



COURSE OUTLINE

Global Environmental Change and Human Response

Lecture: 11:30-12:20, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Clearihue Building A207

Office Hours: 1:30-2:30pm Wednesday, David Turpin Building (DTB) B204, or by appointment

Office Location: David Turpin Building (DTB) B204

Contact: jroszel@uvic.ca

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Based on four components: global environmental change; sustainable development; biodiversity; and population impoverishment and environmental degradation. Lectures and discussion emphasize the causes of global change, the present and expected impacts on natural and social systems, and response strategies that have been proposed or enacted.

This course approaches environmental change, moving beyond description of impacts to explore the power relations, cultural practices, and governance structures that shape both problems and solutions. We begin by grounding ourselves in key geographic methodological lenses—political ecology, political economy, and science & technology studies—that help us make sense of the dynamic relationships between people and environments across scales.

We then apply these perspectives to a series of socio-ecological systems: the atmosphere and air pollution, biodiversity and agriculture, water cycles and governance, urban environments and infrastructure, global waste and recycling networks, and energy transitions. Each system is treated not just as a biophysical process but as a site of politics, inequality, and cultural meaning. Weekly lectures and discussions are supported by guiding questions and case studies that invite students to connect global processes with regional examples, including Indigenous and coastal governance in Canada as well as international cases across the Global South.

Alongside these thematic explorations, students will develop applied skills that prepare them for work inside and outside the academy. Professional development sessions are embedded each week, focusing on tools such as annotated bibliographies, policy memos, stakeholder analysis, data visualization, and scenario building. Course assignments encourage students to translate complex research into public-facing formats, such as videologs, posters, and briefing papers that are designed to communicate effectively to policymakers, community partners, and wider audiences.

The course concludes by considering governance, finance, and alternative futures, asking how different models of sustainability, ranging from international climate agreements to decolonization and degrowth frameworks which might guide responses to global crises. Students will be encouraged to synthesize theoretical insights, case study knowledge, and practical skills to craft their own critical, creative, and constructive visions for socio-ecological futures.

KEY THEMES: environmental governance, sustainability, biogeography, conservation, ecology, resource management

REQUIRED TEXT(S)

There is no required textbook for this course, but there will be assigned readings from online sources like government reports, academic journals and other periodicals, and media coverage. Videos and podcasts will also be incorporated. See the Brightspace page for materials.

RECOMMENDED TEXT(S)

See the Brightspace page for recommended materials.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you should:

- **Critically analyze global environmental change** by applying political ecology, cultural ecology, and economic theories to understand the social and ecological drivers of change.
- **Evaluate sustainability strategies** in relation to biodiversity, food systems, water governance, and urban metabolism, recognizing the role of power and scale in shaping environmental outcomes.
- **Interpret and communicate scientific and social data** (e.g., climate models, pollution studies, stakeholder analyses) using appropriate tools, including policy memos, annotated bibliographies, and visual presentations.
- **Assess the impacts of environmental degradation and population impoverishment** across different regions and communities, with attention to justice, informality, and colonial legacies in waste, recycling, and resource management.
- **Engage with diverse forms of communication** by producing academic and non-academic outputs (papers, video clips, conference posters) that convey environmental issues to multiple audiences.
- **Synthesize knowledge of governance, finance, and alternative futures** to develop informed, creative, and socially responsible approaches to climate action, sustainability, and socio-ecological resilience

EVALUATION

Component	Weight
Videocast Proposal & Discussion	10%

Component	Weight
Policy Memo	5%
Conference Poster	10%
Public Impact Paper	30%
Participation	10%
Final Exam	35%
Total	100%

GRADING SYSTEM

As per the Academic Calendar:

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
A+	9	90-100%	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.
A	8	85-89%	
A-	7	80-84%	
B+	6	77-79%	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.
B	5	73-76%	
B-	4	70-72%	
C+	3	65-69%	Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
C	2	60-64%	
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

Bright Space will serve as the main source of communication in this course. Please monitor the page on a regular basis for course announcements, readings assignments and lecture notes.

