



Environment and Resources Studies

University of Waterloo

ERS 475 Environmental Education and Action
SEM: 0.50 Fall 2013

DRAFT ONLY- the full version of the syllabus and details will be available at the beginning of classes

Instructor: Mary Louise McAllister,
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Time: Monday 1:30-4:30 pm **Office hours:** TBA
Prereq: Level fourth year standing

Course Description: University-level environmental education has often evolved in the context of distinct disciplinary traditions and [standardized models of teaching and learning](#)¹. This course is designed to explore more interdisciplinary approaches, ones that challenge such conventional university traditions. From this perspective, environmental education embraces a critical pedagogy, and an emergent, process-centred approach to interdisciplinary problem-solving. Course participants will be actively engaged in exploring and developing alternative approaches to learning in the university and the wider community with the aim of fostering long-term sustainability of desired social and ecological systems.

This is a collaborative, learner-centred course that actively engages all students in discussions and activities.

The course requires careful reading of all requirements and material placed on the website including this syllabus. Make sure that you are prepared to read and to actively engage in the class and in the community around you before you enroll in the course.

Users can login to LEARN via: <http://learn.uwaterloo.ca>

Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password.

¹ Watch this entertaining and informative TED talk.

This course uses multi-media to explore different approaches you can use to effectively educate, communicate, and advocate for social and environmental sustainability in communities.



How you might benefit from the course; i.e. learning outcomes: You, as a class participant, will learn how to apply conceptual lenses and approaches to environmental education and problem-solving. You will learn how to teach, communicate and advocate for social or biophysical sustainability in the community context focusing on **your own interest area** related to a social or biophysical environmental concern, or your build on your current thesis research.

Required text: **A/J Art and Media: 39:3** (available from the university bookstore). All other readings and course material are available in library, reserves, e-reserves or on the Web.

The course is divided into three parts:

Part A: Understanding, Evaluating and Assessing: Environmental education in the Universities: A critical assessment, alternative approaches and integrating education into the wider community (2 classes)

- What is education for anyway?
- What is environmental (or sustainability) education and what does it do?
- The evolution of environmental education
- Pedagogical approaches: experiential education, community-service learning and action-oriented research

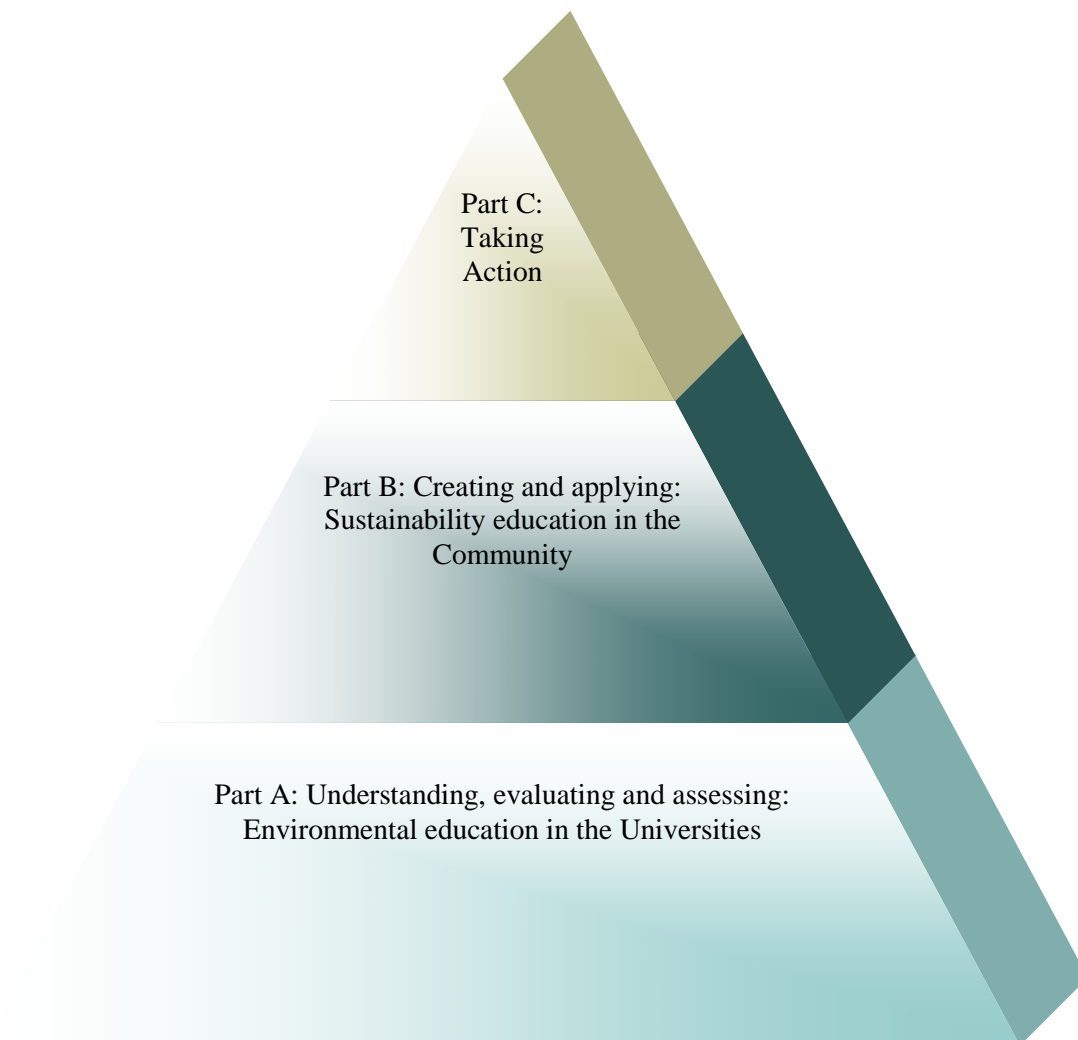
Part B: Creating and Applying: Sustainability education in the community

