

# **JGE321. Multicultural Perspectives on Environmental Management**

Winter 2022

Department of Geography & Planning and School of the Environment

University of Toronto Thursday, 1–3pm

MS 2172 (Online via Zoom between January 13 to 27)

## **Instructor**

Christian Abizaid – [christian.abizaid@utoronto.ca](mailto:christian.abizaid@utoronto.ca)

Office Hours: Thursdays 3:15 to 5-15 PM via Zoom (Students are welcome to drop-in virtually at any time during the first hour, or to make an appointment for any time in the two 2-hour block.)

Office: SS 5055

## **Teaching Assistant**

Rebecca McMillan – [rebecca.mcmillan@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:rebecca.mcmillan@mail.utoronto.ca)

## **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. 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 real-life 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. 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. It is recommended that you keep copies of your assignments and early drafts until you receive your graded assignment. Assignments must be submitted in a DOC, DOCX or Word-compatible file format. PDF or PAGES submissions are not accepted.

### **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., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) will be announced later.

## Assignments and Evaluation

### Key Dates

Provide a list of assignments, include weighting and due dates in the following format:

- |                       |     |   |
|-----------------------|-----|---|
| 1. Reading Response 1 | 15% | February 4, 2022                                |
| 2. Reading Response 2 | 15% | March 11, 2022 or March 19, 2022                |
| 3. Final Essay        | 40% | April 19, 2022 (during final assessment period) |
| 4. Participation      | 15% | Throughout term                                 |
| 5. Quizzes            | 15% | Throughout term                                 |

### Assignment Details

#### *Assignment 1 – Reading Response 1*

Due February 4, 2022 (15% of final grade)

Students must submit 2 reading responses during the term. The first response is related to the readings for week 4 (February 3) 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 ~1000 words (2 to 3 pages). More detailed guidelines will be provided in a separate assignment handout.

#### *Assignment 2– Reading Response 2*

Due March 11 or March 18, 2022 (15% of final grade)

The second reading response is related to the readings for either week 8 (March 10) or week 9 (March 17); 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 ~1000 words (2 to 3 pages). More detailed guidelines will be provided in a separate assignment handout.

#### *Assignment 3 – Final Essay*

Due April 19, 2022 (during the final assessment period) (worth 40% 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 4 – Participation*

Ongoing through the term (15% of final grade)

Participation involves playing an active role in the course, by asking questions, making comments, partaking in discussions during class (i.e., the whole class or in small/break-out groups) and/or through online Quercus discussions. 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. In order to be considered for participation marks, meaningful contributions may include responding to questions during the lecture, commenting on media reports, and/or online discussions that demonstrate engagement and thought. Simple “I agree/disagree” or “yes/no” statements do not suffice.

### *Assignment 4 – Quizzes*

Ongoing through the term (15% 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.

### **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 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. You should complete the Absence Declaration anytime you are absent from academic work, not just when you have missed a specific course deadline. 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. You are also responsible for contacting your instructors to request the academic consideration you are seeking. Please contact me as soon as possible and do not wait until the end of term.

Extensions without penalty will be granted for reasons of accommodation, illness or emergencies when appropriate documentation is submitted to the instructor. Reweighting of assignments/grades is not permitted.

## **Required Texts**

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. The list of required weekly readings will be posted on Quercus a week in advance.

## **Course Schedule**

**Week 1 (January 13): Introduction**

**Week 2 (January 20): Cultural Ecology and Sustainable Livelihoods. Making a Living in the Amazon Floodplain**

**Week 3 (January 27): Transforming the Land – An Historical Ecology Perspective**

**Week 4 (February 3): Community–based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)**

**Week 5 (February 10): Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)**

**Week 6 (February 17): Politics and the Environment – A Political Ecology Approach & Access**

*Winter Reading Week (February 24) No Class*

**Week 7 (March 3): Politics and the Environment – Discourse**

**Week 8 (March 10): Politics and the Environment – Political Economy**

**Week 9 (March 17): Politics and the Environment – Gender & Intersectionality**

## **Week 10 (March 24): What Can Marginalized Groups Do? – Everyday Forms of Resistance**

## **Week 11 (March 31): What Can Marginalized Groups Do? – Civil Society and Social Movements**

## **Week 12 (April 7): In Search for Hope and Inspiration & Wrap-up**

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

## **Course Policies & Expectations**

### **Communication**

I have designated a block of time for “virtual” student hours 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 so take advantage of it! Students are welcome to drop-in virtually at any time during the first hour, or to make an appointment for any time in the two 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 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 as soon as possible on weekdays, but it will take longer during weekends as I remain offline to spend time with my family. Please make sure to use your UofT email account (i.e., @mail.utoronto.ca) and to include the course code “JGE 321” 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.

### **Classroom Environment**

- Punctuality: Class will start on time (i.e., 1:10 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, arrivals after 1:30 PM are discouraged.
- 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 and online discussions, and communications with the teaching team regarding course content or evaluation, etc. Harassment, discrimination and hate speech will not be tolerated.

- 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 PowerPoint 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.
- Following institutional guidelines regarding the ongoing COVID-19 situation, this course will be meeting virtually in a synchronous fashion via Zoom for the first three weeks of the term. Please be advised that a record of the chat will be saved to keep track of participation but Zoom meetings themselves will not be recorded. As of now, in-person learning is expected to resume on January 31.

### **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 ensure 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**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. Please consult with [Accessibility Services](#) (AS) if you require accommodations, are experiencing circumstances that prevent you from completing your course work, or if you have any accessibility concerns about the course.

### **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.

## **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**

You are certainly encouraged to discuss lecture content and readings with classmates. However, plagiarism and submitting an assignment under your name that you have not completed are offences under university policy. Plagiarism is quoting (or paraphrasing!) the work of an author without a proper citation or citing an author without enclosing copied words in quotation marks. It is also an offense to submit academic work for which you have already obtained (or are concurrently seeking) credit. Please consult the university's resources on [Academic Integrity](#) for further information (including the Faculty's [Student Academic Integrity](#) office), and have a look at this document on "[How Not to Plagiarize](#)"

## **Plagiarism Detection**

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the [Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site](#).

## **U of T Library Services**

[Library Catalogue](#) (search for books, journal articles and documents):

[Research services](#) for students (e.g., research guides, citation resources, reworks, etc.)

## Writing Support

[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.

[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.

## Mental Health Statement

### Supporting Mental Health in the U of T Community

As a student at U of T, you may experience circumstances and challenges that can affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. There is no wrong time to reach out, which is why there are resources available for every situation and every level of stress.

Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources, including:

- [Your College Registrar](#)
- [Student Mental Health Resource](#)
- [Safety & Support website](#)
- [Health and Wellness Centre](#)
- [Emergency support if you're feeling distressed](#)
- Additional mental health resources can also be found on the [Geography website](#)

An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources.

## Other Student Services and Support Resources

- [Accessibility Services](#)
- [Academic Success Centre](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Links to Additional Student Services and Support Resources](#) (general services and support for students, international student support, Health & Wellness, financial aid and professional development)