

**University of Toronto**  
**School of the Environment**  
**ENV411 Sustainability Thinking – Winter 2022**

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## **General Information**

Time: Lecture – Mondays 12:00-2:00 pm

Location: Lecture – ES B149 + Online (zoom links will be provided in Quercus)

Instructor: Michael Classens

Email: [michael.classens@utoronto.ca](mailto:michael.classens@utoronto.ca)

Office: 410F Stewart Building, 149 College Street

Office hours: Mondays from 10:00pm-11:45pm, or by appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Tiara Mullick

Email: [tiara.mullick@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:tiara.mullick@mail.utoronto.ca)

## **Course description**

This course is designed to provide a capstone experience that emphasizes various dimensions of sustainability from interdisciplinary perspectives. Students will have the opportunity to consider several structural conditions that reproduce fundamental social and environmental unsustainabilities in the contemporary context, including colonialism, white supremacy and capitalism. The course will also provide students with opportunities to reflect on their own experience and knowledge, and work collaboratively to mobilize critical sustainability perspectives beyond the classroom.

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of this class, you should have confidence in your ability to:

- Understand and describe the conjoined character of the ‘natural’ and ‘social’ worlds
- Understand and describe the structural conditions underpinning unsustainability
- Understand and describe how issues of equity intersect with sustainability issues
- Design and deliver a presentation on complex ideas in an engaging way to your peers and others

## **Evaluation**

*\*Note – all written work should be submitted through Quercus.*

Gratitude in learning – 10

Annotated bibliography and outline – 20

Draft colloquium presentation – 10

Colloquium presentation – 10

Final paper – 25

Participation – 15

Learning journal – 10

## Assignments

### **Gratitude in learning – 10%**

**Due: January 24**

Realizing more sustainable worlds requires fundamental change in multiple registers. One important element in this context includes reformulating conventional relations within the academic sphere. So often academic work is extractive, invisibilized, and exploitative. The teacher-student dichotomy, the distance between reader and writer, and the transactive character of contemporary education can all inhibit fostering meaningful connections in this realm. Reflecting on your postsecondary learning experience, you will write a one-page (250 word) letter to someone who has made a significant contribution to how you understand the world. This could be an author whose work moved you, a teaching assistant, a course instructor, a student – anyone who has contributed meaningfully to your learning in the postsecondary context. Be specific – with an example or two – about how this person impacted you. Submit your letter through Quercus. I also encourage you to send your letter to its intended recipient (in an email or otherwise), though this is not required.

### **Annotated bibliography and outline – 20%**

**Due: February 14**

Regardless of the format you choose, (see details below), you will prepare an outline and annotated bibliography to support your final paper or project. The outline should be no more than 500 words (*not inclusive of the annotated bibliography*), and it should (i) clearly identify the format of the final output (conventional paper, literature review, grant proposal, program review, etc.), (ii) provide a summary of the topic area, and (iii) include a brief outline of the thesis/sections/sub-headings/etc., as applicable. You will also provide a list of at least 5-7 sources, consisting of academic articles, book chapters, policy documents, newspaper articles, and the like, relevant to the topic, and include a brief annotation (3-4 sentences) for each reference. The specifics of the outline and annotated bibliography will be contingent on the form of the final project you choose. Your final paper or project can be focused on anything you'd like, as long as it is related to sustainability broadly defined.

### **Draft colloquium presentation – 10%**

**Due: March 7 or March 14**

In preparation for the colloquium (see below), we will hold two rehearsal colloquia (March 7<sup>th</sup> and March 14<sup>th</sup>). Students will be grouped into thematic panels based on the subject of their final papers, and each student will give a 5 min presentation on their final paper (please be sure to keep your presentation to no more than 5 mins – this is harder than you might think! We'll discuss some strategies in class).

### **Colloquium presentation – 10%**

#### **Due: TBD**

Building on the draft colloquium presentation, you will give your 5 min presentation at an outward facing, public colloquium. The teaching assistant and I will organize the colloquium. You should focus on effectively communicating – in 5 mins or less – the key points, learnings, insights, and the like, in compelling and engaging ways to a diverse audience.

### **Final paper – 25%**

#### **Due: April 4**

There are two options for the final project. In either case, you should use the annotated bibliography and outline to build toward your final project.

- 1) A conventional academic paper focused on a topic relevant to the course themes. The subject of the paper can be motivated by course readings, your own experience and observations, a news article or local issue that piqued your interest – whatever inspires you. The paper should be 2,000 – 2,500 words.
- 2) An alternative output – such as a detailed grant proposal, a literature review (either academic or grey literature), a program scan, a policy scan, or some other mutually agreeable format (if you decide to do an alternative output, you're strongly encouraged to discuss with me or the teaching assistant).

### **Participation – 10%**

#### **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 class (whether in-person or virtually). However, it is also expected that you 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. The participation grade will take into account disruptions related to COVID-19 and will be adjusted accordingly. If you are unable to attend class regularly, please contact me for support and to (potentially) work out an alternative.

### **Learning journal – 15%**

#### **Due: March 28**

Reflection is a key part of learning. In order to encourage you to reflect on your learning experience in this class, and throughout your time as a postsecondary student, I ask that you keep a learning journal throughout the course and make at least FOUR TOTAL entries of approximately 200 words each. You do not need to submit each entry – submit your consolidated reflections on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the journal is to document and reflect on whatever aspects of this course or your degree were most impactful, problematic, resonant and/or challenging for you.

