

University of Toronto, School of the Environment
ENV 1001: Environmental Decision-Making: Interdisciplinary Perspectives
Winter 2023: Dr. Hanna E. Morris
Wednesday 12-3pm (Eastern time zone), hybrid

Contact Information:

Professor Hanna E. Morris, email: hanna.morris@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: online Wednesdays 3:30-4:30pm Eastern (please email me ahead of time so I know you will be Zooming-in) and by appointment on Fridays in-person

TA: Courtney Hopper, email: courtneay.hopper@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Location – in-person and online:

The seminar sessions will be held in-person in **KP 113**. On weeks with guest speakers, these will be delivered online and class will be held entirely on Zoom. To clarify: we will meet in person every other week.

Course Overview:

Description: ENV1001 is the core course for the graduate Collaborative Specialization in Environmental Studies at the School of the Environment. This course addresses the topic of “environmental decision-making,” which we understand broadly as the challenging process of how humans engage with the natural world, and the many iterative (and sometimes invisible) decisions we make about how to organize human societies and activities. While decision-making is itself a field of study, this course takes a more flexible interpretation of the term, involving choices about, and affecting, the environment.

Drawing on insights from across a range of disciplines—throughout the humanities, social sciences, and natural and applied sciences—and with attention to fields beyond academia, we consider multiple perspectives on the environment. Our investigation will be carried out through bi-weekly guest lectures, student presentations, group projects, and individual written assignments.

In this Winter term portion of ENV1001, we will have a focus on exploring ways of interpreting, understanding, defining, and responding to complex environmental crises. We will explore different ways of knowing (what assumptions are made about the world that shape the kinds of decisions proposed and implemented), conflicting interests and information (at multiple scales), and decision-making models and policymaking processes (including recent policymaking interventions inspired by movements for a Green New Deal and youth-led calls for a “just transition” and a “just future”), along with questions of uncertainty and what democratic decision-making means.

Students should emerge from the course with a broader perspective on environmental and social challenges, enhanced communication skills across disciplines, and additional experience

working in diverse teams. In addition, students should leave the course more confident about the options for interdisciplinary collaboration. Our central goal in the course and the Collaborative Specialization program is to enable conversations to take place within and beyond the classroom about the challenges of human-environment relationships, with new ideas on creative and just approaches to social and political decisions. Ultimately, students will develop analytical skills, critical insights, practical strategies, (and inspiration!) for thinking about and doing interdisciplinary environmental research.

Structure: Weekly 3-hour classes. The course is aligned with the School of the Environment's Environment Seminar Series, so six of the twelve weeks of class will have an invited guest lecturer. These seminars will be open to the public. Any changes to the schedule will be announced by email and posted on Quercus (UofT's online course platform). Please note that this is a seminar course, rather than a lecture course; active classroom engagement is expected (and crucial to the value of the course!). Please also note that there is quite a bit of reading and other work outside of our weekly classes—full engagement and preparation will make our class sessions better.

Assignments (details at the end of the syllabus)

- **Weekly participation: 20% (continuous)**
 - Attendance, active listening & engagement each week
- **One-time guest seminar speaker facilitation: 20% (varying deadlines)**
 - Pre-seminar posting of reflection paper and discussion questions on Quercus
 - In-class, post-seminar facilitation of small group discussion on Zoom
- **Individual "3-minute thesis" presentation: 15% (due Feb 8th by start of class)**
 - In-class presentation
- **Individual written assignment: 20% (due March 8th by start of class)**
- **Group project: 25% (due April 5th by start of class)**

In case of unexpected challenges (guest speaker cancellations, student illness, other emergencies, etc.), grading policies may change as follows:

- Deadlines may be moved (as a class or individually; extensions are possible)
- Guest speaker facilitation may be altered to involve shorter/longer student-facilitated discussions, including without a seminar speaker (with discussions to be based on assigned readings and possible supplementary video material)
- Individual students facing challenges may be exempted from group projects, with alternate assignment options and/or grades redistributed to other assignments

Policies and Expectations

In general:

In this course, you can expect that I will strive to be fair, respectful, prepared, responsive, and enthusiastic. In return, I anticipate you will be respectful of your classmates and of me, be prepared, and be flexible. We are all learning new skills, practices, norms and – as the global pandemic has shown us – doing so amidst a series of personal, community, and global challenges. I hope that together we can foster a safe and engaging classroom, and I will rely on all of you to help create that environment.

