

GEOG 1500F – Environment and Development Challenges

Course Outline: Fall 2024

This course is taught in-person

1. Course Information

*Details about design and delivery of the course are listed below in sections 4-8.



Classes Start	Fall Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
September 5	October 14-20	December 6	December 7 & 8	December 9-22

September 13, 2024: Last day to add a first term half course

September 30, 2024: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

October 14, 2024: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 11, 2024: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty



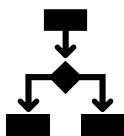
Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours
Dr. Carol Hunsberger	chunsber@uwo.ca	See OWL

Teaching Assistant(s)	Contact Information	Office Hours
Leanne Ferguson Dikshya Pokharel Inonge Mutale	lfergu28@uwo.ca dpokhare@uwo.ca imutale@uwo.ca	See OWL

Office hours will be held in person.

2. 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.



2 lecture hours, 2 tutorial hours, 0.5 course. No prerequisites

3. Readings

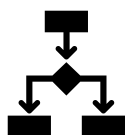
All readings and other assigned materials will be posted on OWL. There are no required textbooks to buy.



Please ensure that you review the assigned materials for each lecture and tutorial **before the session occurs**, as these form the basis for in-class questions, discussions and assignments.

4. Course Objectives and Format

This is an in-person class. While the lecture group is large, active participation is encouraged. **Please review assigned material ahead of time and come to class/tutorial prepared to be involved and to be respectful to your classmates and instructors.** Derogatory or offensive remarks are not acceptable, nor are they effective forms of academic discussion.



Attendance is expected as participation questions are given in lectures, and assignments build on content covered in classes and tutorials. The grading scheme allows for 3 class absences, but students are responsible for catching up by sharing notes with fellow students.

All course material will be posted to [OWL Brightspace](#). If students need technical assistance, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page or contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) (phone: 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800). All popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace. Please update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.

5. 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 and recorded presentations;
- Connect theory to practice by performing and reflecting on a 30-day behavioural change.



6. Course Content and Schedule

Week	Dates	Lecture topic	Tutorial topic	Due dates*
1	Sep 9-13	Global Systems: Key concepts	No tutorial	
2	Sep 16-20	Global Systems: Drivers	Lab 1	
3	Sep 23-27	Biodiversity	Change assignment	Lab 1
4	Sep 30-Oct 4	Biodiversity case: Amazon (Wed only; no class on Mon)	Lab 2	Change 1 (plan)
5	Oct 7-11	Amazon (Mon) / Cities (Wed)	Exam preview	Lab 2
-	Oct 14-18	Fall Study Break: No classes or tutorials		
6	Oct 21-25	Cities case: Resilient Cities	Lab 3	
7	Oct 28-Nov 1	Food and Agriculture	Film and discussion	Lab 3
8	Nov 4-8	Food Case: The Horn of Africa	Lab 4	
9	Nov 11-15	Energy Systems	Change assignment	Lab 4
10	Nov 18-22	Energy case: Western Canada	Film and discussion	Change 2 (reflection)**
11	Nov 25-29	Climate Change	Exam review	
12	Dec 2-6	Climate case: Colorado River	Optional group study	
-	Dec 9-22	Exam to be scheduled during December exam period		

* Assignments are due by the start of your tutorial time one week after they were assigned, except:

** Change Assignment Part 2 (Reflection) is due at the same time for everyone: Wed Nov 20 at noon.

7. Communication



- ☒ Students should check the OWL site before each lecture and tutorial.
- ☒ Course updates will be provided using OWL announcements.
- ☒ Students should contact their TA or the instructor by email or in-person office hours:
 - All correspondence with the instructor and TAs should be professional and show how the student has used available resources to independently find an answer when correspondence is about class content. At the end of this section an example template to guide your professional email correspondence is provided.
 - If the instructor team receives an email asking a question whose answer can be found in the syllabus or assignment instructions, they will not respond.
- ☒ 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 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.
- ☒ Drop-in office hours
 - Students are encouraged to come ask questions about class material as well as general academic/research questions.
 - Introduce yourself when you come in, tell us what course you are in, and then follow the three *explain* steps under the *Example of professional correspondence* below.

Example of professional correspondence structure

- The **yellow highlight** indicates where to fill in specific parts with context and questions.