- Workshop with Alternatives Journal staff at their Kitchener office: education and communicating with the public
- Environmental education, communications, multi-media and the arts

Part C: Taking Action: Flipped classroom—alternative approaches to environmental education

Students individually or in self-selected groups will design and teach the class a short session on some aspect of environmental education and action. Class members are

encouraged to use alternative pedagogical approaches and methods of communications. Individuals will have freedom to choose the topic or tie it to their thesis or project work.



By the end of this course you will know, understand and explain

- the biases and value system of the dominant perspectives shaping today's educational system and society;
- alternative approaches to university and public education that can foster a more sustainable future; and
- how to develop effective education and communications strategies to effect societal change towards healthier communities.

| Assignments | Due Dates and Weight | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------|
| #1 Submit Proposed Term Project abstract, question, rationale thesis statement, proposed learning outcome, outline, type of communications medium, proposed length of project/paper and preliminary bibliography: (group or individual) | Sept. 30 on Learn Site at 11:59 pm | 10% |
| #2 Individual 3-minute (or group 6-minute) blog or infograph presentations based on Alternatives/Kitchener field trip | Oct. 21 in class and on Learn site | 10% |
| #3 The Flipped Classroom: Environmental education seminars (group or individual) | Nov. 11, 18, 25 | 20% |
| #4 Peer Assessment of presentations (these will not be used to assess the grades of presentations or final projects) | Nov 28 | 10% |
| #4 Final in class integrative essay (2 hours) and student choice awards | Dec 2 | 20% |
| #5 Term Projects (group or individual) –recommended that it be approximately 15 pages (if it is an individually-written essay) but this will vary depending on the communications approach used, and if it is a group project. The proposed length and content of the project should be included in project proposal. | Dec 9 | 30% |
| Participation Bonus marks for exceptional participation based on readings and contributions to the collective class learning | | 3 bonus marks |

*note all assignments are to be submitted through the LEARN drop boxes

Course Requirements: See [Appendix 1](#) or the course website for a detailed description of assignment requirements and expectations. (To be added in final draft)

Weekly Schedule (course materials and readings will be available for the first week of classes)

Part A: Environmental education in the Universities; A critical assessment, alternative approaches and integrating education into the wider community

Weeks 1-2

September 9 What is education for? What are higher educational institutions trying to achieve anyway? A critical assessment

September 16 Exploring alternatives: Environmental Education and learner-centred education (For Week 2 – Bring your idea for a term project that explores community-based learning towards sustainability)

Part B: Sustainability education and Action: Out of the classroom

Weeks 3 and 4, September 23 and 30: From environmental education to community-based learning towards sustainability

Week 5 October 7 Educating communities and communications

Attend the afternoon field trip *Alternatives offices in Downtown Kitchener* (195 King West – across from City Hall). 1 hour in office - 1 hour in the community (If you have one, bring a camera or smartphone to take photos), – 1 hour back brainstorming – Julie Belanger, Marcie, Eric

October 14 – Thanksgiving holiday

Week 6 October 21 Educating the public with high-impact communications with downtown Kitchener as the subject

Week 7 October 28 Media and Message: Environmental Art, Communications and Community

Week 8 November 4 Flex class – TBA

Part C: The Flipped Classroom: Environmental, community-based education Peer teaching/learning project seminars (Alternatives Staff and others will be there to participate)

Week 9 November 11 *The power of the written word*

Week 10 November 18 *Networked Worlds: new-media and transformational education–*

Week 11 November 25 a) *A picture is worth a thousand words*, b) *Since time immemorial: the oral tradition* or c) *Soundscapes can be worth a thousand pictures*²

Week 12 December 2 Last class – *Student choice awards!* Two-hour In-class integrative essay on environmental education and community-based action

² observation by Bernie Krause

Additional Important Information and University Requirements

Unclaimed assignments: Unclaimed assignments will be retained until one month after term grades become official in quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW's confidential shredding procedures.

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/>

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with at the beginning of each academic term.

Religious Observances: Please inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

Discipline (as noted above under 2a): A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm