



---

COURSE OUTLINE

**Environment and Sustainability in Practice**

---

**Synchronous Zoom Lecture Times:** Tuesdays 2:30 to 4:30 pm

**Zoom link for lectures and office hours:** Please find the link in Brightspace

**Office Hours:** Please email me for appointment

**Contact:** Dr. Sophia Carodenuto ([carodenuto@uvic.ca](mailto:carodenuto@uvic.ca))

**Expectations for online participation:** *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this course is being offered online to maintain public health measures and safety of students, faculty and the community.* The course has been designed to maximize student learning and community building in an online setting. There is broad evidence that student engagement with the material through peer-to-peer discussions, student-led group interaction, and critical questioning increases knowledge retention. Therefore, a significant component of the course activities will be held synchronously (real-time), reflecting the way we would normally do things in a non-pandemic setting.

Every Tuesday afternoon, we will hold a synchronous two-hour seminar where you will learn from lectures, engage in various activities where you apply newly gained knowledge, exchange perspectives, and hear from guest speakers. Your participation in these seminars is required in order for you to succeed in this course, so please get in touch me as soon as possible if you are unable to attend. If there are a sufficient number of students that cannot attend due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. incompatible time zones), then I may record the Tuesday meetings and make these available on Brightspace. However, reflecting the reality of 'sustainability in practice', this course is highly participatory, so please be prepared to engage in real time.

For the Tuesday seminars, you will need to log in using your netlink ID and password. Please make sure that you have activated and signed in to your UVic Zoom account **before** entering the session below.

Here are instructions for preparing for the zoom lectures:

1. Go to [uvic.zoom.us](https://uvic.zoom.us) and sign in to activate your account.
2. [Try a test call](#) to work out any technical difficulties well before class time
3. Complete the [Zoom Student Orientation Guide](#) to get started with using Zoom.

For information about online learning, please visit the [UVic Learn Anywhere](#) portal. If you are experiencing technical difficulties with zoom or Brightspace, please contact the [UVic Computer Help Desk](#).

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Understanding how societies make decisions through their formal and informal governance processes is at the core of natural resource management and environmental sustainability. In the past decades, the rate of environmental change has accelerated and in turn, decision-making processes have become more urgent but also more complex. The world is more globally integrated than it has ever been. This means that your personal decisions often have consequences that reverberate across the globe. Governance and policy approaches that spur collective action, regulate business, and recognize the natural limits set by planetary boundaries are required for a sustainable future. But the challenges to sustainable and just transitions are plentiful.

In this course, you will learn about how to apply theory and concepts of environmental sustainability *in practice*. You will become aware of the socioeconomic justice considerations of modern-day approaches to regulating environmental and social externalities. Through lectures, readings, and guest speakers, you will witness how disparate geographies of consumption and production result in the off-loading of some of the most critical sustainability challenges to distant places that are far from the purview of the average consumer, and most of the policy makers that you know. Information needs have become more complex, our understanding of the human impacts on ecosystems is much more sophisticated, global economies, trade relationships and governance systems have become more integrated, and widespread cyber-literacy has created new demands for citizen involvement and direct governance. We will evaluate the trade-offs that need to be considered when giving business actors a key role in addressing some of the substantivity challenges that arguably stem from their very existence and purpose.

This course has been designed as a capstone course in applied geography for students interested in environmental sustainability and is best taken in the final term of their undergraduate coursework. The emphasis will be on the real-world practical application of knowledge and skills learned in other courses to the challenges facing society in making complex decisions. Through lectures, discussions, writing exercises, debates, review of current issues, and interaction with guest speakers, the course will explore various policies and approaches to address the threats and opportunities in making decisions about the human use of our environment and its resources. In this course, I will introduce concepts, theory, history and approaches to decision making (i.e. governance) to meet contemporary challenges. Each topic will involve an application of the knowledge that you have gained to real-world examples of recent decision-making processes.

