



COURSE OUTLINE
Environment, Society, and Sustainability

Lecture Times: Mondays and Thursdays, 1:00 to 2:20 PM in David Turpin Building A110

Office Hours: Drop in anytime Thursdays from 2:30-3:45pm (after class) in DTB B350

Contact: Dr. Sophia Carodenuto (carodenuto@uvic.ca) and Senior Lab Instructor Kinga Menu (kmenu@uvic.ca)

Brightspace page: <https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/440232>

Territory Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəḡən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

For more information on local reconciliation efforts, please visit the IACE website:

<https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/>. Indigenous students are encouraged to visit the First People's House to learn about supports and events.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of Geography 101A is to introduce you to ecosphere functions and the ways in which humans interact with the natural environment. The course emphasizes understanding key environmental problems and developing more sustainable approaches to societal interactions with the environment.

Two main themes of geographical enquiry are determining and explaining the biophysical processes that underlie areal differentiation of the earth's surface and understanding the relationship between these processes and human activities. The first focus is physical geography and includes biogeography, climatology, and geomorphology; the second focus is resource management and includes environmental, developmental, and regional geography. Although there is a long history of geographical enquiry in these foci, they have come to greater prominence over this last decade due to the increasing scale and severity of environmental change in the biosphere and the role of human activity in causing this change.

To understand the dimensions of various environmental problems, such as acid rain, climate change, eutrophication, species extinction, deforestation, and a host of others, students must first understand the basic functions of the biosphere. The first part of the course focuses on this aspect, including understanding the ways in which energy flows and materials cycle through the biosphere, and the structure and organization of ecological communities. From this base, students will more readily appreciate the ways in which these naturally occurring processes are changed by human activities such as forestry, agriculture, fisheries, and water management. These are covered in the second half of the course. Examples from throughout the world are used to illustrate these changes. Due to the high profile of many of these issues in the media, students are expected to pay particular attention to these current issues as the course progresses.

The course is designed to meet the requirements of three groups of students:

1. Those who wish to do a BA/BSc Major/Minor in Geography, 101A being a prerequisite for some higher Geography courses;
2. Those who wish to take basic courses in Geography to supplement their major in another field; and
3. Environmental Studies students wishing an introduction to the functioning of environmental systems and human interaction with these systems.

GEOG 101A, as well as 101B and 103, are designed for BSc/BA Major/Minor Geography programs. Students wishing to know more about the Geography Department and opportunities such as field schools or the co-op program should review the [Geography Department website](#).

A bit about your course instructor:

Please call me Sophia, Dr., or Professor Carodenuto. Whatever you are comfortable with. This is how my name is pronounced: so-FEE-uh car-o-den-OO-toh (see phonetic guide [here](#)).

I use she/her pronouns (learn more about pronouns [here](#)). To introduce myself, I'm a settler of European descent and have been living on Coast Salish territory since 2018. I grew up in Minnesota in the United States on land that was inhabited by the Dakota (or Sioux) and the Ojibwa (Anishinabe or Chippewa). My father is of Irish and Italian ancestry, thus my Italian last name. On my mother's side, I am from a small village in Northern Austria where I also spent a significant amount of my childhood.

I am Associate Professor in the research stream at UVic's Department of Geography. I have a PhD in Environment and Natural Resources Sciences and MSc in Environmental Governance from the University of Freiburg (Germany). My research focuses on **forest governance** and sustainable land use in the **Global South**, with a special focus on the sustainable production and trade of tropical forest-risk commodities such as palm oil, coffee, and cocoa. My [transdisciplinary research](#) is participatory, community-engaged, and action-oriented. This means that I **partner with** the communities, companies, and governments that are "doing" the natural resources governance. This allows for my research to have a greater impact, as people are more likely to adopt research findings that they have helped to discover. I have lived and worked in over a dozen countries in the Global South and North. I spent the most time in Cameroon, where I lived for over two years. I also spent significant amounts of time in Ethiopia, Zambia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. In these diverse settings, I supported governments, donors (e.g. World Bank, German Development Agency), civil society, and the private sector to jointly develop viable solutions to climate change and sustainable development that fit the specific context. Having worked for over a decade as a sustainability practitioner, I have significant experience in 'real-world settings' outside of academia.

