

GEOG 3441G: Conservation and Development

Course Outline – Winter 2023



1. Course Information

	Delivery Mode	Day/Time	Location
Lecture	In-person	Tuesdays 12.30-2.30	SSC-3006
Lecture	In-person	Wednesdays 1.30-2.30	SSC-3006

Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office hours
Dr. Tony Weis	tony.weis@uwo.ca	Wednesdays 3-4 pm, SSC 1403
Teaching Assistants		
Alyssa Aglipay	aaglipa@uwo.ca	

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
January 9	Feb. 18–26	April 10	April 11–12	April 13–30

January 17, 2023: Last day to add a second-term half course

February 20, 2023: Family Day

March 7, 2023: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

2. Calendar Description

Examines struggles over conservation and development in a global context. A central aim is to consider the transformation of ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, and struggles for alternatives in relation to the vast and growing inequalities in wealth, power, and resource consumption that exist within and between countries.

3 lecture hours, 0.5 credit. No prerequisites.

Prerequisite(s): Third or fourth year status at the University

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.'

3. Overview

This course examines struggles over conservation and economic development in a global context, in relation to the vast and growing inequalities in wealth, power, and resource consumption that exist within and between countries. A basic premise is that efforts to conserve healthy environmental conditions for humans and for other species – including significant space for relatively self-organizing ecosystems – cannot be understood in an historic or political economic vacuum; that is, without attention to the unevenness of development. There is some attention to the colonial roots of the modern world system and prominent conceptions of conservation, but the primary focus is on the dramatic growth and intensification of global market integration since the Second World War.

A central aim is to understand the major political economic dynamics that have driven the relentless transformation of self-organizing ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity alongside the wide variety of responses that fall under the broad banner of environmentalism. A key part of this is a critical examination of what might be understood as the mainstream conservation movement, and how it tends to approach environmental problems and responses in overly narrow ways. Key course themes will be illuminated through case studies, before concluding with an assessment of how conservation could be entwined with struggles for social justice and decolonization, and ultimately contribute to more sustainable and equitable ways of inhabiting the earth.

4. Format

3 lecture hours per week. You are expected to regularly attend class and keep up with readings and short videos discussed each unit. The course will follow the outline in the schedule on pg. 3, but it is subject to some flexibility, as some units may run slightly longer or shorter. Evaluation is based on a research project, a midterm test, and a final exam.

5. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should:

- have advanced their critical reading, listening, and analytic skills;
- have advanced their writing and communication skills, with a particular focus on synthesizing information and articulating key ideas with clarity and concision;
- be able to understand and explain how pressing environmental challenges and relate to large and growing disparities in wealth and power;
- be able to critically engage with contemporary debates, conflicts, and policy issues surrounding biodiversity, conservation, and environmental justice;

- have a conceptual basis for further studies in subjects relating to political ecology and development studies;
- be inspired to think about global environmental and development problems in new ways.

6. Readings

Readings are available for free and are posted on OWL.

There are also plenty of additional resources embedded in the pdfs of the PowerPoint slides that allow you to dig more deeply into subjects you are most interested in.

PowerPoint slides will be posted shortly *after* every class.

7. Schedule

Units	Dates	SUBJECT
	Jan. 10	Course Introduction
1	Jan. 11 Jan. 17 Jan. 18	Conserving what? The rise and limits of mainstream conservation
2	Jan. 24 Jan. 25 Jan. 31 Feb. 1	Competing conceptions of development
3	Feb. 7 Feb. 8 Feb. 14	The diversity of modern environmentalism proposal due Feb. 8
Feb. 15		Midterm test (20%)
Feb. 20-24		Reading break
4	Feb. 28 Mar. 1 Mar. 7 Mar. 8	Conservation and development under neoliberalism
5	Mar. 14 Mar. 15 Mar. 21 Mar. 22	Conservation and development: case studies summary due Mar. 22
6	Mar. 28 Mar. 29 Apr. 4 Apr. 5	Conservation in an unequal world: beyond crisis management final project due Mar. 29
Apr. 11-12		Study day
Apr. 13-30		Final exam (30%) in examination period – date TBD

8. Communication

- if you have questions you wish to discuss beyond the class, Dr. Weis is typically available after every Tuesday class and during office hours on Wednesdays
- you are encouraged to post general course-related queries (whether content or logistics) to the Forums tab in OWL, which will ensure that the clarifications can be seen by everyone (posts will get monitored daily and you can expect to receive a response in 24 – 48 hours)
- you are encouraged to check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours and to read each announcement carefully
- course announcements will arrive through your university email account in addition to appearing in the Announcement tab on OWL. It is your responsibility to ensure that email received from the University at your UWO address is attended to in a timely manner (you can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#)).

