

SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT – UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ENV451 CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS - FS 2016

SYLLABUS

First class: September 15th, 2016
Thursdays: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Location: Earth Sciences, B 142
Instructor: Dr. Erich Vogt
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TA: Travis Steffens
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Office hours: by appointment
Earth Sciences, #2104

Course Description

Global environmental dangers are among the most profound challenges facing humanity. They fundamentally undermine the quality of life and threaten the organic infrastructure that supports all life on earth. It is within this context that the course explores the sociopolitical dynamics of global environmental affairs. The course will also look into the multiple causes of environmental harm and, with students help, will try to identify effective response mechanisms. Finally, it will examine a number of key challenges - including food and agriculture, water, energy, and climate change - through the lens of interdisciplinary communication, in academe and professional practice.

This is a "capstone" course. It has been specifically designed for students coming to the end of their undergraduate study of the environment and preparing to move on to the next phase of their academic and professional development and competence.

Learning Objectives

Those who participate fully in this course should by its end:

- Have a well-rounded and balanced understanding of the interdisciplinary causes and implications of a range of global environmental challenges and of different forms of response
- Comprehend and appreciate the role of the state system, global political economy, and civil society in exacerbating and/or mitigating environmental problems
- Understand and articulate the difference in perspectives of developed and developing countries and appreciate the tensions between conservation and development
- Differentiate among the perspectives and approaches of key social scientific traditions as they apply to environmental studies

Learning methods – how you might learn from this course

We will attempt to draw on the most collaborative aspects of thinking and learning (without succumbing to ‘group-think’), and we will explore how viewing the subjects under investigation through the lens of interdisciplinary environmental studies further enrich our understanding. We will explore some of the challenges by seeking out ways to address them better together. In our increasingly connected world – and where we work with increasingly diverse inputs and influences in our search for solutions – we need to learn to work with each other across disciplines, build on our collective strengths, and help each other to overcome our shortcomings and weaknesses.

Course framework and format

Students will see the value and importance of depth (narrow expertise) and breadth (broad spectrum of issues) of information and experience, and they will be able to explore the tensions and paradoxes between the policies and the politics on the one hand and the practice on the other - and how they invariably feed into each other.

Weekly classes will include lectures, in-class discussions, group study updates and presentations. The instructor reserves the right to ‘switch gear’ or shift the focus/emphasis of class sessions to respond to emerging environmental issues on the global and local horizons. The course outline is therefore primarily indicative of the range of subjects that we can expect to cover.

There will be a limited ‘laptop use’ policy while class is in session which will be explained on September 8th.

Students are very much encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours. Please make an appointment as early as possible. Emails are normally responded to within 48 hours. The instructor does not respond to emails during weekends or on public holidays.

Course Assignments

1) Critical review - 25 Percent

Based on insights gained in previous environmental courses, you will be asked to critically review a contemporary environmental text as treated by a designated author.

Three pages, 1.5 spacing, TNR 12 font, no footnotes/endnotes, no bibliography. A selection of essays will be provided roughly 2 weeks before due date.

Due: October 6th, 2016

2) Critical review - 30 Percent

You will be asked to critically review a contemporary text about taking “care of our common home” by a designated author. This ‘Think piece’ paper will give students ample opportunity to draw on and apply the body of knowledge – and even wisdom – acquired during their educational journey at UfT and beyond. The text will be provided to you roughly 3 weeks before due date.

Four pages, 1.5 spacing, TNR 12 font, no footnotes/endnotes, no bibliography.

Due: November 5th, 2016

3) Think piece - 25 Percent

Environmentalists the world over have been preoccupied for a good century now with protecting ‘the wildness’ of nature. They have done ‘their best’ to protect the ‘natural’ world, putting it off-limits to ‘preserve’ it. Critics of such interventions argue that there is no such thing as nature itself, only our own conception of it. One person’s endangered species is another’s dinner or source of income, and there are those who strive to live in harmony with nature and those who seek mastery over nature.