If you experience difficulty logging in or password problems, contact the Computer Help Desk
Email: helpdesk@uvic.ca, Tel: 250-721-7687

POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

To ensure fairness towards those of you who have made the effort to hand in assignments on time, I will deduct 10% per day (including weekends and holidays) for assignments that are handed in late. In-class contributions and presentations that are not prepared on time will be given zero and substitutions to later dates are not an option. Exceptions will only be granted for documented medical or compassionate reasons.

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

Our classes will start on time, so please try to be settled and ready to go right at the beginning. Arriving late or packing up early can break the flow for everyone. To get the most out of our discussions, keep up with the assigned readings throughout the week so you can bring your ideas and questions to class. During our sessions, let's all stay present and focused—phones and other distractions can wait until after class.

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.**

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 documented 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.

SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE RESOURCE OFFICE (SVRO)

If you have been directly or indirectly impacted by sexualized violence, reach out to the SVRO for information, advice, resolution options (restorative and disciplinary) as well as support options and referrals. The SVRO is both survivor-centred and trauma-informed in their approach.

eqhr01@uvic.ca

Sedgewick C Wing

www.uvic.ca/svp

EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS (EQHR)

UVic Equity and Human Rights is a resource for students, staff and faculty who have experienced discrimination and harassment and are looking for informal and formal resolution options as well as advice, coaching and/or education. We are available for confidential consultations so that you can ask questions and learn your options.

eqhr01@uvic.ca

Sedgewick C Wing

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.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Week	Date	Lecture	Assignment	Important Dates
1	Sept. 3	Course Orientation		
	Sept. 5	Political Ecology, Power, Scale & Knowledge Systems		
2	Sept. 9	Economic Theories of Environment		
	Sept. 10	Governance, Regulation & Multilevel Politics		
	Sept. 12	How to read academic work critically		
3	Sept. 16	Cultural Ecology		16 th Last day to drop classes 100% refund
	Sept. 17	Ethnography in Geography & Community Based Adaption		Sept. 19 th Last day to add

	Sept. 19	Argument mapping & annotated bibliographies		courses
4	Sept. 23 Sept. 24 Sept. 26	Climate Science Models Air Pollution & Environmental Health Policy Analysis – Carbon Pricing	Sept. 26 – Videocast Proposal Due	
5	Oct. 1 Oct. 3	Biodiversity of land & Agriculture Food systems & livelihoods	Oct 3 – Annotated Bibliography Due	Sept. 30 - University Closed (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation)
6	Oct. 7 Oct. 8 Oct. 10	Water Cycles, Drought, Floods Water governance Policy memo writing	Oct. 10 – Videocast Feedback Due	
7	Oct. 14 Oct. 15 Oct. 17	Cities Infrastructure & Footprints Urban Metabolism Creating a budget	Oct. 17 – Policy Memo, Paper Outline Due	
8	Oct. 21 Oct. 22 Oct. 24	Global waste & recycling markets Justice, informality, and toxic colonialism Stakeholder Analysis Workshop	Oct. 24 – Budget Draft Due	
9	Oct. 28 Oct. 29 Oct. 31	Media & Communication Climate in art, fiction & media – creating a narrative Writing for non-academic audiences (paper workshop)		Oct. 31 st – Last day to drop courses without penalty of failure
10	Nov. 4	Energy, Fossil Fuels & Geopolitics		

	Nov. 5	Renewables & Energy justice		
11	Nov. 14	Paper workshop pt.2	Nov. 14 – Paper Due	Nov. 10 th -12 th Reading Break
12	Nov. 18 Nov. 19 Nov. 21	Conference day 1 Conference day 2 Governance & Finance – COP30 Discussion	Nov. 19 – Conference Poster Due	
13	Nov. 25 Nov. 26 Nov. 28	Futures & Synthesis Alternative futures – degrowth, decolonised futurisms Exam Preparation.		
14	Dec. 03	Classes canceled by university.		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.

NOTE:

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.* 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.* 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* uvic.ca/services/cal/. *The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.*

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 students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php