

Philosophy and the Environment



“One of the recurring philosophical questions is: ‘Does a falling tree in the forest make a sound when there is no one to hear?’ Which says something about the nature of philosophers, because there is always someone in a forest. It may only be a badger, wondering what that cracking noise was, or a squirrel a bit puzzled by all the scenery going upwards, but someone.” (Terry Pratchett)

Instructor: Dr. Chris Goto-Jones (he/him/his) (chrsgotojones@uvic.ca)

Office Hours: Mondays, Thursdays 12:30-13:20 TBC (Zoom booking link is on brightspace)

Class Information: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 13.30-14.20 (on Zoom)

Course Website: Through Brightspace. <http://bright.uvic.ca>

Teaching Assistant: tbc

*Readings available through the course website – all available electronically when on campus network.
Links to academic support and other services available through course site.*

If you notice any accessibility issues with respect to this class, please let me know. If they are within my power, I will do my best to solve them. In general, though, I would also encourage any students who might benefit from their services to register with the Centre for Accessible Learning (www.uvic.ca/services/cal/), where accommodations and other support can be sought.

Course Description

This course explores a range of approaches to the modern philosophy of the environment with a focus on how such philosophies might describe and also inform the relationship between humans and the wider 'other-than-human' world. Hence, this course adheres to the famous dictum of Marx: the purpose of philosophy is not just to interpret the world, the purpose is also to change it (11th thesis on Feuerbach). So, following on from a broad-brush survey of some of the major currents in environmental philosophy (in the West), the course then delves into the more contemporary and radical concerns of deep ecology, eco-philosophy, and eco-psychology. It discusses the radical epistemological, ontological, ethical and political implications of embracing a phenomenological sense of the human that is an aspect of (rather than separate from) the natural world. Hence, the course necessarily deals with some issues in decolonization, emancipation, and even abolition. Finally, given the implications of this material, the course makes a deliberate decision to include a range of 'marginalized' voices, including the voices of non-males, non-westerners, and even non-humans as important and visionary philosophers. You'll find more detail on the course content in the schedule below.

By the end of this course, you can expect to:

- Understand the contours of the development of the modern philosophy of the environment, including during the Enlightenment and Romantic periods.
- Understand the emergence and philosophical dimensions and implications of Deep Ecology.
- Be able to recognise and deploy the phenomenological method to describe and engage with the natural world.
- Understand the difference between anthropocentric and eco-centric epistemologies and ontologies.
- Understand the therapeutic, ethical, and political implications of a more eco-centric philosophical system.
- Recognise and adjudicate the competing imperatives of different environmental philosophies in concrete case studies.
- Be able to answer the question: if a tree falls down in the forest and there's nobody there to hear it, does it make a sound?

Course materials

Given the diversity of the material, there is no single textbook for this course. Nearly all of the readings are available electronically through UVic libraries – links will be provided in brightspace to all materials.

A useful textbook (which is available as an ebook through the library) is:

Pratt, Howarth & Brady, *Environment and Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 2000.

We will make use of several chapters from this book throughout the course.

Additional materials, including text excerpts and alternative readings will also be provided through brightspace. In many weeks, the first two classes will be dedicated to analysis and exploration of the set readings, while the third session will tend to present and explore an additional text to add examples or elaborations on the week's theme.

Course Logistics

This will be a mostly *synchronous* online course. This means that the classes will be held in real-time online via **Zoom**. In a few cases, pre-recorded videos may be used. Attendance is highly recommended, since interaction and discussion are vital to learning (and teaching!). Most of the sessions will be recorded and made available for the class to review on **Brightspace**. These recordings will remain available throughout the course so that you can refer to them as needed. In some weeks we may have guest teachers from other universities, in which case I hope you will all attend those sessions out of respect for their freely-given time. If you are sick or have other good reason to miss the class, please let me know *in advance of the class* (or as soon as possible thereafter), and this may count as an excused absence.

Academic Integrity

Everything you will be evaluated on in this course will be fully open book and untimed. All answers to assignments have to be your own written work. This means that you are not allowed to provide answers for someone else, or *vice versa* or even *versa vice*. If you are ever unsure about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, more information is provided on the University Calendar: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>

Professionalism is expected from all students enrolled in courses in the Faculty of Humanities. As part of professionalism, students, faculty and staff are expected to be familiar with University policies, including the [Tri-Faculty's Standards for Professional Behaviour](#).

Communication and Office Hours

Email is my preferred method of communication, as opposed to *Brightspace* messages or forum posts, especially for any official requests. If you ask me a question over email, you can expect a reply within about 1 working day. If you don't hear back from me within that time frame, feel free to try again in case your message went astray, or in case I'm just snowed under (it happens). Please be aware that if you email on Friday night, the first working day will be ... Monday.

When you do address me (over email or otherwise), please do so as Chris, because that's my name. If you feel more comfortable with titles, then please use either Professor (Prof.) Goto-Jones or Dr. Goto-Jones. No 'sir' or 'mr,' for various reasons, thanks! If you are ever nervous about sending me an email, or asking a question, feel free to include a funny anecdote, cartoon, or a picture of your pet with your request. This will not affect whether or not I will be able to help you with your request, but it will be much more fun for us all.

Finally, my pronouns are he/him. If you think I am unlikely to know the name you would prefer to be called, or the pronouns I ought to use for you (through the entry that I will see for you through your Brightspace/UVic registration), please don't hesitate to make me aware. It's helpful if you add your pronouns to your Zoom tag.

My default platform for office hours will be Zoom, Mondays and Thursdays 12:30-13:20 am (TBC), but if that does not work for you, please feel free to email me in advance to suggest an alternative time and/or platform. Office hours will require pre-booking via Calendly (link to follow). If you don't make an appointment, you are welcome to sit in the Zoom waiting room until I become free, but please keep in

mind that all the slots might already be booked. It's much better to make an appointment. All relevant links will be posted on Brightspace.

Evaluation

You are expected to maintain high standards of respect and academic integrity throughout this course. Discussion is essential to learning in this course, and it relies upon an atmosphere of trust. Everyone present should feel safe to express their views, which also means that everyone present is responsible for ensuring that they exercise academic freedom (rather than merely freedom of speech), treating each other respectfully and supportively.

• Continuous Assessment/Participation: 15%

In this course, your participation will be evidenced by attending and participating in classes and by submitting weekly 'reflections.' These 'reflections' will be short (approx. 150-200 word) responses to excerpts of text drawn from the weekly reading (or from a text adjacent to the reading). Usually, the prompt will be provided during or after class on Wednesday and will be due by 11.59pm on the following Tuesday. The purpose is to demonstrate thoughtfulness and reflection rather than to test your mastery of the material. These reflections are graded simply: 'excellent/satisfactory/fail.'

• Midterm assignment: 35% - deadline: Friday 20 October, 23:59

The midterm assignment will be open-book format. You will receive a list of questions two weeks before the deadline. From this list you will **answer two** with **approx. 750-1,000 words each**. The midterm will address topics from the first half of the course.

Your work will be assessed on: its relevance to the themes and materials of the course; its accurate use of sources; its coherence, sophistication and persuasiveness; the convincingness and effectiveness of your argument and writing. Personal reflection and engagement is encouraged.

• Final assignment: 50% - deadline: Friday 8 December, 23:59

The final assignment will be open-book format. You will receive a list of potential topics in week 11 (reading break). From that list, you can select one question, which you will address in a more extended and sophisticated manner than in the midterm. I will expect **approx. 2000 words**. The questions will encourage you to focus on topics from the second half of the course, but your answers will benefit from making use of knowledge and context from the whole course.

Your work will be assessed on: its relevance to the themes and materials of the course; its accurate use of sources; its coherence, sophistication and persuasiveness; the convincingness and effectiveness of your argument and writing. Personal reflection and engagement is encouraged.

Grades

Grades will be given as percentile marks.

Per UVic grading rubric, the percentile mark for the course will be converted to a letter grade in the following manner:

A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49.

- *The A range means exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance.*
- *A grade in the B range means a very good, good and solid performance.*
- *A grade in the C+ or C range means satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory, performance.*
- *A grade of D or D- indicates merely passable or marginal performance.*
- *An F indicates unsatisfactory performance.*

The full UVic grading rubric is provided in the Appendix to this syllabus. In the instance that it differs from this text, the UVic rubric takes precedence.

SCHEDULE

PART ONE: Introduction

Week 1: Wednesday 6 September – Friday 8 September:

from Biophilia to the Eremocene

The first (short) week of this course is deliberately undemanding in terms of readings, since I don't expect anyone to come to the first day of semester having already done the work. So, we'll spend these sessions introducing the course, as well as its main concerns and main themes. We might then consider what we might learn from this course about what it means to be studying a course like this in this particular part of the world, wheresoever that might be for you.

If you're really keen, or want to pursue some of the ideas from this week, check out:

Solnit, Young & Lutunatabua (eds), *Not Too Late: changing the climate story from despair to possibility*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2023.

In particular, the chapters by Farhana Sultana (Decolonizing Climate Coloniality), Yotam Marom (What to Do When the World is Ending), and Joan Halifax (Meeting the More and the Marrow). I can post extracts to Brightspace for you.

PART TWO: How did it come to this?

The sessions in weeks 2 and 3 aim to lay out some of the terrain of the modern philosophy of the environment, particularly in the (western) philosophical mainstream. Our purpose here is to make sure we have some common language and signposts in place to help us make sense of the more intricate work we'll be doing later.

Week 2: Tuesday 12 September – Friday 15 September:

the making of the (dualistic) modern world

In this week, we will consider the emergence of 'modernity' in the so-called Enlightenment of European philosophy, which is usually seen as commencing in the 17th century. This is the period in which a number of the most pervasive ideas of our times found their roots: individualism, scientism, capitalism etc. Here we find a clearly dualistic structure: mind and body; humans and nature etc. In general, the natural world emerges as a field of 'objects' or 'resources' for the use of humans.

Reading: Pratt, Howarth & Brady, *Environment and Philosophy*, chapter 2, 'Objective nature' (pp.5-18)

This may be supplemented with extracts from primary texts from this period.

Week 3: Tuesday 19 September – Friday 22 September:

romancing the (less-dualistic) natural world

In this week, we consider one of the major philosophical movements to confront so-called 'modernity.' This movement is known as Romanticism (which is an unfortunate label specifically designed to suggest that its participants were driven more by their emotions than by science). The

romantic movement challenged the unquestioned faith in science that had gripped modernity as a form of dehumanization of human life. But furthermore, it challenged the idea of radical individualism, instead exploring what life might be like if we recognised it as more interdependent and holistic. In general, the natural world emerges as a field in which humans find greater levels of self-expression and realization. Here we find the inspiration for many of our contemporary environmentalist movements.

Reading: Pratt, Howarth & Brady, *Environment and Philosophy*, chapter 3, 'We are all one life' (pp.19-37)

This may be supplemented with extracts from primary texts from this period.

PART THREE: Deep Ecology and Eco-Philosophy

Picking up from where we left the so-called Romantics, in this section we explore how the work of Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (1912-2009) helped to make space for a new approach to environmentalist philosophy, in which the boundaries of the self are seen as porous and permeable rather than rigid and clear. This birthed the important idea of 'deep ecology' and provided some of the grounding for eco-philosophy and eco-psychology today.

Optional readings: Arne Naess, 'The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary.' In *Inquiry*, 16:1-4 (1973), pp.95-100.

Harold Glasser, 'Naess's Deep Ecology: Implications for the Human Prospect and Challenges for the Future.' In *Inquiry*, 54:1 (2011), pp.52-77.