The fact is that neither approach is helpful in making strides toward addressing such challenges as climate change, food security and biodiversity loss, and steering humanity toward a more sustainable, ecologically vibrant, and socially just world. What we need then is a new environmentalism.

Drawing on your insights gained in courses in both the social and natural sciences, compose a ‘Think piece’ paper that responds to the question: “What should 21st century environmentalism look like?”

Three pages, 1.5 spacing, TNR 12 font, no footnotes/endnotes, no bibliography.

Due: December 3rd, 2016

Note: Papers are expected to be submitted electronically via Blackboard. ‘Drop-boxes’ will be set up in due time.

4) Participation/Attendance - 20 Percent

Participation means making insightful comments, asking probing questions, and being involved in the ongoing discussions in ways that show students are thinking critically about the content and discourse of the class. Attendance for the entirety of each class is expected. Leaving class before will be counted as a miss. For each class missed 0.75% will be taken off students’ participation/attendance score.

There will be no final exam in the Final Examination period.

Evaluation criteria of all written work products

The primary criteria used in evaluating students’ written work are the following:

- 1) Content: Content is Queen/King!!!
- 2) Mechanics: Defined as freedom from minor factual errors and spelling and grammatical errors. Where asked, students are expected to include thorough, accurate and consistent references in any bona fide academic referencing style that includes page numbering.
- 3) Writing style: It should be appropriate for an academic environment. Beyond that, style will be evaluated primarily in terms of clarity. Proper use of the English language is expected!
- 4) Structure: Papers will also be evaluated in terms of their organization and coherence. The structure of the paper must logically flow from the assignment question(s) and must add up to a coherent whole.
- 5) Precision and accuracy: Precision means saying exactly and specifically what you mean, avoiding ambiguity and vague generalities. Accuracy refers to absence of major factual errors.
- 6) Analysis: Analysis will be evaluated in terms of success in using evidence in the form of data/information to construct a logical argument which convincingly answers your assignment question(s).

Evaluation criteria of all oral presentations

- 1) **Success in communicating** key concepts succinctly and accurately, thereby demonstrating sound understanding of the work being presented.
- 2) **Mechanics of communication**, such as manner of speaking (including good diction and tone), structure of the presentation and level of organization.
- 3) **Ability to respond** appropriately and fairly to questions and contribute to and stimulate unstructured discussion among peers.

Late penalties

No due dates will be extended. Penalty for late work will be 2% of the assignment mark per day late, including weekends. The only exemption from this penalty will be for work that is late for health reasons, if a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate is provided, or for personal reasons if documentation from Accessibility Services or a College Registrar is submitted.

Grading scheme

The course will follow the University of Toronto's undergraduate courses grading scheme:

A+	90 - 100%
A	85 - 89%
A-	80 - 84%
B+	77 - 79%
B	73 - 76%
B-	70 - 72%
C+	67 - 69%
C	63 - 66%
C-	60 - 62%
D+	57 - 59%
D	53 - 56%
D-	50 - 52%
F	0 - 49%

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves. Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- In papers and assignments:
- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks

- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- Making up sources or facts
- Including references to sources that you did not use
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while “editing”
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone
- Looking at someone else’s answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers
- Misrepresenting your identity
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor’s notes
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades

You can get further guidance on academic integrity from the website of the Office of Student Academic Integrity at: www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

Accessibility needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:

<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS

Class topics, activities and reading

Week I: September 15th, 2016

Drivers of Environmental Change

Readings

Gustave Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, Yale University Press, 2008, “Looking into the Abyss”, pp 17 – 45, and “Modern Capitalism: Out of Control”, pp 46 – 66

C. Greenhalgh, “Why does Market Capitalism Fail to Deliver a Sustainable Environment and Greater Equality of Incomes?” *Cambridge Journal of Economics (EJ)*, 29:6, pp. 1091-1109, 2005

