

School of the Environment

ENV1197H: Research in Environment and Sustainability Part 1

Thursday 11am to 1pm

Fall 2025 Course Syllabus

I CONTACTS

INSTRUCTOR

Name: Teresa Kramarz

Email: teresa.kramarz@utoronto.ca

Office hours: Thursday 1-2pm

II COURSE OVERVIEW

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is the first in a two-part series on research methods designed for MES students. During this semester, students will acquire the conceptual and methodological tools necessary for crafting a research proposal. This proposal will be grounded in a significant research question, supported by relevant literature and theory, and accompanied by an appropriate research strategy. Under the guidance of their thesis supervisors, students will develop this proposal, which will form the foundation of their MES thesis. Additionally, the course will focus on enhancing students' critical thinking skills, enabling them to transition from being consumers of research to becoming producers of valuable research outputs.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course student will learn how to develop a research proposal, including how to

- i. Develop a research question and write a thesis statement
- ii. Assemble an annotated bibliography
- iii. Write a literature review
- iv. Identify theoretical frameworks
- v. Develop an approach to answer their research question
- vi. Correctly cite research (using Chicago Manual of Style, author-date format)
- vii. Evaluate appropriate data sources and material for research
- viii. Evaluate peer work according to established criteria

III HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED

This is an in-person seminar class. Students will meet every Thursday during the Fall term. In preparation for these meetings, students are expected to read relevant literature and documents,

prepare presentations, complete peer reviews, and be extremely well organized to complete the scaffolded academic assignments designed for this course.

COURSE SCHEDULE & RELEVANT SESSIONAL DATES:

DATES	WEEK	TOPICS
September 4	1	What is knowledge? How do we know what we know? Why do we bother asking?
September 11	2	Research sources and citation workshop. Bring your laptop to class Topic and draft research question 1 pager is due today
September 18	3	Research questions, theory and data
September 25	4	Literature and hypothesis
October 2	5	Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches Annotated bibliography and literature review is due
October 9	6	Guest lecture: Nicole Spiegelaar and concept mapping Peer reviews of annotated bibliography and literature review due today
October 16	7	Variables 5-minute proposal update presentations
October 23	8	Finding Ways to Measure Variables Preproposal is due
October 30	--	Reading Week – no classes
November 6	9	Research design Concept map due today
November 13	10	Presentations of advanced preproposals
November 20	11	Ethics Presentations of advanced preproposals
November 27	12	Drawing conclusions Final proposal due Double-blind peer review of research proposal in class

IV EVALUATION/GRADING SCHEME

Assignment Name	Due date	Weight
Topic and draft research question (1 page)	September 11	5%
Annotated bibliography and literature review (8-10 sources, 6 pages)	October 2	15%
Pre-proposal (6-7 pages, excluding bibliography)	October 23	25 %
Final proposal (12- 15 pages, excluding bibliography)	November 27	40%
Participation (includes class discussion, peer review, concept map and proposal presentation)	Ongoing	15%

COURSE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

The assignments in this course are intended to provide you with the opportunity to cumulatively develop your thesis proposal. All the assignments and assessment criteria are described on Quercus. They should all be double spaced, and use Chicago Manual of Style, author-date citation format.

V COURSE POLICIES

Communication with Course Instructor

In addition to our class meetings, you are encouraged to **communicate individually** with the course instructor by e-mail or attending her weekly office hours.

Electronic Communications

The Quercus website will be used for posting the course syllabus and other materials related to the course. Any changes that we decide on during class meetings will be reflected in announcements or other material posted on the course website.

NOTE: All students are advised to have their notification preferences on Quercus enabled for Announcements so that you will be receiving course announcements sent via email. **You will be submitting all assignments online via the course website.**

I will provide comments electronically for each assignment. It is essential to regularly check your utoronto e-mail.

Please note the following specific guidelines on email:

- Use a “utoronto” account to ensure receipt of messages by the instructor
- Do not send emails from the Inbox tool on the Quercus website. Messages sent from the website Inbox tool may not be received.
- Use full sentences and proper grammar when composing messages.
- Ensure your questions/comments are clear and comprehensible.
- Do not email panicked questions about an assignment the night before it’s due.
- Avoid unnecessary questions by first consulting the syllabus.
- I will answer emails as soon as I can – sometimes right away, sometimes within 48 hours during the week. Longer questions are best dealt with in office hours.
- Please note that the instructor cannot proofread assignments via email before they are due.

Assignment Submission Policy

Late assignments will be penalized by 20% for each day past the due date (ie past 12.10pm on the date they are due). Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty, except when verifiable extenuating circumstances can be demonstrated.

Remarking term work policy

Requests for “remarks” must be submitted in writing within one week of the date the graded assignment was made available to students. Late requests will not be accepted. To request a remark, you must submit a written explanation detailing precisely why you believe your assignment should receive a different grade. Any remarking will involve the entire assignment, not simply the questions or portion you believe were scored improperly. The revised mark stands.

All students are **REQUIRED** to retain a personal electronic copy of all work undertaken for this course as well as *all rough materials, references, sources, and working notes* until the marked original has been returned.

VI TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

The course will be managed via Quercus (q.utoronto.ca). To access Quercus, you must have an

active University of Toronto email address. It is expected that students will log onto Quercus regularly and set their email and Quercus accounts to receive notifications for all course announcements. You are responsible for ensuring that you maintain regular backup copies of your files, use antivirus software (if using your own computer), and schedule enough time when completing an assignment to allow for delays due to technical difficulties. *Crashed hard drives, broken printers, lost or corrupted files, incompatible file formats, and similar mishaps are common issues when using technology. They are not acceptable grounds for a deadline extension.*

Generative AI is not required to complete any aspect of this course, and we caution you to not rely heavily on these tools to complete any of your coursework. Instead, we recommend treating generative AI as a supplementary tool only for exploration of content. Ultimately, you (and not any AI tool) are responsible for your own learning in this course, and for all the work you submit for credit. It is your responsibility to critically evaluate the content generated, and to regularly assess your own learning independent of generative AI tools. Overreliance on generative AI may give you a false sense of how much you have actually learned, which can lead to poor performance on this, later courses, and future work or studies after graduation.

NOTE: Students who plan to use generative AI tools in researching or writing their graduate thesis must always seek and document in writing unambiguous approval for the planned uses in advance from their supervisor(s) and supervisory committee. Unauthorized use of generative AI tools for scholarly work at the University of Toronto may be considered an offence under the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#), and research misconduct as defined in the [Policy on Ethical Conduct in Research](#) and the [Framework to Address Allegations of Research Misconduct](#).

VII INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND SUPPORT

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

On Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is 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. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
3. Making up sources or facts.

4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
2. Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test.
3. Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. 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 on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>).

COPYRIGHT

If a student wishes to copy or reproduce lecture presentations, course notes or other similar materials provided by instructors, they must obtain the instructor's written consent beforehand. Otherwise, all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited.

More information regarding this is available here:

<https://teaching.utoronto.ca/resources/recording-of-lectures-and-class-sessions/>

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility: if you require accommodations for a disability, or have any other accessibility concerns about the course, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES and SUPPORT

The following are some important links to help you with academic and/or technical service and support.

- General student services and resources at [Student Life](#)
- Full library service through [University of Toronto Libraries](#)
- Resources on conducting online research through [University Libraries Research](#)
- Resources on academic support from the [Academic Success Centre](#)
- Learner support at the [Writing Centre](#)
- Information for [Technical Support/Quercus Support](#)