William Grey, 'Anthropocentrism and deep ecology.' In *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 71:4 (1993), pp.463-475.

Luca Valera, 'Depth, Ecology, and the Deep Ecology Movement: Arne Naess's Proposal for the Future.' In *Environmental Ethics*, 41:4 (2019), pp.293-303.

Week 4: Tuesday 26 September – Friday 29 September:

phenomenology and the spell of the sensuous

One of the implications of the challenge to 'scientism' (and the idea that the world is dualistically composed of humans (subjects) and resources (objects) for humans) is that the empirical methodologies of modernity may also need to be challenged. One important response to this was the development of the school of philosophical phenomenology. In this week we'll consider the basics of phenomenological philosophy, focussing on how it allows space for the natural world to disclose itself to our attention. One interesting question here will be whether this method is actually a form of psychology, or whether it is genuinely ontological.

Reading: Pratt, Howarth & Brady, *Environment and Philosophy*, chapter 5, 'Phenomenology and the environment' (pp.51-77)

This may be supplemented with extracts from primary texts from this movement. If you're excited about this approach, a favourite example of mine might be David Abram, 'Wood and Stone.' In *Becoming Animal: an earthly cosmology*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010, pp.37-56.

Week 5: Tuesday 3 October – Friday 6 October:

eco-philosophy and praxis

It is important to be aware that some of the shifts in perspective required by the Deep Ecology movement are radical (in the strong sense of that term): they require a dramatic change in the very roots of human knowledge about the world, and especially about the ostensibly privileged position of humanity in it. Because of this, Deep Ecology also has radical implications for social and political issues. In this week, we'll consider one such implication – the unsettling of settler environmentalism – which is a kind of epistemological, ethical, and political decolonization of the very idea of the environment.

Reading: Andy Fisher, 'Ecopsychology as Decolonial Practice,' in *Ecopsychology*, 11:3 (2019), pp.145-155.

And: Carl Anthony, 'Ecopsychology and the Deconstruction of Whiteness,' in Roszak, Gomes & Kanner (eds), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*. SF: Sierra Club Books, 1995, pp.263-278.

MIDTERM QUESTIONS ISSUED

Week 6: Tuesday 10 October – Friday 13 October:

praxis beyond the apocalypse

Some of the radical implications of eco-philosophy as praxis highlight the need for the field to examine a whole range of its basic assumptions and challenges in the present. In this week, for example, we'll return (to week 1) to the widespread concerns in the field that we're living on the brink of a climate apocalypse. Through the work of Indigenous philosopher Kyle Whyte, we'll consider whether such a concern is already a form of privilege, given that some communities and cultures have already undergone such levels of destruction in the past ... are they already surviving in a post-apocalyptic world? If so, how are they doing it?

Reading: Kyle Whyte, 'Indigenous science (fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral dystopias and fantasies of the climate change crisis,' in *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*. 1:1-2 (2018), pp.224-242

PART FOUR: Marginalized Voices – non-male, non-western, non-human eco-philosophers

The next section of this course selects a few important philosophical voices that might not normally be heard in the mainstream of the field. To begin, we'll consider the feminist arguments about how the feminization of 'mother earth' reveals some parallels in the ways that woman and nature have been exploited in many societies. Then we'll move on to consider two amazing women philosophers of the environment in their own voices. Some of their concerns will be for the status of animals and the nature of human-animal relationships. And then, finally, we'll step outside the western tradition of philosophy altogether and consider how the natural world features in Buddhist philosophy. There we'll find not only meaningful relationships animals but also with trees, mountains, waters, and islands.

Week 7: Tuesday 17 October – Friday 20 October:

the emergence of eco-feminism

Another philosophical response to the patterns of thought that emerged during the so-called Enlightenment sought to link the way that those patterns enabled the exploitation of the environment to the exploitation of other kinds, including the exploitation of women. Here we see the emergence of critical philosophies, such as feminist philosophy of science and of the environment.

