

Syllabus: JGE321. Multicultural Perspectives on Environmental Management

University of Toronto, Fall 2020
Thursdays, 11AM to 1PM
Online-Synchronous via BB Collaborate

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Office Hours/Drop-in Sessions: Thursdays 1:30 to 3:30 PM, via BB Collaborate

Teaching Assistants

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Course Description

Deforestation, desertification, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, climate change and other environmental problems have reached global dimensions and are believed to put humans and other living species at risk. Yet, the impacts of such environmental problems are unequally distributed within and across countries, regions, groups, as well as among individuals who understand, experience, and interact with their environments in different ways. Critical to the understanding of the environmental challenges we currently face, and to the search for a more sustainable future, is the recognition that environmental issues are complex and are embedded in a variety of local, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts that are connected with global networks of exchange, extraction, and power. This course uses concepts and ideas from various disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, geography and sociology, as well as from some interdisciplinary fields to shed light on these issues. It draws on case studies from multicultural rural settings in Latin America, Africa and Asia, to illustrate the challenges that people face when interacting with the environment, the politics that surround them, as well as inspiring examples from a variety of contexts in the Global South.

The course draws first from the perspectives of sustainable livelihoods, cultural ecology and historical ecology to examine some of the ways in which different human groups make a living from the land and natural resources, as well as their role in shaping the environment. Next, we delve into the concepts of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and traditional ecological knowledge and their role in resource management. The course then explores how people interact, and how societies organize to address environmental issues through the concepts of social capital and collective action. Concepts from political ecology and political geography help to identify the political dimensions of environmental issues and to examine environmental injustices within and among societies. In the final part of the course, we use the concepts of civil society and social and environmental movements to begin exploring some possibilities for a more just and sustainable future and conclude by drawing on cases that offer hope and inspiration.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will:

1. be able to identify, use and appraise different perspectives applied to the study of natural resource management in different cultural settings in rural areas of the Global South.
2. develop a better understanding of the complexity of the challenges that rural, marginalized groups face as they relate with their environment, considering environmental, social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions.
3. be able to compare and appraise the extent to which everyday forms of resistance, civil society, and social movements may help to advance the cause of marginalized groups and lead to a more just and sustainable future.
4. demonstrate that they can read and write critically and that they can assess and apply concepts and ideas covered in the course to other cases.

Course Organization

Access to Course Materials & Readings

A QUERCUS page has been created for this course where various course materials, including lecture recordings, PowerPoint slides, assigned readings, assignment guidelines and other useful materials will be posted. Quercus will also serve as an important platform to communicate with the class and also for assignment submission. To access the JGE321 QUERCUS, go to the [UofT login page](#) 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 JGE321 course (along with all your other QUERCUS-based courses).

Submissions

All assignments must be submitted electronically through QUERCUS by 7:59 PM (TORONTO TIME) on the date specified by the instructor. It is recommended that you keep copies of your assignments and early drafts until you receive your graded assignment. Please submit your assignments in a DOC, DOCX or Word-compatible file format. Please do NOT submit your assignment as a PDF file.

Scheduled Course Time/Synchronous Activity

As a synchronous course, students are expected to set the 11 to 1 (Thurs) window aside for this course, much as if you were to attend the course in person each week. This serves to build a routine and structure that will help you to organize your time. What will happen during this “synchronous” component may vary from one week to the next. Some weeks this will entail a lecture component with opportunity for discussion and participation (specific dates are noted in the course schedule below), in others, the emphasis will be more on discussion, both in small groups (break-out rooms) or as an entire class, and Q & A sessions. Lectures will be recorded by the instructor and will be made available for subsequent viewing only through the BB Collaborate tab in QUERCUS.

Drop-in sessions and office hours with the TA

Rebecca (the TA) will run a series of “virtual” drop-in sessions and/or office hours on specific weeks during term. They are intended to provide guidance in preparation for the various assignments. Specific dates and virtual platform (e.g., BB Collaborate, Zoom, Microsoft Teams) will be announced later.

