Renison University College
Affiliated with the University of Waterloo
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Renison University College Land Acknowledgement

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Hodinohsyó:ni, and Attawandaran (Neutral) Peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place in all corners of our campus through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach. We are guided by the work of our Reconciliation and Re-storying Steering Committee and Anti-Racism and Decolonization Spokescouncil, as well as the University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations .

Winter 2024

Course Code: SDS 260R

Course Title: Ecology, Society and Justice: Social Development and the Environment

M&W 2:30-5:20 p.m./REN2102

Instructor: Robert Case

Office: REN1604

Office Phone: 519-884-4404 x28683

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:00-2:20 (or by appointment)

Email: rob.case@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description

This course introduces students to the basic theory and concepts of social ecology, an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and investigating the interrelationship of social development and environmental sustainability. In this course students will be introduced to influential environmental philosophies (including deep ecology, bioregionalism, and

ecofeminism), will critically examine the implications of environmentalism for human society, and will explore ideas for community action and the construction of social institutions that reflect both a social and an ecological ethic.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to

- Articulate the interconnections between social development and the environment, and vice versa
- Describe the basic tenets of social ecology
- Use concepts of social ecology to critique other major environmental philosophies
- Imagine how social, cultural, economic, and political institutions could be created or reformed to achieve social justice and environmental sustainability

Required Text

- No required text; articles and book chapters as posted in LEARN (see weekly schedule).

Readings Available on LEARN

- Please see weekly schedule.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Evaluation will be based on the following four items

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Attendance	Ongoing beginning in Week 2	10%
Discussion participation	Ongoing beginning in Week 2	15%
Counter-institution: Introduction	Week 4 (Jan. 29)	5%
Concept review	Week 7 (Feb. 26)	25%
Counter-institution: Poster Presentation	Week 11 (Mar. 25)	20%
Manifesto	Week 12 (Apr. 1)	25%
Total		**100%**

Assessment 1: Attendance and Discussion Participation (25% of final mark)

ATTENDANCE (10%):
Attendance will be taken at every class beginning in Week 2. Students who miss a class due to illness or other unanticipated contingencies will not lose attendance marks, but are required to

notify the instructor as soon as possible of the reason for their absence. Students who plan to miss a class for other reasons are encouraged notify the instructor in advance.

DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION (15%):
This is a discussion-based course. The expectation is that students will come to class prepared discuss the "required learnings" (posted in the corresponding content module on Learn), having read the recommended readings and/or consulted other sources on the topic. Each student should come to class with at least one excerpt/quotation or concept from their reading/research to contribute to the discussion. Raising questions about the meaning/significance of ideas from the readings is as a valuable contribution too, as is the sharing of an idea, an explanation you find compelling, a critique, or a point of confusion.

How Your Participation Will Be Assessed

Participation will be assessed using a combination self-evaluation and instructor evaluation. Students will be asked to submit a short (half-page) attendance/participation self-evaluation form, stating the score (out of 15) they believe they deserve and their rationale for this mark. These forms will be weighed against the instructor's assessment of the student's attendance and participation. Significant differences in assessments (3 points of out 20 or more) will be discussed by student and professor before the assignment of a final mark. In the case of the smaller difference, the average of the two assessments or the instructor's assessment, whichever is higher, will be the final participation mark.

DUE DATE: Participation evaluation forms are due (upload to dropbox) April 8, 2024

Assessment 2: Counter-Institution Case Study (25% of final mark)

Students work in pairs (or 3s) to develop a case study of a "counter-institution": a project, initiative, organization, institution, or social movement that addresses a social or ecological issue and does so in a way that opposes and seeks to replace established institutions of power. A list of sample topics will be provided via LEARN, but students are encouraged to use case studies they are familiar with and passionate about. The concept -- what it is that makes an organization or initiative a "counter-institution" -- will be discussed in depth in class.

Case study topics are to be chosen by Week 4 (or sooner) and will be used to explore, illustrate and critique concepts of social ecology over the course of the semester. Students are encouraged to bring their case study topics into class discussion to illustrate concepts, to test out ideas about them, and get peer feedback to bring into their projects. The culmination of the

"Counter-institution" assignment is a poster presentation (described below).

The OBJECTIVES of this assignment are for students
(1) to deepen their understandings and critiques of the ideas and principles of social ecology by applying them to real-life case examples,
(2) to begin shifting their thinking from theory and critique into action, and
(3) to gain practice in presenting research outputs and academic ideas.