Reading: Pratt, Howarth & Brady, *Environment and Philosophy*, chapter 5, 'Phenomenology and the environment' (pp.51-77)

If you're feeling brave, you might also try this really fascinating and punchy piece by Mary Midgley (to whom we'll return in week 9): Midgley, 'Equality, Women and Animals,' extracted from chapters 6-7 of *Animals and Why They Matter*, London: Penguin Books, 1983.

MIDTERM DUE – 20 October 11.59pm

Week 8: Tuesday 24 October – Friday 27 October:

eco-feminism, crocodiles, and val plumwood

The Australian philosopher Val Plumwood was an ecofeminist known for her powerful critiques of anthropocentrism and for the emergence of critical ecosophy. She wrote a number of classic works in this field. In this class though, we'll focus on her astonishing account of being attacked by a saltwater crocodile (in 1985), which she survived, although her worldview was transformed. In this week, we'll be joined by a special guest star, Dr Audrey Yap.

Reading: Val Plumwood, 'Meeting the Predator' (originally, 'Being Prey') in *The Eye of the Crocodile*. Canberra: ANU Press, 2012, pp.9-22

Other works by Plumwood of interest here: *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge, 1993, and, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2002.

Week 9: Tuesday 31 October – Friday 3 October:

mary midgely, dolphins, and everything everywhere all at once

The English philosopher Mary Midgley was known for her work on the status of animals (including animal rights), but also for her commitment to the position that human beings should be recognised – first and foremost – as a kind of animal. Thus diminishing the salience of the ethical and legal boundary between humans and animals. She was also a fierce critic of 'scientism,' which she thought had become ludicrously reductionistic and completely lost sight of life as something that is lived. She lamented the complete ascension of the Sciences and argued for the centrality of the Humanities.

She had an ongoing public disagreement with Richard Dawkins (*The Selfish Gene*), whom she described as a 'quasi-scientific speculator.' When he retorted that she was just anti-science, she replied that was actually trying to save science from his 'dangerous misconstructions.' Perhaps my favourite line from her at the start of her book, *Are you an Illusion?* (2014), where she admits that 'the book simply flows from my increasing exasperation at the current tendency of many well-qualified scholars to claim, apparently in the name of science, that they believe themselves, and

indeed their readers, not to exist, selves having apparently been replaced by arrangements of brain cells' (vii).

In this week, we'll look at Midgley's analysis of a criminal court case that pivoted around the question of whether a dolphin can be considered a person, and also we'll dip our toes into one of her great philosophical passions – the concept of GAIA.

Readings: Midgley, 'Is a dolphin a person?' In *The Essential Mary Midgley*. London: Routledge, 2005, pp.132-142

And: Midgley, 'Individualism and the Concept of Gaia.' And 'The Unity of Life.' In *The Essential Mary Midgley*. London: Routledge, 2005, pp.349-358, 373-378

If you enjoy this stuff, check out: *Animals and Why They Matter: A Journey Around the Species Barrier*. University of Georgia Press, 1983, and, *Earthy Realism: The Meaning of Gaia*. Imprint Academic, 2007.

And, if you're into slightly baffling fiction, it's widely believed that Midgley was the inspiration for JM Coetzee's novel, *The Lives of Animals* (1999).

Week 10: Tuesday 7 November – Friday 10 November <this week's sessions might be pre-recorded?>:

eco-dharma – the decline away from nothingness

Buddhism is often portrayed as a naturally environmentalist tradition, and it's certainly the case that a number of contemporary environmentalists draw strongly on its concepts and ideas. Joanna Macy might be the most influential today (see, *World As Lover, World as Self*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1991/2021). You might also think of the environmental activism of Buddhist leaders such as the late Thich Nhat Hanh (see, *Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet*. New York: HarperOne, 2021, or, *Love Letter to the Earth*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2013) or the current Dalai Lama, who won the Nobel Peace Prize on the basis of environmental activism (see, *This Fragile Planet*. Sumeru Books, 2021). Indeed, Arne Naess was also inspired by Buddhism, at the start of the Deep Ecology movement.