Assignments and Evaluation

Key Dates

1. Reading Response 1	15%	October 2, 2020 (all students)
2. Reading Response 2	15%	October 30 or November 6, 2020
3. Documentary Assignment	10%	November 25, 2020
4. Final Essay	30%	December 16 (during the final assessment period)
5. Quizzes	10%	Throughout term (randomly)
6. Participation & Engagement	20%	Throughout term

Assignment Details

Assignment 1 – Reading response 1

Due October 2, 2020 (15% of final grade)

Students must submit 2 reading responses during the term. The first response is related to the readings for week 4 (October 1) and is mandatory for all students. Reading responses must demonstrate that you have read the assigned materials and that you have thought about their contents. Rather than providing a summary of the readings, responses must draw from concepts, ideas, and issues from the readings in an integrative way. Responses are 1200 words (2-3 pages). More detailed guidelines will be provided in a separate assignment handout.

Assignment 2 – Reading response 2

Due October 30 or November 6, 2020 (15% of final grade)

The second reading response is related to the readings for either week 8 (October 29) or week 9 (November 5); students are to select one. As with the first response, the second response must demonstrate that you have read the assigned materials and that you have thought about their contents. Rather than providing a summary of the readings, responses must draw from concepts, ideas, and issues from the readings in an integrative way. Responses are 1200 words (2-3 pages). More detailed guidelines will be provided in a separate assignment handout.

Assignment 3 – Documentary assignment

Due November 25 (10% of final grade)

Short reflective piece in relation to a film/documentary. More detailed guidelines will be provided in a separate assignment handout.

Assignment 4 – Final essay

December 16 (during the final assessment period) (worth 30% of final grade)

Students will prepare a short (2000 word) essay in which they apply concepts, ideas and examples discussed in this course, to make an argument on an environmental issue in the Global South, based upon a real-life case study discussed in an article provided by the instructor. List of case-studies and detailed guidelines will be provided in a separate assignment handout.

Assignment 5 – Quizzes

Ongoing throughout term (worth 10% of final grade)

Students will be asked to respond to short quizzes prior to or shortly after class on various occasions during the term. They are intended to serve two purposes: 1) to test whether students have prepared the readings and are ready to participate and engage with lectures and discussion; and 2) to identify areas that require further clarification. For such reasons, quizzes will be unannounced and will have a time-expiry.

Assignment 6– Participation and Engagement

Ongoing throughout term (worth 20% of final grade)

Participation involves playing an active role in the course, by asking questions, making comments, partaking in discussions during synchronous sessions (i.e. the whole class or in break-out groups) or through options online. As a way to provide a wider range of options to engage with course materials, students are also welcome to submit questions and brief informal comments related to the readings and class discussion of the week. Electronic questions and comments should be posted on the discussion forum on a weekly basis, preferably the day before class and up to the end of the day (5:00 PM) on Friday (i.e., a day after such materials were discussed in class). Please note that it is easier to incorporate questions into the lecture if sent in advance. In your questions and comments consider what you found most interesting, surprising, unclear, or what you are take away from the article(s), the lecture, or discussion. There will be opportunities to engage with the materials, the instructor but also with your peers.

Late Penalties

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 Toronto time as time of reference. In the case of an outstanding VALID situation you must contact me, preferably in advance. 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. A recent communication you should have received from the university states that “[t]he University is temporarily suspending the need for a doctor’s note or medical certificate for absences from academic participation. Please use the [Absence Declaration tool on ACORN](#) to declare an absence if you require consideration for missed academic work. You are responsible for contacting your instructors to request the academic consideration you are seeking. Record each day of your absence as soon as it begins, up until the day before you return to classes or other academic activities.” No extensions will be granted unless you have communicated with the instructor and your reasons have been deemed valid. Reweighting of assignments/grades is not permitted.

Required Text

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be assigned from academic journal articles, book chapters and other sources to cover the topics discussed in class each week. Whenever possible, reading materials will be made available electronically through QUERCUS (as links to the U of T Library). Alternative arrangements will be made for other readings.

Course Schedule*

Week 1 – September 10 [Synch]

Topic: Introduction

Week 2 – September 17 [Synch]

Topic: Cultural Ecology and Sustainable Livelihoods – Making a Living in the Amazon Floodplain

Week 3 - September 24

Topic: Transforming the land: An Historical Ecology Perspective

Week 4 - October 1 [Synch]

Topic: Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

Guest Speaker: Rebecca McMillan

Week 5 - October 8

Topic: Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)

Week 6 - October 15 [Synch]

Topic: Politics and the Environment – A political Ecology Approach & Access

Week 7 - October 22

Topic: Politics and the Environment – Discourse

Week 8 - October 29

Topic: Politics and the Environment – Political Economy

Week 9 – November 5

Topic: Politics and the Environment – Gender

Fall Reading Week – November 12- No Classes

Week 10 – November 19 [Synch]

Topic: What then Can Marginalized Groups Do? – Everyday Forms of Resistance, Civil Society and Social Movements

Week 11 - November 26

Topic: In Search for Hope and Inspiration

Week 12 – December 3 [Synch]

Topic: Wrap-up

*Modifications may apply as the term progresses; students will be notified in advance, should any changes be made.