My teaching philosophy in general, but especially for this course, mainly revolves around research-enriched learning by engaging students in my practice-based and transdisciplinary research. Transdisciplinarity means that the research I do is in collaboration with practitioners, including governments, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations, and directly responds to *their* needs. I believe that by exposing you to my practice-based research, I am showing you how and why the knowledge and skills that you are gaining in this class are directly applicable to real-world problems and concrete situations.

## **ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR**

I joined the Department of Geography in 2018 as Assistant Professor responsible for both teaching and research. My research focuses on forest governance, with particular attention to how land use decisions affect forests and the communities that live there, including how global food supply chain sustainability policies can be more effective and equitable. Before joining UVic Faculty, I worked internationally as a consultant in over a dozen countries in Africa and lived in Cameroon for over two years. I spent significant amounts of time in Vanuatu, Suriname, Ethiopia, Zambia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. In these places, I supported developing country 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. I look forward to sharing these experiences with you and am

happy to discuss career options both inside and outside academia. Please find more information about me and my research at my website: [sophiacarodenuto.com](http://sophiacarodenuto.com). Here you can also find out about opportunities for you to get involved in research.

---

### REQUIRED TEXT

There is no textbook for this course. Assigned readings will be posted on the course [Brightspace](#). It is important to complete these readings prior to each class so that you can actively engage in class discussions. **If you don't do the readings, you will not achieve the learning outcomes of the course.**

---

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course you will:

- have a heightened self-awareness of how your personal experiences and biases shape the kinds of decision-making processes and outcomes that you are mostly likely to influence as an individual;
- have a working knowledge of the history, major concepts and approaches to natural resource management decision making and governance institutions;
- understand the increasing complexity and challenges of balancing ecological and socio-economic values in decision processes and the demand for citizen involvement; and
- critically evaluate the effectiveness of decision-making processes related to effective and durable decision making and sustainability.

### EVALUATION

This class is a fourth-year capstone seminar and thus requires a high degree of participation and engagement. Regular attendance and active involvement in class is critical to success. The course will consist of a two-hour class once per week. In addition, students are expected to spend a minimum of 5-7 hours each week preparing for each session of the class and completing assignments. Evaluation will not focus on the memorization of information, but rather on how well you are able to demonstrate your engagement in the class, your ability to integrate and use the conceptual frameworks and analytical tools discussed in the course, and your successful completion of real-world assignments. The detailed evaluation regime is as follows:

1. Seminar participation – 15%
2. Weekly virtual reflection, including personal posts and responses to others – 15%
3. Assignment 1: Sustainability Indicator – 20%
4. Assignment 2: Briefing Note – 20%
5. Assignment 3: Group Term Project/Case Study – 30%
6. Extra Credit Opportunity

*Note: All assignments and the weekly discussions are submitted on Brightspace, where you can find detailed instructions, and evaluation rubrics.*

**Seminar participation (15%):** Each week, one group of students will lead the discussion (30 minutes) of that week's reading. In your designated week, please engage the class in a discussion on key themes, personal reflections, and questions. Here I encourage you to be innovative and I'm happy to facilitate breakout rooms and other online engagement tools. Please start your session with an interactive 'ice-breaker' to get to know each other better. To break down the evaluation of this component: 10% of your grade will go toward your leading of that week's discussion and 5% will go towards your active engagement as a participant in the discussions that you are not leading, especially in the stakeholder negotiation that we are simulating in Week 9.

**Weekly virtual reflection (15%):** Each week, you will write a personal reflection (roughly 400 words) of the material that you have learned about that week and how it applies personally to your life. Consider this a weekly journal in a blog form that is available for others to read. These weekly reflections are due by 5 PM on Thursday of the week of that class. Here I encourage you to read and react to each other's posts to increase peer-to-peer learning and engagement with your classmates.

**Assignment 1: Sustainability Indicator (20%):** Early on in this course, we will learn about the importance of science and other forms of knowledge and information in influencing environmental decision making. In this assignment, you will devise and justify your own sustainability indicator as a tool for decision makers to understand whether progress is being achieved (or not) on a specific environmental or social issue.

**Assignment 2: Briefing Note (20%):** For this assignment, you will provide a synopsis of the key issues and recommended actions resulting from your analysis of a select report on sustainability. You will be given a list of reports to choose from, but you are also welcome to find your own report to write the briefing note on. Please confirm any reports that are not from the list provided with me before completing the assignment. This is a real-world task that many of you will encounter in some shape or form in your future professions.

**Assignment 3: Group Term Project (30%):** Again reflecting real-world situations, the final assignment for this course will involve collaboration with peers on a topic of your choice. For this final assignment, you will apply what you learned in this course to an environmental decision of your choice, so I encourage you to get thinking early and often about an environmental decision that is of interest to you. Please be ready to present your project on the last day of class. Only in exceptional circumstances will students be allowed to complete the final project individually rather than as a group. If group-based work is especially challenging due to the pandemic, please contact me for an exemption to complete the assignment alone.

**Extra credit opportunity:** This semester, the Geography Seminar Series is geared toward undergraduate students to showcase the diversity of what you can do with your degree. Held Friday afternoon from 2-3 pm, these sessions will give you an overview of on-going research in Geography and how this is research is applied in practice. Students who attend at least 3 out of the 5 lectures will receive one extra point on their final grade.

## 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%	<b>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent</b> 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%	<b>Very good, good and solid</b> 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%	<b>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory.</b> These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
D	1	50-59%	<b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
F	0	0-49%	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> 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/](http://uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/)
- Geography Undergraduate Advising and Registration: [geogadvising@uvic.ca](mailto:geogadvising@uvic.ca)

## BRIGHTSPACE

Bright Space will serve as the main avenue of communication in this course. Please monitor the page on a regular basis for course announcements, readings assignments and lecture handouts. If you are having difficulty logging in or password problems, contact the Computer Help Desk Email: [helpdesk@uvic.ca](mailto:helpdesk@uvic.ca), Tel: 250-721-7687

## COURSE COMMUNICATION

For all inquiries about lectures and exams, please first use the “Questions to the instructor” discussion in Week 1 of the Content page of Brightspace. The reason I prefer Brightspace over email is because many of you might have the same questions, so I am hoping that all can benefit my response. For personal matters or anything that you would not like to share with your classmates, please email me directly. I will do our best to respond to all questions within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays.

## WEEKLY CALENDAR

Attention students: Please note important UVic calendar dates: [www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates](http://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates)  
January 20th is the last day for adding courses for this semester and February 28th is the last day for withdrawing without penalty of failure.

Date	Topic and reading	Assignments Due (Journals due by 5 PM Thursday)
Week 1 – January 12	<p><b>Introduction:</b> Objectives, Conceptual Frameworks, Governance and the Elements of Decision Making</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> This syllabus, in its entirety 😊</p>	Journal Entry #1
Week 2 – January 19	<p><b>Setting the Stage:</b> How to work in the field of environmental sustainability in a way that is respectful to yourself and others (<i>Guest speaker Dawn Schell, MA, CCC, CCDP Counsellor/Training Specialist at UVic Counselling Services &amp; Office of Student Life</i>)</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Karrer et al. (2011). Science-to-Action Guidebook. <i>Conservation International</i>.</p>	Journal Entry #2
Week 3 – January 26	<p><b>Sustainability Indicators:</b> How do we know what we know and how do we construct and communicate information for decision making?</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Victoria’s 2020 Vital Signs report from the Victoria Foundation <a href="#">website</a>.</p>	Journal Entry #3
Week 4 – February 2	<p><b>Information Transparency:</b> How is public information disclosed and by whom</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Gardner et al. (2019). Transparency and sustainability in global commodity supply chains. <i>World Development</i>, 121, 163-177.</p>	Journal Entry #4
Week 5 – February 9	<p><b>Is it personal or is it political?:</b> The role of consumers versus economic structures for solving climate change (<i>Guest speaker <a href="#">Rajat Panwar</a></i>)</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Kobayashi-Solomon, E. (2020). <a href="#">Climate Change: The Ball is in Our Court</a>. Forbes.</p>	Journal Entry #5  <i>Indicator assignment due Friday, Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> at 5pm</i>
Week 6 – February 16	Reading Break – no classes	
Week 7 – February 23	<p><b>Environmental Justice:</b> When and how well-intentioned policies have adverse impacts on the most vulnerable (<i>Guest Speaker <a href="#">Sabaheta Ramcilovic-Suominen</a></i>)</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Boone, C. (2010). Environmental justice, sustainability and vulnerability. <i>International Journal of</i></p>	Journal Entry #6