However, Buddhism is an immense and complicated philosophical system with many different currents and threads. In this week, we'll see that early (Pali) texts might be less conducive for the contemporary environmentalist agenda. And then next week, we'll see that it's largely the later, Mahayana traditions of Buddhist philosophy that are being emphasized by environmentalists today.

Readings: *Aggañña Sutta*, and, *Cakkavatti-Sihanānda sutta*

If you're intrigued by this Theravada tradition, an interesting next step might be to check out the work of the contemporary (German) Theravadin, Bhikkhu Anālayo, *Mindfully Facing the Climate Crisis*. BCBS, 2019.

Week 11: Tuesday 14 November – Friday 17 November <reading break>:

eco-dharma – the living landscape

In this short week (only the Friday class because of two days of 'reading break' right at the end of term!!), we'll consider a fun text in the Buddhist tradition that contains some of the most important

contributions of the Mahayana traditions. In particular, we'll look at a medieval Japanese Buddhist monk who wrote a letter to an island because it was his best friend.

Reading: Myōe Shōnin, 'Letter to the Island.' In Kaza & Kraft (eds), *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*. Boston: Shambhala, 2004, pp.63-65

If you find this intriguing, you might also enjoy this brief meditation on it: Chris Goto-Jones, 'Visions of Myōe Shōnin in the Forest of the World.' In *Kyoto Journal*, 104 (2023), pp.48-50.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT ISSUED

Week 12: Tuesday 21 November – Friday 24 November:

eco-dharma – the voice of the inanimate

In our final week of the main course, we'll complete the step into the Mahayana philosophy of nature by considering the classic Zen text by Eihei Dōgen, who is famous for his commitment to the idea that the mountains and the waters are not only wonderful subjects for our contemplation and insight, but they are actually our teachers, if only we can learn to perceive them correctly.

Reading: Dōgen, 'Mountains and Waters Sutra.' In Kaza & Kraft (eds), *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*. Boston: Shambhala, 2004, pp.65-76.

If you find this interesting, you might be intrigued to know that the contemporary American environmentalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Gary Snyder, spent years writing his own response to this short piece: Gary Snyder, *Mountains and Waters Without End, a poem*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1996.

PART FIVE: Looking at the whole

Week 13: Tuesday 28 November – Friday 1 December (final class):

weaving the threads

In our final week of classes, we'll review the major themes and ideas and challenges of the course as a whole. We might do this via a consideration of how some of these come together in concrete, contemporary environmental dilemmas, such as in the case of how/whether to conserve cherry trees in the streets of Victoria. How do we balance the different perspectives? And, if we can't, what should we do?

Reading: Chris Goto-Jones, 'Sitting with the Death of a (Cherry) Tree: Eco-Chaplaincy and the Ordination of the Mountains and Waters in Chan/Zen Buddhism.' In *Journal of Chan Buddhism*, 3 (2021), pp.1-24.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE – 8 December 11.59pm

Please note that all assignments for this course and all materials posted to Brightspace are the intellectual property of myself and the University of Victoria. Do not circulate this material or post it to note-sharing sites without my permission. Posting course materials to note-sharing sites or otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the *Policy on Academic Integrity* (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcl.html>).

APPENDIX: UVIC GRADING RUBRIC

<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/S1AAgoGuV?bc=true&bcCurrent=14%20-%20Grading&bcItemtype=policies>

A primary purpose of evaluation and grading is to further effective teaching and learning. Any practices which assign a predetermined percentage of students a specific grade, that is, a certain percentage get A, another percentage get B and so on, without regard to individual achievement are prohibited.