Yash Tandon, *End Aid Dependency*, Pambazuka Publishers, 2008

Simon Nicholson/Paul Wapner (eds.), *Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015, Introduction only

Week II: September 22th, 2016

The International Communities response

Readings

For Rio+20 coverage; see The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development/UNCSD, www.uncsd2012.org/index.html; also see for the broad range of issues addressed in Rio in 2012 the International Institute for Sustainable Development, <http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/rio20>

Open Working Group Proposal for Sustainable Development Goals, in <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

Financing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals – Roundtable, in http://www.brookings.edu/~media/events/2015/07/08-financing-post-2015-sustainable-development-lagarde/20150708_development_financing_imf_lagarde_transcript.pdf

- **Guest speaker:**
Douglas Macdonald, UFT, School of the Environment, TBC

Week III: September 29nd, 2016

Intellectuals respond

Readings

Tim Jackson, *End of prosperity*, Earthscan, 2009, chapters 1, 2, 11

Herman Daly, “The Delusion of Sustainable Development”, pp 215 -219, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.) *Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015

Jonathan Rowe “Who is An Economy for? Rethinking GDP”, pp. 220 – 227, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), *Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015

Yash Tandon, *End Aid Dependency*, Pambazuka Publishers, 2008

Paul Krugman, “Environmental Economics 101: Overcoming Market Failures”, pp 164 – 172, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), *Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet*, Paradigm Publishers, 2015

Gustave Speth, *The Bridge at the End of the World*, Yale University Press, 2008, “Consumption: Living with Enough, not Always More”, pp 147 – 164

Week IV: October 6th, 2016

Institutional/mechanistic responses

Readings

Jennifer Clapp/Peter Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World, ”Mapping World Views of Global Environmental Change”*, pp 1 – 17

Chasek, Pamela S., Downie David L., Brown, Janet Welsh, *Global Environmental Politics*, Boulder, Col., 2014, chapter 1, “The Emergence of Global Environmental Politics” & chapter 2 “Actors in the Environmental Arena”

Ford, Lucy, “Transnational actors in global environmental politics” in Kutting, Gabriela (ed.), *Global Environmental Politics: Concepts, Theories and Case Studies*, 2011 London: Routledge. pp. 27 – 41.

Biermann, Frank and Siebenhuener, Bernd (eds.), *Managers of Global Change – The Influence of International Environmental Bureaucracies*, MIT, Cambridge, 2009, chapters 1, 2, 3, 8, and 10

Week V: October 13th, 2016

Biodiversity – and presentation

Readings

Pavan Sukhdev, “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity”, Summary – Responding to the Value of Nature, in:

<http://www.teebweb.org/ForPolicymakers/tabid/1019/language/en-Default.aspx>

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/pdf/teeb_report.pdf

Astrid Scholz, *Earthly Politics*, “Merchants of Diversity: Scientists as Traffickers of Plants and Institutions,” pp 217 - 238

Andrea Durbin, Carol Welch, “Greening the Bretton Woods Institutions”, in: *Foreign Policy in Focus* 5 (33). See also: www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/briefs/vol5/v5n33bretton.html

“Making Forests fit for climate change”, Policy Brief, in:

<http://www.iufro.org/science/gfep/embargoed-release/>

World Bank Forest Strategy, in:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTARD/EXTFORESTS/0,,contentMDK:20458321~menuPK:1601741~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:985785,00.html>

“Strengthening voices for better choices in Tanzania”, in : IUCN -

http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/forest/fp_resources/fp_resources_publications/fp_resources_general_pubs/?2550/Strengthening-Voices-for-Better-Choices-in-Tanzania

- **Guest speaker:**
Barbara Zimmerman, Director Kayapo Project, International Conservation Fund of Canada

