ENV 221H1-S Multidisciplinary Perspectives on the Environment  
School of the Environment  
University of Toronto  
Summer 2021

First lecture: July 5th, 2021  
Lectures: Mondays & Wednesdays,  
Location: online/synchronous  
Time: 2 pm - 4 pm (Eastern Standard Time)  
Instructor: Dr. Erich Vogt - erich.vogt@utoronto.ca  
Student Hours: by appointment  
Lead TA: Rebecca McMillan - rebecca.mcmillan@mail.utoronto.ca  
TA: Brian Pentz - brian.pentz@mail.utoronto.ca

The course  
Global environmental dangers are among the most profound challenges facing humanity. They fundamentally undermine the quality of life and threaten the organic infrastructure that supports all life on earth. No single academic discipline, country, corporation, government, or organization can fully illuminate alone the fabric of, or fashion solutions to environmental problems, both locally and globally, and achieve sustainability. Multidisciplinarity and cooperation across sectors, institutions and countries are critical when carving out sustainable answers and solutions to a multitude of both global and local environmental challenges.

At the outset of the course, we will review some of the fundamental concepts and themes in how the academic universe understands and interprets the environment. We then explore four themes in more depth by the drawing on a number of thematic case studies (climate change, energy, water, agriculture/food). Each case study will be approached from a variety of disciplinary perspectives: the physical nature of the issue; the action addressing the issue by governments and others; and the cultural, ethical and philosophical dimensions of the issue. We will do so with the assistance of academics, policy makers, and practitioners.
By the end of this course, students should have a sound understanding and appreciation of the multidisciplinary nature of environmental studies, and an initial sense of the urgency to address and attack environmental challenges with an interdisciplinary lens and approach in both research and teaching.

**Course format**
The course will be delivered by way of ‘Blackboard Collaborate’. While in a fully online course there is no in-person scheduled classroom time, the delivery of the lectures will take place ‘live’ at designated times (Mondays and Wednesdays, 2 pm – 4 pm, Eastern Standard Time). Attendance and participation in the lectures is expected. They will also be recorded for later (re)viewing, as will be the accompanying slides. You can find them in the weekly Modules on Quercus. The tutorials will also be delivered ‘live’ at the designated times and every effort will be made to also make them available for students’ (re)view on Quercus.

The syllabus, course videos and related materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation, and they are thus protected by copyright. In this course, you are permitted to download session videos and materials for your own academic use, but you should not copy, share, or use them for any other purpose without the explicit consent of your course instructor. Because recordings will be provided for all lectures and tutorials, students may not create additional audio or video recordings without written permission from the instructor and/or teaching assistants. Permission for such recordings will not be withheld for students with accommodation needs.

**Course framework**
The course material is presented in three ways: course readings, bi-weekly lectures and discussions in four tutorials. Students will be asked to write three papers (critical review, memorandum to political decision makers, research/policy paper). Despite the class size, every effort will be made to make the course as interactive and participatory as possible. This, however, requires that students come to both the lectures and tutorials well prepared.

**Technology requirements for online learning**
This course requires the use of computers, and, as we all have found out on occasion, sometimes the technology doesn’t perform as expected. Because ‘what
can go wrong will go wrong’, you should plan ahead and ensure that you maintain regular backup copies of your files, use antivirus software and schedule enough time when completing assignments to allow for delays due to technical glitches. Computer viruses, 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 asking for deadline extensions.

That said, UofT has identified the following minimum technical requirements needed to access remote/online learning courses such as ENV 221:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Windows-based PC</th>
<th>AppleMac/macOS-based PC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating Systems:</td>
<td>Windows 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web Browser:</td>
<td>Firefox/Google Chrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Processor:</td>
<td>Intel Core i5 based model</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAM/Memory:</td>
<td>4 GB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storage:</td>
<td>5 GB of available space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screen Resolution:</td>
<td>1024 x 768</td>
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<td>Connectivity:</td>
<td>Ethernet/WiFi</td>
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Learning environment
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. The University does NOT condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Learning objectives
Those who participate fully in this course should by its end:
- have improved their critical thinking capacity;
- have both a well-rounded and balanced understanding of the multiple causes and implications of a range of global and local environmental challenges;
- have a more grounded appreciation of the options a multidisciplinary body of knowledge provides to tackle them;
- demonstrate a more sophisticated understanding of the value-added multidisciplinary approaches can bring across all the disciplines in the university universe;
• demonstrate proficiency in framing more effectively research questions and approaches, analysis, verbal presentation, and writing skills.