The table below shows the official grading system used by instructors in arriving at final assessments of student performance. For letter grades authorized for use in the Faculty of Law, see the entry under that faculty.

| Passing Grades | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------|---|
| Grade | Grade Value | Point Percentage* | Description |
| A+ | 9 | 90 - 100 | An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students. |
| A | 8 | 85 - 89 | |
| A- | 7 | 80 - 84 | |
| B+ | 6 | 77 - 79 | A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. |
| B | 5 | 73 - 76 | |
| B- | 4 | 70 - 72 | |
| C+ | 3 | 65 - 69 | A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities. |
| C | 2 | 60 - 64 | |
| D | 1 | 50 - 59 | A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree. |
| COM | Excluded Grade | N/A | Complete (pass). Used only for 0-unit courses and those credit courses designated by the Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. |
| CTN | Excluded Grade | N/A | Continuing . Denotes the first half of a full-year course. |
| Failing Grades | | | |
| Grade | Grade Value | Point Percentage* | Description |
| E | 0 | 0 - 49 | Conditional supplemental. Supplemental examinations are not offered by all departments and the allowable percentage may vary by program (e.g. 35-49). Students will be advised whether supplemental |

Failing Grades

| Grade | Grade Value | Point Percentage* | Description |
|-------|----------------|-------------------|---|
| | | | will be offered and if the percentage range varies when assessment techniques are announced at the beginning of the course. |
| F | 0 | 0 - 49 | F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree. |
| N | 0 | 0 - 49 | Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental. |
| N/X | Excluded Grade | N/A | Did not complete course requirements by the end of the term; no supplemental. Used only for Co-op work terms and for courses designated by Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. The grade is EXCLUDED from the calculation of all grade point averages. |
| F/X | Excluded Grade | N/A | Unsatisfactory performance. Completed course requirements; no supplemental. Used only for Co-op work terms and for courses designated by Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. The grade is EXCLUDED from the calculation of all grade point averages. |

Temporary Grades

| Grade | Grade Point Value | Percentage* | Description |
|-------|-------------------|-------------|--|
| INC | N/A | N/A | Incomplete. Used only for those credit courses designated by the Senate, to be replaced with a final grade by June 1 for Winter Session courses and by October 1 for Summer Session courses. Such courses are identified in the course listings. |
| DEF | N/A | N/A | Deferred status granted. Used only when deferred status has been granted because of illness, an accident or family affliction. See Deferred status . |
| INP | N/A | N/A | In Progress. Used only for courses designated by Senate, to be replaced with a final grade by the end of the next Winter Session except for TIED courses (identified in the Calendar). In TIED courses the INP must be replaced with a final grade by the end of the subsequent term (including Summer Session) or, where a COOP Work Term, or other activity approved by the academic unit, intervenes, within eight months. If a student fails to complete the second course of a TIED course sequence, then the final grade will be N. |
| CIC | N/A | N/A | Co-op Interrupted Course. See General Regulations: Undergraduate Co-op . |

Grade notes

| Grade note | Grade Point Value | Percentage* | Description |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|---|
| AEG | N/A | N/A | Aegrotat. Transcript notation accompanying a letter grade, assigned where documented illness or similar affliction affected the student's performance or prevented completion of all course work. |
| WE | N/A | N/A | Withdrawal under extenuating circumstances. The WE registration status will replace a course registration or grade when approved by the Dean following a request for academic concession from a student. This registration status is excluded from the calculation of all grade point averages; it will appear on the official transcript. |

* The grading scale for the evaluation of course achievement at the University of Victoria is a percentage scale that translates to a 9 point GPA/letter grade system. The 9 point GPA system is the sole basis for the calculation of grade point averages and academic standing. Standardized percentage ranges have been established as the basis for the assignment of letter grades. The percentage grades are displayed on the official and administrative transcripts in order to provide fine grained course assessment which will be useful to students particularly in their application to graduate studies and for external scholarships and funding. Comparative grading information (average grade [mean] for the class), along with the number of students in the class, is displayed for each course section for which percentage grades are assigned.