PART 1 – COUNTER-INSTITUTION INTRODUCTION (5%):
Early in the semester, groups select and introduce their case studies to the class (Week 4; Jan. 25), briefly describing the case study, identifying where they anticipate finding intersections in it with social ecology, and outlining their plan for further exploration of the initiative or issue being explored. Each pair/group of students will be allotted 10 minutes to introduce their case studies to the class, followed by 5 minutes of discussion where other students (and the instructor) can ask questions, challenge assumptions, and make suggestions.

These case studies will be used as a basis for discussion and analysis as we work through the concepts and principles introduced each week.

PART 2 – COUNTER-INSTITUTION POSTER PRESENTATION (20%):
Week 11's class will be dedicated to poster presentations of the case studies. In pairs or trios, students will work together to create and animate/explain a poster display highlighting key characteristics of their case study and key insights in relation to the theory and praxis of social ecology. Students will be invited to visit each other's displays and those hosting the display will be expected to elaborate on their poster presentation, filling in details about the case study, critiquing it using principles of social ecology, and engaging classmates in a discussion of how social ecological concepts could be applied.

The instructor(s) will circulate through the presentations one-by-one. Students will be asked to submit feedback on each of the presentations they experience. This feedback will be used to inform the mark given by the instructor.

DUE DATE: Presentation topics will be shared in class January 29, 2024
Poster presentations will be shared in class on March 25, 2024

Assessment 3: Concept Review (25% of final mark)

At mid-term (Week 7; Feb. 26), following the reading week), each student will submit a summary and critique (maximum 1,250 words) of one core course concept, selected from the list below.

This is not a research assignment. You are not required or expected to search out sources that are not already in the list of recommended and additional) resources (though you are free to do so if it helps you). The objective of this assignment is to get you to dig in to one of the core concepts of social ecology, and to play around with the ideas presented in it.

Drawing on two or three of the articles or chapters from the reading list, in conjunction with insights you pick up in class discussions, summarize your chosen concept, critique it if you have an alternative viewpoint, and identify questions or challenges that are raised for you by the author(s)'s position. Use the discussion questions provided in the list below to guide your summary and analysis.

You are not expected to cover all permutations and nuances of your chosen topic. The objective, rather, is to demonstrate your understanding of the concept by distilling (and critiquing) some of the central ideas. Expectations for reviews of concepts already discussed in class will be higher than for reviews of readings not yet discussed.

CORE CONCEPTS

•   CONCEPTIONS OF NATURE: How do the dominant understandings in western culture of "nature" and our relationship to/with it contribute to ecological destruction? What does Bookchin mean by "First", "Second" and "Free" nature, and how do these concepts seek to challenge and contradict dominant attitudes?
•   HIERRCHY: What, according to social ecologists, is the relationship between hierarchy and ecological destruction? How is hierarchy in human society different from how the rest of nature is organized? What does patriarchy, white supremacy or other forms of oppressive have to do with environmental destruction?
•   PROPERTY: How does private exclusionary property lead to ecological collapse? What are some alternatives (e.g., the commons, usufruct, etc.) and how do they differ from dominant forms of property ownership? How might we apply these different forms of ownership in reality? Are there examples of where they already exist or have existed historically?
•   SCARCITY AND ABUNDANCE: Is nature stingy, in social ecological thinking, or is nature

abundant? Where does scarcity come from, if not from nature? What is the relationship between scarcity and capitalism? (Consider bringing in concepts like the economic accumulation vs. redistribution, and the irreducible minimum). What are some examples of institutions or practices that (including alternative conceptualizations of property/ownership) that represent an abundance-oriented approach?

• DEMOCRACY VS. STATECRAFT: What is the difference between democracy/politics and statecraft? How does statecraft support institutions and practices that contribute to climate change and environmental destruction (vs. a moral economy and social justice)? How does libertarian municipalism contradict/challenge conventional politics, and how is this supposed to lead to an ecological society? What limitations or challenges to do you see in libertarian municipalism, and which concept/components of it do you think could be useful?

Chapter reviews should be submitted via the dropbox. MSWord or rich text format preferred.

DUE DATE: before class on February 26, 2024.

Assessment 4: Manifesto

As a culminating assignment, each student will be required to create and submit a manifesto – a written statement of their beliefs, their vision for a socially just and ecologically sustainable society, and general steps for getting there. The manifesto must draw on and integrate theory and ideas from the course readings and discussions. The manifesto can affirm, supplement, challenge or even contradict course content and materials, but it must demonstrate an understanding of and ability to critically engage with the ideas and theories of social ecology.

