

ENV198
Environment and Mental Wellness
Fall 2021

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Office: *Larkin 215*

Office: *Monday 11:00am-12:00pm, Wednesday 10:00am-11:00am*

Class Time: Wednesdays 2:00pm-4:00pm

Class Location: Wetmore Hall-New College, 300 Huron Street. Room 75

Course Description

This course will examine the relationship between the human psyche and the environment (built and natural), with a focus on mental wellness. You will be introduced the field of Environmental Psychology and related disciplines, as well as non-western perspectives on this psyche-nature relationship. Topics will include: psycho-evolutionary environments, positive psychology, place attachment and identity, neurological toxins and environmental health, the psychology of built environments, Eastern and Indigenous worldviews, climate coping and ecological grief, nature connectedness, sustainable behaviour and stressful/restorative environments.

Learning Outcomes

With full participation in this course, you will develop key academic skills such as 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.

Evaluation

Participation	30%
Journal	15%
Design Project, Due Oct. 27	25%
Reflection, Due Dec. 8	25%
Presentation	5%

Participation (30%): Classes will involve interactive and discussion-based learning on weekly readings and activities. Weekly activities are prompts for outdoor immersion in the natural and built environment (either during class or as homework), followed by journal reflections. Your participation grade will be based on seminar 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 will reflect your completion of weekly readings.

b) 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). Weekly required readings and videos must be completed before every class and will be made available on Quercus.

Activity Journal (15%): 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 on a mutually decided deadline. Prompts will encourage thought exercises that will build into your Reflection Paper. You will also be prompted to post images, observations or reflections from these activities on Quercus.

Design Project (25%): You will design a space that optimizes mental wellness or psychological resiliency of a specific population or individual based on the activities that define that space.

Weekly Readings: Required readings are listed in the Schedule below. These readings will give you the information you need to actively participate in class, to develop thoughtful questions for guest speakers, and to develop your major assignments. 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.

Reflection (25%): You will write a paper on your activity observations supported by major themes explored in course readings and during class discussions. I will give you a set of questions to prompt further reflection on these experiences and the course as a whole.

Presentation (5%): You will give a 5-minute presentation of your Design Project.

Quercus: Your required readings, activities and discussion prompts will be posted one week before the corresponding class. Please visit Quercus before class 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
- ✓ Discussion Posts (Reflections & Questions)
- ✓ Activity Observations (Journal)
- ✓ Activity Post

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1 Sept 15	Introduction	
Week 2 Sept 22	Environmental, Evolutionary and Positive Psychologies	(Hartig et al. 2011: 127-140; Lino, 2020, 2014; Steg et al., 2012)
Week 3 Sept 29	Restorative Environments Outdoor Mindfulness Practice	(Kaplan, 1995; Lymeus, 2019, pp. 68–87; Grinde and Patil, 2009*)
Week 4 Oct 6	Taoist and Buddhist Perspectives Guest: Billy J. Choi-Gekas Longman (Dragon Gate) & DanTao Lineage	(Lai, Chi-Tim. 2001; Wilhem, 1932; His Holiness the Seventeenth Gyalwang Karmapa, & Ogyen Drodul Trinley Dorje, 2008)
Week 5 Oct 13	Architectural Design	(Gifford & McCunn, 2018; Joye, 2011; Roshinni, 2018)
Week 6 Oct 20	Perception and Preference	(Korpela, 2012; Pasanen et al., 2018; Tveit et al., 2018)
Week 7 Oct 27	Place Identity Nature Connectedness Presentations (5)	(Cervinka et al., 2012; Knez et al. 2018)

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 8 Nov 3	Climate Change Coping Ecological Grief Presentations (5)	(Comtesse et al., 2021; Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018)
Nov 10	READING BREAK	
Week 9 Nov 17	Biochemical Feedbacks Environmental Health Presentations (5)	(Ford & Herrera, 2019; Hyun-Ju et al., 2010; Iqbal et al., 2020)
Date	Topic	Reading
Week 10 Nov 24	Semiotic Nature Complex Adaptive Systems Presentations (5)	(LeCompte-Mastenbrook, 2014; Wilson, 1984, Trovarello & Stroink, 2015)
Week 11 Dec 1	Sustainability Presentations (5)	(Koger, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2019; Uzzell & Räthzel, 2009)
Week 12 Dec 8	Indigenous Perspectives Guest: Thomas Scott, Traditional Healer, Fort Albany First Nation	(Middleton et al., 2020; Wenger-Nabigon, 2010)

Support

Writing Support: Writing support is available to all students year-round at Writing Centres: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/>.

Writing Workshop Series: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus/>.

English Language Learning: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

Academic Success Centre: www.asc.utoronto.ca

AccessABILITY: (www.accessibility.utoronto.ca) If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services immediately.

Wellness: Wellness refers to maintenance of a balanced life, stress reduction and prevention of serious health issues. You are encouraged to seek support early and often.

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

Sexual and Gender Diversity: 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/>

Course Policies

1. **Deadlines:** Late submission of an assignment will result in a penalty of -5% per day.
2. **Extenuating Circumstances:** 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.

3. **Academic Integrity:** (<http://uoft.me/CodeofBehaviour>)

The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document.

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- In papers and assignments: Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor. Making up sources or facts. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work).
- On quizzes/tests: 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 (but not limited to) doctor's notes. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

References of Course Readings:

- Cervinka, R., Röderer, K., & Hefler, E. (2012). Are nature lovers happy? On various indicators of well-being and connectedness with nature. *Journal of Health Psychology, 17*(3), 379–388. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105311416873>
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