9. Evaluation

Assessment		Weighting	Dates
Research project	Proposal	5%	Wednesday, Feb. 8
	Summary	10%	Wednesday, March 22
	Final project (paper or recorded presentation)	35%	Wednesday, March 29
Midterm test	multiple choice and short answer	20%	Wednesday, February 15
Final exam	multiple choice, short answer and paragraph responses	30%	TBA in exam period: April 13-30

Midterm test (20%) and Final Exam (30%)

The midterm test (**Wednesday, February 15**) is a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions.

The final exam (**TBA in April exam period**) combines multiple choice, short answer, and written paragraph questions, that involve integrative thinking between units. You are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the readings posted in the unit folders in OWL.

More detailed instructions for both will be given in advance.

Research project (50%)

The research project challenges you to explore a significant historical or contemporary conservation struggle and develop and argument about the key actors and outcomes or possible alternatives.

This can include the struggle over a protected area, a threatened bioregion, or an endangered species. The project can be pursued individually or in pairs. More details and some suggestions for topics are provided on pages 8-10.

The **proposal** (due **Wednesday, February 8**) will indicate a preliminary outline of your research, including a brief statement of the struggle you have identified and why it is significant and key issues you will be exploring, along with a preliminary bibliography. The proposal counts for 5 of the 50% total assignment grade.

The objective of the **project summary** (due **Wednesday, March 22**) is to provide a succinct and visually-engaging overview of your research project. Your project summary should include a good combination of images (e.g. photographs, graphics, and maps) that help to convey the nature of the conservation struggle you have examined. The proposal counts for 10 of the 50% total assignment grade.

The **final paper or recorded presentation** (due **Wednesday, March 29**) will be evaluated based on the quality of the introduction, clarity of the thesis, support for the argument, analysis, overall style (organization, grammar, and concision of writing), and conclusions. The final paper counts for 35 of the 50% total assignment grade.

Notes on grading

- click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The following table 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

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

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are

deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Makeups 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.

Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness - Undergraduate Students

Student Medical Certificate (SMC)

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should 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. How to be successful in this class

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

- 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.
- make it a regular habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class, and to review the lecture slides as quickly as possible after they get posted.
- take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively than just reviewing the slides.
- do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, ask questions in class, afterwards, or post questions in the Forums tab and follow the responses there.
- get moving on your research project as soon as possible

12. 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>).

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. 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.

15. Support Services

Western's Support Services

Student Development Centre

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at this survivor support website. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

16. Important Dates

Monday January 9: Classes resume

Tuesday January 17: Last day to add a second term half course

Monday February 20: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 18 to February 26: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

Tuesday March 7: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty

Friday April 7: Good Friday – Department Office Closed

Monday April 10: Classes end

April 11 and 12: Study days

April 13-30: Examination Period

Geo 3441 – Research Project

The research project challenges you to explore a significant historical or contemporary conservation struggle and develop an argument about the key actors and outcomes or possible alternatives. This can include the struggle over a protected area, a threatened bioregion, or an endangered species.

This project can be approached individually or in pairs. If you choose to work in pairs, obviously the expectations are greater in terms of the level of research and the length of various components of the project. Grades will be given evenly to group partners, so if you choose this option it is your responsibility to ensure that it is an evenly shared endeavour.

Any plagiarized or copied work will receive a grade of **zero** (see notes on academic offences above).

The **proposal** (due **Wednesday, February 8**) will indicate a preliminary outline of your research, including a brief statement of the struggle you have identified and why it is significant and key issues you will be exploring, along with a preliminary bibliography. This should be **submitted as a .doc file** on the Assignments tab on OWL.

The proposal is intended to get you moving on the topic, give you constructive feedback at an early stage, and help you focus your topic if need be. You are also encouraged to discuss your topic prior to the initial proposal.

The objective of the **project summary** (due **Wednesday, March 22**) is to provide a succinct and visually-engaging overview of your research project. This summary should include a good combination of images (e.g. photographs, graphics, and maps) that help to convey the nature of the struggle under examination. The project summary should be **submitted as a .ppt or .pdf file** on the Assignments tab on OWL.

The **final paper or recorded lecture** (due **Wednesday, March 29**) will be evaluated based on the quality of the introduction, clarity of the thesis, support for the argument, analysis, overall style (organization, grammar, and concision of writing), and conclusions. The paper should be **submitted as a .doc file** and the recorded presentation should be **submitted as a .mp4 file** on the Assignments tab on OWL.

