

# SII199H1S: Understanding and Debating Environmental Issues Winter 2017

Last Updated: January 5, 2017

**Time:** Wed 2-4  
**Location:** BF 315  
**Instructor:** Karen Ing, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, School of the Environment, ES2098, [karen.ing@utoronto.ca](mailto:karen.ing@utoronto.ca), 978-4863  
**Course Website:** Blackboard  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

## Course Overview

The study of environment offers unique challenges since it is inherently interdisciplinary involving the intersection of science, society, politics, culture, and values. The complexity of this area of study combined with a multitude of competing interests means that one can easily become overwhelmed with the bombardment of new and often conflicting information.

The purpose of this seminar course is to introduce students to current environmental issues through readings and discussions to develop an understanding of the issue to serve as a foundation in debating what should be done about said issue.

In addition, the course aims to introduce and provide opportunities for students to practice skills necessary for a successful undergraduate experience, e.g. the development of critical thinking, writing skills, and oral presentations.

The course consists of detailed examination of three current environmental issues: climate change, energy, and water. For each, we will first examine the physical facts of the case and then the social and political aspects. From this foundation, students will then be required to seek out and evaluate other information sources and communicate their new found knowledge back to the class. Drawing on the breadth of knowledge and perspectives presented, students will then debate what should be done about the issue.

## Required Readings

Course readings have been drawn from a variety of sources, but are all electronically accessible with links posted.

## Course Evaluation and Assignments

Finding and Evaluating Information Sources (due Feb 8/Mar 8/Mar 29)	
- 10% for paper, 5% for presentation	15%
Position Paper on Climate Change (due Feb 15)	20%
Position Paper on Energy or Water (due Apr 7)	30%
Final Test (In-class Apr 5 <sup>th</sup> )	25%
Class Participation (attendance & discussions)	10%

Note: because class discussions are integral to the course, attendance and participation is an important component of your personal success in the course. Therefore an attendance record will be maintained which will be factored into the participation grade.

**Lecture Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>
Jan 11	Intro; What is education for?
Jan 18	Climate Change - Background Information Literacy
Jan 25	Climate Change – Policy Challenges
Feb 1	Climate Change – Future and Debates Fundamentals of Writing an Academic Essay
Feb 8	Climate Change – student led discussions
Feb 15	Energy – Fossil Fuels
Feb 22	<b>Reading Week</b>
Mar 1	Energy – Conventional Alternatives & debates
Mar 8	Energy – student led discussions
Mar 15	Water – Background
Mar 22	Water – challenges and opportunities debates
Mar 29	Water – student led discussions
Apr 5	Final Test / Final discussions

**Important Dates**

- Jan 5 – start of term
- Jan 18 - last day to add or make section changes to S section code courses
- Feb 20 – Family Day
- Feb 21-24 – Reading Week
- Mar 13 - last day to cancel S section code courses without academic penalty; last day to add or remove a [CR/NCR option](#) for S section code courses
- Apr 5 – classes end
- Apr 10-28 – exam period

**ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:**

**Information Sources – 15% (10% written assignment; 5% presentation)**

Due Feb 8/Mar 8/Mar 29 in class, 4-5 double space pages

Each student must sign up for only one of the three student led discussion dates (Climate Change – Feb 8; Energy – Mar 8; Water – Mar 29). In preparation for leading discussions on their chosen date, a student also hands in their “Finding and Evaluating Information Sources” assignment on that date.

This assignment is modelled on an annotated bibliography, which is a useful first step in tackling any research effort. Typically an annotated bibliography is a list of citations of books, articles,

documents, electronic sources, etc. with each entry containing a brief description and evaluation of the citation. The annotation should inform a reader on the range and depth of the document, discuss its sources, validity, quality and accuracy.

## **The Details**

### The Written Component

Based on the environmental issue you signed up to research, select a subtopic within this broad area and locate **three** sources of information published within the **past five years** on this topic. Two of the three sources must come from the University of Toronto library system: one must be a peer reviewed journal article and the other a book found on the shelves from any of the campus libraries. The third source can be from anywhere else including the internet, newspaper, promotional brochures, etc...

Source 1: a peer reviewed journal article from the University of Toronto library system

Source 2: a book found on the shelves from any of the campus libraries at UofT

Source 3: from anywhere you want as long as it is on topic

For EACH source provide the full citation at the top of the page. Use the APA (www.apastyle.org) style throughout. For a brief description of the APA styles visit [www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca)

Write a minimum of 3 paragraphs for **each** source:

- The first paragraph should be a brief description of the process you used to locate the source, e.g. keywords, particular database, search engine, library location, browsing, etc...
- the second paragraph should describe the contents or main arguments of the source, assessing its potential audience, level of difficulty, and range of coverage
- the final paragraph should be a critical evaluation on the quality and relevance of the source for an academic audience and a lay audience. Your evaluation may consider the credentials of the author/institution (for websites); the date of the work (recent or outdated); the publisher (reputable in the field?); the reputation of the journal and the range of other articles in the issue; the audience (popular, educated, scholarly); etc...

**Finally, write a brief paragraph comparing and contrasting the three different sources of information.**

### The Presentation

Prepare a short (5-10 min) presentation on the topic of your information sources assignment. The presentation should include key findings from the sources you located to illustrate new understanding you have gained as part of your research effort. You should end the presentation by presenting a discussion or debate question on your topic.

Learning objectives: familiarity with the UofT library system, research skills, critical evaluation of information sources, presentation skills.