Week VI: October 20th, 2016

Climate change - Where the rubber hits the road

Readings

The Paris Agreement; see http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php
William Antholis/Strobe Talbott, Fast Forward – Ethics and Politics in the Age of Global Warming, Brookings Institution Press, 2010
Vogt, Erich, “Current State of Climate Politics”, In Environmental Policy & Law”, 2012, Vol. 43: 3, pp. 188 – 198
Macdonald, Douglas, “Climate Change Policy”, in Debora L. VanNignatten (ed.) Canadian Environmental Policy and Politics: The Challenges of Austerity and Ambivalence. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2016
IPCC Synthesis Report for Policy Makers, Climate Change_2014, http://ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf

Week VII: October 27th, 2016

Climate change – the North-South divide, the financing instruments, and a higher calling

Readings

World Development Report 2010 - Summary: Development and Climate Change; see <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/0,,contentMDK:23062354~pagePK:478093~piPK:477627~theSitePK:477624,00.html>
Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter LAUDATO SI - “On care of our common home”, http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf
Report of the Secretary-General’s High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing, in: http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/climatechange/shared/Documents/AGF_reports/AGF_Final_Report.pdf
Nicholas Stern, The Economics of Climate Change, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Part II (Impacts of Climate Change on Growth and Development).

- **Guest speaker:**
Mafalda Duarte, Head, Climate Investment Funds
The World Bank

Week VIII: November 3rd, 2016

Food – and presentations

Readings

Lester Brown, “The Global Food Crisis”, pp.68 – 71, in Simon Nicholson/Paul Wapner (eds.), *Global Environmental Politics –From Person to Planet*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London 2015

Jenny Edkins, “Mass Starvations and the Limits of Famine Theorizing,” (2002) *IDS Bulletin* 33(4) pp. 12 -18.

Heinz-Wilhelm Strubenhoff, “Can 10 billion people live and eat well on this planet? Yes.

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/future-development/posts/2015/04/28-population-food-security-strubenhoff>

Raj Patel, “Can the World Feed 10 Billion People?” (May 4, 2011) *Foreign Policy*

Richard Manning, “The Oil We Eat: Following the Food Chain Back to Iraq,” (2004) *Harper’s Magazine*. Available online at: <http://www.harpers.org/TheOilWeEat.html>.

- **Guest speakers:**

Nidhi Tandon, Director, Networked Intelligence for Development

Bryan Dale, Ph.D. candidate, UfT, Department of Geography

Week IX: November 10th, 2016

Resource extraction and Environmental Justice

Readings

McKibben, Bill, "Why Not Frack?" in *New York Review of Books* (March 8, 2012)

Wapner, Paul, "Sacrifice in an Age of Comfort." in *The Politics of Sacrifice*. Edited by Michael Maniates and John Meyer. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010

Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, *Environmental Colonialism: The Perverse Politics of Climate Change*, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), *Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015

- **Guest speakers:**

Mining – Mike Dutton, Vale

Solar – Jochen Bezner, Orange Solar

Week X: November 17th, 2016

Water – and presentations

Readings

Maude Barlow, “Where has all the Water gone?” pp. 58 – 67, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015

Ken Conca, Governing Water: Contentious Transnational Politics and Global Institution Building, MIT Press, 2005, chapters 1 & 6

7th World Water Forum in Daegu and Gyeongju/South Korea,

<http://eng.worldwaterforum7.org/main/>

- **Guest speakers:**

Lawson Oates – Director, Toronto Water

Week XI: November 24th, 2016

The Fourth Estate – the fifth wheel on the sustainable development wagon?

Readings

Vogt, Erich “Academic Freedom in Canada, the Stephen Harper Government and the Canadian Media”, in Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien 34 (2014) 160–174

Columbia Journalism Review (2013), “Ambivalent coverage of climate change’s ‘new normal’”,

http://cjr.org/the_observatory/ambivalent_coverage_of_climate.php?page=2

Week XII: December 1st, 2016

Looking back to move forward - The meaning of sustainable development in the age of climate change

Roundtable

- **Guest speakers:**

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops - TBC

Bloomberg – TBC

Munk School of Global Affairs – TBC