In the Geography Department, I run an active research lab: the Environmental Governance Group. You can learn more about our cutting-edge research here: [envirogov.org](#).

Please find more information about me and my research at my website: [sophiacarodenuto.com](#).

REQUIRED TEXT FOR THIS COURSE

Dearden et al. (2020). *Environmental change and challenge: A Canadian perspective*. 6th Edition. Toronto: Oxford University Press. **Only use the 6th edition**. The book is available to rent or buy online, or purchase as hard copy from the UVic bookstore. The Uvic Bookstore has used versions and also offers an e-text as a 180-day purchase, providing a more affordable option. In this course we use most book chapters and GEOG 209 uses the chapters that we do not cover, so you might return to this book in future courses. This book has also been placed on reserve in the library.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon course completion, you will:

1. Accurately recognize the fundamental planetary processes such as energy flows and biogeochemical cycling;
 2. Appreciate the ways in which humans change these processes, the implications of so doing, and potential solutions to these problems;
 3. Articulate the historical development of environmental problems and differences in spatial occurrence;
 4. Gain some understanding of Indigenous peoples and their relationship to topics of concern in Geography;
 5. Appropriately develop critical and analytical thinking techniques that are applied to environmental problems;
 6. Critically analyze environmental problems from differing perspectives;
 7. Explain the role of values in environmental decision-making;
 8. Realize the need for a comprehensive approach to environmental change involving the natural and social sciences;
 9. Appreciate the role of Geography as a synthesizing discipline based on analysis of space and place and the links to specific courses in the Department of Geography that will provide more detailed insights into these challenges;
 10. Have augmented confidence with fundamental academic research and research skills such as library searches, style of presentation, bibliographic citation formats, etc.;
 11. Individually recognize current environmental problems that support making informed decisions about;
 12. Be empowered to undertake changes in your own lifestyles that will lead to more sustainable futures.
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EVALUATION

Lab marks (45%)*

Exams (55%)*

1. **Topic Quizzes**: 6% : There are 3 quizzes online quizzes administered through Brightspace. These quizzes have a **48-hour window** during which can complete them. Extensions can be provided if a student requests the extension **before** the start of the 48-hour window and has a legitimate reason for an extension.
2. **Mid-term** 15% : This exam will take place in person during classtime towards the middle of term.
3. **Final** 34% : The date and location of this exam will be communicated by UVic's central authorities. It is not possible for the instructor or anyone to influence the date or time of this exam.

** Note: You must pass both the exam portion and the lab portion to pass the course.*

GRADING SYSTEM

As per the Academic Calendar:

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
A+ A A-	9 8 7	90-100% 85-89% 80-84%	Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.
B+ B B-	6 5 4	77-79% 73-76% 70-72%	Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.
C+ C	3 2	65-69% 60-64%	Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
D	1	50-59%	Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
F	0	0-49%	Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.
N	0	0-49%	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT INFO

- Geography Department website: uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/
- Geography Department Chair: geogchair@uvic.ca
- Geography Undergraduate Advising: geogadvising@uvic.ca

BRIGHTSPACE

Please ensure that you are connecting regularly with the Brightspace course site:

<https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/440232> and are receiving **Announcements** from this site. This is a core component of communication for this course, and this is where we post all course material.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Please **ensure the professionalism of all your communication, including email** communication. Emails are not text messages. For those who are unsure what this means, please have a look at this humorous post, which is actually pretty helpful: <https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087#.k6bvk7tyt>

Also- **please use your official UVic email account** (@uvic.ca) and proper email subject line to ensure that your email does not land in my junk box. I will do our best to respond to all emails within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays. Please note that many questions are not suitable for email exchange. If you have a more in-depth question about a concept covered in class, then please *come to my office hours*.

