

**GEOGRAPHY 2153B: ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY
Winter 2013**

Course Outline

Instructor:	Tor H. Oiamo (thoiamo@uwo.ca ; Room 1424 SSC)
Office Hours:	Thursdays: 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm or by appointment
Class Times:	Thursdays: 10:30 am – 1:30 pm
Location:	B&GS 0165
Teaching Assistants:	Chad Walker (cwalke26@uwo.ca) Office hours: Wednesdays 10:00am – 12:00pm, SSC 1424 Autumn Gambles (agambles@uwo.ca) Office hours: Tuesdays 10:00am – 12:00pm, SSC 2435
Prerequisite:	<i>None</i> (note that it is the student's responsibility to check home program requirements and obtain necessary permissions)
Antirequisite:	<i>Geography 2450 F/G</i>

Course Description

Environment, Economy and Society constitute the three pillars of sustainability, therefore sustainable development can be viewed as development that seeks to balance environmental, economic, and social outcomes. While the dominant discourse on sustainability presents the environment as the limiting factor, an alternative view is that innovation, creativity and resourcefulness are the limiting factors. In either case, sustainable development revolves around tradeoffs between environment, economy and society, and the nature of tradeoffs is often such that information, power and values become important points to consider. Through the lens of systems thinking, this course provides a theoretical foundation for understanding sustainability concepts and an introductory survey of geographical practices for addressing sustainable development issues.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed to promote active learning through student practice and engagement. The lectures, group discussions and term project will provide you with the tools to:

- (1) Demonstrate your comprehension of and ability to apply *systems thinking* to frame the balance between environmental, economic and social outcomes along with tradeoffs in sustainable development (midterm exam)
- (2) Reflect on values, power and information as points of contention in contemporary issues of sustainable development (group discussions and reflection paper)
- (3) Utilize geographical concepts and methods to address local sustainable development challenges (group project)

Course Materials

Required text (available from UWO bookstore):

Meadows, D.H. (2008). *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

- In addition to the course text you will be provided weekly readings via OWL. Readings will be posted prior to relevant lectures, and will form the basis for lecture materials or supplement the lecture topic.

Evaluation:

Midterm Exam:	25% (February 7 in class)
Final Exam:	35% (Take home, open book format)
Group project:	20% (See below)
Participation:	10% (Peer evaluation)
Reflection Paper:	10% (Individual due dates)

Schedule

Wk	Date	Lecture topics	Readings	Group Notes
		Part 1: Sustainability and Systems Thinking		
1	Jan 10	<i>Course Description</i> <i>Introduction to sustainability</i>	<i>See OWL</i>	
2	Jan 17	<i>Frameworks and Worldviews</i> <i>System Structure and Behaviour</i>	<i>Meadows, pp. 1 - 85</i>	QD
3	Jan 24	<i>Limits and Information</i>	<i>Meadows, pp. 86 - 110, 166 - 185</i> <i>(Harrison, 1991)</i>	QD Groups assigned
4	Jan 31	<i>System Traps and Opportunities</i> <i>Leverage/Intervention Points</i>	<i>Meadows, pp. 111 - 141, 145 - 165</i> <i>(Hardin, 1968)</i>	QD Group contracts
5	Feb 7	MIDTERM EXAM		
6	Feb 14	Group Project Description and Planning		QD
7	Feb 21	<i>No class - Reading week</i>		
		Part 2: Contemporary Issues in Sustainable Development		
8	Feb 28	<u><i>Introduction to Geography:</i></u> <i>~Theories and Methods</i> <i>~Sub-Disciplinary Approaches to Sustainable Development</i>	<i>See OWL</i>	Project proposal due
9	Mar 7	<u><i>Urban Development:</i></u> <i>~Sustainable Transportation</i> <i>~Land Use in North America</i> <i>(Documentary: Requiem for Detroit)</i>	<i>See OWL</i>	QD Proposal returned
10	Mar 14	<u><i>The Welfare State:</i></u> <i>~Health and Health Care</i> <i>~The Future of Work</i>	<i>See OWL</i>	QD
11	Mar 21	<u><i>Global Change and Resource Management:</i></u> <i>~Geopolitics and Climate Change</i> <i>~Food Security</i>	<i>See OWL</i>	QD
12	Mar 28	<u><i>Power, Values and Information</i></u> <i>~Governance</i> <i>~Democracy</i> <i>~Communication</i>	<i>See OWL</i>	QD
13	Apr 4	Poster presentations		
14	Apr 11	- Course review - Final take-home exam issued		

Assignments and Participation

Question of the Day

Time will be allotted at the end of each lecture for assigned groups to discuss and come up with an answer to a Question of the Day (QD). ALL group members are expected to contribute to the discussion whenever a group member is required to write a reflection on the week's QD.

Reflection Paper (10%)

You are required to hand in one reflection paper during the course. Due dates for this assignment are individual and distributed throughout the term. **A schedule will be posted on WebCT and it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to check the deadline for your paper.** Papers are to be submitted electronically by midnight of the due date. Failure to submit the paper on time will result in a grade of 0; no late assignments will be accepted without valid documentation.

The reflection paper (**700-800 words; 3 pages**) provides an opportunity for you to critically examine your understanding of the week's lecture topic(s). It should clearly state your *opinion* on the Question of the Day in a paragraph/essay style format. You are free to use any style of argument. References must follow an established format (e.g., APA, see <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/services/styleguides.html> for assistance).

Group Project (20%)

During the second half of the term you will work with your assigned group to complete a proposal that will address a sustainable development challenge in London. The proposals will be presented as academic posters in a 'mini-conference' during lecture hours towards end of term. Details will be provided in class. See schedule above for relevant dates. The printing cost for the posters will be shared by group members (\$10-20 per person).

Participation (10%)

At the end of the term you will be asked to evaluate other members of your group based on their attendance at group meetings throughout the term (5%) and contribution to the group project (5%).

Course policies

Academic dishonesty: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Scholastic Offence policy: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading.

Other policies

1. Retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and graded assignments.
2. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations or other similar commitments should discuss their commitments with the instructor.

3. Mobile telephones and any similar devices should be switched off during class. If you bring one to class, be sure to turn it off or you will be asked to leave. No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.
4. Email and/or office hours, are the best ways to contact your instructor and/TAs.

Western's commitment to accessibility

The University of Western Ontario is committed to achieving barrier free accessibility for persons studying, visiting and working at Western.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Support Services

Registrarial Services: <http://www3.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm>

Student Development Services: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>