



COURSE OUTLINE (v1.2)
ADVANCED TOPICS IN GEOGRAPHY: INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM
Meeting Time: Wednesdays--2:30-5:20 PM, Clearihue Building A329

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12-2 or by appointment, in-person and virtually
Office Location: David Turpin Building B306 and via Zoom
Contact: dsmiles@uvic.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In an era of climate change and climate crisis, mitigation and adaptation strategies are among some of the most pressing issues of our times. Indigenous nations have long struggled with questions of environmental degradation through the processes of settler colonialism and have taken actions accordingly to try and adapt and mitigate effects of climate change. In many cases, this has taken the form of struggle and resistance against colonial structures and against agents of climate change, such as energy production and changes to the physical environment.

These acts of struggle, such as protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, ongoing protests against Enbridge's Line 3, and the Unisto'ten camp here in British Columbia, have captured the public consciousness in recent years. However, these actions are simply part of a long arc of Indigenous resistance and struggle surrounding the environment that stretches back decades. These actions, based in both performative actions and every day actions, are part of a broader arc of Indigenous resistance against settler colonialism.

In this course, we will trace the history of settler colonialism in North America (and selected other settler colonies such as Australia), exploring the ways in which colonization has wrought tremendous changes to Indigenous environments. We then will turn our attention to the role of Indigenous environmental activism amidst the rise of Indigenous activism in the 1960s and 1970s. We then devote attention to the efforts of tribes in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s to secure and assert treaty rights related to the environment. We then return to the current upswelling of Indigenous environmental activism, contemplating what this may mean for the environment, including both humans and more-than-human kin. Finally, we conclude this course by looking towards Indigenous conceptions of the future of their natural and political environments and what they might look like in an era of climate crisis.

KEY THEMES: Indigenous geographies, Indigenous environmental history, settler colonialism, activism, Indigenous futures

REQUIRED TEXTS:

We do not have a textbook in this course. I feel that there is not a single textbook that can authoritatively speak on the subject of Indigenous environmental activism, and at any rate, I do not

want to burden you with extra financial cost for a textbook that we would use very infrequently. I would much rather highlight the work of Indigenous scholars and activists who are deeply engaged with this work. Therefore, our required texts will consist of journal articles, book chapters, zines and other publications written primarily by Indigenous authors and communities. I will post all required and supplemental media/readings on Brightspace.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Apply geographic and historical concepts and methods to examine the rise and growth of Indigenous environmental activism over the last 50 years.
- Assess their own place in the world, how it might change as a result of climate change/climate crisis, and how Indigenous viewpoints and methodologies might help mitigate these effects or allow for adaptation to take place.
- Define settler colonialism, define indigeneity, and understand the relationship between the two.
- Understand the history of environmental changes in the United States and Canada, and how they have affected Indigenous peoples
- Identify and discuss processes of global climate change and their effects on Indigenous peoples
- Understand the ways that processes of climate change and environmental injustice have harmed and continue to harm Indigenous communities

EVALUATION

Grade Breakdown	%
Weekly Reflections/Field Notes	45
Class Assignments	25
Final Project	30

Weekly Reflections (45%)

Each week, you will be asked to write a 2 to 3 page (maximum of 3 pages, double-spaced) reflection. What I am looking for is your reactions and your thoughts on what we've covered in class that particular week. There are no wrong ways of reflecting on what you've learned in class, but I am really wanting to 'hear' (see) your thoughts about the week's topic. Think of these as a form of 'field notes' about how you're thinking about the topics! These reflections are meant to be very low stakes ways that allow me to see how you're thinking about the topics we've covered—as long as you are completing them, you will get full credit. **Writing reflections will not be due during the reading break week.**

In-Class Assignments/Homeworks (Approx. 25%)

Besides the lectures, we will also devote significant time towards discussing the readings and lectures in class, in a seminar-style setting. Students should come to class prepared and ready to discuss and contribute to the larger discussion. Throughout the semester, there will be small in-class assignments, such as our weekly graded discussions, or other activities as I see fit to assign. There will also be some assignments that you will work on outside of class, such as ArcGIS-based assignments. These will be announced as they come up.

