# ENVIRONMENT & MENTAL WELLNESS
# ENV198H1

## I    CONTACTS

**INSTRUCTOR**
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Email: Nicole.spiegelaar@utoronto.ca
Office hours: Wednesday 10:10am-12:00pm

## II    COURSE OVERVIEW

**Wednesdays 2:10-4:00pm in UC175**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
We will explore the impact of the environment (built and natural) on the human psyche, with a focus on mental wellness. We will view this relationship through various theoretical frameworks including Evolutionary, Positive and Environmental Psychologies, as well as Indigenous wisdom across Turtle Island and Yoga Vedantic philosophy. We will also understand this relationship through experiential and embodied learning during outdoor observations and introspective practices. Topics will range from: evolutionary environments, psychological restoration in nature, herbal and entheogenic healing, place attachment and identity, neurological toxins, biophilic architecture, climate coping and ecological grief, nature connectedness and mental health justice.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
With full participation in this course, you will develop foundational academic skills including academic literacy, communication and application, interdisciplinary critical thinking, as well as creative problem solving. The course will help you make connections between social, historical, biological and cultural domains of human-environment interactions. Through the topic of environment and wellbeing, you will learn how to navigate the ever-increasing emotional stressors of environmental degradation in our society today, build awareness of your own psychological states, become more equipped with healthy coping and be empowered to address environmental issues.

**PREREQUISITE COURSE(S):**
None

**READINGS:**
Required readings are listed in the Course Schedule below. Note that readings with an asterisk (*) are not required; these supplemental/optional readings and there list of references may be helpful resources for  your assignments. The readings will help

you actively participate in class, develop thoughtful questions for guest speakers, and develop your major assignments. Weekly required readings and videos must be completed before every class and will be made available on Quercus. All articles will be available for free on Quercus. NOTE: Readings are subject to change with one week of advance notice - please check Quercus for weekly modules.

## III    HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED

This course is will be held in person. Weekly classes will invovle experiential outdoor learning in the natural and urban environment, or indoor classroom group discussions. Please be prepared to go outside for class and dress appropriately for the weather (walking shoes, warm clothes, rain gear).

Weekly preparation activities, readings and reflections will be done outside of classtime, and are inteneded to give you extra support in digesting course material and applying it to your assignments.

One week before each class you will be given instructions on the "Discussion" tab of Quercus to prepare for class. This will include a link to course *readings* and may include instructions for an outdoor *activity* on your own. You will reflect on these readings and activities in a person *Journal*, which will help you integrate these expeirenes along with the new knowledge you gain. You may be asked to post a question, images, observations or short reflections on Quercus.

Please visit Quercus regularly for course announcements.

**Weekly Checklist**
Check Quercus for weekly prompts. Before Tuesday at midnight, ask yourself: did the weekly prompts include any of the following? Did I complete them?

> ✔ Readings
> ✔ Journal Entries
> ✔ Discussion Posts
> ✔ Activity Post

**COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS & RELEVANT SESSIONAL DATES:**

**Readings**
We will use the following text book; a digital version is available via the U of T Library.

> Steg, L., Berg, A. E. van den, & Groot, J. I. M. de (Eds.). (2018). *Environmental Psychology: An Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell.

We will also read academic journal articles and magazine articles which are listed below by their authors and in full at the end of this syllabus. These will be made available via Quercus or through the UT library.

| Date | Topic | Reading | Due Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 1 Sept 13 | Introduction | | |
| Week 2 Sept 20 | Environment & Mental Wellness | (Mantler & Logan, 2015; Text Chapter 1; Text Chapter 6, Section 6.1-6.4 only) | |
| Week 3 Sept 27 | Restoration in Natural Settings | (Text Chapter 4, Text Chapter 7; Wilson, 1984, pp. 1–22)<br><br>(Grinde & Patil, 2009; Kaplan, 1995; Ulrich, 1993)* | |
| Week 4 Oct 4 | Indigenous Relations of Wellness | (Bopp, 1989; University nuhelot'įnethaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills, 2019)<br><br>*Guest: Isaac Crosby* | |
| Week 5 Oct 11 | Resilience & Mindfulness | (Lino, 2020; Lymeus et al., 2017)<br><br>*Guest: Freddie Lymeus* | |
| Week 6 Oct 18 | Test<br><br>Discussion: University Skills | | Test Wk 2-5 |
| Week 7 Oct 19 | Architecture | (Text Chapter 11; Joye, 2011)<br><br>(Joye, 2007; Roshinni et al., 2018)* | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Week 8<br>Nov 1 | Environmental & Neurological Degradation | (Ford & Herrera, 2019; Iqubal et al., 2020)<br><br>(Morse et al., 2020)* | |
| READING WEEK | | ------------- | |
| Week 9<br>Nov 15 | Ingesting Nature | (Franco et al. 2017; Metzner, 2013; Sarris, 2018)<br><br>(Hyun-Ju et al., 2010; Tupper et al., 2015)* | |
| Week 10<br>Nov 22 | Ecological Hope | (Tbd)<br><br>*Guest: Simon Appolloni* | |
| Week 11<br>Nov 29 | Test | | Open-Book Test Wk 1-9 |
| Week 12<br>Dec 6 | Reflection | | Final Journal Review<br><br>Reflection Due Dec 11 |

