University of Toronto
School of the Environment
ENV222H1 S Pathways to Sustainability: An Interdisciplinary Approach Winter 2024

General Information
Time: Lecture – Tuesday 3:00 - 5:00 pm
        Tutorials – See Quercus and timetable for details
Location: Lecture – See Quercus for details
Instructor: Michael Classens
Email: michael.classens@utoronto.ca
Office: See Quercus for details
Office hours: Wednesday, 10:00am – 11:00am, or by appointment.

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Course description
This course explores the concept and practice of sustainability through interdisciplinary and equity perspectives. The course will provide students with a broad introduction to sustainability integrating scientific, technological, economic, political, psychological, historical, and ethical perspectives.

Learning Outcomes
This course is designed to provide you with an introductory, interdisciplinary foundation to sustainability. By the end of the class, you should have confidence in your ability to:

1. Understand and describe key challenges related to sustainability from scientific, social scientific and humanities perspectives
2. Understand and engage in an informed way with the language and discourses of sustainability

3. Understand and describe how issues of equity intersect with sustainability issues
4. Understand and critically engage with existing sustainability interventions
5. Engage in the world around you through a holistic sustainability lens

Evaluation
Note – all written work should be submitted through Quercus.

Sustainability in the City – 15%
Interrogative Campus Tour – 20%
Sustainability in my feeds – 15%
Learning Journal – 10%
Take home test – 20%
Tutorial participation – 20%

Assignments

Sustainability in the City – 15%
Due: January 30, 2024
Take a walk around your neighbourhood, wherever you live, and try looking through a 'sustainability lens'. Even if you've been living in the same place for your entire life, try looking at your surroundings in a way that centres sustainability. Choose at least three things – it could be a building, park, road, store, a wall, a tree, anything at all – and write a brief *reflection* on each one. Centre yourself in the narrative – this shouldn't be written as an academic essay. You don't need to answer these specific questions, but some questions you might reflect on include: In what ways is it sustainable? In what ways is it unsustainable? How could it be more sustainable? Who is it sustainable for? Who isn't it sustainable for? Each site reflection should be between 200 – 250 words (so, 600-750 words total for three sites).

Interrogative Campus Tour – 20% (Total – *this is a group grade)
Due: Various dates, see below
Working in groups of 3-5 people in your tutorial, you will identify a site on campus, conduct research on the site, and develop a reflexive, analytical and probing narrative about the site that interrogates the sustainability of the site. You can choose anything on campus – a building, a garbage can, a tree – any element at all. The stories you curate about the site you chose should be critical – that is, investigative and thoughtful – but they need not be negative. Nor should they be uncritically celebratory. You might consider integrating a creative or interactive component to your tour that complements your site narrative and engages your peers in active learning. On March 26 and April 2 we will conduct the campus tours – you will be both tourist (at your colleagues' sites) and tour guide (at your own site). This broader assignment includes a number of elements, including:

- **Preliminary site narrative for Interrogative Campus Tour (5%)**
  Due: February 27, 2024

For the preliminary site narrative, you will (i) identify a site of interest on campus, (ii) curate some preliminary research on the site, and (iii) develop a draft narrative for the site. The total output should be no more than about 500 words. You are encouraged to include pictures of your site. You should write your narrative as a script – that is, you are encouraged to use less formal language than you might typically in a conventional essay.

- **Final site narrative for Interrogative Campus Tour (10%)**
  Due: March 26, 2024

Building on your preliminary draft, you will prepare a well-researched final site narrative of no more than about 500 words. The final draft should be conversational and engaging, though still professional. The final draft should also address, as appropriate, feedback you received on your initial draft. This will be the script you will follow when giving the tour, so feel free to include any prompts or cues you feel necessary. You should also provide pictures in your final submission. Your final site narrative should include references to sources where appropriate and necessary.

- **Campus tour (5%)**
  Due: March 26 / April 2, 2024

We will hold the campus tour during lecture on March 26 and April 2. Each group will present their narrative at their respective sites. Each group member should deliver some of the site narrative. Details of the tour routes and meeting places will be figured out with your TA in tutorials.

Sustainability in my feeds – 15%
Due: March 5, 2024
You will find an item within one of your social media feeds, that addresses sustainability in some way. This could be a news story, a tweet, a promoted post, a Facebook post, whatever you want. I then want you to critically interrogate the piece – what are the sustainability claims being made? What implicit narrative is it forwarding? What are the assumptions of the piece? Drawing on at least two pieces of peer reviewed scholarship, I want you to assess and respond to the piece. For this assignment you will submit (a) a response to the social media post in the format of the post you're responding to (i.e a Twitter post, Instagram post, Facebook post), and (b) in recognition of the limitations of social media, a longer format response to the post (no more than 500 words) that elaborates on your response. Your social media post and longer format response should be included in the same document.

