

Course Outline: 1021G Section 550

Environmental Issues

Winter 2012

Huron University College

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Christie Stewart
The Centre for Environment and Sustainability
Office locations: Huron University College Rm V126
(also main campus Collip Bldg Rm 108)
Office hours: Appointments scheduled by email
Email: cstewa26@uwo.ca

Course Information

Pre- or co-requisite: None

Class lectures: Mon., Wed. and Fri. 10:30-11:30; Huron University College Rm W112

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe. ~ John Muir

Course description:

Environmental Issues 1021 is intended to provide learners with an appreciation and understanding of the interconnectedness of environmental issues that currently plague us. Recently, many significant environmental issues have captured the media headlines, been debated and researched in academia and probably discussed in your homes: the nuclear power plant incidents in Japan, the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster and, Copenhagen Climate Conference and climate change, alternative and renewable energy, the Alberta oil sands and the Cancun Climate Conference. These issues surround us and affect our daily lives, whether we understand the connection or not. This course is intended to provide you with a basic scientific understanding of the environmental issues and an ability to critically assess these issues as discussed in the media. Knowledge and understanding of these issues will help develop your decision-making skills that will aid you making more sustainable choices. We will use case studies and media stories as jumping points to help illustrate the many environmental issues we face. By the end of this course you should be able to answer the questions “Why should I care?” and “What does it mean?” with respect to environmental issues in the media.

Some weeks we will have 2 lecture hours and 1 hour of tutorial/group work. You are expected to attend the non-lecture components of class. **THIS IS AN ESSAY COURSE**; therefore writing is a significant component. The content and quality of your writing in all written submissions will be assessed. You will write individual essays as well as work in groups for some assignments. You will

be provided detailed instructions regarding your writing assignments and where to receive writing assistance at a later date.

Course objectives:

1. Make connections between humans, their behaviours and environmental issues and solutions.
2. Recognize that environmental issues are multi-faceted and challenges are global.
3. Develop environmental literacy and critical thinking skills.
4. Learn to navigate various media sources (TV, newspapers, journals, magazines etc.) and evaluate environmental issues presented in them through well formulated questions, information collection, analysis, interpretation, information integration and healthy scepticism.
5. Understand the scientific concepts behind environmental issues addressed in media, policy, legislation and business decisions.
6. Use the skills developed in this class to make informed and well thought-out life choices regarding environmental issues.

Required Texts

There is no text book to purchase for this course; however, the textbook “Living in the Environment: concepts, connections and solutions” by Miller and Spoolman will be put on 24 hour reserve in the Taylor Library as a resource. Other required reading material will be distributed in class or made available on WebCT.

Evaluation and Grading

Grading plan:

Participation	5% (participation, peer evaluations, attendance on group work days)
News story assignment	5% (two parts)
Research article summary	8% (two drafts)
Essay	17% (includes outline)
Public communication	15% (poster or video; group work)
Mid-term Test	20% (Feb. 29th ; multiple choice, short answer, long answer)
Final Exam	30% (date and location TBA; multiple choice, short answer, long answer)

NOTE: In order to pass the course, it is mandatory that you complete the essay. In-class group work sessions and the research information session are also mandatory.

If you miss any mandatory components due to illness or serious circumstances, you are responsible for going through the proper steps for academic accommodation (See below for steps). Your absence must be approved by the Dean’s office.