# IV    EVALUATION/GRADING SCHEME

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Participation | 25% | Weekly |
| Journal | 10% | Weekly |
| Reflection Essay | 15% | Due Dec 11 |
| Test | 25% | Oct 18 |
| Open-Book Test | 25% | Nov 29 |

**Participation (25%):** Your participation grade will be based on class attendance, participation and Quercus Discussion Posts. Accommodations for participation via Quercus can be made on a case-by-case basis due to illness or other extenuating circumstances.

*a) Attendance and Class Discussion*
You will be graded on weekly seminar attendance as well as reasoned, thoughtful, and informed contributions to this course. Participation marks are awarded for class interaction, clear evidence of familiarity with assigned readings, focused attention, and engagement with guest speakers. You will be evaluated on your ability to engage in supportive, respectful dialogue with your peers. In-class discussions should reflect your completion of weekly readings.
You should summarize the three most important takeaways from your readings, and may be asked to share during class.

*Note*: Professors are not automatically notified when you complete an Absence Declaration on ACORN; you also need to notify your professor.

*b) Quercus Discussion and Activity Posts*
One week before class, you will be given prompts to i) respond to readings, ii) prepare questions for class discussion or guest speaker, and/or iii) respond to outdoor activities. They are due by midnight on day before class (Tuesdays).

**Journal (10%):** You will use a journal to develop note-taking skills and for personal reflection on course topics. The journal will help you prepare for tests and university in general.

For each week, your journal should have notes for the following entries:

i)      activity reflection (if relevant),
ii)     class readings, including the three big takeways,
iii)    reflection and question for class (at least one),
iv)     class discussion notes (if relevant).

Each entry must have a date (top right) and title. Your notes can be point-form and I encourage you to use diagrams, tables or drawings where relevant. I will review

your journal on random dates at the beginning of class, and finally in the last class, based on completeness.

*Please purchase your own journal.*

**Reflection Essay (15%)**: Activities in class and at home will encourage thought exercises that you will document in weekly Quercus postings. Along with course readings and discussions, this will culminate into a short personal reflection assignment.

**Test (25%) and Open-Book Test (25%):** You will have two tests based on course readings and class discussions. Both tests will take place in the classroom. The first will include material from Weeks 1-5. The second will be cumulative, covering Weeks 1-9, and will be open-book (meaning, you may use your course notes).

**Note:** if an unexpected technical issue occurs with a university system (e.g., Quercus services, network outage) that affects availability or functionality, it may be necessary to revise the timing or weighting of the assessments.

## V    COURSE POLICIES

- I am available during office hours or by appointment. I will respond to email within 48 hrs on weekdays.

- Please refer to the University statement regarding 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.*"

- **Deadlines**: Late submission of an assignment will result in a penalty of -5% per day. If there are extenuating circumstances (illness, death in family) that prevent you meeting the assignment deadline you must email the course instructor as soon as possible BEFORE the deadline and NO LATER than one week after the due date.

- **Submission methods:** Please use the Assignments Tab on Quercus for assignment submissions. All assingments should be submitted as a Word(.doc) file, saved with the title: lastname.firstname.assignment.doc

- Students **may not create audio or video recordings of classes** with the exception of those students requiring an accommodation for a disability, who should speak to the instructor prior to beginning to record lectures.

# VI    TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

In the event of online learning, U of T has outlined the following technology requirments here: https://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/covid-19/tech-requirements-online-learning/

Here is general advice regarding online learning: https://onlinelearning.utoronto.ca/getting-ready-for-online/

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

# VII    INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND SUPPORT

**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/).

**COPYRIGHT**
If a student wishes to copy or reproduce lecture presentations, course notes or other similar materials provided by instructors, he or she must obtain the instructor's written consent beforehand. Otherwise all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited.  Students creating unauthorized audio recording of lectures violate an instructor's intellectual property rights and the Canadian Copyright Act. Students violating this agreement will be subject to disciplinary actions under the Code of Student Conduct.
More information regarding this is available here: https://teaching.utoronto.ca/ed-tech/audio-video/copyright-considerations/

**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.

**ADDITIONAL SERVICES 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
- English Language Learning
- Mental Health Resources: https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/
- Counselling and Therapy: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/mental-health-care/
- Health and Wellness Centre: http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc
- Sexual Violence Prevention and Support: thesvpcentre@utoronto.ca
- Sexual and Gender Diversity: sgdo@utoronto.ca

## VII    COURSE LITERATURE REFERENCES

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