Online course site:

We will have a course website (Quercus) for readings, course announcements, course materials, and discussions. We will use Zoom when online. Please check in frequently with the Quercus site. Please also be patient with our online tools, as we will encounter glitches and challenges. If/when communication on the site goes awry, please feel free to use email for assignments, questions, etc.

Deadlines and late penalties:

I anticipate all assignments will be submitted on time. However, some of you may find yourselves with valid conflicts and challenges, especially in light of your diverse programs and courses of study, and the exceptional challenges of this particular time (illness, caregiving duties, housing and financial insecurity, technological connectivity challenges, etc.). Please contact me as early as possible if you anticipate being unable to meet deadlines. Please also contact your group members if you run into challenges during the group project. As this is a seminar class, attendance is the bedrock of the course, enabling us to build a strong community and develop enriching conversations across weeks—still, we'll need to be flexible and understanding when conflicts and problems arise. If you know in advance you need to miss class, it helps me tremendously to be aware of these absences.

Backups and rough drafts:

You are strongly advised to keep rough drafts and backup copies of all assignments and essays you submit. Please take a minute at the start of the term to set yourself a backup strategy. Whether it's a backup external hard drive, a web-based cloud service like Dropbox or Google Drive, or some other option, it's important you have multiple copies of your work in the case of a hard drive failure or computer problem (this is important not only for this course, but also (especially!) for your research and thesis/dissertation projects).

Names:

If your name on the official course registration list does not, for any reason, match the name by which you would like to be addressed (and under which you would like to submit assignments and sign emails and be addressed in class) please let me know. I am not able to change official course lists, but I can certainly call you by your preferred name. Also, please let me know the pronouns you use (mine are she/her/hers). I encourage you always to begin your interactions in academic settings with more senior scholars using formal forms of address—especially “Dr.” or

“Professor” titles for profs/instructors. That said, as graduate student colleagues, I am happy to have formal or informal exchanges with you: you are welcome to call me Dr./Prof. Morris, or Hanna whichever makes you most comfortable. (If you use a title for me, though, please choose “Dr.” or “Prof.”, not “Ms.” or “Miss” or “Mrs.”)

Exceptions and Assistance:

The University has many resources to help students who need assistance for any number of reasons, both in and outside of the classroom, including library, academic, and health and counseling resources. Let’s aim to work together as a class to help each other find academic support in the midst of challenges. The University remains committed to providing allowances for religious observances, as do I. A few helpful resources:

- <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/gradlife/Pages/Grad-Wellness.aspx>
- <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Writing-Centre.aspx>
- <http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation>
- <http://familycare.utoronto.ca/resources/>

If you are struggling or you encounter unanticipated challenges or crises during the term (whether for academic and/or personal reasons), please seek the support you need as early as possible, as best you can. Some students find themselves facing challenges unexpectedly. If you find yourself in a difficult situation, even if you have not yet gone through all the official channels, it is best to let me know right away that you are seeking university assistance and may need accommodations (you do not need to disclose the details of your situation to me). If you will need accommodation from me for any reason, in the classroom or on coursework and assignments, please let me know as soon as you can.

Academic integrity:

The seriousness of academic integrity really cannot be stressed enough. Academic integrity remains **essential** to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student’s individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, seeing these as serious academic offenses. As graduate students, your academic integrity will be the foundation of your scholarly and practitioner careers.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, through the School of Graduate Studies. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from your instructor or other institutional resources. As some norms differ across disciplines and universities, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with UofT policies.

- <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/facultyandstaff/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx>
- <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>
- www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
- Using someone else's words without using quotation marks
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without instructor permission
- Making up sources or facts
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University

Class Schedule and Readings (all readings are available on Quercus)

Week 1: Jan 11: Introduction (*in-person*)

Key questions we will consider: What are “environmental crises”? What is “environmental decision-making”? What are the challenges associated with making decisions about how to respond to environmental crises? What does “interdisciplinary environmental research” entail / mean, exactly? What are the challenges and opportunities for doing interdisciplinary environmental research?

Readings:

- Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Introduction, pgs. 1-43.

Week 2: Jan 18: Geography and Planning; Guest speaker: Dr. Nidhi Subramanyam, U of T (*online*)

See Quercus for updated speaker bio and lecture abstract

Note: In guest speaker weeks, we'll convene on Zoom for a public seminar. These sessions will involve a lecture and an instructor-moderated question-and-answer session during the first half of class. Following the public seminar, we will have a short break, and then our ENV 1001 class will reconvene promptly at 1:50pm in a separate Zoom session. This post-talk session will involve student-facilitated small-group discussions.

