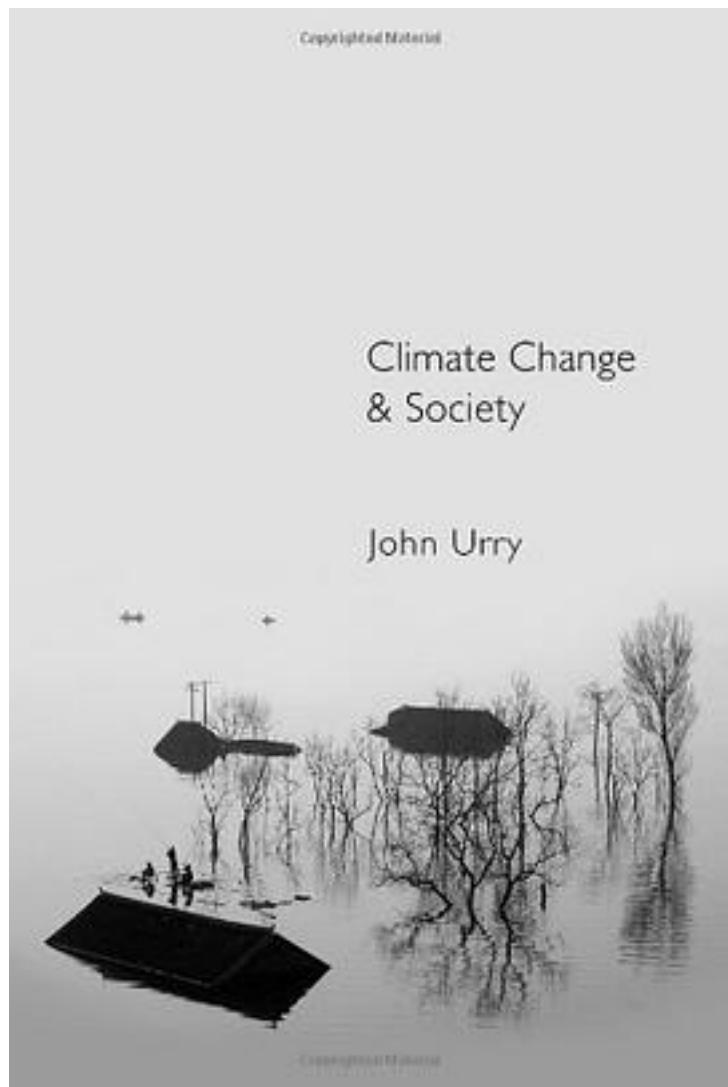


Climate Change and Society



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This book explores the significance of human behaviour to understanding the causes and impacts of changing climates and to assessing varied ways of responding to such changes. So far the discipline that has represented and modelled such human behaviour is economics.

By contrast Climate Change and Society tries to place the ‘social’ at the heart of both the analysis of climates and of the assessment of alternative futures. It demonstrates the importance of social practices organised into systems. In the fateful twentieth century various interlocking high carbon systems were established. This sedimented high carbon social practices, engendering huge population growth, increasing greenhouse gas emissions and the potentially declining availability of oil that made this world go round. Especially important in stabilising this pattern was the ‘carbon military-industrial complex’ around the world.

The book goes on to examine how in this new century it is systems that have to change, to move from growing high carbon systems to those that are low carbon. Many suggestions are made as to how to innovate such low carbon systems. It is shown that such a transition has to happen fast so as to create positive feedbacks of each low carbon system upon each other. Various scenarios are elaborated of differing futures for the middle of this century, futures that all contain significant costs for the scale, extent and richness of social life.

Climate Change and Society thus attempts to replace economics with sociology as the dominant discipline in climate change analysis. Sociology has spent much time examining the nature of modern societies, of modernity, but mostly failed to analyse the carbon resource base of such societies. This book seeks to remedy that failing. It should appeal to teachers and students in sociology, economics, environmental studies, geography, planning, politics and science studies, as well as to the public concerned with the long term future of carbon and society.

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