“The conquest of the earth . . . is not a pretty thing when you look into it . . .”

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 1899

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The evidence of humanity’s impact on the plant is overwhelming. It has been suggested we are entering a new period in geological time, the Anthropocene (Age of Humanity) such that humans are now drivers of environmental change on a scale that is unique in Earth’s history. The impacts include climate change, mass animal extinction, alteration to systems of nutrient cycling, massive land-use change and ocean acidification. This course focuses on the following:

**Major specific areas of inquiry**

The course is based on three main themes integral to the Anthropocene. Firstly, we examine the major events in human history and pre-history and their impact on the geological record through 5 main periods of transition. This includes Pleistocene impacts especially the megafaunal extinction, origins and impacts of farming, the “Columbian Exchange” of New and Old World species, industrialization and “The Great Acceleration” beginning in the 1950s (e.g., major expansion in human populations, development of plastics and industrial chemicals, defaunation).

Secondly, we focus further on the phenomena of defaunation (animal extinctions) including biogeographic patterns, causes and consequences. This includes the examination of the drivers (e.g., overexploitation and habitat loss), cascading effects on other species and ecosystem functions, and evolutionary consequences.

We conclude with a critique of ways forward. This includes de-extinction and re-wilding to reverse defaunation. More general discussion considers the bold and innovative actions required by all sectors of society to transform historical relationships between human populations and the planet, and to prevent events that will be catastrophic to nature, the Earth system and humanity.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of the course students should be able to:
• explain how the concept of the Anthropocene arose
• identify the environmental conditions and indicators associated with the Anthropocene
• summarize the various arguments and evidence as to when the Anthropocene began
• compare and contrast the ways in which different scientific-based perspectives understand and apply the Anthropocene concept
• understand how defaunation from biodiversity, ecosystem services and biogeographic perspectives has been particularly affected
• reflect upon and help identify the ways forward for societies and individuals to adjust to and cope with the Anthropocene

Course Philosophy:

Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself

Chinese Proverb

GREAT RESOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE WITH WRITING

and/or


TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS

Lectures. Attending class regularly throughout the term is integral to successfully completing this course. Power-point and overhead materials are not available outside of class. Please arrive on time. Drop me an email if you cannot make class.

CourseSpaces learning management systems (LMS) will serve as a major conduit of information in this course (http://coursespaces.uvic.ca). This is where I will post important resources that should help you and includes course information, selected lecture overheads, and important dates/announcements. Please visit often. If you are having difficulty logging in or password problems, contact the Computer Help Desk Email: helpdesk@uvic.ca, Tel: 250-721-7687

Cell phones must be turned off or silenced during lectures.

Course Grading

Exam 1 – October 10 20%
Three page annotated proposal AND outline for Term paper 10%
–October 17
Exam 2 – November 21 25%
Pecha Kucha - November 26 – Dec 3 10%
2 Person Group Creative Project or
Individual Personal Manifesto Nov 28 10%
Research Paper – December 5 20%

Attendance and participation 5%

*Personal Manifesto for “Liiving the Anthropocene”* — You will articulate through writing, video, or other media how the Anthropocene guides the obligations, responsibilities, ambitions, hopes, strategies and practices you would like to embrace for living in the Anthropocene.

(Idea for Personal Manifesto thanks to Dr. Stephen Zavestoski, University of San Francisco)

*Creative Project* - You will create a visualization, a map, an infographic, an art work, an interactive website, or another way of grasping and conveying the effects of the Anthropocene on society and / or nature.

*Term paper* – You will address how the Anthropocene has or might shape our understanding of a core concept in environmental management.

**Participation:** this class requires your attendance and engaged participation. Everyone is allowed two free, no-questions-asked absences over the courses of the semester. Use them wisely. Every subsequent absence will negatively affect your participation grade.

**Policy on Late Assignments**

Assignments must be tendered by 4:30 pm on the due date. Receipt after this is deemed late. All assignments must be submitted as a hard copy unless otherwise specified.

Late assignments will be penalized 20% per day (including weekends and holidays). Exceptions will only be granted for documented medical or compassionate reasons. Please inform me of your situation promptly and present written proof within five working days.

Conflicts with holidays or travel plans are not considered an acceptable reason to apply for a deferred exam or assignment extension.

**UVic Grading System**

As noted in the UVic calendar

“A primary purpose of evaluation and grading is to further effective teaching and learning. The table on this webpage shows the official grading system for final assessments of student performance. “

[https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-05/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html](https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-05/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html)
**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade point value</th>
<th>Grade scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85-89%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80-84%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65-69%</td>
<td>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60-64%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50-59%</td>
<td>Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-49%</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-49%</td>
<td>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity matters are governed by UVic’s Policy on Academic Integrity (http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html), which now includes provisions for the “Unauthorized Use of an Editor”. Please make sure that you are familiar with this policy.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Victoria. Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations, for referencing your sources, or unauthorized use of an editor, please familiarize yourself with the University policy on academic integrity found in the Undergraduate Calendar at the following website. http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html.

Infractions will be dealt with in accordance with University policy. Commonly, the penalty for any form of cheating/plagiarism is a grade of F on the tests or laboratory assignments, or a final grade of F in the course. However, depending on the severity of the case other penalties may include a record on the student’s transcript or expulsion.

To help avoid plagiarism and cheating please see this guide (http://library.uvic.ca/instruction/cite/plagiarism.html).
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 https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/). The RCSD 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.

Course Evaluation

Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey of your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing me with feedback on the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for future students. 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.

Help with Writing?

Centre for Academic Communication (CAC) uvic.mywconline.com

CAC tutors can help you compose better essays, integrate your research and ideas, and become a more efficient writer. We also help students with all areas of academic communication, including giving great presentations, understanding academic integrity, and knowing the academic expectations of undergraduate and graduate work. We will help you acquire the skills necessary to be an effective, efficient communicator in the university environment. We won't edit or fix your work for you; rather, we focus on your role in the process, allowing you to develop your abilities and confidence as a communicator.

Important Dates

Winter Session - First Term

Sep 3 Monday Labour Day (University closed)
Sep 5 Wednesday First term classes begin for all faculties
Sep 18 Tuesday Last day for 100% reduction of tuition fees for standard first term and full year courses.
Sep 21 Friday Last day for adding courses that begin in the first term.
Sep 30 Sunday Last day for paying first term fees without penalty
Oct 8 Monday Thanksgiving Day (University closed)
Oct 31 Wednesday Last day for paying first term fees without penalty
Nov 12-14 Mon-Wednesday Reading Break
Dec 5 Wednesday Last day of classes in first term

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.
Classes and exams cancelled from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
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.