For all inquiries about lectures and exams, please either ask them during lecture or first use the “Questions to the Professor” discussion on the Content page of Brightspace. The reason that we prefer Brightspace is because many of you will have the same questions, so we are hoping that all can benefit from the instructor’s response. For personal matters that you would not like to share with your classmates, please come to office hours or speak with your lab instructor. For queries about the labs, please email your lab instructor directly.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Attention: Please note important UVic calendar dates: www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates

September 19 is the last day for adding courses for this semester and October 31st is the last day for withdrawing without penalty of failure.

Week	Lecture date	Lecture topic	Readings	Lab
1	Sept. 4	NO LECTURE: Instructor invited to expert panel at Stockholm Environment Institute (sei.org)	This syllabus, in its entirety ☺	<i>No labs</i>
2	Sept. 8	Introduction	Chapter 1	Lab Introduction
	Sept. 11	Spaceship Earth	Chapter 2	
3	Sept. 15	Flatten that Curve!	Chapter 3	EcoAction teams and work block
	Sept. 18	Energy		
4	Sept. 22	Biogeography	Chapter 4	Natural areas and Human impact Part 1 Start project
	Sept. 25	Ecosystem Change		
5	Sept. 29	Biogeochemical cycles	Chapter 5	<i>No labs</i>
	Oct. 2	Guest lecture (Sonia Furstenau)		
6	Oct. 6	Global climate change		Natural areas and Human impact Part 2 Fieldwork
	Oct. 9			
7	Oct. 13	Thanksgiving- no lecture	Chapter 8	Natural areas and Human Impact Part 3 <u>Research Presentations</u>
	Oct. 16	Forest		
8	Oct. 20	Mid-term exam (no lecture)	Chapter 8	GBR and/or debate prep
	Oct. 23	Forest		
9	Oct. 27	Agriculture	Chapter 10	Debate 1
	Oct. 30	<i>Research highlight: Ethical chocolate for Halloween</i>		
10	Nov. 3	Ecosystem Services	Chapter 10 (continued)	Debate 2
	Nov. 6			
11	Nov. 10	Reading Break- no lecture	Chapter 11 Chapter 12	<i>No labs</i>
	Nov. 13	Water		
12	Nov. 17	Biodiversity and Protected Areas	Chapter 15 Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragedy of the commons. <i>Science</i> . 168, 1243-1248.	Role play
	Nov. 20	Common Pool Resources		

13	Nov. 24 Nov. 27	Environment and Development	Chapter 16	EcoAction presentations Lab evaluations
14	Dec. 1	Course conclusions		

Please note December 4, 2025 is National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

DISCLAIMER

The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, such as changing schedules of our high-level guest speakers.

GUEST SPEAKERS

One of the functions of the course is to engage students with information and ideas presented by people with experience (often called experts) in a particular area. These are highly sought-after individuals who have taken precious time out of their busy schedules to inspire you and share their knowledge. Each of the invited speakers will present a specific point of view on a given issue.

One of the key learning outcomes of this course is that you become better able to analyze the information you hear/read/view and clearly articulate a thoughtful response to that information. Therefore, please pay special attention to the readings in advance of guest speakers and be sure to 'google' them so you are informed about who they are. Since you will likely only see this person once, taking full advantage of the class means you need to come to class prepared to discuss your reading for that week and ask questions of the guest speaker.

POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due by the beginning of the lab. Late assignments will be deducted 10% per day. All assignments must be submitted to get a passing grade in the laboratory component.

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

Every Monday and Thursday, we will hold an in-person one-hour, twenty-minute lecture where you will be engaged and encouraged to ask questions, share experiences, and hear from guest speakers. Students are expected to attend all class sessions in person. However, if you are feeling unwell, please do not come to class. Rather, **ask a classmate to take notes on your behalf**. You do not need to email the professor if you are unable to attend lecture. It is up to you to stay up to date and obtain any missed course materials from a classmate.

