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COURSE OUTLINE

**Environment and Sustainability in Practice**

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**Class meeting times:** Thursdays 2:30 to 5:20 pm in Clearihue Building A329

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

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2-3 PM on Zoom or DTB B324, or email me for appointment

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

**Brightspace page:** <https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/153953>

**Territory Acknowledgement**

*We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.*

For more information on local reconciliation efforts, please visit the UVic [First Peoples House](#)

**Expectations for online participation:** *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first part of this course is 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 and in-person 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 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. 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 at [uvic.zoom.us](https://uvic.zoom.us) **before** entering the session below.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Our home, planet Earth, is witnessing environmental and human change at an unprecedented rate. Humanity’s accelerating impacts on natural systems are so dynamic that scientists, policy makers, business, and citizens are scrambling to keep up. Although our understanding of the human impacts on ecosystems is more sophisticated than ever, the demand for data-driven and science-based environmental policy continues to be urgent and growing. At the same time, the gap between policy design and policy implementation is growing. Significant progress is being made to mitigate and adapt to

anthropogenic change, but I would argue that never before has this planet needed geographers like yourselves more critically. With our interdisciplinary background, geographers are best placed to connect the dots and shorten the gaps between science, policy, and action.

In this course, you will learn about how to apply theory and concepts of environmental sustainability *in practice*. Our overarching theme is decision making. Understanding how societies make decisions through their formal and informal governance processes is at the core of natural resource management and environmental sustainability. Equitable, transparent, and accountable decision making has become more urgent but also more complex. The core actors (sometimes called stakeholders) whose unique yet interdependent roles we will focus on include government, business, and community (largely defined). As the rate of environmental change accelerates, the world is more globally integrated than it has ever been. As geographers, we acutely appreciate scale, which means that our personal and collective decisions not only affect our immediate surroundings, but 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. The challenges to sustainable and just transitions are plentiful, but so are the opportunities.

This course is a capstone seminar course in applied geography for students interested in environmental sustainability and is best taken in the final term of your 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 class presentations (by the instructor and yourselves), reading discussions, guest speakers, and in-class activities, you will become aware of the socioeconomic justice considerations of modern-day approaches to regulating environmental and social externalities. I will re-introduce the concepts that most of you probably already learned about and explain how these concepts and approaches are applied in practice. Through case studies and engagement activities, we will unpack decision making, which is the foundation upon which our contemporary yet path-dependent human-environment interactions exist. The course culminates in your 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. Transdisciplinary means that the research I do is in collaboration with ‘practitioners’ – including governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and Indigenous communities – to directly respond 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 am a research-stream Assistant Professor at UVic’s Department of Geography. I have a PhD in Environment and Natural Resources Sciences from the University of Freiburg (Germany) in collaboration with Yale University. My research focus is the political geography of natural resources governance, with special interest in how global food systems impact people and ecosystems.

Prior to entering academia, **I worked for eight years as an environmental sustainability practitioner** in over a dozen countries in the Global South and was based in Cameroon for three years managing a regional office in Central and West Africa focused on forest and land use policy. I led interdisciplinary projects focused on climate mitigation and adaptation in the forest sector in Vanuatu, Suriname, Ethiopia, Zambia, Côte d’Ivoire, and Ghana. This work exposed me to the importance of collaboration and communication between governments, international agencies, 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.

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### 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.**

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### 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;
- practice your articulation skills, both orally and in writing, including in a (simulated) multi-stakeholder setting, allowing you to share your perspective in an effective and respectful manner (be ready to engage in the weekly seminars);
- have a working knowledge of the history, major concepts, and approaches to natural resource governance (i.e. decision making);
- understand the increasing complexity and challenges of balancing ecological and socio-economic values in decision processes and the demand for citizen involvement;
- learn how to quickly and effectively draw conclusions and implications in situations where you are overloaded with information from multiple and conflicting sources; 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 three-hour class once per week. In addition, students are expected to spend a minimum of an *additional* 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 with the material and the learning process of your classmates, 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, including leading an opening discussion– 15%
2. Weekly blog, including personal reflections 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%

Note: All assignments and the weekly discussions are submitted on Brightspace, where you can find detailed instructions, and evaluation rubrics. *You are welcome and encouraged to submit assignments early!*

**Seminar participation (15%):** On designated weeks, two groups of students will lead 15-minute discussions, one focused on a current event that involves a decision affecting people and the natural environment; and the other focused on engaging your peers in a discussion of that week's reading. This is not meant to be a lecture but rather an opportunity to engage the class in a discussion on key themes,

personal reflections, and questions arising as the course progresses. To break down the evaluation of this component: 7.5% of your grade will go toward your leading of that week's discussion and 7.5% 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 the latter part of the course. Consider the student-led discussion is a low-stakes opportunity to practice your public speaking skills in a friendly and supportive environment.

