

Course Outline: 1021G
Environmental Issues
Winter 2011
Huron University College

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Christie Stewart
The Centre for Environment and Sustainability
Office locations: Huron University College Rm A306
(also main campus Collip Bldg Rm 108)
Office hours: Thursdays 2 -5pm (for meetings outside these hours please email)
Email: cstewa26@uwo.ca

Course Information

Pre- or co-requisite: None

Class lectures: Thursday 6 – 9pm; Huron University College Rm W116

**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. In the past year, many significant environmental issues have captured the media headlines, been debated and researched in academia and probably discussed in your homes: the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster and, Copenhagen Climate Conference and climate change, alternative and renewable energy, the Alberta oil sands and most recently, 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 given 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, some references may be put on reserve in the Library. Other required reading material will be distributed in class or made available on WebCT.

Evaluation and Grading

Grading plan:

News media article summary/collection	6%
Research article summary	9% (includes individual, group marks and peer evaluation)
Essay	20%
Public communication	15% (poster, pamphlet or video; group work, includes peer assessment and participation mark for judging)
Mid-term Test	20% (Feb. 17th ; 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.

You are required to judge your assigned peer projects. Your participation will be recorded by your submission of each evaluation form at the end of the judging day. Submission of your evaluation forms will determine, in part, your overall mark for this part of the course. If you miss judging day due to illness or serious circumstance, you are responsible for contacting me to set up an alternate time to judge. Your absence on judging day must be approved by the Dean's office.

Date*	Lecture subject	Topics*	Due dates
Jan. 6	Class introduction; Environmental history and philosophy	Course expectations; Essay topics distributed; Assignments explained; Environmental philosophies and points of view	Learning style and Essay group topic choices DUE Jan. 11th
Jan. 13	Library information session (date tentative); Environmental movement	What is primary literature and where do I find it?; American Experience: Earth Days video	Essay topics and groups assigned; meeting with groups
Jan. 20	Environmental politics; Environmental and ecological economics; Food and Land	NGO's, political parties and the environment; Sustainable growth, ecological value, human and natural capital, GDP; soil, food consumption patterns, green revolution	News media article summary and collection DUE
Jan. 27	Food and Land continued	Food chains, problems with soil; industrial food production, pesticides, aquaculture, energy efficient food	
Feb. 3	Essay writing help session ; Food and Land continued	How to write an essay in science; Forestry and biodiversity; Peer editing circle	Research article summary 1st draft DUE
Feb. 10	Food and Land continued; Midterm review	Invasive species and natural disasters; Examples of questions and material review	Research article summary final draft DUE
Feb. 17	MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS ; Air	Air pollution sources and types	MIDTERM
Mar. 3	Air continued; Water	Climate change, ozone; Water crisis, water pollution	
Mar. 10	Waste; Group work	Consumption patterns, waste types, waste mitigation; Discuss and decide on public education platform; work on project	ESSAY DUE
Mar. 17	Waste continued	Waste disposal, recycling;	
Mar. 24	Composting workshop	How to compost and the science behind it	
Mar. 31	The Great Squeeze; Group work	Summary of environmental issues; Final day to work on group project	
Apr. 7	Project judging day!; Exam review	Examples of questions and review of material; Essays returned	Public communication 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.

The “Library Information Session” and the “Essay Writing Help Session” are mandatory. If you miss them, you will be required to make them up on your own time. If you do not, it will result in marks lost on the associated writing assignments.

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).

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.
- 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, Myspace™-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.
2. **Class starts on time.** If you come in late, please do so quietly. You are responsible for finding out about announcements, 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. Use your Western email account **ONLY** when contacting your professor. Personal accounts (e.g. hotchick@hotmail.com or biker4life@yahoo.com) might be intercepted by "SPAM" filters and be sent

to junk mail folders. This means you are expected to be checking your UWO email account. This will not hold as an excuse for not receiving information.

2. **It is important that you include “1021F” 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 24-48 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. If you send us an email a 2:00am, it is highly unlikely that we will respond by 5:00am.

Electronic Submission of Assignments and Essay

“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 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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>).” See further details regarding the University’s plagiarism rules below.

To submit your assignments or essay to *Turnitin*:

1. Go to <http://webct.uwo.ca/>
2. Login using your UWO/Huron 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.

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>

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 Environmental Science should contact Dean Mark Blagrave, 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:

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").