I recognize that for some students, "in-person" participation may be anxiety inducing and difficult to do in a large class setting. Therefore, these assignments are meant to find alternative ways for students to

show that they are engaging with the course material and the lectures/guest lectures without having to do so in a way that can make them uncomfortable.

Final Paper (30%)

The final assignment in this course will be the final paper/project, which will be due during the finals period. This assignment, which will be based on a topic chosen by the student and approved by me, will critically engage with the chosen topic and will seek to generate unique and/or interesting insights that the student uncovers through their research. My hope is that for undergraduate students, you will produce a paper that can serve as the nucleus of an undergraduate honours thesis or other capstone product in your undergraduate careers. If writing a paper is not your forte, you may choose to pursue a project, such as an artistic endeavour or other form of knowledge production, my hope is that your work will be of a similar professional quality.

For graduate students enrolled in this course, I will encourage you to develop a paper that could one day be submitted as a manuscript to an academic journal.

We will be working through the process of working on this assignment throughout the second half of the semester, including learning about components of a research paper such as literature searches and analysis; hopefully this will make it so that the process induces as little anxiety as possible!

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

We will have a Brightspace page for the course, where you can find a schedule and download the readings for each week. Additionally, I will provide a “Q & A” discussion forum on Brightspace for students to talk to me and each other about any questions they may have about the readings.

So, if this applies to you, as it likely will to everyone this semester, consult the **Course Q&A discussion** in Brightspace and use the search function. I check and respond to these messages regularly and you may find that I’ve already addressed your question. If you don’t find an answer, post your question to the discussion board. Your classmates may provide an answer before me.

The Course Q&A discussion is not appropriate for questions about your grade, illness, etc. In those situations, an e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will typically check and reply to e-mails and messages in the discussion boards every **24 hours on school days, but please allow up to 48 hours.**

POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late take-home work is subject to a 10% penalty per day late. So, for example, if an assignment is due on Wednesday, if a student turns it in the following Wednesday, it will be subject to a 70% points penalty. The final assignment will also be subject to a late penalty—we will discuss this in class towards the end of the semester. **In-class work cannot be made up except in extenuating circumstances.**

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

In a course that meets once a week for a total of 12 meetings, attendance is very vital. Attendance is ‘mandatory’ in that you will do best in the course if you are attending class meetings and engaging with the material. While I do not ‘take attendance’ during each course meeting, I find that it is generally very easy to tell who is not attending or engaging with the class. In the case where we have a graded discussion or similar activity in class, if you are not in attendance, you cannot receive the points. If you miss enough classes, it will be difficult for you to receive a good grade in the course. Simply put, if you are making a sincere effort to show up and participate, no matter in what form the participation takes, I will recognize that. You will never be penalized for being shy or not ‘speaking up’ in class.

If you have a genuine reason (known medical condition, a pile-up of due assignments on other courses, ROTC, athletics teams, job interview, religious obligations etc.) for being unable to complete work on time, then some flexibility is possible—please let me know and we can talk about it. Additionally, given the circumstances surrounding the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, if there are ongoing medical, personal, or other issues that are likely to affect your work all semester, then please contact me to discuss the situation. I am willing to make accommodations and be flexible if it will help you be successful in this course.

MASK POLICY

Per B.C. provincial public health order, you are **required to wear a mask in class**, and must continue to do so until the health order and/or University policy related to mask wearing is amended/rescinded. The policy on masks in this class will always reflect current provincial and University policy.

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**.

UVic Policy on Academic Integrity: web.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html

Specific Policies for this course:

- **Assignments:** You must complete all assignments yourself, without any external help or communication, unless the instructions specifically say something else.
Your written assignments should be your own original work. You should follow a consistent citation style (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago) to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are free to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in. This also goes for using any University writing resources. Limited editing of your assignments is permitted but the overwhelming majority of what you turn in must be your own.
- **Reusing past work:** In general, you are prohibited in University courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss this with me before submitting it.
- **Collaboration and informal peer-review:** The course includes several opportunities for collaboration with your classmates. While study groups and peer-review of written work is encouraged, remember that copying answers is not permitted. If you're unsure about a particular situation, please feel free to ask me ahead of time.

