SOCI 437
Issues in Environmental Sociology and Climate Change

Instructor: Dr. Martha McMahon

Course Description: The social sciences have been relatively marginalized in climate change research and policy. What if it would be a deadly mistake to allow that to continue to be the case? In the last several years sociology has really caught up with where it needs to be going. This course examines sociological analysis of the sources of climate change and environmental destruction. It makes the case that without engaging the social sciences and sociology in particular efforts at mitigation and adaption will be unsuccessful and exacerbate both social inequality and injustice and be deadly for many in the human and more-than-human world.

The course material explores efforts to change the course we seem to be on, whether political activism but also including newly emerging and re-emerging epistemologies and ontologies and diverse knowledge systems. These include new feminisms and different indigenous knowledge that disrupt the human/nature divides of modernist thinking and open spaces for alternative framings of the issues. These efforts are creating opportunities for future more liveable and just worlds for humans and the more-than-human. The course connects theory and action and asks how you and I can usefully respond to the crises climate change represents.

Course Pre/Co-requisites:

Minimum third-year standing; and declared Honours or Major in Sociology; or permission of the department.

Required Textbooks:


This online outline is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. Detailed course outlines will be made available for all registered students on the first day of class. Only those outlines are to be considered official.