Readings:

- Carswell, G., De Neve, G., & Subramanyam, N. (2022). Getting home during lockdown: migration disruption, labour control and linked lives in India at the time of Covid-19. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1-19. DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2022.2099360
- Subramanyam, Nidhi, & Kudva, Neema. (2021) Acquiescence in the face of dispossession in the Mahindra World City Special Economic Zone, Tamil Nadu, India. *Environment & Planning C: Politics and Space* 39(1): 114-131.

Week 3: Jan 25: Environmental Decision-Making in Times of Democratic Crisis (*in-person*)

Key questions we will consider: What are the links between authoritarianism and environmental crises? What are the threats of anti-democratic modes of governance in present-day environmental decision-making processes? How do end-of-the-world / apocalyptic visions shape proposed responses to environmental crises?

Readings:

- Daggett, C. (2018). Petro-masculinity: Fossil fuels and authoritarian desire. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 47(1), 25-44.
- Lilley, S., McNally, D., Yuen, E., & Davis, J. (2012). "Introduction: The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and Rebirth" in *Catastrophism: The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and Rebirth*. Oakland, CA: PM Press, pp. 1-14.
- O'Connell, M. (2018, February 15). Why Silicon Valley billionaires are prepping for the apocalypse in New Zealand. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/feb/15/why-silicon-valley-billionaires-are-prepping-for-the-apocalypse-in-new-zealand>
- Solnit, R. (2010). "Prelude: Falling Together" in *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, pp. 1-10.

Week 4: Feb 1: Environmental Justice; Guest speaker: Dr. Michael Mascarenhas, UC Berkeley (*online*)

See *Quercus* for updated speaker bio and lecture abstract

Readings (tbc):

- Mascarenhas, M. J. (2016). Where the Waters Divide: Neoliberal Racism, White Privilege and Environmental Injustice. *Race, Gender & Class*, 23(3-4), 6-25.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26529206>
- Mascarenhas, M. J., & Scarce, R. (2004). "The Intention Was Good": Legitimacy, Consensus-Based Decision Making, and the Case of Forest Planning in British Columbia, Canada. *Society & Natural Resources*, 17(1), 17-38, DOI: [10.1080/08941920490247227](https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920490247227)

***Week 5: Feb 8: Three-minute Thesis Presentations (in-person)**

Week 6: Feb 15: The Green Energy Transition; Guest speaker: Dr. Teresa Kramarz, U of T (online)

See Quercus for updated speaker bio and lecture abstract

Readings (tbc):

- Kramarz, T. (2022, November 15). The Green Energy Transition Has an Extractivism Problem. *World Politics Review*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/environmental-impact-mining-extractivism-green-energy-transition/?share-code=97JQqEH84baZ>
- Kramarz, T., & Kingsbury, D.V. (2022). Climate action and populism of the left in Ecuador. *Environmental Politics*, 31(5), 841-860, DOI: [10.1080/09644016.2022.2090388](https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2022.2090388)

Winter Term Reading Week: Feb 22 – no class

Week 7: March 1: Writing Workshop (in-person)

***Week 8: March 8: Climate Communication and “Green” Public Relations; Guest speaker: Dr. Melissa Aronczyk, Rutgers University (online) [*Individual Assignment Due]**

See Quercus for updated speaker bio and lecture abstract

Readings (tbc):

- Aronczyk, M. (2022, August 11). Author’s Note: A Strategic Nature: Public Relations and the Politics of American Environmentalism. *Environmental Humanities*. Retrieved from <https://www.energyhumanities.ca/news/authors-note-a-strategic-nature-public-relations-and-the-politics-of-american-environmentalism>
- Espinoza, M. I., & Aronczyk, M. (2021). Big data for climate action or climate action for big data? *Big Data & Society*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951720982032>

Week 9: March 15: The Production of Environmental “Knowledge” (in-person)

Key questions we will consider: How and why are certain experiences and environmental expertise deemed “legitimate” or not? What are the dynamics of power involved in determining whose experiences and expertise matter in producing and recognizing “legitimate” environmental “knowledge”? What is the role of settler colonialism, culture, institutions, and discourse in shaping what is considered “legitimate” environmental expertise and knowledge?