## Schedule

\*Note: This schedule is subject to change

- Lecture will be held every week, on Monday, from January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (with the exception of February 21, 2022, which is reading week).
- Classes will be online until at least January 31<sup>st</sup> – zoom links will be provided on Quercus for lectures and tutorials.

Date	Topic/readings	Deadlines/to do
Week 1 January 10, 2022	<p><b><u>Introduction and overview</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b> The syllabus</p>	Schedule final colloquium
Week 2 January 17, 2022	<p><b><u>The world as a (hopeful) classroom</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b> Hooks, B. (2003). <i>Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope</i>. Routledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preface – pgs ix – xvi</li> <li>• Teach 1 – pgs 1-12</li> <li>• Teach 2 – pgs 13-24</li> <li>• Teach 4 – pgs 41-50</li> </ul>	
Week 3 January 24, 2022	<p><b><u>Scrutinizing sustainability</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b> Blühdorn, I. (2016). <i>Sustainability—Post-sustainability—Unsustainability</i> (T. Gabrielson, C. Hall, J. M. Meyer, &amp; D. Schlosberg, Eds.; Vol. 1). Oxford University Press. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199685271.013.39">https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199685271.013.39</a></p> <p>Seasons, M. (2021). The Equity Dimension of Climate Change: Perspectives From the Global North and South. <i>Urban Planning</i>, 6(4), 283–286. <a href="https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v6i4.4998">https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v6i4.4998</a></p>	Gratitude in learning
Week 4 January 31, 2022	<p><b><u>Pollution &amp; colonialism</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b> Liboiron, M. (2021). <i>Pollution is colonialism</i>. Duke University Press. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478021445">https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478021445</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction – pgs 1-38</li> <li>• Chapter 1 – pgs 39-79</li> </ul>	
Week 5 February 7, 2022	<p><b><u>The Anthropocene?</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b> Baldwin, A., &amp; Erickson, B. (2020). Introduction: Whiteness, coloniality, and the Anthropocene. <i>Environment and Planning D: Society and Space</i>, 38(1), 3–11. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775820904485">https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775820904485</a></p>	

	<p>Todd, Z. (2013). Indigenizing the Anthropocene. In <i>Art in the Anthropocene</i> (pp. 241–254).  <a href="https://openresearchlibrary.org/viewer/bd918efc-f018-4d3e-bcd3-6e7994a09298/12">https://openresearchlibrary.org/viewer/bd918efc-f018-4d3e-bcd3-6e7994a09298/12</a></p>	
<p>Week 6 February 14, 2022</p>	<p><b><u>The slow violence of unsustainability</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b>  Nixon, R. (2011). “Introduction”, in <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i> (pp. 1-44). <a href="https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/uri/ebooks/ebooks3/harvard/2017-05-17/1/9780674061194">https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/uri/ebooks/ebooks3/harvard/2017-05-17/1/9780674061194</a></p> <p>Cairns, K. (2021). Feeling environmental justice: Pedagogies of slow violence. <i>Curriculum Inquiry</i>, 1–20.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2021.1985925">https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2021.1985925</a></p>	<p>Annotated bibliography and outline</p>
<p>February 21, 2022</p>	<p><b>READING WEEK NO CLASS</b></p>	
<p>Week 7 February 28, 2022</p>	<p><b><u>Waste, Capitalism, &amp; Sustainability</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b>  Giles, D. B. (2021). A Mass Conspiracy to Feed People: Food Not Bombs and the World-Class Waste of Global Cities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction: Of Waste, Cities, and Conspiracies (pp. 1-23)  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478021711-001">https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478021711-001</a></li> <li>• The Anatomy of a Dumpster: Abject Capital and the Looking Glass of Value (pp. 31-54).  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478021711-003">https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478021711-003</a></li> </ul>	
<p>Week 8 March 7, 2022</p>	<p><b><u>Draft colloquium presentations</u></b></p> <p><b>No readings</b></p>	<p>Due: Draft colloquium presentation</p>
<p>Week 9 March 14, 2022</p>	<p><b><u>Draft colloquium presentations</u></b></p> <p><b>No readings</b></p>	<p>Due: Draft colloquium presentation</p>
<p>Week 10 March 21, 2022</p>	<p><b><u>Community, economy, sustainability</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b>  Vgontzas, N. (2021). <i>Toward Degrowth: Worker Power, Surveillance Abolition, and Climate Justice at Amazon</i> (SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 3981869). Social Science Research Network.  <a href="https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3981869">https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3981869</a></p> <p>Graham, J. K. G., &amp; Roelvink, G. (2010). An Economic Ethics for the Anthropocene. <i>Antipode</i>, 41(s1), 320–346.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00728.x">https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00728.x</a></p>	

Week 11 March 28, 2022	<p><b><u>Socio-ecological change – what comes next?</u></b></p> <p><b>Read</b></p> <p>Rodríguez, D. (2017). The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex, In <i>The Revolution Will Not Funded</i> (pp. 21-40). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373001-002">https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373001-002</a></p> <p>Indigenous Environmental Network. (2021). Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon. <a href="https://www.ienearth.org/irac-indigenous-rights-and-responsibilities-framework/">https://www.ienearth.org/irac-indigenous-rights-and-responsibilities-framework/</a></p>	Learning reflection
Week 12 April 4, 2022	<b>No readings</b>	Final paper  Colloquium (date TBD)

## Course Policies

- A note on COVID-19:** We are still very much in the midst of the global pandemic. It is important to recognize that this reality 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.

  - 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 two 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>
- 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.
- 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.

## 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](http://www.asc.utoronto.ca)

*AccessABILITY:* ([www.accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://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/>