In-person attendance at the **laboratory sessions** is mandatory. Lab activities include reporting on your own research, discussions, and projects. Labs form an integral part of the course since they enable a more detailed discussion of topics. They are intended to complement, not repeat, the course, and labs also counter the anonymity often experienced in the large lecture section. You must immediately contact your TA if you are sick or are expecting to miss lab for any reason. Please email Kinga Menu (kmenu@uvic.ca) if you are expecting to miss a significant amount of in-person labs.

COPYRIGHT

All course content and materials are made available by instructors for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students registered in their class. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked with a ©. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires the written permission of the instructor, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is every student's responsibility to be aware of the university's policies on academic integrity, including policies on **cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of an editor, multiple submission, and aiding others to cheat**. I reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software or other platforms to assess the integrity of student work. Plagiarism is the submission of work that is not your own. To present the work of others as your own is dishonest. All sources must be attributed, or there will be strict penalties.

Please familiarize yourself with **Policy on Academic Integrity**:

web.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html

If you have any questions or doubts, talk to me, your course instructor. For more information, see uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/index.php.

ACCESSIBILITY

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible (uvic.ca/services/cal/). The CAL staff is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

POSITIVITY AND SAFETY

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. To ensure that all class members feel welcomed and equally able to contribute to class discussions, we will all endeavor to be respectful in our language, our examples, and the manner in which we conduct our discussions and group work. If you have any concerns about the climate of the class, please contact me.

SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT UVIC

UVic takes sexualized violence seriously, and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. We encourage students to learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting uvic.ca/svp. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Whether or not you have been directly impacted, if you want to take part in the important prevention work taking place on campus, you can also reach out:

Where: Sexualized violence resource office in EQHR; Sedgewick C119

Phone: 250.721.8021

Email: svpcoordinator@uvic.ca

Web: uvic.ca/svp

RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The University of Victoria offers a number of resources to support international students as they pursue their studies. UVic's [International Centre for Students](#) is the primary office supporting international students on campus at the university-wide level and provides various supportive program through the [UVic Global Community Initiative](#), including a Mentorship Program and Conversation Partner Program. For academic advising-related questions, students in the Geography Department are also encouraged to meet with the Geography Undergraduate Advisor (geogadvising@uvic.ca) as well as an academic advisor in the [Academic Advising Centre](#) early in their studies to help map out a plan to declare a major and complete university program requirements. Other resources include the [Centre for Academic Communication](#) and the [Math and Stats Assistance Centre](#). International students are also encouraged

to contact the International Student Liaison in Geography (Prof. CindyAnn Rose-Redwood, cindyann@uvic.ca), who can assist in making connections with other international and domestic students in the Geography Department and share opportunities for getting involved in departmental activities more broadly.

COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed online and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

Online Conduct

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and supportive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to this experience and the responsibility to help create such an environment. The University will not tolerate racism, sexualized violence, or any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment. Please be advised that, by logging into UVic's learning systems or interacting with online resources, and course-related communication platforms, you are engaging in a university activity. All interactions within this environment are subject to the university expectations and policies. Any concerns about student conduct may be reviewed and responded to in accordance with the appropriate university policy.

To report concerns about online student conduct: onlineconduct@uvic.ca

University of Victoria Student Society

The [UVSS](#) is a social justice based non-profit run by students, for students and is entirely separate from UVic. As an undergrad student, you are already a member! We work on issues affecting students such as affordability, public transit, sexualized violence, sustainability, student employment, and much more. We fund clubs and course unions and have several advocacy groups. We also have a Food Bank and Free Store, a Peer Support Centre, and run your health and dental plan. We are here to support you, so please reach out to us at uvss.ca!

Indigenous Students

Indigenous students can reach out to Lydia Toorenburgh at tfirc@uvic.ca for support and advocacy, non-Indigenous students can reach out to Lydia for guidance on Indigenous research and decolonization support.

Student Wellness

A note to remind you to take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone.

Counselling Services - *Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.* <https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>

Health Services - *University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.* <https://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>

Centre for Accessible Learning - *The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs,*

provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course. <https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>

Elders' Voices - The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide Indigenous students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being. <https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php>