**Position Paper #1: Climate Change: Due Feb 15, worth 20%**  
**Position Paper #2: Energy or Water: Due Apr 7<sup>th</sup>, worth 30%**  
**Length: 2500 words or approximately 7-8 double spaced pages**

There will be two opportunities in this course for you to develop skills in writing an academic research paper. Because of the course topic and format, we will model these essays as position papers.

A position paper requires you to present your position on an issue as supported by the research you introduce. You should guide the reader to your position through a critical and reasoned thinking process. Your paper should clearly demonstrate that you have weighed a wide range of information and knowledge on the issue with information derived from a breadth of sources. Aside from the assigned readings in the course, **include a minimum of 5 other** references.

To guide you through this process, consider the following steps:

- figure out what is at issue, select a debate within the issue
- identify the various positions within this debate, e.g. the pros and cons
- formulate your own position after careful weighing of the evidence
- compose a thesis that states your own position
- use evidence from your research, and reasoning to support and develop your thesis. It is important here to also include acknowledgement and consideration of the opposing side to demonstrate you have weighed all evidence in reaching your position.
- conclude by restating your position and emphasizing its support

The format for each of your position papers should be as follows:

- Introduction:
  - subject and importance of subject
  - purpose, including an explicit research question
  - format: explanation of the function of each section
- Body
  - Three to five sections, possibly with sub-sections in each
  - use section headings
  - sections must add up to a coherent whole, as you will explain in the format sub-section
- Conclusion
  - answer your research question, by analysis of data provided in the sections
- Alphabetical list of works cited

In this course, you are being asked to use the APA citation method for all your assignments. ([www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)).

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Submission of assignments:**

All assignments are due **in class** on the due dates noted for each assignment, except for the final research paper which can be dropped off in the School of the Environment drop box which is just inside the main office doors of the School of the Environment on the first floor of the Forestry Wing of the Earth Sciences Building in **ES1016V**.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to **Turnitin.com** for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

**NOTE:** To submit your assignment to Turnitin, the Class ID = 14283785, Enrollment password = SII199ENV

If a student does not wish to participate in Turnitin, the student **MUST** advise me immediately as alternate arrangements for screening the assignment must be arranged.

The two position papers must:

- Include the following information on the front page: the assignment title (feel free to be creative, but representative), the course title and number, the instructor's name, your name and student number
- Be double spaced, using 12 point font, in black ink with 1" (2.5cm) margins;
- include page numbers
- be submitted **both** on-line using Turnitin.com and in hard (paper) copy in class on due date specified. An assignment will not be officially acknowledged for grading until both copies are received.

### **Late Penalties:**

The late penalty on all assignments will be 2.5% of the assignment grade per day late, including weekends and will only be waived with the accompaniment of a completed official University of Toronto **Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form** which can be found at:

**<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/>**.

Please note that the certificate must cover the period of time you missed, *e.g.* the week before the assignment/essay is due, *etc.* and must supply sufficient detail and appropriate support to warrant any special consideration.

Assignments will **NOT** be accepted a week past the due date even if accompanied by a medical certificate unless prior approval has been obtained from the instructor.

Late assignments must be handed into the School of Environment drop box inside **ES1016V**. Please ensure you sign in your assignment using the sign-in sheet attached to the drop box. Any

assignments received after 5pm in the drop box is recorded as being received on the following business day, this includes weekends.

## Academic Integrity

**The following is taken from the Faculty of Arts and Science Academic Integrity website (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students>):**

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.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code*. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

See also the handout “How Not to Plagiarize,” Margaret Proctor, 2009, available online at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

### **Logging in to your Blackboard Course Website**

Like many other courses, this course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access our SII199H website, or any other Blackboard-based course website, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and log in using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you’ll find the link to our SII199H course website along with the link to all your other Blackboard-based courses.

### **Activating your UTORid and Password**

If you need information on how to activate your UTORid and set your password for the first time, please go to [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). Under the “First Time Users” area, click on “activate your UTORid” (if you are new to the university) or “create your UTORid” (if you are a returning student), then follow the instructions. New students who use the link to “activate your UTORid” will find reference to a “Secret Activation Key”. This was originally issued to you when you picked up your Tcard at the library. If you have lost your Secret Activation Key you can call 416-978-HELP or visit the Help Desk at the Information Commons on the ground floor of Robarts Library to be issued a new one. **The course instructors will not be able to help you with this.** 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can also answer any other questions you may have about your UTORid and password.

### **Email Communication with the Course Instructor**

At times, I may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all UofT students are required to have a valid UofT email address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UofT email address is set up AND properly entered in the ROSI system. You can do that by using the following instructions:

To submit the information to activate your UTORid and password (see above), you will need to click the “Validate” button. Follow the instructions on the subsequent screens to receive your utoronto.ca address. Once you have your UofT email address, go to the ROSI system ([www.rosi.utoronto.ca](http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca)), log in and update the system with your new UofT email address.

You can **check your UofT email** account from

1. The UofT home page <http://www.utoronto.ca>: From the Quick Links menu on the top right, choose “my.utoronto.ca”. Enter your UTORid and password, and when the Welcome page opens, click “WEBMAIL”.
2. Email software installed on your computer, for example Microsoft Outlook or Mozilla Thunderbird. Visit the Help Desk at the Information Commons or call 416-978-HELP for help with the set up.

**Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

You are responsible for:

1. Ensuring you have a valid UofT email address that is properly entered in the ROSI system
2. Checking your UofT email account on a regular basis.

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**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: [disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> .*

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