Date*	Lecture subject	Topics*	Due dates
Jan. 9	Class introduction	Course expectations; Essay topics distributed; Assignments explained briefly	
Jan. 11, 13	Environmental philosophy	Environmental philosophies and points of view; details of first assignment explained	Learning style DUE
Jan. 16	Environmental politics	Political parties and the environment; sustainable growth, ecological value, human and natural capital, GDP; details of second assignment explained	Assignment topic choices DUE 16th at midnight
Jan. 18, 20	Environmental movement	American Experience: Earth Days video	Assignment topics and groups assigned; Mandatory meeting with groups on 18th
Jan. 23	Resource assistance for assignments and essay	<u>Mandatory class</u>	News story collection DUE on 23rd
Jan. 25	Environmental and ecological economics	Sustainable growth, ecological value, human and natural capital, GDP	
Jan. 27, 30, Feb. 1	Food and Land	Soil, food consumption patterns, green revolution; food chains, problems with soil; industrial food production, pesticides, aquaculture, energy efficient food	News story summary and table DUE on 27th; Specific essay subject choice DUE on 1st
Feb. 3	Peer editing circle	READ instructions before coming to class!!! In class exercise; participation grade	Research article summary first draft DUE
Feb. 6	Food and Land cont'd		Initial peer evaluation DUE
Feb. 8	Essay help	<u>Mandatory class:</u> How to write an essay in science; Source importance	
Feb. 10, 13, 15	Food and Land cont'd		Research article summary final draft DUE on 10th
Feb. 17	Midterm review; In-text citation lesson	Examples of questions and material review	
Feb 20-24	Spring Break	NO CLASS	
Feb. 27	Food and Land cont'd	Pesticides: Herbicides, fungicides, insecticides; Oh my!	
Feb. 29	MIDTERM EXAM	IN CLASS	MIDTERM
Mar. 2, 5	Food and Land cont'd	Forestry and biodiversity; Invasive species and natural disasters	
Mar. 7,	Air	Air pollution sources and types;	Essay outline DUE

9, 12		Climate change, Ozone	on the 9 th
Mar. 14, 16, 19	Water	Water quantity, water pollution	
Mar. 19, 21	Water cont'd	Consumption patterns, waste types, waste mitigation, waste disposal, recycling, composting	
Mar. 23	Group work	Mandatory class: Discuss and decide on public education platform; Work on project	ESSAY DUE
Mar. 26	Waste		
Mar. 28	Group work	Mandatory class: Work on project	
Mar. 30	Waste cont'd		
April 2	Group work: final day	Mandatory class: Work on project	
April 4	Project assessment day!	Environmental Expo	Final project DUE
April 9	The Great Squeeze	Summary of environmental issues	
April 11	The Great Squeeze cont'd, Exam review	Examples of questions and review of material	Final peer evaluation DUE

***Note: Lecture schedule is a rough outline. Student questions and interest may change schedule. Issues that arise in the media during the course may be discussed in place of course material.**

Course Policies and Other Information

Late assignment penalty:

There will be a 5% penalty for each day your assignments/essays are late (e.g., if you submit it in 1.0 day late, you will receive 0.95 of the graded mark for your effort). Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class.

Use of WebCT:

- **I will attempt to make this course as paperless as possible, therefore there will be heavy reliance on WebCT for information exchange**
- Lecture notes, announcements, links, assignments and resources of interest will be posted on WebCT
- Regularly (**at least twice/week**) log on to the course website for class announcements or postings. This will be our main point of contact outside of class and office hours. If I'm online, you are welcome to use the chat function.
- The **lecture notes are only meant to provide an OUTLINE of lectures**. You are responsible for adding information presented in class. This extra information is testable.
- Discussion and questions regarding environmental issues in class and on WebCT is encouraged between students.

How to access WebCT:

Go to <http://webct.uwo.ca> and log into the system using your UWO user name and password (*i.e.* same ones used to access your Western email account)

Classroom/Online Environment Rules of Conduct:

1. ***All technology not being used for class purposes should be turned off, disabled or not used*** (i.e. cell phone ringers, texting, messaging, Facebook™-ing, twitter™-ing). Answering emails, surfing the web and chatting online are not acceptable uses of technology in the classroom. **Remember**, other people around you can see what you are doing on your laptop. This can be a distraction to your classmates. Students using laptops for class purposes are required to sit in the first or back rows.
2. **Class starts on time.** If you come in late, please do so quietly using the back door, if available. You are responsible for the material presented and obtaining handouts if you arrive late or miss a class.
3. **Please treat all class members, grading assistants and the professor with respect in class and in the web environment.** This includes keeping noise levels down during class. On WebCT, be respectful of the opinions and thoughts of other classmates posted in discussion forums. Derogatory and offensive remarks and responses are not acceptable.

