

GEOG 2153A – Course Name

Course Outline: Section Intersession 2019

1. Course Information

1.1. Classroom Location:

Room: SSC 3014

Time: Monday/Wednesday, 2:00-4:00pm; **No class on Monday, May 20th 2019.**

1.2. Contact Information:

Instructor: Josh Steckley

Office: SSC 2221

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00-2:00

Email: jsteckl5@uwo.ca

Please Note: This syllabus is a “living” document that is subject to change based on time constraints and/or student interests and feedback. The basic structure of the course (including the weighting of assignments/exams) will remain constant, topics and readings may shift throughout the term. Students will be made aware of such changes during lecture and on the OWL course website.

2. Calendar Description

2.1. Course Description

From calendar: *The human uses of and impacts on environment and resources; the concept of sustainability; current resource issues.*

4 lecture hours, 0.5 course

Environment, Economy and Society are categories we use every day to make sense of our lives in relationship to the world around us. However, it is increasingly clear that these categories are not fixed; they are nearly impossible to separate from one another. This course seeks to challenge common assumptions about our biophysical world and understand how social, political, and economic forces shape (and are shaped by) environmental resources, management, and transformation. The first part of the course will examine dominant approaches to understand how environment/economy/society relations have been understood in the past, and how these perspectives continue to structure our understanding of environmental issues today. The second part of the course applies these approaches to specific resources and/or commodities that are present in our daily lives.

2.2. Senate Regulations

Senate Regulations state, “unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be

deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

Prerequisite checking is the student’s responsibility

3. Textbook

Robbins, P., Hintz, J., & Moore, S. A. (2014). Environment and society: a critical introduction. John Wiley & Sons.

Supplementary readings will be available online through the UWO library, or a link provided by the instructor. Check the OWL course website under “Resources” for details.

4. Course Objectives and Format

4.1. Objectives

- To develop the conceptual tools to analyze the linkages between the environment, economy and society.
- To ‘denaturalize’ common assumptions about human-environment relations.
- to understand and describe in detail contemporary environmental issues in Canada and around the world.
- to critically reflect upon one’s own environmental impact (both good and bad) and the impact of the society to which they belong
- To develop and refine critical research and writing skills
- To participate with and learn from experiences of other classmates.

4.2. Format

This course consists of four lecture hours per week. The lecture hours will consist of a mixture of lecture and discussion. Some lecture class time will be devoted to tutorial-style group discussion. Never hesitate to ask questions. Students are responsible for i) completing readings prior to each lecture and; ii) being prepared to engage in active group discussions.

5. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Define and critically unpack dominant environmental narratives
- identify and engage with prominent environmental theorists

- explain how everyday resources/commodities relate to the environmental and economic processes
- identify and describe current environmental issues that face Canadians and the efforts being made to address these issues

6. Evaluation

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Ecological Footprint Assignment	15%	May 22 - 2pm
Midterm Exam	30%	June 5 - in class
Assignment Proposal	15%	June 12 - 2pm
Final Paper	30%	June 25 - 5pm
Participation	10%	

Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned chapters/sections in the text.

Attendance in lecture is required. Lecture slides will be posted on the OWL course website under "Resources"

Any non-medical absence from the June 5th mid-term exam will result in a grade of 0.

If you are ill for the mid-term please consult the university's [Policy on Accommodation for Illness](#).

For Western's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC please refer to the [Academic Handbook](#).

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. **PLEASE NOTE: ONLY PARTICIPATION IS WORTH 10%. THEREFORE, NO ACCOMMODATION CAN BE GIVEN BY THE INSTRUCTOR FOR INCOMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS, OR MISSED MIDTERM EXAM. YOU MUST CONSULT WITH THE ACADEMIC COUNSELLING OFFICE.**

Late Assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends.

PLEASE NOTE: THE FINAL PAPER MUST BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO OR ON JUNE 25th. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: *You* are responsible for your grades in this course.

7. Assignment Descriptions:

a) Ecological Footprint (15%) — May 22 by 2pm

Go to myfootprint.org and complete the 21-question survey. This will calculate your “ecological footprint” and tell you how many resources would be required if everyone in the world lived like you. This should take about 15 minutes.

Print out your results (or save as a pdf) and respond to these questions:

- 1) In what category (Carbon Footprint, Food Footprint, Housing Footprint, Good and Services Footprint) were you significantly lower than the Canadian average? Explain why you believe this aspect of your life contributes to this low footprint.
- 2) In what category were you most similar or higher than the Canadian average? Explain why you believe that is the case.
- 3) Based on these results, what’s the biggest *individual* change you could make to reduce your footprint?
- 4) What one *societal* level change do you believe would reduce the Canadian average footprint and why?

Answer each question using between 100 and 150 words. Questions 1 to 3 need no other sources other than the myfootprint.org website. Question 4 will require at least two reliable sources to back up your answer. These should either be government websites, reputable organizations, or peer-reviewed academic journals. **Do not** use information presented on an organization’s website *that does not properly cite its source*.

You will be graded on clarity or your writing, the depth and precision of your analysis, and the sources you choose.

b) Midterm Exam (30%) — In-class June 5

The midterm exam will cover course content up to the exam date, including the guest lecture. Students are responsible for knowing key thinkers, key concepts, as well as general dates when they are integral to specific issues (i.e. the decades associated with the Green Revolution).

PLEASE NOTE: Content covered in the course textbook that is not mentioned during the class lectures will not be on the test. Therefore, lecture attendance will greatly improve your exam results. I will also drop not-so-subtle hints about the concepts that will most likely appear on the exam.

