Course Syllabus: Introduction to Environmental Studies (ENVS 195)

Contact Us

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Course Description and Learning Outcomes

Course Description

This first year course introduces the field of environmental studies, exploring the relationships and interactions between humans and their natural, social and built environments. Over the duration of the course, we will:

1) Explore the variety of drivers underlying human interaction with the natural environment.
world, including demographic, economic, and socio-cultural/ethical drivers;

2) Develop an understanding of the planetary systems and processes that have been disturbed by human activity and contribute to the environmental challenges that we face today;

3) Examine key planning and management approaches, concepts and frameworks that may be useful for responding to environmental challenges, and...

4) Critically analyze specific environmental challenges we face as global citizens and some of the key debates/proposed solutions related to these challenges. These environmental challenges will be studied at the global, national and local levels, and the complexity and interconnectedness of these various challenges will be examined.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Explain the causes and implications of key environmental challenges, including climate change, agriculture, waste management, energy, and oceans and fisheries
- Describe key perspectives on the demographic, economic, and socio-cultural/ethical drivers that have led to environmental degradation
- Situate your own values and perspectives on key drivers of environmental degradation within the context of other perspectives
- Apply planning and management concepts and frameworks to key environmental issues
- Compare and contrast the pros and cons of potential solutions to key environmental challenges
- Create a visual and textual representation of which potential solutions you would like to contribute to and how you would like to contribute

**Grade Breakdown**

The following table is a quick reference for you to know what the activities and
The following table is a quick reference for you to know what the activities and assignments are for this course and how much they are worth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities and Assignments</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Ungraded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings quizzes (10 at 1% each)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture reflections (2 at 15% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions (3 at 5% each)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied activities (2 at 10% each)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your Instructors

Julie Cook

Hi everyone, how exciting it is to be able to co-lead you through an adventure in environmental studies this term!

I have an undergraduate degree from the University of Waterloo in Social Development Studies, a Masters degree in Human Rights Law, and I'm currently working on my PhD in Sustainability Management. My research focus is on success and failure factors in social marketing, which is a discipline that uses marketing techniques to help people change their behaviour to meet a social or environmental objective (e.g. helping people to quit smoking, recycle more, donate their organs, cycle instead of drive, etc). On a broader level, I'm very interested in the processes of social change: How does it happen? Who gets to have a voice in this process? How do we include all voices equally in the development of social change strategies?
make the big decisions? What mechanisms are available to us to make those changes (e.g. law, education, marketing, etc)? My teaching philosophy is centred around active engagement and real-world application, which is why we'll be having class discussions, applied activities, and a final project that encourages you to think more deeply about applying the concepts you've learned to your own life. My interests include reading non-fiction books, singing gigs, hiking, and social and environmental justice activism.

Sadaf Mollaei

Hello everyone!

I am very happy to be co-teaching the introduction to environmental studies course this semester.

Currently, I am doing my doctoral research in the sustainability management program and my research focuses on eating behaviours and behaviour change, food environments and life cycle assessment. I also did my masters in the same program at UWaterloo studying sustainable diets in Ontario. More on food, I worked as a quality control manager in food industries for more than 4 years. However, my academic background is a bit more diverse. I have a bachelors in civil engineering and geomatics, and an MBA in marketing.

To me, a good and productive lesson revolves around dynamic interactions, engagement and learning both theoretical and applicable concepts.

Hopefully, you will be able to enjoy this course and learn at the same time. Looking forward to e-meet all of you.

Cheers,
Sadaf

Materials and Resources

https://learn.uwaterloo.ca/d2l/le/content/641476/viewContent/3451394/View
Textbook(s)

Required


The required text has been selected to assist you in understanding environmental issues from different perspectives, both Canadian and international. Sections of the textbook assigned as readings are available on LEARN under Content/Course Schedule. The text has many references to further reading in both printed sources and electronic web sites at the end of each chapter. The text will be useful (and in some cases, required) for completing the assignments in the course.

Booklook info

For textbook ordering information, please contact the W Store | Course Materials + Supplies.