	<i>Urban Sustainable Development</i> , 2(1-2), 135-140.	
<b>Week 8 –</b> March 2	<p><b>Stakeholder Salience:</b> Multi-stakeholder negotiations from theory to practice</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Garcia et al. (2020). The global forest transition as a human affair. <i>One Earth</i>, 2(5), 417-428.</p>	Journal Entry #7
<b>Week 9 –</b> March 9	<p><b>Debate: Business: Savior or Culprit?</b> The role of transnational corporations for biosphere stewardship</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Everyone must read: Folke et al. (2019). Transnational corporations and the challenge of biosphere stewardship. <i>Nature Ecology &amp; Evolution</i>. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-019-0978-z">https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-019-0978-z</a></p> <p>To prepare for the debate, you will be assigned one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Etzion, D. (2020a). Corporate engagement with the natural environment. <i>Nature Ecology &amp; Evolution</i>, 4(4), 493–493. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1142-5">https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1142-5</a></li> <li>2. Folke et al. (2020). An invitation for more research on transnational corporations and the biosphere. <i>Nature Ecology &amp; Evolution</i>, 4(4), 494–494. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1145-2">https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1145-2</a></li> <li>3. Schneider et al. (2020). Can transnational corporations leverage systemic change towards a ‘sustainable’ future? <i>Nature Ecology &amp; Evolution</i>, 4(4), 491–492. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1143-4">https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1143-4</a></li> </ol>	Journal Entry #8
<b>Week 10 –</b> March 16	<p><b>Policy and Social Learning:</b> How to act in the dearth of science-based evidence?</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Cashore et al. (2019). Designing stakeholder learning dialogues for effective global governance. <i>Policy and Society</i>, 38(1), 118-147.</p>	Journal Entry #9  <i>Briefing Note due Monday, March 22 at 5 pm</i>
<b>Week 11 –</b> March 23	<p><b>Career Workshop:</b> How to plan next steps, talk about your qualifications, and practice geography (<i>Guest speaker</i> Richard Myers, Certified Career Development Practitioner At UVic Career Educator for Social Sciences)</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Look through the various pages on the UVic Career Services portal: <a href="http://uvic.ca/coopandcareer/career/index.php">uvic.ca/coopandcareer/career/index.php</a></p>	Journal Entry #10
<b>Week 12 –</b> March 30	<b>Group study</b> (no class): Use this time to work on your final project and practice your presentation	
<b>Week 13 –</b>	<b>Term Project Presentations</b>	<i>Class participation</i>

April 6	Written component of final group assignment due April 13 at 5 PM	statement due Thursday, April 8 at 5 pm
---------	--	---

### 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 your thoughtful response to that information. Therefore, please pay special attention to the readings in advance of guest speakers. Since you will 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. Having your video on and engaging with them is also a sign of respect and appreciation for their time and effort.

---

### POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Missing or late journal entries will not be marked. For the Indicator, Briefing Note and Term Project, 10% will be deducted for every day the assignment is late. This policy is to ensure fairness to students who do meet the deadlines. Please mark all important dates in your calendar.

### 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](http://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](http://uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/index.php).

The Instructor reserves the right to use plagiarism detection software programs, web searches, discussions with other instructors, or other methods to investigate evidence of plagiarism in all submitted materials.

### 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/](http://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 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](http://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](mailto:svpcoordinator@uvic.ca)

Web: [uvic.ca/svp](http://uvic.ca/svp)

## **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 via MyPage 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 and interacting with online resources 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](mailto:onlineconduct@uvic.ca)

## **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).

## **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 students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.* <https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php>