[Synch] denote proposed dates for synchronous lectures. Other weeks will have different synchronous components as described above.

Course Policies & Expectations

Communication

My preference would have been to meet with students in person but due to the COVID-19 pandemic there will NOT be any in-person interaction this term. Still, I hope to be able to communicate with you in “real time” to the degree that is possible. I have designated a block of time for “virtual” office hours or drop-in sessions during which I am available to discuss with you course-related matters (for the hours, see the first page of the syllabus). It is time set aside for you-- take advantage of it! Appointments may also be set for students who cannot attend scheduled office hours/drop-in sessions, whether they are in other time zones or not. For urgent matters or simple questions, you may also contact me via email, but the rule of thumb is that 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. Please note that I am not online 24/7 and thus may not be able to respond to your messages right away. I will make an effort to respond to you within 48 hours, but it will take longer during weekends as I remain offline to spend time with my family. Please make sure to use your University of Toronto email account (i.e. @mail.utoronto.ca) and to include the course code “JGE321” and your name in the title box of your email for easier handling. Other e-mail addresses may be filtered as spam and thus I may be unable to respond to them.

Mutual Respect

We all have a shared collective responsibility to build an atmosphere of mutual respect for all, students, teaching assistant and instructor. We must work together to build a community that welcomes different points and where everybody feels welcome and respected. Harassment, discrimination and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Formatting of Written Work

Coursework must be word processed 1.5-spaced, 12-point font size, unless otherwise noted. Assignments should be proofread prior to submission to insure that they are free of grammatical and spelling errors and must include a list of all references cited in the text, using [the APA citation style](#). All coursework should include the student’s name and student number, the course’s code and name, and that of the instructor, in order to avoid loss or improper identification. Note, however, that there is no need to use a cover page to do so.

Accessibility Services

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 (disability.services@utoronto.ca). 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.

Reread Requests

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. If you require clarification or feel that you have been unfairly assessed, please contact the TA or me explaining the rationale for your request within one week of receiving the graded assignment. Please be aware that rereading the assignment does NOT necessarily translate into a higher grade. It is a reassessment and as such, the grade can remain, go up, or drop.

Recordings, Electronic Materials and 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 written consent of the instructor). Lectures cannot be recorded without the instructor's written permission. 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.

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](#). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at 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
 - 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

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades

Please note that potential offences will be addressed in accordance with institutional procedures. Check the 'How not to plagiarize' website at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize> for further guidance.

Services and Support

[Health and Wellbeing](#) provides a range of health services for your physical and mental health, as well as wellness programs and information to help support you in achieving your personal and academic goals.

UofT Libraries

- [Library Catalogue](#) (search for books, journal articles and documents):
- [Research services](#) for students (e.g., research guides, citation resources, reworks, etc.):

[UofT Writing](#) (for advice on: planning and organizing, reading and researching, using sources, types of writing, style, and editing and English as a second language): see also: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca>

[English Language Learning](#) (ELL) offers a variety of services including:

- Communication Cafe meets virtually for practice with oral skills like class discussion and presentations.
- Reading eWriting, an online program that helps students engage course with readings more effectively.

Stay on top of your work while connecting with your peers

[Recognized Study Groups \(RSG\)](#) are voluntary, peer-led study groups of 3 – 6 students enrolled in the same course. They're available for all A&S courses and are now fully online. In addition to supporting students' study habits and academic success, RSGs also encourage student participants to be socially connected with their peers. Last year, over 2,000 A&S students participated in RSGs for courses spanning all streams and class sizes.

[Meet to Complete](#) are online drop-in study sessions held exclusively for A&S undergrads. Offered multiple times per business day and led by trained A&S student-staff, these study sessions help students to stay motivated and productive by offering daily goal-setting and the opportunity to study alongside their A&S peers.