



COURSE OUTLINE
Environment, Society, and Sustainability

Lecture: Monday & Thursday, 11:30-12:50, CLE A224

Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00 - 3:00 or by appointment

Office Location: DTB B208

Contact: Course Instructor: Wyatt Maddox (wrmaddox@uvic.ca)
Senior Lab Instructor: Kinga Menu (kmenu@uvic.ca)
Lab Instructor: Sarah Loos (smaxwell@uvic.ca)

We acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən 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.

As we enjoy the beautiful geography of the area colonially named Vancouver Island, consider the stewardship that has shaped this land. Move with care and tread gently, acknowledging that as we breathe the air and drink the water that gives us life, we have an impact at all times. We are privileged, as uninvited settlers on unceded lands, to live in this space diligently cared for by the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples.

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 considering more sustainable approaches to societal interactions with the environment.

In this course, you will explore the biological and physical processes of the earth's surface to gain an understanding of the relationship between these processes and human activities. The first focus is physical geography and includes biogeography, climatology, and geomorphology; building an understanding of the ways in which energy flows and materials cycle through the biosphere. From this foundation, you will better appreciate the ways in which natural processes are changed by human activities such as forestry, agriculture, fisheries, and water management through a lens of resource management, including environmental, developmental, and regional geography.

Geographical enquiry in these foci have come to greater prominence over the last several decades due to the increasing scale and severity of environmental change in the biosphere and the role of human activity in causing this change.

KEY THEMES: energy flows, biogeochemical cycles, ecosystem structure and dynamics, pollution, global change, water resources, biodiversity, endangered species, protected areas, agriculture and food, forestry, marine resources, poverty and development, and different worldviews

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 resulting problems;
3. Articulate the historical development of environmental issues and differences in spatial occurrence;
4. Gain some understanding of Indigenous peoples and their relationship to topics in Geography;
5. Develop critical and analytical thinking techniques as applied to environmental problems;
6. Explain the role of values and perspective in environmental decision-making;
7. Realize the need for a comprehensive approach to environmental change involving the natural and social sciences;
8. Appreciate Geography as a synthesizing discipline based on analysis of space and place;
9. Gain confidence with fundamental academic research and research skills such as library searches, style of presentation, bibliographic citation formats, etc.;
10. Be aware of changes in your lifestyle that will lead to more sustainable futures.

REQUIRED TEXT(S)

All required readings will be included in the text or available on Brightspace. These materials are selected to improve your understanding of course materials and will be evaluated in quizzes or exams.

Dearden et al. (2025). Environmental change and challenge: A Canadian perspective. 7th Edition. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

The text is available to rent or buy online or purchase as hard copy from the UVic bookstore. Used versions may be available at the bookstore. You may use the 6th edition.

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT INFO

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

EVALUATION

Lab (45%)		Lecture (55%)		
EcoAction Project	17%	Quizzes	6%	Three online quizzes in Brightspace
Natural Areas Project	10%	Mid-term Exam	15%	In-person, in-class; see schedule
Nature Reflection	1%	Final Exam	34%	Spring 2026 Exam Period: April 7-22
Debates	12%			
Participation	5%			

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

WEEKLY CALENDAR

WEEK	DATE	Lecture	Readings	Lab
1	January 5 January 8	Introduction Introduction cont'd	Syllabus	No labs
2	January 12 January 15	Spaceship Earth Flatten the Curve	Chapter 1 Chapter 2	Lab intro
3	January 19 January 22	Energy Biogeography	Chapter 3	EcoAction
4	January 26 January 29	Ecosystem Change	Chapter 4	Natural areas
5	February 2 February 5	Biogeochemical cycles	Chapter 6 (5)	Natural areas
6	February 9 February 12	Global climate change Midterm Review	Chapter 7 (8)	Natural areas
7	February 16-20	**Reading Break** No class		No labs
8	February 23 February 26	No class Midterm		GBR
9	March 2 March 5	Forest Forest cont'd	Chapter 9 (10)	Debate 1
10	March 9 March 12	Agriculture Water	Chapter 10 (11) Chapter 11 (12)	Debate 2
11	March 16 March 19	Coastal and Marine Biodiversity & Protected Areas	Chapter 8 (9) Chapter 5 & 15 (15)	Role play
12	March 23 March 26	Biodiversity & Protected Areas cont'd Environment & Development	Chapter 14 (6-7)	EcoAction presentations
13	March 30 April 2	Environment & Development cont'd Review		No Labs

The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to minor change. Chapter readings in brackets are for the 6th edition text.

Brightspace

Please ensure that you are connecting regularly with the Brightspace course site: <https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/459120> and are receiving Announcements from this site.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Assignments

- Late work receives a 10% reduction in points for each day late (weekends count as one day). Extensions beyond 24 hours must be approved by your course instructor prior to the deadline for submission. Requests will be granted for legitimate reasons after consultation with your TA or course instructor.

Missed examinations

- Documented extenuating circumstances for missing an assessment will be accepted consistent with UVic policy. Unauthorized absence will result in a zero for the assessment portion.

Attendance

Lecture will take place Monday and Thursday, for one hour and twenty-minutes. You are expected to come prepared, be engaged, ask questions, share experiences, and be courteous. Except in circumstances of weather, instructor illness, or scheduled class cancellation, classes will be held in person without the option for hybrid attendance. **If you are feeling unwell, please do not come to class;** ask a classmate to take notes on your behalf. **You do not need to email the professor if you are unable to attend lecture.**

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 your lab instructor, Kinga Menu (kmenu@uvic.ca) or Sarah Loos (smaxwell@uvic.ca), if you will be missing a lab for illness, appointment, or travel. **Emails should be sent with as much advance notice as possible.**

Respect and belonging

My pedagogy is rooted in principles of respect and belonging for you individually as a student and a person with distinct experiences. My class is a space open for diverse thought, perspective, and approach. Anti-racism, decolonial practices, and Indigenous ways of knowing and being are imperative to this concept. As such, hate speech and intolerance will be met with education and guidance. As I hold myself to a standard of implementing principles of respect and belonging, I expect reciprocation from you to practice empathy, acceptance, and courtesy towards your peers and me.

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.

Please be advised that in this course you are not authorized to use any form of generative AI. In order to successfully complete course activities, generative AI is not required nor welcomed. Students should not make any use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, among others that use AI for content generation and editing. As the University of Victoria states on its Academic Integrity Policy "Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility." Therefore, I expect you to comply with the course syllabus and I encourage you to enhance your academic experience in this course by refraining from use of generative AI.

GRADING SYSTEM

As per the Academic Calendar:

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
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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.

RESOURCES

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 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.

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 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

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 www.uvic.ca/equity

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.

Student experience of learning survey (SEL)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (SEL) regarding your learning experience. 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. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to your [SEL dashboard](#). You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

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. Please reach out to the course instructor, TAs, campus resources, friends, and/or family.

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/

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