

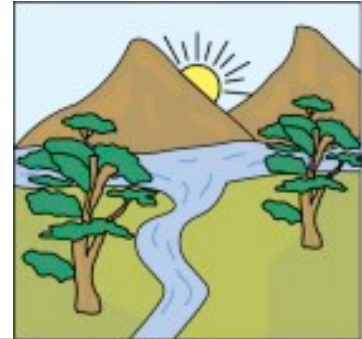


# GEOG 209 - Intro. to Enviro. Management

## COURSE INFO

Dr. Cameron Owens [camo@uvic.ca](mailto:camo@uvic.ca) (250) 721-7330  
Office Hours: M 15:00-17:00 in room DTB B210

LECTURE: MR: 13:00-14:20 in ECS 116  
LABS: A01 M 15:30-17:20 in DTB B311;  
A02 T 10:30-12:20 in DTB B307  
A03 T 16:30-18:20 in DTB B307;  
A04 W 10:30-12:20 in DTB B311;  
A05 W 14:30-16:20 in B311



## OVERVIEW

Featuring both a lab and lecture component, Geog 209 is the core 200 level course in the Department of Geography's "Environment and Sustainability" concentration. Building primarily on Geog 101A, this course further explores the troubling relationship between humans and their surroundings, critically interrogating the means by which humans attempt to manage environments. Our approach takes bearings from political ecologist Paul Robbins who uses the metaphor of the hatchet and the seed to describe critical inquiry. With "the hatchet" we want to reveal the dynamics of the dominant paradigm that has had such devastating effect, "cutting and pruning away the stories, methods and policies that create pernicious social and environmental outcomes". With "the seed" we want to celebrate and learn from those that are working out creative solutions to bring about a genuinely sustainable and just future. The course attends to rural and urban situations using examples from British Columbia and other national and international contexts. Geog 209 prepares students for further exploration at the 300 level in courses such as: Geog 301 Environmental Impact Assessment; Geog 353 Coastal and Marine Resources, Geog 357 Parks and Protected Areas and Geog 371 Water Resources Management.

## REQUIRED READINGS

**Texts:** There are no mandatory texts assigned for this class.

**Readings:** Essential readings in the forms of journal articles, book chapters and other sources will be posted on the course Moodle site (<http://moodle.uvic.ca/>) and should be read thoroughly and brought to class. While readings are peripheral to learning in some courses, they are central to this one.

**Reading effectively** is absolutely essential for success in this course. Be mindful that simply reading without engaging with the material (i.e. marking, highlighting, frequent re-reading, taking notes and critical reflection) is essentially useless (i.e. the material has no chance of moving from short to long term memory).

**Note on Moodle:** You will access the Moodle site not only for required readings but also for important announcements, instructor notes, your grades and additional information.

## ASSESSMENT

**Assessment:** Students will be evaluated on the following required elements:

1. **Labs:** see handout (35%); 2. **Midterm** - Oct 25th (20%); 3. **Final Exam** - to be scheduled by registrar (30%); 4. **Extra-curricular participation** (10%) ongoing (to be discussed in class)

• **Note on Undergraduate Grading:** Grading practices and procedures are guided by University policies specified in the Calendar. The Department is concerned about the potential problem of **grade inflation** and wishes to ensure **equity in grading standards** among colleagues. In cases in which grades for a course are substantially outside normal ranges, the Chair may ask the instructor to justify or revise those grades. Instructors submit grades online, and those grades are available to students online as soon as they have been approved by the Chair. If the grades for a course are not available online, it means that the grades have not yet been approved by the Chair, and any grades posted elsewhere are unofficial and subject to change.

Students should pay particular attention to the qualitative indicators associated with each grade:

- **A+ (90-100%); A (85-89%); A- 80-84% Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance.** Normally achieved by a small group of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.
- **B+ (77-79%); B (73-76%): Very good / acceptable work fulfilling expectations.** These grades indicate a good or satisfactory grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area with no major weakness.
- **B- (70-72%); C+ (65-69); C (60-64%); D (50-59): Deficiencies in knowledge, understanding or techniques;** Mastery of some relevant techniques or concepts lacking.
- **F (0-49): Failing grade.** Unsatisfactory performance. see <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2012/GRAD/FARe/Grad.html>

## COURSE POLICIES

**Collegial Respect:** Do your part to ensure a classroom environment conducive to learning. Arriving late, talking, texting, surfing the internet etc. all disrupt the flow of the class. Be respectful to the instructor and colleagues. Note that the instructor receives a high volume of emails and may not always be able to respond in a timely manner. Be sure to plan ahead. Being at university is a unique and fleeting opportunity. Be sure to make the most of it!

**Late / Missing Work:** If for a legitimate reason (e.g. verifiable serious illness or family emergency) you must miss the midterm or final exam you must notify the instructor **before** writing to make alternative arrangements. Failure to do so will result in a zero. Expectations with respect to the lab component of course will be introduced by the TA.

**Withdrawal:** For information regarding withdrawal from class, please see: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2011/FACS/UnIn/UARe/With.html> for dates and other information.

**Academic Integrity:** Please review <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2011/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcl.html> for university policy on academic integrity and useful information on avoiding plagiarism, falsifying results, cheating on assignments etc. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic "F" for that assignment or test and possibly the course for ALL individuals involved. Note: plagiarism detection software will be used in this class.

**Accessibility:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Successful students will leave this course with:

1. A more sophisticated understanding of: the social / political context of environmental change; how environmental issues are more precisely understood as social challenges with environmental implications; the concept of sustainability and the deep cultural barriers that inhibit it and opportunities for bringing it about
2. A critical appreciation for the variety (and shortcomings) of conventional management responses to environmental challenges with an emphasis on the Canadian experience.
3. The ability to reconceptualize “resources”, “the environment” and “management” in the context of new approaches based on concepts such as resilience theory, ecosystem-based and adaptive management.
4. Enhanced critical thinking skills: i.e. recognizing multiple perspectives and the values and assumptions underlying each (including our own), defining questions and problems, evaluating evidence and arguments and arriving at defensible positions on issues.
5. Enhanced creative and practical communication, group-work and presentation skills developed through lab activities.
6. A better appreciation of the importance of a critical environmental education for one’s own well-being and civic responsibility (i.e. recognition of one’s own linkages to environmental problems and solutions).

## GUIDING IDEAS:

1. “As critique, political ecology seeks to expose flaws in dominant approaches to the environment... working to demonstrate the undesirable impacts of policies and market conditions [and] to “denaturalize” certain social and environmental conditions, showing them to be contingent outcomes of power and not inevitable. As critical historiography, deconstruction and myth busting research, political ecology is a hatchet, cutting and pruning away the stories, methods and policies that create pernicious social and environmental outcomes. The research has another side - [the seed, which looks to] preserve and develop specific, manageable and appropriate ways to make a living.” *Paul Robbins*
2. “If you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren’t pessimistic, you don’t understand the data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren’t optimistic you haven’t got a pulse. What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people confronting despair, power and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice and beauty in this world.” - *Paul Hawken*
3. “The standard paradox of the twentieth century: our tools are better than we are, and grow better faster than we do. They suffice to crack the atom, to command the tides. But they do not suffice for the oldest task in human history: to live on a piece of land without spoiling it.” - *Aldo Leopold*
4. “When a crisis occurs, the actions taken depend on the ideas that are lying around... [we need to] develop alternatives, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable.” - *Milton Friedman*
5. Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” - *Dr. Seuss, The Lorax*