Subject: *GEO1500* **short statement about the nature of the inquiry**

Main body of the message:

Hello **Dr. xxx**,

I hope this email finds you well.

- **Explain the issue or question**
- **Explain what you have already done to find information or resources or what technique you have tried to resolve the issue**
- **Explain exactly what you do not understand based on what you have already tried and what kind of assistance or help you are looking for from your TA or instructor**

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Your full name

8. Evaluation

Grades will be allocated based on the following tasks. Completing each task in its assigned format is essential to the course learning objectives. Due dates are noted on the Schedule. Students are responsible for material covered in lectures and tutorials as well as the assigned readings, videos, etc.

Assessment	Weighting
Lab assignments	40%
Change assignment	20%
Participation	10%
Final exam	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 the week after they were introduced** (see schedule above). 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%)

In lectures, you will be asked questions using iClickers: an online platform where you submit answers using your laptop or phone. Some questions review course material and will be marked based on correctness, while others ask for your opinion and will be marked based on completion. Because there may be times when you legitimately have to miss class (e.g. illness), or the technology may glitch, there is a cushion built into the grading: your participation mark is calculated as 1.2 times the score you earned, up to a maximum of 100% (10/10). In other words, you can still get 10/10 even if you miss up to 3 lectures. Because flexibility is built into the assignment, **do not** contact the instructor asking to be excused from participation questions you were unable to answer for any reason.

Final Exam (30%)

A cumulative, in-person, written exam will be held during the December exam period. Questions will go beyond memory recall: you will be asked to apply course material to new examples and make connections between topics. More information, sample questions, and a study guide will be provided separately. The December exam schedule is normally released in October. Do not book holiday travel until you know when the exam will be.

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 accommodation (beyond the one allowed late assignment per student, see flexibility policy below) will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day. The clock “starts” at the beginning of tutorial on the due date.
- 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.

9. 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](#).

General Information about missed work:

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here.

Any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

Dr Hunsberger’s flexible assignment policy for GEOG 1500:

Every student will be allowed to submit an assignment late one time. You will have up to 72 hours beyond the deadline to submit your late assignment. THERE IS NO NEED to email the instructor; your TA will note the first time you submit late. No questions will be asked. Additional extensions or longer extensions will require formal academic consideration, otherwise late penalties apply. Late assignments may receive their grades and feedback later than the rest of the class.

As explained, participation grades have flexibility built in (your grade is multiplied by 1.2 to allow for up to 3 absences), so there is no need to email the instructor about missed participation.

Absence from Course Commitments

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#).

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation.

Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams).

Supporting documentation for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, if not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test.

10. Make-up Examinations

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.

11. Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices will not be allowed during the final exam.

12. How to Be Successful in this Class

1. Use a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Enter all deadlines at the start of 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.
3. Follow weekly checklists on OWL, or create your own, to help you stay on track.
4. Hand in all assignments, no matter how small. Read the instructions carefully and ask your TA if you are not sure what the expectations are.
5. Take notes during lectures and tutorials. Keeping handwritten notes or notes on a Word document will help you learn more effectively.
6. Connect with others. Try forming a study group and meet weekly for peer support.
7. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion forum or contact your instructor or teaching assistant.
8. Reward yourself for success. It is easier to motivate ourselves knowing there is something nice waiting for us at the end of the task.



13. 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.

Assignments may be submitted for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database to help detect plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

While students are encouraged to help each other, assignments are to be submitted individually. The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (e.g. chatGPT) may be considered plagiarism if it is identical or nearly identical to existing work. Although it is not possible to ban students from using AI to help explore a problem, if a student cannot explain and defend the answers, text, and arguments used in a submission, the student will fail.

14. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography and Environment 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 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.

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

Western's Support Services
Student Development Centre
Indigenous Student Center

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 https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

17. Important Dates

September 5: Classes resume

September 13: Last day to add a first-term half course

September 30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (No classes)

October 14: Thanksgiving Holiday – Department Office Closed

October 14-20: Fall Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

November 11: Last day to drop a first term half-course without penalty

November 30: Last day to drop a full course without penalty

December 6: Classes end

December 7 and 8: Study days

December 9-22: Examination Period