Learning Journal – 10%
Due: April 2, 2024
Reflection is a key part of learning. In order to encourage you to reflect on your learning experience in this class, I ask that you keep a learning journal throughout the course and make at least THREE TOTAL entries of approximately 200 words each. You do not need to submit each entry as you write it. Rather, submit your consolidated reflections on April 2. The purpose of the journal is to document and reflect on whatever aspects of the course were most impactful, problematic, resonant and/or challenging for you. I don't want you to simply inventory *what* you

learned, rather I want to *reflect on the learning process*. Reflections in particular on your experience as a community-engaged learner and/or group learner are welcome. There are resources on Quercus to help you think through the learning reflection process (and we'll talk about these in class too).

Take home test – 20%
Due: April 16, 2024
You will be given a take home test that will provide you with an opportunity to synthesize and summarize what you learned during the course. The test will be given to you well in advance and you will have until April 16 to submit your work.

Tutorial participation – 20%
Due: Ongoing
Full participation is expected of all students able to do so. In the best-case scenario, this requires – to the best of your ability – attending every scheduled tutorial. However, it is also expected that you'll be well prepared, having carefully read the required readings and able to add insight and depth to class discussions. You'll also be expected to attentively listen to, and learn from, your classmates during class. The participation grade is based on attendance; contributions to inclusive, insightful and respectful class discussion; familiarity with the readings; and contribution to the learning of your peers. If you are unable to attend tutorial regularly, please contact me or your teaching assistant for support and to (potentially) work out an alternative.

Readings
All course readings are available through the University of Toronto library system and/or the course Quercus site.

Schedule
Note: This schedule is subject to change

- Lecture will be held every week, on Tuesdays, from January 9, 2024 – April 2, 2024 (with the exception of February 20, 2024, which is reading week).
- Tutorials will NOT be held every week. They will only be held the weeks of January 15, January 29, February 5, February 12, March 11, and April 1. See below for details.

Date	Topic/readings	Deadlines
Week 1 January 9, 2024	**Introduction and course overview** **Read** The syllabus	
Week 2 January 16, 2024	**From progress to prospect, or stuck in the Great Derangement?** **Read** An interview with Joni Adamson, "Connecting the humanities and sustainability: An interview with Joni Adamson". Find it here.	**Tutorial 1:** Sustainability in the City

	Ghosh, A. (2016). The great derangement: Climate change and the unthinkable. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pgs 1-27.	
Week 3 January 23, 2024	**The Anthropocene?** **Read** Baldwin, A., and B Erickoson. (2020). Introduction: Whiteness, coloniality, and the Anthropocene. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 38*(1): 3-11. Pulido, L. (2017). Racism and the Anthropocene. In, G. Mitman, A. Marco, and E. Robert (Eds) *Future remains: A cabinet of curiosities for the Anthropocene*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (pgs 116-128).	
Week 4 January 30, 2024	**Learning, thinking and sustainability** **Read** Classens, M., E. Hardman, N. Henderson, E. Systsma, and A. Vsetula-Sheffield. (2021). Critical food systems education, neoliberalism, and the alternative campus tour. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems 45*(3): 450-471. Toth. (2017). Teaching Contested University Histories through Campus Tours. *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, *27*(1), 104. https://doi.org/10.5325/trajincschped.27.1.0104	**Tutorial 2**: Writing tutorial **Due**: Sustainability in the City
Week 5 February 6, 2024	**Indigenous resurgence, decolonization, and sustainability** **Read** Indigenous Environmental Network. (2021). Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon. https://www.ienearth.org/irac-indigenous-rights-and-responsibilities-framework/ **Watch** Cottagers and Indians https://gem.cbc.ca/media/cbc-docs-pov/s04e01 **Special Guest** Isaac Crosby	**Tutorial 3**: Interrogative Campus Tour **Due**: Site selection
Week 6 February 13, 2024	**Speaking sustainability** **Read** McBride, BB., et al., (2013). Environmental literacy, ecological literacy, ecoliteracy: What do we mean and how did we get here? *Ecosphere 4*(5): 1-19. Morris, H. E. (2021). Constructing the Millennial "Other" in United States Press Coverage of the Green New Deal. *Environmental Communication*, *15*(1), 133–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2020.1812686	**Tutorial 4**: Sustainability in my Feeds
February 20, 2024	**READING WEEK NO CLASS**	
Week 7 February 27, 2024	**(Un)Sustainability: The physical science basis** **Read** Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2021). Climate change 2021 – The physical science basis: Summary for policymakers. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM_final.pdf	**Due**: Preliminary site narrative

