

# **ENVIRONMENT & MENTAL WELLNESS**

## **ENV198H1 Fall 2022**

### **I CONTACTS**

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#### **INSTRUCTOR**

Name: Nicole Spiegelaar

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Office: Larkin, 215

Office hours: Wednesday and Thursday, 10:10am-11:10am

### **II COURSE OVERVIEW**

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**Wednesdays 2:10-4:00pm in HA410**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

We will explore the relationship between the human psyche and the environment (built and natural), with a focus on mental wellness. We will view this relationship through various theoretical frameworks including Evolutionary, Positive and Environmental Psychologies, as well as Indigenous wisdom across Turtle Island and Yoga Vedantic philosophy. We will also understand this relationship through experiential and embodied learning during outdoor observations and introspective practices. Topics will range from: evolutionary environments, psychological restoration in nature, herbal and entheogenic healing, place attachment and identity, neurological toxins, biophilic architecture, climate coping and ecological grief, nature connectedness and mental health justice.

#### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

With full participation in this course, you will develop foundational academic skills including academic literacy, communication and application, interdisciplinary critical thinking, as well as creative problem solving. The course will help you make connections between social, historical, biological and cultural domains of human-environment interactions. Through the topic of environment and wellbeing, you will learn how to navigate the ever-increasing emotional stressors of environmental degradation in our society today, build awareness of your own psychological states, become more equipped with healthy coping and be empowered to address environmental issues.

#### **PREREQUISITE COURSE(S):**

None

#### **READINGS:**

Required readings are listed in the Course Schedule below. Note that readings with an asterisk (\*) are not required; these supplemental/optional readings and their list of references may be helpful resources for your assignments. The readings will help

you actively participate in class, develop thoughtful questions for guest speakers, and develop your major assignments. Weekly required readings and videos must be completed before every class and will be made available on Quercus. All articles will be available for free on Quercus. NOTE: Readings are subject to change with one week of advance notice - please check Quercus for weekly modules.

### III HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED

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This course is will be held in person. Weekly classes will invovle experiential outdoor learning in the natural and urban environment, or indoor classroom group discussions. Please be prepared to go outside for class and dress appropriately for the weather (walking shoes, warm clothes, rain gear).

Weekly preparation activities, readings and reflections will be done outside of classtime, and are inteneded to give you extra support in digesting course material and applying it to your assignments.

One week before each class you will be given instructions on the “Discussion” tab of Quercus to prepare for class. This will include a link to course *readings* and may include instructions for an outdoor *activity* on your own. You will reflect on these readings and activities in a person *Journal*, which will help you integrate these expeirenes along with the new knowledge you gain. You may be asked to post a question, images, observations or short reflections on Quercus.

Please visit Quercus regularly for course announcements.

#### Weekly Checklist

Check Quercus for weekly prompts. Before Tuesday at midnight, ask yourself: did the weekly prompts include any of the following? Did I complete them?

- ✓Readings
- ✓ Journal Reflections (Activities & Readings)
- ✓Discussion Posts
- ✓Activity Post

#### COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS & RELEVANT SESSIONAL DATES:

Date	Topic	Reading	Due Date
Week 1 Sept 14	Introduction		

Week 2 Sept 21	Restoration in Natural Settings	(Joye & van den Berg, 2018; Wilson, 1984, pp. 1–22)  (Grinde & Patil, 2009; Kaplan, 1995; Ulrich, 1993)*	
Week 3 Sept 28	Environment Interactions	(Franco et al., 2017; Hartig, 2021) (Mantler & Logan, 2015; Pasanen et al., 2019)*	
Week 4 Oct 5	Ingesting Environment	(Metzner, 2013; Sarris, 2018)  (Hyun-Ju et al., 2010; Tupper et al., 2015)*	
Week 5 Oct 12	Indigenous Relations of Wellness	(Bopp, 1989; University nuhelot'înethaiyots'î nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills, 2019)	
Week 6 Oct 19	Resilience & Mindfulness	(Kirmayer et al., 2017; Lino, 2020; Lymeus et al., 2017)	
Week 7 Oct 26	Environmental & Neurological Degradation	(Ford & Herrera, 2019; Iqbal et al., 2020)  (Morse et al., 2020)*	Medicinal Plant Report Due
Week 8 Nov 2	Architecture	(Gifford & McCunn, 2018; Joye, 2011)  (Joye, 2007; Roshinni et al., 2018)*	
READING WEEK		-----	
Week 9 Nov 16	Place Identity	(Bonaiuto et al., 2019, pp. 1–7; Knez et al., 2018; Middleton et al., 2020)	

	& Ecological Grief	(Korpela, 2012)*	
Week 10 Nov 23	Yoga Vedantic Perspectives & Ecoanxiety Coping	tbd	
Week 11 Nov 30	Presentations (3)		Group Project Due
Week 12 Dec 7	Reflection Presentations (2)		Journal & Reflection Due

#### IV EVALUATION/GRADING SCHEME

Participation	30%	Weekly
Journal & Reflection	15%	Due Dec 7
Medicinal Plant Report	20%	Due Oct 26
Group Design Project	25%	Due Nov 30
Group Presentation	10%	Week 11 or Week 12

**Participation (30%):** Your participation grade will be based on class attendance, participation and Quercus Discussion Posts. Accommodations for participation via Quercus can be made on a case-by-case basis due to illness or other extenuating circumstances.

