

**Course Syllabus**

This syllabus provides an overview of the course content, policies, and expectations. Specific details regarding assignments and all course updates will be available through Quercus.

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"Research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions."

— Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies

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**COURSE CONTACTS**

Instructor
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Environmental studies is a field of inquiry that can be seen as both a multi-disciplinary as well as trans-disciplinary. Environmental studies incorporate many disciplines such as the social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, and simultaneously incorporates multiple worldviews to understand human relationships with the natural environment. This area of study provides insight into the impacts of climate change, conservation, and sustainability practices both on the natural world as well as humans and explores how to address the ambiguity on resolving such realities. Thus, Environmental studies is a complex area of inquiry that tries to look at the deep relationships, interactions, and patterns that exist within our world today. To effectively bring together these multiple perspectives, students of environmental studies are on a journey to build the necessary knowledge framework, skills, and experiences. Such a journey involves navigating through a plethora of information that is available through a variety of platforms and employing effective skills that enable them to develop sound understanding, build meaningful perspectives and communicate findings effectively. Ultimately, the hope is that students of environmental studies are able to contribute to positive environmental and social change from the local to the global scale. This may include informing group, systemic, and policy practices around them.

As a means to building practical skills, this course will teach students fundamental research, analysis, and presentations skills that will be effective in their environmental work. Through the term, students will explore the fundamental elements to conducting research including: research design, ethical considerations in research, research methods, referencing and critical analysis of sources of literature, an overview of fieldwork, and research presentation.
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Completion of 4.0 credits. This course is for students enrolled in the Environmental Studies Major program, or with permission of the Undergraduate Associate Director.

EXCLUSION

GGR271H1

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand the nature and value of research
- Develop a basic knowledge of epistemologies and methodologies, and the place of various quantitative and qualitative research methods with regards to environmental studies
- Identify and strategically develop research questions and/or hypothesis in regards to interactions between humans and the earth
- Design an effective environmental research project; and communicate research outcomes effectively
- Collect, analyse, integrate and report social and environmental studies-related data
- Demonstrate familiarity with key conceptual tools and skills for field research in climate change and human impacts and adaptation, ecology, conservation and society
- Understand the importance and relevance of ethics in research, and how to become a reflexive researcher who is cognizant of pluralistic worldviews
- Learn and practise how to effectively communicate research results through oral, written and visual techniques
- Develop collaborative research practise skills through groupwork
- Strengthen research writing skills

READINGS

- All required weekly course readings are provided in the syllabus with clickable links.
- Links require UofT library access
- Some links may require you to select/download the PDF document to retrieve text.
- These readings will strongly support both in-class discussions as well as help develop an understanding of how to complete the course assignments.
# COURSE SCHEDULE

This course is designed into 3 parts: An Introduction & Overview to Research Planning; Approaches to Research Methods in Environmental Studies; & Research Communication in Environmental Studies

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<td><strong>Wk.1 Sept.8</strong></td>
<td>Introductions; Course Syllabus Overview; What is Research?</td>
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<td><strong>Wk.2 Sept.15</strong></td>
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“Climate Change is the defining issue of our time – and we are at a defining moment” Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General |
| **Wk.3 Sept.22** | Sources of Information, Literature reviews, & Referencing |  |

Writing an Annotated Bibliography  
5. Cite it Right: Academic Integrity at the Rotman School of Management. Introduction to APA [https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/c.php?g=250462&p=1670709](https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/c.php?g=250462&p=1670709)

“Citation is at the heart of the academic enterprise as what enables us to interface with others and take our place in a delicate and complicated ecology of knowledge production. It is intimately bound up with the treatment of ideas as property, with the dynamic of exchange turning that property into capital, into a vector for intellectual value. This intellectual economy, which citation upholds and founds, has its politics—a politics that is most often submerged, obscured by the reproductive quality of citation, which compels individuals to reproduce a certain set of citations, a certain model of reference, in order to be allowed to pass through the gates of intellectual legitimacy and be recognized in turn as someone who is citable. Citation incites citation, which incites citation, which incites citation.” Annabel L. Kim, The Politics of Citation |
### Week 4: Sept. 29

**Picking a research topic area; research design; fieldwork**

**Fieldwork group research assignment discussion**

**READINGS**


> “How we frame the problem—and who we frame as the problem—shapes the answers we find.”  
> – Ibram X. Kendi, How To Be An Antiracist

**Annotated bibliography (ind.) 15% Due: Sept. 30**

### Week 5: Oct. 6

**Ethical considerations in research & decolonizing methodologies; multiple worldviews; being self-reflexive researcher**

**READINGS**


> “Research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions.”  – Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies

### Part II: Approaches to Research Methods in Environmental Studies

#### Week 6: Oct. 13

**Qualitative research methods & analysis**

**READINGS**

1. Gifford, R. Qualitative Approaches to Environment–Behavior Research Understanding Environmental and Place Experiences, Meanings, and Actions David Seamon, Harneet K. Gill, Book Editor(s): April 2016, Ch.7, p.115-127 [https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119162124.ch7](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119162124.ch7)


> “Qualitative research often focuses on gaining insights into underlying processes, mechanisms, and belief systems.”  
> – Mark Kanazawa, Research Methods for Environmental Studies
### Wk. 7  
**Oct. 20**  
**Quantitative research methods & analysis**

**READINGS**
   
   “The importance of data in environmental research has to do with two key objectives of the quantitative approach: quantifying relationships and testing hypotheses. Many environmental questions center on the relationship among variables.” Mark Kanazawa, Research Methods for Environmental Studies

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### Wk. 8  
**Oct. 27**  
**Mixed-methods research & analysis**

**READINGS**
   
   “Stories give life to data, and data gives authority to stories.” Wendy Newman, Canadian School Libraries

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### Wk. 9  
**Nov. 3**  
**Intersectionality & environmental studies research; field research assignment discussion**

**READINGS**
   https://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/class_web/ES-114A/Week%204/TuckHEdR79-3.pdf
   https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1007/978-3-030-77712-8_2
   
   “When we write about the experiences of a group to which we do not belong, we should think about the ethics of our action, considering whether or not our work will be used to reinforce and perpetuate domination. – bell hooks, Talking Back

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### Nov. 10  
**READING WEEK – NO CLASSES**

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### PART III: Research Communication in Environmental Studies

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### Wk. 10  
**Nov. 17**  
**Drawing conclusions & effectively communicating environmental research; developing a report**

**READINGS**
   https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/arctic/article/view/74994/55691 (click download)
2. Howard, C., Parsons, L., Thew, H. Effectively Communicating Climate Science beyond Academia: Harnessing the Heterogeneity of Climate Knowledge, p.320-324  
   https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2020.04.001
| Wk. 10 | Reference resources for report writing & presentations, will be available on Quercus:
| Cont’d | 1. Booth, Colomb, Williams The Craft of Research, Ch. 16, “Introductions and conclusions,” p.232-248
| | 2. + Ch.15, “Communicating evidence visually,” p.213-231
| | “Reports convey information. Stories create experience. Reports transfer knowledge. Stories transport the reader, crossing boundaries of time, space, and imagination. The report points us there. The story puts us there.” Roy Peter Clark, Writing Tools |
| Wk. 11 | Poster Presentations
| Nov. 24 | Details to be shared closer to date |
| Wk. 12 | Course wrap-up & reflections on impacting environmental discourse through hope
| Dec. 1 | READINGS
| | 1. Watch: The Magnitude of All Things (1h26mins)
| | https://www-nfb-ca.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/film/magnitude-of-all-things/?ctlgsrc=mr
| | “Climate change requires us to open ourselves personally to connect with the magnitude of the ecological challenges that we, as a society are facing and then individually and collectively work to address these challenges” Ashlee Cunsolo & Neville Ellis |
| | Fieldwork group research poster presentation (grp.) 15% |
| | Fieldwork research final report (ind. or grp) 30%
| | Due: Dec. 7 |

**COPYRIGHT**

Lectures and course materials are considered intellectual property of the Instructor and are covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. These materials are made available to students for personal study purposes only (i.e., they cannot be shared outside or `published` in any way without prior written consent of the instructor). Lectures cannot be recorded without the instructor’s written permission. Otherwise all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. Please be advised that posting course materials, or recordings to external websites (or in any other format) without explicit permission of the instructor, constitutes an infringement on the Canadian Copyright Act and is absolutely prohibited. More information regarding this is available here: https://teaching.utoronto.ca/ed-tech/audio-video/copyright-considerations/
The evaluation in this course will be based on both individual as well as groupwork and will be based on 7 key elements:

- **Class Attendance & Participation (10%, individual) - ongoing**
  - To help develop a community-based learning environment, everybody is encouraged to participate as a respectful, active member of the learning community by engaging in the course content through discussions, questions, making comments and participating in activities during class.
  - Classroom participation will also involve participation in in-class activities.
  - Students may also participate by sharing brief comments regarding the readings & class discussions (submitted via email). It is preferable that this is submitted the day before class, and *no later than* the Friday (one day after class discussions).

- **Social Identity Map & Reflections Short Paper (15%, individual) – due: October 28, 2022**
  - This short paper will be comprised of a social identity map (re: wk 5 readings) and a 500-word self-reflection piece that will encourage learners to think about one’s own positionality as a researcher and how to be a reflexive practitioner. More details on assignment will be provided on QUERCUS.