Tutorials
Each student will attend four tutorials. The educational objective of the tutorials is to give students an opportunity to both deepen and broaden their understanding and appreciation of the themes addressed and discussed in the weekly lectures through further discussion in smaller group settings. Each Tutorial will be led by highly-experienced and competent teaching assistants. The topics to be discussed will be announced via e-mail and Quercus in advance of the tutorial date. Attendance and active participation in the tutorials is expected, as both build the bedrock of your participation mark. If you missed a tutorial for what you believe is a legitimate reason (such as a documented medical or family issue), please bring this to the attention of the TA as soon as possible. The TAs reserve the right to determine what are legitimate reasons for missing tutorials. Students’ tutorial mark will be calculated according to this formula: 40% for attendance and 60% for participation. While we encourage live (synchronous) attendance and participation in tutorials, asynchronous tutorial options will be made available to students for limited, specified circumstances (e.g., significant time zone impediments). In each case prior TA approval must be obtained. Last but not least, students should check and confirm their respective tutorial group as well as the time of the tutorial.

The tutorials will be held on the following dates and times (Eastern Standard Time) in a live/synchronous online manner:
TUT 0101 – Monday, 1 pm – 2 pm: July 12; July 26; August 9; August 16
TUT 0201 – Monday, 4 pm – 5 pm: July 12; July 26; August 9; August 16
TUT 0301 – Wednesday, 1 pm – 2 pm: July 14; July 28; August 4; August 11
TUT 0401 – Wednesday, 4 pm – 5 pm: July 14; July 28; August 4; August 11

Readings
Readings for each class are listed in the Lecture Topics section below. We have made every attempt to make all of them available electronically, and in some cases also in printed format. You can find them on Quercus in the Library Resources file.
If you are a citizen of another country, and/or accessing your courses at the University of Toronto from a jurisdiction outside of Canada, you may be subject to the laws of the country in which you are residing, or any country of which you have citizenship. As you know, the University of Toronto has a long-established commitment to human rights, freedom of expression, and it provides an environment which values respect, diversity, and inclusion. Against this backdrop, in this class you may be assigned readings, or discuss topics that are against the law in other jurisdictions. I encourage you to become familiar with your appropriate local laws that may apply to you and any potential impact on you if course content and information could be considered illegal, controversial, or politically sensitive. If you have any concerns about these issues, please contact me directly for further clarification.

**Communication**

Emails are normally responded to within 48 hours, but not during weekends or on public holidays. All official communications and announcements from the instructor and TAs will be sent to either the ‘Announcement’ file on Quercus, or to students’ official UofT-issued e-mail addresses.

**Course Assignments and distribution of marks:**

1) **Critical review - 25 Percent**

Based on the information and insights gained in the course thus far, you will be asked to critically review a contemporary environmental essay as written by a designated author. More specific instructions will be given in both the lectures and tutorials.

Three (3) pages, 1.5 spacing, TNR 12 font, no footnotes/endnotes, no bibliography. A selection of essays will be provided roughly 2 weeks before due date.

All writing assignments/papers are expected to be submitted electronically via Quercus.

**Due: July 23rd, 2021, 11.59 p.m. (EST)**

2) **Memorandum - 30 Percent**

You are the special climate change envoy of a G20 country of your choice. Write a climate change memorandum for the sherpa of your chosen G20 country and present your arguments for crafting a policy with an eye toward its cross-cutting nature. More specific instructions will be given in both the lectures and tutorials.
3) Research/Policy paper – 35 Percent
The purpose of this combined research/policy paper is to give students an opportunity to explore and develop a paper that focuses on one of the SDGs with directly relevant environmental impacts. This five (5) page paper must: (1) examine the chief causes/drivers of the issue(s)/problem(s) - as you see them based on your own critical assessment; (2) outline what the international community has agreed to do about it (targets, indicators); and (3) provide ideas and recommendations of how best to move the envisioned solution from concept to practice. More specific instructions will be given in writing. The paper shall have 1.5 spacing, 1 inch margins, TNR 12 font, footnotes/endnotes and bibliography.
Due: August 18th, 2021, 11.59 p.m. (EST)

Evaluation criteria of all written work products
The primary criteria used in evaluating students’ written work are the following:
1) **Content:** Content is Queen/King!!!
2) **Mechanics:** Defined as freedom from minor factual errors and spelling and grammatical errors. Where asked, students are expected to include thorough, accurate and consistent references in any bona fide academic referencing style that includes page numbering.
3) **Writing style:** It should be appropriate for an academic environment. Beyond that, style will be evaluated primarily in terms of clarity. Proper use of the English language is expected!
4) **Structure:** Papers will also be evaluated in terms of their organization and coherence. The structure of the paper must logically flow from the assignment question(s) and must add up to a coherent whole.
5) **Precision and accuracy:** Precision means saying exactly and specifically what you mean, avoiding ambiguity and vague generalities. Accuracy refers to absence of major factual errors.
6) **Analysis:** Analysis will be evaluated in terms of success in using evidence in the form of data/information to construct a logical argument which convincingly answers your assignment question(s).