Readings:

- Escobar, A. (1995) “The Making and Unmaking of the Third World through Development” in Rahnema, M. and Bawtree, V. (Eds.). (1997). *The Post-Development Reader*. London, UK: Zed Books, pp. 85-93.
- Brave NoiseCat, J. (2019, September 13). The Environmental Movement Needs to Reckon with Its Racist History. *VICE*. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/bjwvn8/the-environmental-movement-needs-to-reckon-with-its-racist-history>
- Vergès, F. (2017), Racial Capitalocene: Is the Anthropocene Racial? In: Verso Blog. Available at: <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3376-racial-capitalocene>
- Tuck, E., and Yang, K.W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.

Week 10: March 22: Visualizing Environmental Crises; Guest speaker: Dr. Finis Dunaway, Trent University (online)

See *Quercus* for updated speaker bio and lecture abstract

Readings (tbc):

- Dunaway, F. (2006). Reframing the Last Frontier: Subhankar Banerjee and the Visual Politics of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. *American Quarterly*, 58, 159-180.
- Dunaway, F, (2009). Seeing Global Warming: Contemporary Art and the Fate of the Planet. *Environmental History*, 14, 9-31.
- Dunaway, F. (2022, December 9). Defending the Arctic: Introducing a New Public History Website. *NiCHE*. Retrieved from <https://niche-canada.org/2022/12/09/defending-the-arctic-refuge-introducing-a-public-history-website/>

Week 11: March 29: Reimagining Environmental Policymaking Processes (*in-person*)

Key questions we will consider: How and why are environmental policymaking processes being reimagined through the concept of “just transitions”? How do the Green New Deal and the Red Deal imagine “just futures” and how to get there? How do these policymaking interventions reimagine the methods and means for making environmental decisions?

Readings:

- Aronoff, K. (2021, July 19). A New Global Group of 21 Lawmakers Will Pressure Countries on Climate Change. *New Republic*.
<https://newrepublic.com/article/162999/ilhan-omar-global-green-new-deal>
- Aronoff, K., Battistoni, A., Aldana Cohen, D., Riofrancos, T. (2019) “Recharging Internationalism” in *A Planet to Win*. London, UK: Verso, pgs. 139-169.
- Brown, A. (2019, March 7). A Lakota Historian on What Climate Organizers Can Learn From Two Centuries of Indigenous Resistance. *The Intercept*. Retrieved from <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/07/nick-estes-our-history-is-the-future-indigenous-resistance/>
- Estes, N. (2019, August 6). A Red Deal. *Jacobin*. Retrieved from <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/08/red-deal-green-new-deal-ecosocialism-decolonization-indigenous-resistance-environment>

***Week 12: April 5: Environmental Sociology and Health; Guest speaker: Dr. Lauren Richter, UTM (*online*) [**Group project due*]**

See Quercus for updated speaker bio and lecture abstract

Readings (tbc):

- Richter, L. (2018). [Constructing Insignificance? Applying Critical Race Theory to Institutional Failure in Environmental Justice Communities](#). *Environmental Sociology* 4(1): 107-121.
- Liévanos, R.S., Wilder, E., Richter, L., Carrera, J., & Mascarenhas, M. (2021). [Challenging the White Spaces of Environmental Sociology](#). *Environmental Sociology* 7(2): 103-109.
- Richter, L., Cordner, A., & Brown, P. (2021). [Producing Ignorance Through Regulatory Structure: The Case of Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances \(PFAS\)](#). *Sociological Perspectives* 64(4).

Assignment Details

Facilitation Assignment (20%)

You will each be assigned a week with a guest speaker for facilitation responsibilities.

There are two parts to this:

1) Pre-seminar: posting a reflection paper and discussion questions: due by 12pm Eastern on *Tuesday* before your assigned *Wednesday* seminar. Post this on the Quercus discussion board on the thread of the relevant seminar speaker.

Please post a one-page (~400-500-word) reflection paper on the readings and theme of the week (stated seminar topic or theme) with two or three discussion questions. In this paper, you might choose to reflect on the questions that arise for you from the reading, how the theme fits with other readings from our course, and/or how your work in your home program relates to the topic of discussion. You're welcome to read more widely, based on the description of the seminar, and bring in knowledge you have from other classes, research, or work you've done or learned about. If you refer to external/additional readings, please provide enough detail about that source to enable your peers who have not read the supplementary material to understand your reflections. The discussion questions may be ones I incorporate into the moderated discussion with the speaker in the seminar session; they may also be used to help guide your post-seminar small group discussions. Everyone should read their peers' papers/questions before class!