The exam will be structured into three parts:

- 1) Multiple choice/True false: There is no penalty for choosing the wrong answer. Questions may involve key thinkers, course concepts, examples from class.
- 2) Short Answers: These will be key concepts from the term. You will provide a brief definition and/or history of the concept and explain its relevance today.
- 3) Long Answer: You will respond to one (out of two) statement, explaining why or why not you believe it is correct using course material and your own perspective. For example, the statement might be something like: "There is no such thing as the population bomb." A solid answer would have to define what the "population bomb" is, where the concept came from, why it is relevant today, and whether you agree or disagree with the statement, providing evidence from lectures and readings to back up your opinion.

You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam. More details will be given during the mid-term review at the end of the May 29th lecture.

c) Final Assignment Proposal (15%) — June 12 by 2pm:

The individual assignment, due at the end of the term is a written assignment, in the format of an opinion article in a major newspaper. The objective of this opinion piece is to debunk an environmental "myth" that you believe is dominant in public discourse.

In the proposal, you must include the following three sections:

- 1) MYTH: State in clear terms the myth you intend to debunk. See Final Assignment instructions for examples.
- 2) ARGUMENT: Clearly state your argument and how you intend to prove it using relevant concepts and information (200 words or less).
- 3) SOURCES: Provide bibliographic details for **4 peer-reviewed sources** that you may use in your assignment. While your final paper may include information from government or organization websites, for this proposal please only include peer-reviewed journals. For each of the four sources: a) summarize the author(s)' argument *in your own words*. This should begin with the sentence: "In this paper, (Author's last name) argues that..." b) describe what data/information the author(s) used to make their argument. This should be around 100 words or less for each source.

d) Final Assignment (30%) — June 24 by 5pm

The final assignment is a 1200-1500 word (excluding bibliography) paper in the format of an opinion article written for a major newspaper. The objective of this opinion piece is to debunk an environmental "myth" that you believe is dominant in public discourse.

Your argument should be provocative and clear. Please make any necessary changes to your argument based on the feedback you have received from your proposal.

Write in accessible language that would be appropriate for a major newspaper.

An exceptional opinion piece will have a great **introductory paragraph** that provides context of the issue in a catchy and accessible way which will lead to a clear and direct argument. Don't hedge your argument with words like, "generally," or "relatively" "may be" "could be" "I think," etc. Feel free to be provocative. The **article body will be** several paragraphs long and should *logically* present information in a way that *directly* supports your argument. This may include historical information if it is pertinent to your argument and must include evidence, from credible sources, that supports your argument. The **conclusion** should restate your argument, and why this is important to the reader (or their community, environment, or country).

Although this is a "opinion piece," you are still required to properly source your information using a referencing style of your choice.

e) Participation (10%)

We will have a relatively small class and therefore there will be many opportunities for large and small group discussions.

The first requirement for your participation grade is attendance. I will take attendance each class. Simply showing up will get you half marks. You are free to miss one of the 11 lectures throughout the term without penalty.

The remained of the grade will be determined by the quality of your participation in class. This includes but is not limited to: the quality of your discussions with classmates in small groups; the ability to ask relevant questions related to readings; active listening and note taking; posting of comments or questions on the OWL forum.

8. Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments	Administration
May 13	Course Introduction, the Anthropocene, and Malthus	Chapter 1, 2; Linden 2017 (NY Times)		
May 15	Green Revolution, Markets & Commodities	Chapter 2, 3		Discuss ecological footprint assignment (10 min)
May 20	No Class			
May 22	The political economy of nature	Chapter 7, 4; Podcast	Ecological Footprint Due (15%)	
May 27	Unnatural Disasters	Chapter 6; Davis (1995)		
May 29	Social Construction of Nature and Environmental Ethics	Chapter 5, 8		Select topic for final assignment (10 min) Midterm Review (30 minutes)

Jun 3	Guest Lecture	TBD		
Jun 5	In Class midterm		Midterm (30%)	Go over Proposal Assignment (10 min)
Jun 10	Soil, lawns, and trees	Chapter 10, 14		Post-exam reflection
Jun 12	Carbon	Chapter 9; Wallace-Wells (2017)	Proposal Due (15%)	
Jun 17	Water	Chapter 15; Jaffe & Case (2018)		
Jun 19	Alternatives moving forward (Ecomodernism, de-growth, steady-state economy)	TBD		Class evaluation (20 min)
Jun 25			Final Assignment Due (30%)	

9. Make-up Examinations

Makeups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided the Academic Counselling Office and Instructor within 48 hours of the scheduled exam. For missed exams, you must take your documentation to Academic Counselling within 48 hours of the exam. Otherwise, the instructor will assign a grade of zero. The format and content of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

10. Use of Electronic Devices

Laptops, ipads, and phones are permitted in class and can be used for class-related activities. Please silence your phones and turn off notification alerts for all your devices.

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

11. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

12. Copyright

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute lecture notes, wiki material, and other course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without my written consent.

13. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

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 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. [Information regarding accommodation of exams](#) is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about "[Accessibility at Western](#)" is available.

14. Medical Issues

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. The Student Services website provides greater detail about the University's policy on [medical accommodation](#). This site provides links the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

Students must see the [Academic Counsellor](#) and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation.

15. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

16. Support Services

[Student Support Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

17. Important Dates

Intersession

Duration: May 13th to June 21st

Online course registration: March 4th to May 14th

Last day to drop a course without academic penalty: June 3rd

Exams: June 24th and 25th

May 20th: Victoria Day