Manifestos can be submitted individually (1,250-1,750 words), in pairs (1,750-2,250 words), or in groups of 3 (2,250-3,250).

Alternative forms of submission (e.g., video, theatre, graphic novel, etc.) are encouraged, but must be negotiated with the course instructor by Week 10 at the latest.

Manifestos should be submitted via the dropbox. MSWord or rich text format preferred.

DUE DATE: before class on April 8, 2024.

Course Outline

All readings and other resource materials will be posted to Learn in the content module for the corresponding week. Students will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss weekly "required learnings" (posted in the corresponding weekly content modules on Learn) based on their weekly reading and research.

Week	Date	Topic	Recommended Readings
1	Jan 8	Course Introduction: Syllabus review and introduction to key concepts	Course syllabus
2	Jan 15	The philosophy of social ecology	"What is social ecology?" (Murray Bookchin, 2006). "Bizarre and Wonderful: Murray Bookchin, Eco-Anarchist" (Wes Enzinna, 2017). Video: "Social Ecology, Human Nature and Hierarchy" (12:16 min)
3	Jan 22	Hierarchy, equality, and the environment	Chapter 4: The legacy of domination (Janet Biehl, (1999). "Introduction: Why we wrote this book together." (Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, 1993).
4	Jan 29	Capitalism and Moral Economy: -- critique of capitalism; exploration of alternatives	"Chapter 2: The roots of the social-ecological crisis." (Magdoff & Williams, 2017), "Market versus moral economy." (Murray Bookchin, 1987).
5	Feb 5	The "state", democracy, and ecology	"Politics vs. statecraft" (Janet Biehl, 1996). "The Confederation as the Commune of Communes" (Debbie Bookchin, 2019).
6	Feb 12	Property and the commons	"The Tragedy of the commons." (Garrett Hardin, 1968). "Stop thief! A primer on commons and commoning." (Peter Linebaugh, 2011). "Some principles of the commons." (Peter Linebaugh, 2010).
	Feb 19	Reading Week	

Week	Date	Topic	Recommended Readings
7	Feb 26	Scarcity, abundance and the environment	"Post-scarcity anarchism." (Murray Bookchin, 1986). "Commoning and scarcity: A manifesto against capitalism." (Peter Gelderloos, 2012).
8	Mar 4	Decentralism and localism	"A reinvigorated cause" (p. 2, editorial) and "Rebuilding our cities" (pp. 6-10). (Jonathan Korsár, 2009) "Resilience thinking" (Hopkins, R., 2012).
9	Mar 11	Current examples and emerging praxis	"The New Municipal Movements" (Eleanor Finley, 2017). "The Kurdish answer: Democratic confederalism" (Eleanor Finley, 2019).
10	Mar 18	Social ecology and "environmentalism"	"Chapter 2: Citizens' responses to the plight of the earth" (Dimitri Roussopolous, 2018). "Deep ecology, misanthropy, and the genesis of the Bookchin caricature." (Andy Price, 2009) "An open letter to the ecological movement." (Murray Bookchin, 1982).
11	Mar 25	Counter-institutions presentations	No readings
12	Apr 1	Utopia	Communalism against climate chaos." (Brian Tokar, 2018)

Late or Incomplete Work

A penalty of 3% per day will be deducted from the mark on assignments handed in late. Extensions will be considered in extenuating circumstances, and accommodations will be made for students unable to complete their assignments for reasons of illness or unforeseen circumstance.

Policy on Plagiarism

"Policy 71's glossary defines plagiarism, in part, as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one's own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes"…

The Vice-President Academic and Dean has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism and the resultant penalties that are raised by an instructor. An instructor can propose a grade penalty to the Vice-President Academic and Dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry."

For additional information on how plagiarism is dealt with at Renison, review the policy from where the above text is copied: Policy 71 - Student Discipline.

Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. See Waterloo's policy on Fair Dealing. Violation of Canada's Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under Policy 71 – Student Discipline.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

This course includes the independent development and practice of specific skills, such as synthesizing and analyzing information, developing and articulating unique critics and arguments, etc.. Therefore, the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) trained using large language models (LLM) or other methods to produce text, images, music, or code, like Chat GPT, DALL-E, or GitHub CoPilot, is not permitted in this class. Unauthorized use in this course, such as running course materials through GenAI or using GenAI to complete a course assessment is considered a violation of Policy 71 (plagiarism or unauthorized aids or assistance). Work produced with the assistance of AI tools does not represent the author's original work and is therefore in violation of the fundamental values of academic integrity including honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and courage (ICAI, n.d.).