- **In-class Course Wrap-up Activity (5%, individual) – to be completed in class on December 1, 2022**
  - A Group Research Project (5 people per group), that will be comprised of 4 separate submissions (2 individual and 2 group submissions) throughout the term.
  - Participants will conduct an independent group-based environmental research project throughout the term.
  - This project will be a hands-on learning experience that will apply the theories and content of the course through a multi-phase project where learners will work collaboratively to design, implement, and communicate the results of a project on a relevant environmental issue.
  - Detailed guidelines on each component will be provided in class and on QUERCUS.
  - Please note that while some time will be available during class to collaborate and work in the research project, participants will have to organize and meet outside of class time to complete the work effectively. Please plan and organize accordingly.

- **Annotated Bibliography (15%, individual submission) – due September 30, 2022**
  - In this short (individual) assignment, students will create annotated entries for 3 academic articles on an environmental topic. Each entry must include the full bibliographic information of the article, a brief synthesis of the main ideas of the article, and explanation of why/how the article is relevant.
  - This assignment, although individual, constitutes a part of the Group Research Project. As such, each student must focus their individual annotated bibliography on the topic to be covered in the Group Research Project.

- **Research Design (10%, group submission) – due October 14, 2022**
  - This will be a single group submission where the research design is outlined defining the topic, its relevance and the plan of how the research will be conducted.

- **Poster Presentation (15%, group presentation) – due November 24, 2022**
  - Groups will prepare a visual poster presentation along with a short oral presentation that effectively communicates the research project and outcomes to an audience. Details on format will be provided.

- **Research final report write-up (30%, individual submission) – due December 7, 2022**
  - Each Research team will have an option to either submit a single group report or individual reports. The final research write-up and report which will contain the main findings, analysis, and reflections on the research project.
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING WORK

The primary criteria used in evaluating written work are the following:

1) **Mechanics:**
   Your work must be completely free of grammatical, spelling or major factual errors. Students are expected to include thorough, accurate and consistent references in APA academic referencing style that includes page numbering.

2) **Writing style:**
   Papers must be written in a clear and unambiguous style which assists, rather than impedes, communication with the reader.

3) **Structure:**
   Your written work should have a clear focus and organization. The logic of the structure is determined by the purpose, which is to test a hypothesis, answer a research question or defend a thesis statement.

4) **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.

5) **Analysis:**
   Your analysis should display understanding of the topic and, based on that understanding, originality of thought. The proposal and the research report will be evaluated on the defensibility of their analysis in terms of their use of evidence and logical coherence.

The primary criteria used in evaluating poster presentations are the following:

1) Success in communicating key concepts succinctly and accurately, thereby demonstrating sound understanding of the work being presented in the final product.

2) Mechanics of communication, such as manner of speaking (including good diction and tone), structure of the presentation and level of organization of the poster/presentation and level of organization, neatness, effective use of color and visuals, and proper referencing.

3) Ability to respond appropriately and fairly to questions and contribute to and stimulate unstructured discussion among peers.

GROUPWORK & TEAM COLLABORATION

Group-based work and collaboration will play a key role in this course & our journey as environmentalists

- I hope we will be able to build a strong and supportive learning community together
- Group members within the research project are expected to participate and contribute collaboratively to contribute to the project outcomes
- Groups members should manage and contribute to the overall project in a fair way
- If there are any concerns, please raise them as early as possible, so we can effectively address issues
- There will be a peer and self-assessment component to the final project that I reserve the right to use at my discretion to adjust +/- 5 points of the final assessment.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & EXCELLENCE

At the University of Toronto, we strive to be an equitable and inclusive community, rich with diversity, protecting the human rights of all persons, and based upon understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every person. We seek to ensure to the greatest extent possible that all students and employees enjoy the opportunity to participate as they see fit in the full range of activities that the University offers, and to achieve their full potential as members of the University community.
Communication with Instructor

- Designated virtual office hours have been allocated for course-related discussions [Mondays, 9.30am-11.30am].
- Please feel free to email me to make an appointment at anytime in the 2-hour block.
- Appointments may also be set for students who cannot attend scheduled student hours sessions.
- For urgent matters or simple questions, you may also contact me via email, but email should not be a substitute for these “live” sessions.
- Depending on the situation/issue, I may ask that we set up a virtual meeting.
- I can be contacted at: Memona.hossain@utoronto.ca

Please note that I will make an effort to respond to emails within 2 weekdays (i.e. It may take longer during weekends). Please include “ENV223+ student name” in subject line of email.

Lectures & Classroom Policies

- **Punctuality:**
  - Class will start on time (i.e., 2:10 PM). If you have to come into class late, please do so in the least disruptive manner possible.
  - As a sign of respect to the instructor and the rest of the class, please try your best to show up to class on time to effectively engage with the course content.