If you have any questions or doubts, talk to me. 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 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

COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. There will be two opportunities to provide feedback—the first opportunity will take place around Week 7 and will provide an opportunity for you to give feedback on the course so far—this will help me to make adjustments going forward. Additionally, 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	Topics:
1	September 8th	Syllabus, introduction to settler colonialism and the environment—historical perspectives (Colonization to early 20th century) Reading reflection/field notes due 9/14
2	September 15th	Settler colonialism and the environment II: Indigenous dystopias (1940-1970) Reading reflection/field notes due 9/21
3	September 22nd	Red Power and the Environment Reading reflection/field notes due 9/28
	September 24th	Last day to add courses for Fall Term
4	September 29th	Indigenous Sovereignty and the Environment (1970-2000) Reading reflection/field notes due 10/5
5	October 6th	Environmental Racism & Environmental Justice Reading reflection/field notes due 10/12

6	October 13th	Indigenous Environmental activism case study #1: Pipelines Reading reflection/field notes due 10/19
7	October 20th	Indigenous environmental activism, case study #2: Tribal Cultural Resource Management/Protection Reading reflection/field notes due 10/26
8	October 27th	Indigenous environmental activism, case study #3: British Columbia—Unis'tot'en and Fairy Creek Reading reflection/field notes due 11/2
	October 31st	Last day to drop Fall Term courses without penalty of failure
9	November 3rd	Anthropocene/Climate Crisis—Human Dimensions Reading reflection/field notes due 11/9
10	November 10th	Reading Break—NO CLASS
11	November 17th	Indigenous Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Reading reflection/field notes due 11/23
12	November 24th	Indigenous (Environmental) Futurisms I Reading reflection/field notes due 11/30
13	December 1st	Indigenous (Environmental) Futurisms II/Course Wrap-Up Reading reflection/field notes due 12/7

DISCLAIMER

The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Any changes will be communicated to students ahead of time and will not result in extra burden to students.

FACULTY FEEDBACK AND RESPONSE TIME:

The following list will give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course.

Grading and Feedback:

Most assignments are small and will usually be graded within a few days. For any larger assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7 days**.

E-mail:

I will typically respond to e-mails within **24 hours on school days, but please allow up to 48 hours. I do not mind being e-mailed on the weekends, but I do ask that you reserve this to emergencies/urgent situations only.**

Office Hours:

I will offer office hours in person, and virtually through Zoom. **Please attend office hours if you have questions and are able to attend—doing so will help me to get to know you better as a student and**

can allow me to provide more one-on-one help with course concepts.

OTHER TOPICS

Email/In-Person Decorum:

Professional communication is expected at all times; I will always treat you with respect in my communications, so we ask that you do the same. Feel free to address me by my first name in e-mail communications or in person (i.e. Dear Deondre), but **please do address me by name**. If you want to use an honorific, “Dr. Smiles” works fine in all communications.

When e-mailing me, please include “GEOG 491” in the subject line so that I know it is regarding class. The exception is if you are messaging me on Brightspace, it will automatically let me know.

DISCUSSION, COMMUNICATION AND WRITING GUIDELINES

The following are general expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** Written assignments should have a professional tone. For discussions and other communication there is no need to act as if you were writing a research paper, but you should still remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. If you want feedback on your writing, I am always happy to provide it.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online or in-person. **Homophobic, racist, xenophobic and sexist language is not tolerated in my class. If you are in violation of this policy, I will ask you to meet with me in office hours to discuss your conduct in class. A second violation will result in my recommendation that you drop the class.**
- **Electronics usage:** The use of personal laptops or tablets for note-taking purposes is permitted and encouraged. Doing anything on your laptops and/or tablets that is not related to class is discouraged. The use of your phone during class is also discouraged. If I find that you are extremely distracted during class, I will likely reach out to you for a chat about what we can do to make sure you are more ‘present’ in class.
- **Backing up your work:** Please make sure you are saving your work! Technical issues can happen with computers and I don't want you to lose any work that you have spent time and effort on. I highly recommend saving your work in multiple places, such as an external hard drive, the ‘cloud’, a flash drive, etc.

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*