 2030 if no further action is taken. Governments are already working to make all modes of transportation more efficient and convenient, but more action is needed."
- **3.4 Industrial Greenhouse Gas Emissions**
  "Canada's industries are the backbone of the economy, but they are also a major source of GHG emissions. In 2014, industrial sectors accounted for about 37 percent of Canada's emissions, the majority of which came from the oil and gas sector. Industrial emissions are projected to grow between now and 2030 as demand grows for Canadian-produced goods, at home and abroad."

We will come together to present and debate briefly our positions ~20 minutes.

Finally, we will debrief with the following discussion questions:

- What types of policy are either side of the issue more drawn towards?
- How is a divided policymaking process effective/difficult to achieve?
- Where is there possibility for consensus on climate change?

PS, check out the figure on the next page that describes Canadian GHG emissions, from the framework document.

## Emissions by sector in 2014 (megatonnes of $CO_2$ eq.)