

## Instructional Packet for Geopolitics of the Energy Transition Simulation Incorporating the “Giving Voice to Values” Framework

For students increasingly interested in climate change, class simulations are a useful and stimulating tool. This packet includes instructional materials for a course-long simulation in the context of a class on the “Global Politics of Climate Change”<sup>1</sup> that incorporates ethics and values via the “[Giving Voice to Values](#)” (GVV) framework and builds on [Carnegie Council principles](#), especially with respect to the commitment to international cooperation and the humanitarian imperative. Explicitly combining a political science simulation with ethics and values is important and useful because it speaks to students’ interests in values and demonstrates the ways in which their values can be pursued.

The subject of the simulation is the geopolitics of the energy transition. In trying to develop a [governance framework](#) to manage the just extraction, use, and export of critical minerals such as lithium and nickel, students are asked to grapple with questions pertaining to [climate ethics](#), [human rights](#), and [intergenerational justice](#). Broadly speaking, they will confront questions around inequalities between the Global North and Global South, tradeoffs within and between countries and corporations that have (sometimes, but not always, opposing) interests in mineral extraction and addressing climate change, and the [ethics of mining](#).

An earlier version of this simulation was taught to a class of 25 students, but the number of simulation parties could easily be adjusted depending on the number of students and the amount of support (e.g., teaching assistants) the instructor receives. Running the simulation is labor-intensive, but also quite rewarding for both students and faculty.

### The main order of tasks for the instructor is as follows:

**1. Before the semester begins:** Determine how many simulation parties you will have. For this version of the simulation, there are five parties: the People’s Republic of China, the United States, Chile, Indonesia, and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). This set of parties was selected to include representation from the Global North, Global South, and an international governmental organization. Global South countries such as Chile and Indonesia are important sources of raw materials, such as lithium and nickel, necessary for the green energy transition. Richer countries such as the U.S. and China seek access to these materials. International governmental organizations aim to set standards to govern such access and, in this case, to promote

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<sup>1</sup> Taught at the University of Minnesota. For additional information on a related simulation see Tanisha M. Fazal and Maria Sanchez (2022), “A Course-Long Online Simulation: The International Relations of COVID-19.” *Journal of Political Science Education* 19(2): 297-306.

the transition to a green economy. Additional simulation parties could have included NGOs representing Indigenous groups, richer countries with significant raw material deposits such as Australia, and multinational companies that aim to purchase these raw materials.

In addition to identifying simulation parties, instructors should also identify specific people students are representing, such as the minister of energy, the CEO of a company, etc. Note that the head of state/group role is assigned to an instructor rather than a student. Additionally, the primary instructor for the group is the official convenor of the negotiations (usually playing the role of an actor such as the United Nations secretary-general).

**2. Week two or three of class:** Sort students into simulation groups. After briefly introducing the simulation in class, students can fill out a (Google) form where they rank their simulation group preferences. Instructors can then place students in groups (and to specific roles) based on these preferences.

**3. As soon as students receive their simulation assignments:** Have students begin working on their pre-simulation briefs (see Appendix for assignment prompt).

**4. Before the simulation begins:** Set up dedicated email accounts. There should be two dedicated email accounts set up for each simulation party: one for the student delegation and one for the head of state/group. Note that platforms such as Gmail restrict how many accounts can be associated with a particular cell phone number, so you may have to use an additional platform (such as Yahoo). Marking the setting that does not require a security login/two-factor authentication is important to enable students to access their accounts. We also recommend including a line in the signature for each account that makes clear that the email account is associated with a course simulation.

**5. Before the simulation begins:** Write instructions from each head of state/group (see Appendix for examples). Instructions include a point structure at the end. To be consistent with the GVV framework, there should be at least one set of positive points that are collective and values-based.

**6. For the first class session devoted to the simulation:** Distribute simulation instructions (see Appendix). During this session, students should meet with their simulation groups, set up a means of communication among them, read their simulation instructions, and decide whether they want to push back against their head of state/group. They may also begin reaching out to other delegations.

**7. Prior to the opening plenary:** Devote some class time to the GVV framework and discuss how it will inform the simulation as well as opening statements.

**8. Opening plenary:** Students will deliver their groups' opening statements during this session. They may also begin negotiating with other parties. It is important to encourage students to walk across the room to speak to other simulation groups.

**9. As the simulation is ongoing:**

- a. Devote at least 30 minutes of class time for simulation time, which can include negotiations and working on the weekly update, each week.
- b. Share news articles with the class pertinent to the simulation that are sent to each delegation’s email account from the UN secretary-general’s account. Writing some fictional articles that are especially pertinent to the simulation can be a useful tool to focus students’ attention on a specific point (and it is also fun for students to guess which articles were real and which were fake at the end!).
- c. Be sure that each head of state/group is checking their emails at least once a day.

**10. The final plenary session:** Should be the same day that negotiations close, but can occur earlier in the day (depending on class time) than the negotiation deadline. While students often prefer a midnight deadline, instructors whose bedtimes are earlier than midnight may wish to set an earlier deadline for negotiations. Heads of state/group should block time out the last week—and, especially day—of negotiations, as there tend to be many emails going back and forth during that time.

**11. After negotiations close:** Students should be working on their simulation analysis (see prompt in Appendix).

Additional Carnegie Council resources that may be useful in informing the simulation include exercises such as “[Overcoming Political Short-Termism in Climate Adaptation](#)” and “[Creating Common Ground between Interest Groups and Government.](#)” Having students do these exercises in class either prior to the start of the simulation or as it is beginning can help them become accustomed to the simulation format and also to begin to work with their simulation group.

[Click here for the Appendix](#)

**Appendix contents include:**

1. “Giving Voice to Values” short article
2. Syllabus
3. Pre-simulation brief prompt
4. Instructions from heads of state/groups
5. Simulation instructions
6. “Giving Voice to Values” lesson plan for opening statements
7. Fake news articles and interventions circulated during the simulation
8. Real news articles circulated during the simulation
9. Simulation analysis prompt