


GEOG 1500 – Environment and Development Challenges Course Outline: Fall 2020



Although this academic year might be different, Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**. We encourage you to check out the [Digital Student Experience](#) website to manage your academics and well-being. Additionally, this [Health and Wellness link](#) provides available resources to support students on and off campus.

1. Technical Requirements



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer



Working microphone



Working webcam

Please review the [recommended technical specifications](#) for online courses at Western.

2. Course Information

Delivery Mode: Online



The course involves asynchronous lessons (flexible timing) and synchronous tutorials (fixed timing). See details in Section 5.

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
September 9	November 2 - 8	December 9	December 10	December 11 - 22

* September 17, 2020: Last day to add a first-term half course

** November 12, 2020: Last day to drop a first-term half course without penalty



Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours
Dr. Carol Hunsberger	chunsber@uwo.ca	Thurs 9-11am

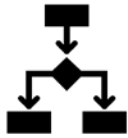
Teaching Assistants	Contact Information	Office Hours
Daniel Amoak	damoak@uwo.ca	TBD
Haley Everitt	heveritt@uwo.ca	TBD
Sara Wilson	swils222@uwo.ca	TBD



Office hours will be held remotely using Zoom.

Students will be able to sign up for an appointment using Sign-Up on OWL.

3. Calendar Description



This course examines environmental change over long periods of earth history, considering both physical processes and human impacts. An integrative approach (which combines physical and social science perspectives) provides a basis for understanding some of the world's most pressing environment and development challenges, such as biodiversity loss, climate change, energy use, and persistent hunger and inequality.

0.5 course; no prerequisites.

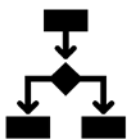
4. Readings



All resources will be posted in OWL.

5. Format

Mode	Dates	Time	Frequency
Online, asynchronous lessons	Flexible	2 hrs	Weekly
Online, synchronous tutorials and associated prep work	Fixed: attend the session you registered for	2 hrs	Most weeks: see Schedule



- The course involves **asynchronous, online lessons** and **live, online tutorials** supplemented by readings, individual and group work, and assignments.
- Students are responsible for all material covered in the lessons, tutorials and readings.
- Online lessons** will be released at the beginning of each week in the Course Content section of OWL. Students will work through this material on a flexible schedule.
- Tutorials** will be held on Zoom within OWL, and will involve discussions and other activities. Unless you have special permission, you must attend the tutorial session you registered for.
- Students are expected to come to tutorial having reviewed any assigned materials and ready to participate.
- If a student is in another time zone, it is the student's responsibility to ensure they connect for synchronous tutorials and submit asynchronous assessments at the correct time.
- All course material will be posted to OWL. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and announced to the class.
- Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, click [here](#).
- For assistance, students can seek support on the [OWL Help page](#) or contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) (phone: 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800).

6. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain major drivers of environmental change;
- Explain how physical and human processes interact to shape the course of key environmental and social challenges;
- Apply geographical concepts of space, place and scale to world issues;
- Critically engage with alternative points of view using solid evidence and reasoning;
- Articulate well informed, convincing statements in writing;
- Connect theory to practice by performing and reflecting on a 30-day behavioural change;
- Collaborate and work constructively with peers.



7. Course Content and Schedule

Week	Dates	Lesson topic	Tutorials	Due dates*
-	Sep 9 – 13	Course Overview	No tutorial	
1	Sep 14 – 20	Global Systems: Key concepts	Introductions	
2	Sep 21 – 27	Global Systems: Drivers	Lab 1	
3	Sep 28 – Oct 4	Biodiversity	Change assignment	Lab 1
4	Oct 5 – 11	Biodiversity case: The Amazon	Lab 2	Change 1 (plan)
5	Oct 12 – 18	Cities	No tutorial	Lab 2**
6	Oct 19 – 25	Cities case: Resilient cities	Lab 3	
7	Oct 26 – Nov 1	Food and agriculture	Exam preview	Lab 3
-	Nov 2 – 8	Reading Week: No classes or tutorials		
8	Nov 9 – 15	Food Case: The Horn of Africa	Lab 4	
9	Nov 16 – 22	Energy Systems	Change assignment	Lab 4
10	Nov 23 – 29	Energy case: The oil sands	Exam review 1	Change 2 (reflection)
11	Nov 30 – Dec 6	Climate Change	Exam review 2	
12	Dec 7 – 9	Climate case: Colorado River	No tutorial	
-	Dec 11-22	Take-home exam to be scheduled during December exam period		

* Unless otherwise indicated, assignments are due at the beginning of your tutorial time.

** Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, Lab 2 will be due Tues Oct 13 for the Monday tutorial group.

8. Communication

- Students should check the OWL site every day or two.
- Please contact the instructor and teaching assistants by OWL Message rather than email.
- Students are responsible for checking their UWO e-mail address in a timely manner.
- Post course-related questions to the OWL discussion forum so everyone can see the answers.
- Instructor and TA messages and the discussion forum will be monitored daily. Students can expect a response within 24 hours from Monday-Friday and within 48 hours on the weekend.
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their TA. To ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days.



9. Evaluation

Grades will be allocated based on the following tasks. Due dates are noted on the Schedule.

Assessment	Weighting
Lab assignments	40%
Change assignment	20%
Participation	10%
Final assessment	30%

Lab Assignments (4 x 10% = 40% total)

Four of the tutorials involve a marked assignment. Instructions for these will be provided separately. **Lab assignments are due by the start of your assigned tutorial time** on the weeks shown. Make sure you complete all tutorial preparation work in the week's Course Content section **before** your tutorial. You are expected to attend all tutorials at your assigned time.

Change Assignment (20%)

The Change assignment involves choosing and completing a 30-day action that contributes to sustainability in some way. You will produce a plan (worth 10%) and a final reflection on the experience (worth 10%) and share them with the class through the course OWL site. Detailed instructions will be provided separately.

Participation (10%)

A variety of tasks throughout the term will add up to a participation mark of 10%. For example, in a given week you may be asked to answer online questions, post a comment, or give feedback about the course. As long as your submission is complete and relevant, you will receive the mark. Irrelevant responses (i.e. comments unrelated to the question) will not count.



Final Assessment (30%)

The final assessment, held during the December exam period, will be a **take-home exam with a collaborative component** that you will complete with one or more classmates. The questions will go beyond memory recall: you will be asked to apply course material to new situations, make connections between topics, and/or critique example arguments drawing on course material. Students who collaborate on the same answers will receive the same grade, subject to a peer assessment of how equally the work was shared. More information, example questions and a study guide will be provided separately.

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Submission Policy and Late Policy

- Assignments should be submitted online through OWL, on or before the due date.
- Late assessments without illness self-reports will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day. The clock “starts” at the beginning of tutorial on the due date.
- Late assessments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 48 hours of the original deadline (i.e. a 48-hour illness gets a 48-hour extension).
- An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been marked and returned to the class.

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.

10. Accommodation Policies

Accessible Education (formerly SSD) provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. See the policy on [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#) for details.

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an online portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the absence lasts no more than 48 hours, and the assessment for which consideration is sought is worth 30% or less of the student’s final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the absence. Students may not use self-reporting in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- for an absence of greater than 48 hours,
- for assessments worth more than 30% of the student’s final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year.

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or appropriate documentation for compassionate grounds. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether for consideration on medical or other grounds. **All documentation required for absences not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

See Western’s [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences](#) for details. You can access a [Student Medical Certificate here](#).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

11. Make-up Examinations

Makeups (or extensions to the take-home final) will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided to the Academic Counselling Office within 48 hours of the scheduled 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.

12. How to Be Successful in this Class

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

1. Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
2. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
3. Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Treat this course as you would a face-to-face course. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively than just reading or watching the videos.
5. Connect with others. Try forming an online study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor or teaching assistant.
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.



13. Statements concerning Online Etiquette

Some components of this course will involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- Please “arrive” to tutorials or meetings on time
- Please use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- Ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions
- To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- Please be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable
- Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting

The teaching assistants will act as moderators for the tutorials and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- If you wish to speak, use the “raise hand” function and wait for the TA to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question
- Remember to unmute your microphone before speaking, and re-mute after speaking
- Self-identify when speaking

General considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your peers, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Cite the ideas of others appropriately.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

14. 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](#). The most common offence is failure to cite properly. If you draw on someone else’s ideas, you must cite the source!

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](#).

15. 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 any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also contact [Accessible Education](#) at 519-661-2147 for any questions regarding accommodation. More information about [Accessibility at Western](#) is available. [Information regarding accommodation of exams](#) is available on the Registrar’s website.

16. Mental Health

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

17. Support Services

[Western’s Support Services](#)

[Student Development Centre](#)