##### *a) Attendance and Class Discussion*

You will be graded on weekly seminar attendance as well as reasoned, thoughtful, and informed contributions to this course. Participation marks are awarded for class interaction, clear evidence of familiarity with assigned readings, focused attention, and engagement with guest speakers. You will be evaluated on your ability to engage in supportive, respectful dialogue with your peers. In-class discussions should reflect your completion of weekly readings.

*Note:* Professors are not automatically notified when you complete an Absence Declaration on ACORN; you also need to notify your professor.

##### *b) Quercus Discussion and Activity Posts*

One week before class, you will be given prompts to i) respond to readings, ii) prepare questions for class discussion or guest speaker, and/or iii) respond to outdoor activities. They are due by midnight on day before class (Tuesdays).

**Journal & Reflection:** You will be prompted to do weekly activities in natural and built spaces on your own time. **Please purchase your own journal for documenting your observations.** You will use the same journal for a short summary of readings, questions prepared for class, and a critical reflection on the topic. I will review your journal for completeness. Activities in class and at home will encourage thought exercises that will build into a short personal reflection assignment.

**Medicinal Plant Report:** You will choose one plant, animal or fungi with known mental health benefits understood by both scientific medical research and a traditional local knowledge that predates science. You will write a short report comparing and contrasting these narratives.

**Group Design Project:** You will work with your peers to design a University space that optimizes mental wellness or psychological resiliency for a student population.

**Presentation:** You will give a 15-minute presentation of your Design Project with your group.

**Note:** if an unexpected technical issue occurs with a university system (e.g., Quercus services, network outage) that affects availability or functionality, it may be necessary to revise the timing or weighting of the assessments.

## V COURSE POLICIES

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- I am available during office hours or by appointment. I will respond to email within 48 hrs on weekdays.
- Please refer to the University statement regarding a positive learning environment: *"The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities."*
- **Deadlines:** Late submission of an assignment will result in a penalty of -5% per day. If there are extenuating circumstances (illness, death in family) that prevent you meeting the assignment deadline you must email the course instructor as soon as possible BEFORE the deadline and NO LATER than one week after the due date.

- **Submission methods:** Please use the Assignments Tab on Quercus for assignment submissions. All assignments should be submitted as a Word(.doc) file, saved with the title: lastname.firstname.assignment.doc
- Students **may not create audio or video recordings of classes** with the exception of those students requiring an accommodation for a disability, who should speak to the instructor prior to beginning to record lectures.

## VI TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

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In the event of online learning, U of T has outlined the following technology requirements here: <https://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/covid-19/tech-requirements-online-learning/>

Here is general advice regarding online learning:  
<https://onlinelearning.utoronto.ca/getting-ready-for-online/>

This course requires the use of computers, and of course sometimes things can go wrong when using them. 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. Computer viruses, crashed hard drives, broken printers, lost or corrupted files, incompatible file formats, and similar mishaps are common issues when using technology, and are not acceptable grounds for a deadline extension.

## VII INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND SUPPORT

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### 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, he or she must obtain the instructor's written consent beforehand. Otherwise all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. Students creating unauthorized audio recording of lectures violate an instructor's intellectual property rights and the Canadian Copyright Act. Students violating this agreement will be subject to disciplinary actions under the Code of Student Conduct. More information regarding this is available here: <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/ed-tech/audio-video/copyright-considerations/>

## **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**

- 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](#)
- [English Language Learning](#)
- Mental Health Resources: <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>
- Counselling and Therapy: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/mental-health-care/>
- Health and Wellness Centre: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>
- Sexual Violence Prevention and Support: [thesvpcentre@utoronto.ca](mailto:thesvpcentre@utoronto.ca)
- Sexual and Gender Diversity: [sgdo@utoronto.ca](mailto:sgdo@utoronto.ca)
  - Support is also available **24/7** for students within and outside of Canada at: **U of T My Student Support Program** (U of T My SSP) at **1-844-451-9700** or, outside of North America, **001-416-380-6578**.
- More info is available at: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/myssp/>

## VII COURSE LITERATURE REFERENCES

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