Research assignment expectations	
Proposal (5% of grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• for individuals: no more than 300 words and biblio with at least 4 academic sources• for pairs: no more than 500 words and biblio with at least 6 academic sources (word count does not include biblio)
Summary (10% of grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• for individuals: no more than 4 pages/slides• for pairs: no more than 6 pages/slides (no more than 100 words of text per slide/page)

Final project (35% of grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for individuals: no more than 2500 words for paper or 20 minutes for recorded presentation (<i>word count does not include biblio</i>) • for pairs: no more than 4000 words for paper; or 30 minutes for recorded presentation (<i>a biblio must be submitted for the presentation option</i>)
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Each paper or presentation should:

- start with a brief review of the geographic context (e.g. place, history, key actors, what's at stake)
- develop an argument about the roots and outcomes or possible alternatives of the conservation struggle you've identified
- connect your discussion to relevant issues covered in the course
- be primarily based on academic sources (i.e. refereed journal articles and scholarly books or book chapters).

Some examples of possible topics include:

- struggles to protect an endangered species in a key part of its habitat (e.g. gorillas, orangutans, cheetahs, lions, tigers, elephants, rhinos, etc.)
- conservation and livelihood struggles in relation to a major dam building project (e.g. Narmada in India; Belo Monte in Brazil)
- conservation and livelihood struggles in a part of the Amazon River basin versus ranching, mining, and other pressures (this could involve the establishment or defence of a national park or indigenous reserve)
- conservation and livelihood struggles in a part of the Congo River basin vis-à-vis mining and other pressures (this could involve the defence of a national park like Virunga)
- struggles to establish and connect 'peace parks' in Southern Africa
- conservation and livelihood struggles in the context of the palm oil boom in Southeast Asia
- the successes and limitations of Project Tiger in India
- the dynamics of a particular Debt-for-Nature swap
- the threats posed by mining, logging, or hydroelectric development on the periphery of a National Park in Canada (e.g. the Nahanni)
- struggles to defend the Arctic Wilderness Refuge (Alaska) vis-à-vis oil and gas exploration and drilling
- indigenous dispossession in relation to the establishment of a national park in Canada (e.g. Wood Buffalo NP) or the US (Yellowstone NP)
- large-scale ecological restoration in relation to a national park or bioregion (e.g. Grasslands NP)
- struggles to defend the old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest
- some other ideas of topics might be found on Conservation International's *Biodiversity Hotspots* page: www.biodiversityhotspots.org/

Style Guidelines – Paper

Format Use 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins, number pages, footnotes or endnotes where appropriate, and a list of references (choose a style, and be consistent). Have a title page with the title, your name and student number, and the date. Respect the guidelines for the assignment word length.

Referencing Be sure to reference all quotes, paraphrased ideas and arguments, and data drawn from other sources, using scientific in-text referencing of author and date (Garrett 2003), giving page numbers only when you use direct quotations (Garrett 2003:34-35). Direct quotations can be useful, but use them with care, and do not overuse. A complete set of references of all in-text references (and nothing not referenced) should be listed alphabetically at the end in a bibliography. See the UWO Geography website for instructions on essays and referencing.

Style Guidelines – Presentation

You can record a presentation with whatever software you are comfortable with, provided it allows you to save it as an .mp4 file. Be sure the audio is clear and there are good images to augment the discussion, and attach a bibliography as a separate .doc file. For a 20 or 30 minute presentation, it is very important that you have a clear and concise transcript to speak from that is aligned with the transition between images.

Some General Tips for a Successful Research Paper/Presentation

The success of a research paper depends upon having a good, unambiguous thesis statement – that is, the explicit argument that will guide your explanation of the conservation struggle in question. Without a strong thesis, papers tend to read like mere collections of information, when the point is to critically interpret it – to demonstrate how particular evidence explains the issues at hand. You will need to contextualize the conservation and development issues in question but don't let the description run away with your paper; a good test for whether to include information or not is to ask: "does this have relevance to my thesis?"

It is important to begin with a strong introduction that clearly states your thesis, catches the reader's attention (making it clear why the subject at hand is important), and outlines the organization that is to follow. Making an outline can be very helpful before you start writing, framing it by your thesis and listing the key ideas for and against. Style and presentation are important. The body of the paper should be well organized, developing arguments with examples, quotations, data, and references, and providing transitions between sections. Avoid vague and unsubstantiated generalizations – they greatly weaken the persuasiveness of your argument. Any use of maps, graphs, and tables should be clear and should serve an explanatory purpose, and must be integrated into the text and referred to. Mechanics, punctuation, and spelling do weigh in the overall impression of the paper. End with a clear conclusion that concisely and unambiguously summarizes the major arguments and points and re-iterates the significance of the issue. It should *not* introduce new ideas or data.

There is no substitute for hard work, and good writing will typically involve multiple drafts, so leave yourself time to edit and revisit your work (essays written at the last minute rarely read well).