2) After the seminar, in our Zoom classroom: facilitation of small group discussion: right after the seminar

After the public seminar, we'll have a short break and then reconvene promptly at 1:50pm in a separate Zoom room just with our class for small group discussions. As a facilitator, you'll moderate the discussion with small groups (we might switch group composition midway through the session, perhaps more than once, to mix up discussions and add different perspectives -- please be prepared for the format of these to change slightly over the term as we learn how to work together in the most generative ways!) In general, you'll have 5-6 peers in your small groups, and you'll be tasked with moderating the discussions, asking questions to catalyze discussion, drawing links between your peers' comments and questions, and generally leading the discussion. You'll also be asked to report back to the full class on key insights from these discussions -- questions that might be relevant to the class as a whole, comments that were surprising or illuminating, points of agreement or divergence, etc. You'll be asked for a self-assessment of your moderation of these sessions, so you will need to think critically and carefully about moderation styles, what generates good conversations, and how to engage with your peers across perspectives and fields.

Some tips on facilitating/moderating:*What does 'moderating' mean?*

- If you have ever attended a panel discussion at a conference, a debate or a webinar, you have seen a moderator. The moderator's main role is to keep the conversation lively, on topic and balanced.
- A moderator needs to "read the room." If occasionally someone wanders off, it's okay to encourage them back to the main theme or questions. But if everyone starts leaving the conversation en masse, it means the question or theme is no longer taking them in a direction they want to go, and it's okay to change course.

How can I be a good moderator?

- Be present, engaged, and attentive.
- Your goal is to facilitate the conversation: we want to reflect on seminar content, dive deeper in the specific topic, and hear people's original ideas, while also meeting peers!
 - If someone answers with a short, vague answer, you can say "Yes, thank you for sharing. We have a bit more time, would you be able to elaborate on that point?"
 - If someone goes off track, you can gently bring back the conversation "This is a very interesting point, but I think it's a little beyond our scope. Could we focus on the initial question, and maybe talk about your point at the end if we have time?"
- **Balance is crucial:** some folks speak more than others, even though everyone in the class has something interesting to say. Try to pay attention to who has already spoken a few times and who has never been able to speak. Notice if the conversation becomes dominated by a smaller group and do your best to restore balance.
 - It is okay for you to say: "Hey [peer name], I think you spoke a few times already. Let's go first to those who haven't spoken and get back to you afterwards!" - it's not rude, it's your "job"!
 - Use your judgment for when to intervene, and when to let things go. This can be hard to do, so do reflect afterwards on whether your judgment calls were effective.
- You don't need to know the answers. If a colleague asks a question, you can answer as a student, open it up to everyone to see if anyone has the answer, and say "It seems like none of us know the answer here, I'll write it down and bring it back to the whole group." Moderation works better if the moderator *doesn't* try to provide the answers.
 - Don't feel you need to fill all the silences. Sometimes people need space to think before they speak. But if the silence drags on, be prepared to offer another prompt to get things going again.
- You can establish a system that works for you: you might have those who want to speak raise their hand, or indicate that they'd like to intervene by putting a note in the chat, etc.... whatever works for you, and allows people to have a chance to speak without interrupting each other.
- You are not expected to be an 'expert' -- just an engaged peer who is making sure the conversation has a direction, is participatory, and is coherent.

Three Minute Thesis (20%)

The Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) assignment in this class is modelled after a university competition developed by The University of Queensland. The aim for ENV1001 is for everyone to practice their oral presentation skills and their ability to communicate complex ideas and research in environmental studies to a broad audience.

Instructions:

For this assignment, students will present a three-minute talk to the class on their graduate research work. Students who are taking course-based graduate programs rather than research programs may choose to present on a past research project, an internship or work project, or a topic of interest in their area of study. Even if you are not engaged in research, this is a good chance to practice your communication skills.

The assignment is to present on your research, or an area of special interest, and the goal is to practice speaking clearly and concisely to a general audience about a research topic in your field. You might think about the arc of your talk in terms of making a short and powerful argument (convincing your audience to see a particular question or issue through your lens).

The role of the audience will be:

- A question to a peer about their research/topic;
- A positive comment to a peer about something you found compelling/striking about their work; or
- A comment identifying some point of intersection or tension between peers' talks: this could be similarities or differences in how they approach their theme/topic, what kinds of methods or approaches they use in their work, or any other elements you notice.

Rules

- 3MT is 3 minutes **max**
- You are allowed 1 static slide (no additional images/props/visuals; no moving images)
- Presentations will be held during Week 5. If we don't have enough time for everyone to present, the remainder of the presentations will be held during Week 7.