**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 experience. 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 Monday of the week following class. Here I encourage you to read and react on Brightspace to each others' 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%):** Reflecting real-world situations that require teamwork, 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. *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 second-to-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.

### **Attendance**

Active participation in this class is worth 15% of your grade. While I do not take attendance, I will probably notice if you are consistently absent. I understand that you are all mature students who have busy schedules and agendas, so its fine if you need to miss a class or two. Keep in mind however, that because we meet only 13 times, missing two classes means that you are missing ~15% of the course material. You don't need to email me if you are going to miss class unless you are leading a discussion that day. Please check Brightspace and ask a classmate for their notes to stay up to date on the material we are covering.

## GRADING SYSTEM

As per the Academic Calendar:

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
<b>A+</b> <b>A</b> <b>A-</b>	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> <b>B</b> <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.
<b>C+</b> <b>C</b>	3 2	65-69% 60-64%	<b>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory.</b> These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
<b>D</b>	1	50-59%	<b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
<b>F</b>	0	0-49%	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.
<b>N</b>	0	0-49%	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

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## 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

Brightspace 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 general inquiries about this course, please first use the “Questions to the instructor” discussion in 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. Please aim to **ensure the professionalism of your email** communication, and have a look at this humorous [post](#), which is actually pretty helpful. Also, please use your official UVic email account (@uvic.ca) to ensure that your email does not land in my junk box.

## WEEKLY CALENDAR

Please note important UVic calendar dates: [www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates](http://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates)

January 26th is the last day for adding courses for this semester and February 28th is the last day for withdrawing without penalty of failure.

**Note: Additional readings will be posted on Brightspace.**

Date	Topic and reading	Assignments Due (Journals due by 5 PM Monday)
Week 1 – January 13	<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 20	<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> Wallace, R. L., Greenburg, J., &amp; Clark, S. G. (2020). Confronting anxiety and despair in environmental studies and sciences: an analysis and guide for students and faculty. <i>Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences</i>, 10(2), 148-155.</p>	Journal Entry #2
Week 3 – January 27	<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 3	<p><b>Sustainability tools in practice:</b> A look at transparency – 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 10	<p><b>Business: Savior or Culprit?</b> The role of transnational corporations for biosphere stewardship</p> <p>Reading: 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>	Journal Entry #5  <i>Indicator assignment due Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> at 5pm</i>
Week 6 – February 17	<p><b>Environmental Justice:</b> When and how well-intentioned policies have adverse impacts on the most vulnerable</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Fletcher, M. S., Hamilton, R., Dressler, W., &amp; Palmer, L. (2021). Indigenous knowledge and the shackles of</p>	Journal Entry #6

	wilderness. <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i> , 118(40).	
<b>Week 7</b> February 24	Reading Break – no classes	
<b>Week 8 –</b> March 3	<b>All Government is local:</b> Climate politics in our backyard with guest speaker <a href="#">Kenneth Porter</a> , Senior Policy Analyst at BC Public Service (UVic Geography undergrad)  <b>Reading:</b> CleanBC: <a href="#">Roadmap to 2030</a>	Journal Entry #7
<b>Week 9 –</b> March 10	<b>Stakeholder Salience:</b> Multi-stakeholder negotiations from theory to practice  <b>Reading:</b> Garcia et al. (2020). The global forest transition as a human affair. <i>One Earth</i> , 2(5), 417-428.	Journal Entry #8  <i>Briefing Note due March 15 at 5 pm</i>
<b>Week 10 –</b> March 17	<b>Stakeholder negotiation:</b> The Northern Gateway Pipeline  <b>Reading:</b> Case material- see Brightspace	Journal Entry #9
<b>Week 11 –</b> March 24	<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)  <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>	Journal Entry #10
<b>Week 12 –</b> March 31	<b>Term Project Presentations</b>	<i>Class participation statement due April 4 at 5 pm</i>
<b>Week 13 –</b> April 7	<b>Course conclusions</b>	<i>Final paper due April 15<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm.</i>

#### 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.

## **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, and get started early on the assignments.

## **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.

Please also be aware of UVic's Student Code of Conduct: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/advising/advice-support/academic-units/student-code-of-conduct/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/](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.

## **UNIQUE NEEDS**

If you require *special accommodations* (e.g., flexibility with deadlines), please meet with me to discuss as soon as possible. If you have an *ongoing problem* (e.g., an emotional or physical health concern) that may present challenges to meeting the expectations, please talk to me as soon as possible, so that I can support you in meeting your goals. You do not have to wait for a crisis to ask for help!

## **OPEN COMMUNICATION**

If, for any reason, you are unhappy with or uncomfortable in this course, please let me know immediately. Providing a safe, healthy, productive, and supportive environment is my priority.

## **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. 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>