Email Policy

1. **Check your Western email account regularly as this is the email contact that will be used by your professor or grading assistant.**
2. **It is important that you include "1021G" plus your section number in the subject of any emails that you send.** This will help us sort the many emails received every day and respond as quickly as possible.
3. Generally, all emails will be responded to within **48 hours during weekdays** (not including holidays). Emails will *usually* be addressed during regular work hours (9-5). We may choose, at our discretion, to respond outside these hours, depending on availability.

Electronic Submission of Assignments and Essay

See further details below regarding the University's plagiarism and Academic offences rules.

To submit your assignments or essay to *Turnitin*:

1. Go to <http://webct.uwo.ca/>
2. Login using your UWO username and password (same as your e-mail)
3. Click on Article portfolio or Public communication or Essay Information folder.
4. Click on the Article portfolio or Public communication or Essay submission icon.
5. Click on the **Upload** button to upload your assignment and follow the prompts to complete the submission process. Do not forget to do this step or your assignment will not properly upload.

Accommodation for Medical Illness or Other Serious Circumstances

If you are unable to meet **ANY** course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstance, you must provide valid medical documentation or other supporting documentation to the Dean's office as soon as possible and contact the instructor immediately.

For **non-medical** grounds or for **medical grounds when work represents less than 10%** of the overall grade for the course, students seeking academic accommodation must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the instructor. Missed assignments less than 10% of the course grade can have the grade weight added to the midterm or final exam, if you choose (with approved accommodation). It is your responsibility to make alternative arrangements with the instructor once the accommodation has been approved by the Dean's office and the instructor has been informed.

In the event of a missed final exam, a "Recommendation of Special Examination" form must be obtained from the Dean's Office immediately. Please see for further information:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Student's requiring academic accommodation due to illness for any assignment/exam should use the Student Medical Certificate when visiting an off-campus medical facility or request a Record's Release Form (located in the Dean's Office) if you visit Student Health Services.

The Student Medical Certification form can be downloaded from this link:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>

Tips for Course Success

- Determine your Learning Style
- Attend class, print lecture notes, pay attention and take notes
- Take part in class discussions
- **FOLLOW course instructions that you are provided**
- Review, review, review; cramming doesn't work

Available Support Services

Program and Academic Counselling

Environmental Science students registered at Huron who require advice about modules and courses in should contact Dean Mark Blagrove, mblagrav@huron.uwo.ca. Students should contact Debbie Chadwick or Kent Robinson, Academic Counsellor on other academic matters. See the Academic Counselling website for information on services offered.

http://www.huronuc.ca/students/service_centre/academic_counselling/

Writing Services at Huron University College are available to students to assist with improving writing skills.

http://www.huronuc.ca/student_life/writing_services/

The **Writing Support Centre** can help students to improve their writing skills. Writing resources and/or expert writing counsellors are available to you. (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing>).

The **Student Development Centre** has many other support services available to students.
<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Accessibility Statement

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. We welcome your feedback about accessibility at Huron. Information about how to provide feedback is available at: <http://www.huronuc.ca/accessibility>

Additional Policies

Plagiarism Rules and Academic Integrity

All assignments and essays must be written in your own words. Changing the word or sentence order or changing words using a thesaurus **does not** constitute original work. If you use an idea or excerpt from another author, regardless of source type, you **MUST** reference it in the appropriate fashion as requested on the assignment. Details of how to do this will be provided to you.

“Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).”

The following guide will help you avoid committing an academic offence

<http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/student/cheating.html>

Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at

<http://www.huronuc.ca/library/Citing/>. In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library. Information about these resources can be found in LibGuides on the main page:

<http://www.huronuc.ca/library>.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf .

Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean’s Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean’s Office for the duration of the student’s academic career at Huron University College.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Conduct of Students in Lectures, Classes and Seminars

Membership in the community of Huron University College and the University of Western Ontario implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly.

Please see the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* at:

http://www.huronuc.ca/students/student_life/student_policies

Technology

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Policy on Special Needs

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has

been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Class Cancellations

In the event of a cancellation of class, every effort will be made to post that information on the Huron website, <http://www.huronuc.ca/accessibility> (“Postings of Service Disruptions”).