Guidance

- Keep it simple! You can't tell your audience everything—decide on a specific set of points to make in the three minutes
- Reduce jargon/unexplained subject-specific terminology: you are speaking to an interdisciplinary audience—you must consider whether someone outside your field/area of expertise will understand your talk
- Tell a story: You might want to consider your presentation as a short, concise story—you want to catch your audience's attention, develop a clear, logical flow, and wrap up with some kind of conclusion/summary
- For non-research students: Still tell a story! You might not have your own research project, but you're sharing an issue-area or topic you know about with your peers.

Examples:

- <https://uwaterloo.ca/three-minute-thesis/>
- <https://cags.ca/3mt-2/>
- <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/cgpd/three-minute-thesis-3mt-at-u-of-t/>

Terrific advice:

- <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internal/doctoralschool/researcherdev/threeminthesis/preparing3mt>
- <https://uofgprblog.com/pgrblog/2020/2/12/three-minute-thesis-advice-and-thoughts-from-the-2019-winner>

Grading for this assignment will follow the three UofT 3MT judging criteria, with each component weighted equally: comprehension; engagement; and communication.

- Comprehension
 - Did the presentation: help the audience understand the research/project? Follow a logical sequence?
 - Did the speaker: clearly outline the nature and aims of research/project? Clearly indicate what was significant about this research?
- Engagement
 - Did the presentation make the audience want to know more?
 - Did the speaker: convey enthusiasm for their work? Capture and maintain their audience's attention? Avoid trivializing or "dumbing down" their research?
 - Would the audience want to know more about the speaker's research?
- Communication
 - Was the presentation communicated in language appropriate for non-specialists?
 - Did the speaker: use sufficient eye contact and vocal range? Maintain a steady pace and a confidence stance? Avoid scientific jargon? Explain terminology that needed to be used? Provide adequate background information to illustrate points?

Individual Assignment (20%)

This is a short individual written assignment focused on course content and interdisciplinary communication. You may choose one of the following formats:

- A blog post for an interdisciplinary or policy-focused website (e.g., the Washington Post's Monkey Cage, the Center for Global Development's web series, the Wilson Center's New Security Beat, The Conversation, etc.)
- A forum or viewpoint or perspectives article for a less disciplinary specific audience in an academic journal or elsewhere (e.g., the journal *Science* has a policy forum section)
- An op-ed for a newspaper or other media outlet
- A policy brief written for a specific audience (e.g., federal MPs; UN negotiators; city councillors; etc) on a pressing environmental issue where they might be expected to take action, or a proposal they might need to vote on, etc.
- An alternate format of your choice, with my permission

Please note that your assignment should be roughly 1500-2000 words. Shorter is fine, although usually more challenging! Most *New Security Beat* articles are 1800 words, most *Science* policy forums are 1700-2000 words, and most Monkey Cage posts are ~1000-1200 words. Op-eds generally are 800-1000 words. If you need a few more words for your assignment, that's fine, but try not to go much over 2000 words (that should give you a sense of the scope of your piece). If you are writing an op-ed, stick to the lower word count.

You will write on decision-making themes related to the readings and/or seminar speaker presentations. You can interpret decision-making broadly, as we do in our course. **You must draw on at least two readings from our syllabus.** You may also choose to refer to the speaker or class presentations and additional outside sources. In your blog post, viewpoint/forum piece, op-ed, or briefing note, you will:

- Specify the outlet you are writing for
- Use the citation style that is appropriate to the outlet you choose. If no citations are generally used in the outlet you choose, e.g., in op-eds, please include footnotes or endnotes, so I can track your sources
- You will write in the style appropriate to your chosen outlet

Group Assignment (25%)

Option 1

Provide a description and analysis of an environmental decision made in the recent past. Please run your chosen topic by me. The topic can either be the decision itself or both the decision and its implementation. The research question to be addressed should include:

- why was the decision made (and implemented in the way it was)?
- how could it have been done differently?

Option 2

Create a proposal/plan for an online, in-person, or hybrid interdisciplinary conference or workshop on a topic of current concern. Please run your chosen topic by me.

For option 2, in addition to your proposal/plan, critically assess the benefits and drawbacks of convening the conference or workshop online, in-person, or as a hybrid.

For either option, each group will turn in a shared project, and the projects will:

- Identify a relevant and contemporary environmental challenge, controversy, or research area;
- Identify strategies to address interdisciplinary communication challenges;
- Consider equity issues; and
- Draw on course readings and key questions/themes in some form;
- Be 5,000-8,000 words long