4) Participation in bi-weekly lectures and tutorials - 10 Percent
Students are expected to attend all lectures and tutorials, and to participate actively in tutorial discussions. Participation means making insightful comments, asking probing questions, and being involved in the ongoing discussions in ways that demonstrates students have done the readings and are thinking critically about the content and discourse of the class.

If the time zones in which students are based would significantly impair their ability to participate in synchronous tutorials, please contact your TA prior to the first tutorial to seek approval to follow the four tutorials asynchronously.

**Evaluation criteria of all oral contributions**
1) **Success in communicating** key concepts succinctly and accurately, thereby demonstrating sound understanding of the work being presented.
2) **Mechanics of communication**, such as manner of speaking (including good diction and tone), structure of the presentation and level of organization.
3) **Ability to respond** appropriately and fairly to questions and contribute to and stimulate unstructured discussion among peers.

**There will be no mid-term and no final exam**

**Late penalties**
No due dates will be extended unless discussed with and agreed upon by your TA in advance. Penalty for late work will be 2% of the assignment mark per day late, including weekends. **Late papers will be accepted only for one week after the due date.** Papers submitted later will not be reviewed and assessed. The only exemption from this penalty will be for work that is late for both medical or non-medical reasons. In such cases, students must record either their absence from academic participation or late submissions through the ACORN online absence declaration. In addition, students should advise both the instructor and their designated TAs of their absence and request for late submissions.

**Grading scheme**
The course will follow the University of Toronto’s undergraduate courses grading scheme:

- A+ 90 -100%
- A 85 - 89%
- A- 80 - 84%
- B+ 77 - 79%
B    73 - 76%
B-   70 - 72%
C+   67 - 69%
C    63 - 66%
C-   60 - 62%
D+   57 - 59%
D    53 - 56%
D-   50 - 52%
F    0 - 49%

More information is available here: https://fas.calendar.utoronto.ca/rules-regulations#grading

**Academic Integrity**

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) and (https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/). 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
o 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

You can get further guidance on academic integrity from the website of the Office of Student Academic Integrity at: www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

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 accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible at https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca
If you require additional accessibility remote/online learning information, please have a look at: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/covid-19-accessibility-faqs/

Writing Centers
All seven Faculty of Arts and Science writing centres will be operating during this summer session, and all will be offering synchronous one-on-one instruction with asynchronous options at some colleges. Please visit each individual centre's site for information on how to make an appointment.

The FAS centres are listed at https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science.
Undergraduate students taking summer courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science are eligible to seek help at their home college's centre and at other centres for work in college program courses. In the summer, students may book up to TWO appointments per week.

Also note that more than 60 Advice files on all aspects of academic writing are available from http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca. Printable PDF versions are listed at http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/student-pdfs.

International students are invited to check out the English Language Learning program (ELL)'s summer offerings. It is available at http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell. For more information, please contact the ELL coordinator Leora Freedman at ell.newcollege@utoronto.ca.

Additional services and support
The following are 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
Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies
Lecture topics and readings

Monday, July 5/Wednesday July 7
Introduction to the course – status report on the multidisciplinary challenges of the environment

Readings
Joshua Rothman, “The Big Question: Is the world getting better or worse?,” The New Yorker (23 July 2018), pp. 26-32

Monday, July 12/Wednesday, July 14
The driving force: Capitalism, Globalization, and the Great Divide
Readings
Jennifer Clapp/Peter Dauvergne, Paths to a Green World – The Globalization of Environmentalism, pp. 45–82, MIT Press, 2005
Angus Deacon/Anne Case, Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism, Princeton University Press, 2020

Monday, July 19/Wednesday, July 21
The environmental awakening and the great pushback

Readings
James Gustave Speth, red sky at morning, pp. 25–42, pp. 77-88, Yale University Press, 2004
James Gustave Speth, “Environmental Failure: A Case for a New Green Politics”, see https://e360.yale.edu/features/environmental_failure_a_case_for_a_new_green_politics
Monday, July 26/Wednesday, July 28