Week 8 March 5, 2024	**The (unequal) energy transition** **Read** Rodon, T., Nachet, L., Krolik, C., & Palliser, T. (2021). Building Energy Sovereignty through Community-Based Projects in Nunavik. *Sustainability*, *13*(16), 9061. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13169061 **Listen** Episode 3.4: What does a just transition really entail? From green jobs to decolonization https://www.ecopoliticspodcast.ca/episode-3-4-what-does-a-just-transition-really-entail-from-green-jobs-to-decolonization/ **Suggested** Markard, J. (2018). The next phase of the energy transition and its implications for research and policy. *Nature Energy*, *3*(8), 628–633. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-018-0171-7	**Due**: Sustainability in my Feeds
Week 9 March 12, 2024	**Waste not want not…** **Read** Giles, D. B. (2021). "The Anatomy of a Dumpster: Abject Capital and the Looking Glass of Value" in *A Mass Conspiracy to Feed People: Food Not Bombs and the World-Class Waste of Global Cities* (pgs 31-54). https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478021711-003 Jaeger-Erben, M., Jensen, C., Hofmann, F., & Zwiers, J. (2021). There is no sustainable circular economy without a circular society. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, *168*, 105476. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2021.105476	**Tutorial 5**: Interrogative Campus Tour
Week 10 March 19, 2024	**Economy vs the Environment?** **Read** Raworth, K. (2017). Why it's time for doughnut economics. *IPPR Progressive Review 24*(3): 217-22. Kallis, G., Kostakis, V., Lange, S., Muraca, B., Paulson, S., & Schmelzer, M. (2018). Research On Degrowth. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, *43*(1), 291–316. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-102017-025941	
Week 11 March 26, 2024	**Campus Tour – No Lecture**	**Due**: Final narrative **Campus Tour**
Week 12 April 2, 2024	**Campus Tour – No Lecture**	**Tutorial 6:** Test prep **Campus Tour** **Due**: Learning Journal

Course Policies

1. **A note on COVID-19**: It is important to recognize the likelihood that COVID-19 will substantively shape our time together in class, as well as our respective lives outside the classroom. The frustrating truth is that we cannot predict the specific impacts of COVID-19 in the coming academic year. However, I hope the following will help guide us.
   - I hope that we are able to conduct community-based research projects this year, and that you all will get to spend time 'in the field', so to speak. If this is not possible, we will adjust and find equally meaningful projects to work on and learn from.
   - The pandemic has and will continue to have unequal and differential impacts. I hope that we are all attuned to this fact and resist assuming how the pandemic is being experienced by others in the class.
   - Given the profound disruption of the global pandemic over the past 3+ years, many of us are rightfully beleaguered. Given this, I hope we can prioritize being kind, gentle and understanding with each other.
   - I expect that everyone in the class will follow the COVID-19 guidelines established by the university and do their utmost to keep their peers safe and healthy. Updates on COVID-19 protocols can be found here: https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether
2. **A note on the use of AI/ChatGPT**: I want us to consider our responsibilities to each other as members within a community of learning, and think about how using AI tools may impact/undermine that. I also want us to consider the hidden environmental impacts of all digital tools (particularly those that rely on very large servers). We should also keep in mind the invisibleized labour – often done by racialized people in the majority world – that maintains these digital infrastructures. Finally, drawing on Métis scholar Max Liboiron, I want us to consider the *citational politics* of using AI. Who we cite in our work, who we chose to be in scholarly conversation with, is always a political choice. I want to acknowledge Sarah Martin, whose inspiring thinking on AI I draw on here.
3. **Deadlines**: Please do your very best to submit your work on time. In this class, perhaps more than most, your peers will be relying on you to complete your work in a timely fashion. Late penalties of up to 2% per day may apply in cases where work is not submitted on time. If you need extra time for an assignment, please do not hesitate to ask – and please try to do so at least a week in advance of the deadline.
4. **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).

- Misrepresentation: Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me, the Writing Centre or the Academic Success Centre.

Institutional Policies

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/).

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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.

Support

Writing Support: Writing support is available to all students year-round at Writing Centres: http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/. You can visit the writing centre for help with an writing projects.

> **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) Students with diverse learning styles and needs are very welcome in this course. 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. Find out more here https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/

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/

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](#)