- **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.”
  - This applies to all matters and interactions related to the course including participation in class, group work, field exercises, student presentations, communications with the teaching team regarding course content or evaluation, etc.

- **Etiquette regarding the use of computers and other electronic devices:**
  - The use of computers and other electronic devices has become central to learning since the pandemic, still the use of electronics in class should be limited to activities related to the course.
  - Other uses are disruptive for the instructor and peers and thus are unacceptable.

- **Course notes:**
  - As a courtesy, I will be posting my lecture slides on Quercus after class.
  - Please note that I am under no obligation to do so and that such notes are intended to assist you and not replace your personal notes.
  - The instructor reserves the right to stop posting the slides at any time at his discretion.

- **Lecture recordings:**
  - It is understandable that as we navigate through the pandemic and given the ambiguity over the semester, there may be a need to access lectures online.
  - As such, lecture recordings will be available for 2 weeks after each session, after which they will no longer be available for viewing.
  - These recordings can be accessed through QUERCUS.
  - Please note this is NOT a substitute for attending class.
Written Assignments

• Submission guidelines:
  o Written assignments must be submitted electronically via Quercus by 7:59 pm on the due date.
  o Please note that deadlines have purposely been set on days that do not coincide with class and to avoid students staying up late to complete assignments.
  o It is recommended that you keep early drafts until you receive a graded copy of your assignment.

• Late penalty policy:
  o Work submitted late will be accepted with a 5% daily penalty (including Saturdays and Sundays), up to seven days after the due date. In such cases, the date/time of submission will be considered, using 7:59 pm ET of the original due date & time as time of reference.
  o In the case of an outstanding valid situation you must contact me, preferably in advance.
  o I cannot consider a situation unless I know about it, so do not wait until the end of the term to communicate with me if something did come up.
  o You are responsible for contacting your instructors to request the academic consideration you are seeking.
  o No extensions will be granted unless you have communicated with the instructor.
  o Requests for reweighting of assignments/grades is not permitted.

• Reread requests:
  o Students concerned about the assessment in assignments are invited to carefully read the feedback provided by the TA and/or instructor in written form and in the assignment rubric (where applicable).
  o If you require clarification or feel that you have been unfairly assessed, please contact the TA or the instructor explaining the rationale for your request within one week of receiving the graded assignment.
  o Please be aware that rereading the assignment does not necessarily translate into a higher grade. It is a reassessment and as such, the grade may remain, go up, or drop.
  o Requests made after one week may no longer be considered.

• This course requires the use of computers.
  o and of course sometimes things can go wrong when using them.
  o 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.
  o 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.

Other Policies

• Declared absences:
  o In response to the effects of the pandemic, students are now required to submit an Absence Declaration Tool via ACORN to record any absence from academic work, whether for medical or non-medical reasons.
  o You should complete the Absence Declaration anytime you are absent from academic work, not just when you have missed a specific course deadline.
  o You should record each day of your absence as soon as it begins, up until the day before you return to classes or other academic activities.
The University uses this information to consider students for academic accommodation and to monitor overall absences.

In addition to completing the ACORN self-declaration tool, please inform me if declared absence will impact any graded work.

**Quercus:**
- A Quercus site has been set for this course.
- PowerPoint slides, additional readings, assignments, and other useful materials will be posted on it.
- Quercus will also be used by the instructor to communicate with the class as a whole and will serve as the platform for assignment submission.
- Please make sure to check it regularly.
- To access the ENV223 Quercus, go to the UofT login page at: https://q.utoronto.ca/ and login using your UTORid and password.
- Once you have logged in, click on the Dashboard module on the right margin of your screen.
- You will then be able to see the tab for ENV223 course (along with all your other Quercus-based courses).

### 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](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:**
    - 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.
  - **On tests and exams:**
    - Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
    - Looking at someone else’s answers during an exam or test.
    - Misrepresenting your identity.
  - **In academic work:**
    - Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
    - 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...
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.
- You may also want to contact the Accessibility Services Office if you have problems arising from chronic issues or injuries sustained during the term that affect your ability to do tests or course work.

Additional Supports & Services

- 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
  - Services to assist students with English Learning are offered through English Language Learning (ELL)
  - Stay on top of your work while connecting with your peers by creating a Recognized Study Group (RSG) or by joining a Meet to Complete online drop-in study session

Students in Crisis

- You also have resources available to you if a student’s problems are more extreme and immediate.
  - Student Crisis Response/Student Progress & Support: 416-946-7111
  - Due to a high volume of inquiries during the academic year, please allow 1 business day for your call to be returned. If your inquiry requires immediate follow-up, please contact Campus Safety at 416-978-2222.

I look forward to a semester of shared learning and community-building together.