**Case Study: Climate Change**

**Readings**


UNFCCC – COP 25/Madrid, in unfccc.int “Climate change visualized: How Earth's temperature has changed since 1970”, see [https://www.axios.com/climate-change-earth-temperature-change-902e2958-451b-4044-a6a3-8dab46902da6.html?fbclid=IwAR0vlGfdduQ0v4mpzFvEBK8U1qdTQHOQ8YS5gZgL3keZYbSOXX9vbTtUcNc](https://www.axios.com/climate-change-earth-temperature-change-902e2958-451b-4044-a6a3-8dab46902da6.html?fbclid=IwAR0vlGfdduQ0v4mpzFvEBK8U1qdTQHOQ8YS5gZgL3keZYbSOXX9vbTtUcNc)

Dale Jamieson, Reason in a Dark Time – Why the struggle against climate change failed – and what it means for our future, pp. 11-60, Oxford University Press, 2014


David Miller, Solved - How the World’s Great Cities are Fixing the Climate Crisis, University of Toronto Press, 2020

“Carbon tax or cap-and-trade?” see [https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/carbon-tax-cap-trade/](https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/carbon-tax-cap-trade/)


“What Biden’s climate leadership means for Canada”, see [https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/what-bidens-climate-leadership-means-for-canada/](https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/what-bidens-climate-leadership-means-for-canada/)


“How CC is contributing to skyrocketing infectious diseases”, see [https://www.propublica.org/article/climate-infectious-diseases](https://www.propublica.org/article/climate-infectious-diseases)
“Deaths from fossil fuel emissions higher than previously thought”, see

Wednesday, August 4
Case Study: Energy

Readings
World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change
WB – Energy – Overview: Context-Strategy-Results, see
“Off-shore wind to become a $1 trillion industry”, see
“Coal”, see https://www.iea.org/topics/coal/
“Electricity”, see https://www.iea.org/topics/electricity/
“Energy access”, see https://www.iea.org/energyaccess/
“Energy efficiency”, see https://www.iea.org/topics/energyefficiency/
“Energy security”, see https://www.iea.org/topics/energysecurity/
“53 Ways to reform fossil fuel consumer subsidies and pricing”, see
“Only 1 in 10 utilities prioritize renewable electricity”, see

Further links:
Sustainable Energy for All initiative
UNDP Environment and Energy
UNIDO Energy and Climate Change
International Energy Agency
International Renewable Energy Agency
UN Energy
Guest presentations by:
Prof. Danny Harvey, Department of Geography, UofT
Prof. Adonis Yatchew, Economics Department, UofT
Editor-in-Chief, The Energy Journal
Mr. Joerg Wittenbrink, Senior Policy Advisor
Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines
Ontario

Monday, August 9
Case study: Water

Readings
Simon Nicholson/Paul Wapner, Chapter 6
9th World Water Forum in Dakar/Senegal, see https://www.worldwaterforum.org/en
“Oceans on the front lines of global climate change”, see https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2017/10/31/oceans-on-the-front-lines-of-global-climate-change/

Guest presentations by:
Mr. Lawson Oates, Director, Toronto Water
(former head of Toronto Environment Office)

Wednesday, August 11
Case study: Agriculture and food security

Readings
“The world is off track to end hunger, so what’s the solution”; see https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2017/10/23/the-world-is-off-track-to-end-hunger-so-whats-the-solution/

Raj Patel, “Can the World Feed 10 Billion People?” (May 4, 2011) Foreign Policy
Richard Manning, “The Oil We Eat: Following the Food Chain to Iraq”, 2004, Harper’s Magazine, see http://harpers.org/TheOilWeEat.html

James Foster, GWU, Multidimensional poverty: - measurement and implications, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUvLwgQsTL8

Consult World Bank website (www.worldbank.org) – Note: As the premier global development organizations, the WB focuses on the Poverty-Context-Strategy-Results nexus; see https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview

Consult FAO website (fao.org) - As the UN custodian for agriculture and food, the FAO supports countries’ efforts in monitoring the following SDGs (1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15)


Ifad.org “As climate shocks intensify, UN food agencies urge more support for southern Africa's hungry people”, see https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/news-detail/asset/41402041


Guest presentations by:
Prof. Roberta Fulthorpe
Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences, UTSC, TBC
Ms Nidhi Tandon, Agricultural Economist, Consultant
Prof. Sarah Wakefield
Department of Geography and Planning, UofT, TBC

Monday, August 16
What went well, What didn’t, What should we do differently?

Roundtable with students

Good luck!!!