

The current interest in Climate Change owes a considerable debt to Al Gore, whose 2006 book and movie “An Inconvenient Truth” laid the groundwork for the current debate. You’ll be hearing a lot about Mr. Gore—both positive and negative—during this course.

If you don’t know much about Al Gore, check out the Wikipedia page or his website, AlGore.com. Al Gore is the recipient of a number of awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize (together with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change-IPCC) in 2007, a Primetime Emmy Award for Current TV in 2007, and a Grammy Award for best Spoken Word Album (2009) for his book, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Gore served as the 45<sup>th</sup> Vice President of the United States under President Bill Clinton (1993-2001). He was the Democratic Party’s nominee for President, but lost the 2000 US Presidential election despite winning the popular vote. On election night, news networks first called Florida for Gore, later retracted the projection, and then called Florida for Bush, before finally retracting that projection as well. Florida’s Republican Secretary of State, Katherine Harris, eventually certified Florida’s vote count. This led to the Florida election recount, a move to further examine the Florida results. The Florida recount was stopped a few weeks later by the U.S. Supreme Court. In the ruling, *Bush v. Gore*, the Justices held that the Florida recount was unconstitutional and that no constitutionally valid recount could be completed by the December 12 deadline, effectively ending the recounts. This 7–2 vote ruled that the standards the Florida Supreme Court provided for a recount were unconstitutional due to violations of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and further ruled 5–4 that no constitutionally valid recount could be completed by the December 12 deadline. This case ordered an end to recounting underway in selected Florida counties, effectively giving George W. Bush a 537 vote victory in Florida and consequently Florida’s 25 electoral votes and the presidency. The results of the decision led to Gore winning the popular vote by approximately 500,000 votes nationwide, but receiving 266 electoral votes to Bush’s 271 (one District of Columbia elector abstained). On December 13, 2000, Gore conceded the election. Gore strongly disagreed with the Court’s decision, but in his concession speech stated that, “for the sake of our unity as a people and the strength of our democracy, I offer my concession.”

The 2000 election is the subject of a 2008 made-for-TV movie directed by Jay Roach, produced by, and starring Kevin Spacey called *Recount*. It premiered on the HBO cable network on May 25, 2008. For the assignment, watch the movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*. It is available to rent on YouTube for \$2.99 or you can buy it on Amazon for \$4.00.