You should be prepared to show your work. To demonstrate your learning, you should keep your rough notes, including research notes, brainstorming, and drafting notes. You may be asked to submit these notes along with earlier drafts of their work, either through saved drafts or saved versions of a document. If the use of GenAI is suspected where not permitted, you may be asked to meet with your instructor or TA to provide explanations to support the submitted material as being your original work. Through this process, if you have not sufficiently supported your work, academic misconduct allegations may be brought to the Associate Dean.

In addition, you should be aware that the legal/copyright status of generative AI inputs and outputs is unclear. More information is available from the Copyright Advisory Committee: https://uwaterloo.ca/copyright-at-waterloo/teaching/generative-artificial-intelligence

Students are encouraged to reach out to campus supports if they need help with their coursework including:

- [Student Success Office](#) for help with skills like notetaking and time management
- [Writing and Communication Centre](#) for assignments with writing or presentations
- [AccessAbility Services](#) for documented accommodations
- [Library](#) for research-based assignments

Electronic Device Policy

Students may have and use electronic devices in class at their discretion. Please ensure all ringers and notifications are on silent before coming to class. Heavy users are asked to be mindful of those beside and behind them and to manage their use (and where they sit in the classroom) to minimize distraction to others. The professor reserves the right to limit or withdraw an individual's use of electronic devices in the classroom if they become disruptive that or any other student's learning.

Audio or video recording of lectures and other class activities is not permitted without the consent of the professor.

Attendance Policy

Student should make every effort to attend each class as scheduled. Attendance will be taken at every class beginning in Week 2. Students who miss a class due to illness or other unanticipated contingencies will not lose attendance marks, but are required to notify the instructor as soon as possible of the reason for their absence. Students who plan to miss a class for other reasons are encouraged notify the instructor in advance. instructor, and the TA if applicable, as soon as possible after the realization.

Communication Policy

Email, using the uWaterloo provided email address, is the approved method of communication for Renison. The Office 365 email that you use to login using your WatIAM login and password is secure and confidential. Take caution when forwarding your WatIAM email to an external email service as confidential information forwarded to a third-party provider could be a data security breach and violation of FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) under which all students, staff, and faculty are bound by law.

Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances

The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See Accommodation due to illness.

Accommodation Due to Religious Observances

The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may seek accommodations on religious grounds. Accordingly, students must consult with their instructor(s) within two weeks of the announcement of the due date for which accommodation is being sought. Failure to provide a timely request will decrease the likelihood of providing an accommodation. See Request for accommodation on religious grounds.

Academic Integrity, Grievance, Discipline, Appeals and Note for Students with Disabilities

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity and the Arts Academic Integrity websites for more information.

Renison University College is committed to the view that when a problem or disagreement arises between a faculty member and a student every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mutual and respectful negotiation. Most issues are resolved by a student/faculty meeting to discuss differences of opinion. It is only after this stage, when a common understanding or agreement is not obtained that further actions listed below could be taken.

Discipline: Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity website for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course professor or academic advisor. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the Department's administrative assistant, or Academic Advisor, who will provide further assistance.

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 they have a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals.](#)

Academic Integrity Office (UWaterloo): The website can be found at [uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/](#)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

[AccessAbility Services](#) is located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, and 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 AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Students are encouraged to register with AccessAbility Services (AAS) at the start of each term if they require accommodations due to a disability. However, some students not connected to AAS may require accommodations later in the term. In that case, you should immediately consult with your instructor and/or your Academic Advisor.

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)
- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in Policy 71 – Student Discipline. Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor's intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4096
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- Health Services – Student Medical Clinic: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off Campus, 24/7

- Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Empower Me: Confidential, multilingual, culturally sensitive, faith inclusive mental health and wellness service.
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 844-437-3247
- Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Email: ok2bme@caminowellbeing.ca Phone: 519-884-0000

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website.

Download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF)

Download the WatSafe app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

A Respectful Living and Learning Environment for All

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.

If you feel that you are experiencing the above from any member of the Renison community (students, staff, or faculty), you may contact Melissa Knox, Renison's external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officer, by email (mnknox@uwaterloo.ca) or by phone or text (226-753-5669). Melissa is an employment and human rights lawyer and part-time Assistant Crown Attorney for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Melissa is experienced in case management, discipline and complaints processes, and works with organizations across Canada to foster safe, respectful, and inclusive work and learning environments through policy development, educational workshops, conflict mediation and dispute resolution, and organizational culture audits.

For additional information see Renison's [Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse](#) policy.