You can order the course textbook, either print or digital format, through UWwaterloo BookLook using your Quest userID and password. If you are having difficulties ordering online and need support, please contact the W Store by email wstore@lists.uwaterloo.ca, by local phone +1 519-888-4673 or by toll-free at +1 866-330-7933. Please be aware that textbook orders CANNOT be taken over the phone.

Course Evaluation

Your final mark will be determined based on readings quizzes, lecture reflections, online discussions, applied activities and one final project. Please refer to the Assignments document (Content/Assignments) for all other Assignment details. Also, additional instructions will be provided through Announcements on LEARN as particular due dates draw near.

Course Structure
The course is organized in four modules, generally corresponding to the course objectives and the progression of chapters in the course text:

Module 1: Introduction and Drivers

Module 2: The Ecosphere

Module 3: Planning and Management

Module 4: Environmental Challenges

Course Schedule

Please consult the ENVS 195 Course Schedule by clicking on Content/Syllabus/ENVS 195 - Course Schedule.

Announcements

Professors Sadaf and Julie use the Announcements widget on the LEARN Course Home page during the term to communicate new or changing information regarding due dates, instructor absence, etc., as needed. You are expected to read the announcements on a regular basis. To ensure you are viewing the complete list of announcements, you may need to click Show All Announcements.

Discussions

Professors Sadaf and Julie have provided a Group Discussion forum for four different group discussions that will take place throughout the term. For the first one, called Introduce Yourself, which is ungraded, say hello to your class group and let them know a bit about yourself. Tell them who you are, where you're from, what environmental topic interests you the most, and what is your favourite place on Earth (this could be a city, a region, or even a nook or cranny in your own home). Feel free to add a photo if you're inspired! Be sure to post in this discussion topic by January 17, 2021.

The other three group discussions will be graded. More information on these
group discussions is available in the Assignments document (Content/Assignments).

There will also be a class-wide Ask the Instructor discussion forum. Use the Ask the Instructor Forum when you have a question that may benefit the whole class. Also, check this forum to see if your question has already been answered before reaching out to us.

Discussions can be accessed from the Course Home page by clicking Connect and then Discussions on the course navigation bar.

### Resources for Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counselling Services</strong> - Programming and services to help you live a healthy, balanced life. Due to COVID-19, counselling services are available via phone or video call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Success Office</strong> - Academic tools, personal development workshops, study abroad opportunities, and more</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Centre for Career Action</strong> - Career development and job search strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AccessAbility Services</strong> - Note taking support and adaptive technology if you have permanent, temporary, or suspected disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous Services</strong> - Sharing Indigenous knowledge and culturally relevant support services for all members of the University of Waterloo community</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>International Student Resources</strong> - Helping international students transition to life in Canada (e.g. help in applying for documents such as study or work permits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Aid</strong> - OSAP and government aid, other loan programs, awards and bursaries, including those available</td>
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to first year students

**WatCards** - Prints and distributes the University of Waterloo's student identification cards. Due to COVID-19, you must apply for it online

**Library Services** - Print and digital collections, access to research and journal databases

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### Technical Support

- Technical problems with Waterloo LEARN

**learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca**

When emailing LEARN for technical assistance, include your full name, WatIAM user ID, student number, and course name and number.

Technical support is available during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM (Eastern Time).

**LEARN Help Student Documentation**

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### Course and Department Policies

#### Course Policies

Professors Sadaf and Julie will allow a 24 hour grace period for each assignment due date**, since we understand that sometimes circumstances arise beyond the students' control. If your assignment is handed in after the 24 hour grace period, there will be a 10% flat late penalty up until seven days after the original due date. After seven days have passed, the assignment will receive a mark of zero. If circumstances do arise (e.g. family emergency, health issues) leading up to an assignment due date and you will not be able to meet the deadline, you will need to contact the professors and/or the TAs **BEFORE** the due date to arrange a potential accommodation. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Details</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Completion Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Required: Automatic</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

View this topic to complete the activity

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