

Course Outline: 1021F Section 551

## Environmental Issues

Fall 2011

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:** Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 11:30-12:30pm (for meetings outside these hours please 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, 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:**

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Group work participation      | 2%   |
| News story summary/collection | 5%   |
| Research article summary      | 8% (2 drafts - includes individual 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% ( <b>Oct. 24<sup>th</sup></b> ; 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 and participate on group work days.** Your participation will be recorded. Submission of your peer evaluation forms will determine, in part, your overall mark for this part of the course. If you miss the final presentation day or group work days due

to illness or serious circumstances, you are responsible for going through the proper steps for approval. Your absence on presentation day and group works days must be approved by the Dean's office.

| <b>Date*</b>    | <b>Lecture subject</b>  | <b>Topics*</b>   | <b>Due dates</b>   |
|-----------------|---|--|--|
| Sept. 9         | Class introduction  | Course expectations; Essay topics distributed; Assignments explained briefly   |  |
| Sept. 12        | Environmental philosophy  | Environmental philosophies and points of view; details of first assignment explained   | <b>Learning style DUE</b>  |
| Sept. 14        | Environmental politics;<br><b>Library information session – Group A</b> | Political parties and the environment; sustainable growth, ecological value, human and natural capital, GDP; details of second assignment explained            |  |
| Sept. 16        | Environmental politics;<br><b>Library information session – Group B</b> | Political parties and the environment; sustainable growth, ecological value, human and natural capital, GDP; details of second assignment explained            | <b>Essay topic choices DUE 17<sup>th</sup> at midnight</b>                                       |
| Sept. 19, 21    | Environmental movement  | American Experience: Earth Days video  | Assignment topics and groups assigned; meeting with groups                                       |
| Sept. 23, 26    | Environmental and ecological economics                                  | Sustainable growth, ecological value, human and natural capital, GDP   | <b>News story collection DUE on 26<sup>th</sup></b>  |
| Sept. 28        | Food and Land   | Soil, food consumption patterns, green revolution; food chains, problems with soil; industrial food production, pesticides, aquaculture, energy efficient food | <b>News story summary DUE</b>  |
| Sept. 30        | Essay help  | How to write an essay in science; Source importance  | <b>Date tentative</b>  |
| Oct. 3          | Peer editing circle   | READ instructions before coming to class!!!  | <b>Research article summary 1<sup>st</sup> draft DUE</b>   |
| Oct. 5, 7       | Food and Land continued   |  |  |
| Oct. 10         | <b>Thanksgiving</b>   | <b>NO CLASS</b>  | <b>ENJOY!</b>  |
| Oct. 12, 14, 17 | Food and Land continued   | Forestry and biodiversity; Invasive species and natural disasters  | <b>Research article summary final draft DUE on 12<sup>th</sup> ; Initial peer evaluation due</b> |
| Oct. 19         | Midterm review  | Examples of questions and material review  |  |
| Oct. 21         | Air   | Air pollution sources and types  |  |
| Oct. 24         | <b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>   | <b>IN CLASS</b>  | <b>MIDTERM</b>   |
| Oct 26, 28      | Air   | Climate change, ozone  |  |
| Oct. 31,        | Water   | Water crisis, water pollution  | <b>Academic Integrity</b>  |

|                     |                         |  |   |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--|---|
| Nov. 2, 4           |                         |  | <b>assessment DUE on 4<sup>th</sup> – voluntary</b> |
| Nov. 7, 9           | Waste                   | Consumption patterns, waste types, waste mitigation, waste disposal, recycling, composting |   |
| Nov. 11             | Group work              | Discuss and decide on public education platform; work on project                           | <b>ESSAY DUE</b>                                    |
| Nov. 14             | Waste continued         |  |   |
| Nov. 16, 18, 21, 23 | Fuel and Energy         | Mining, fossil fuels, alternative energy   |   |
| Nov. 25             | Group work              | Work on project  |   |
| Nov. 28, 30         | The Great Squeeze       | Summary of environmental issues  |   |
| Dec. 2              | Group work              | Final day to work on group project   |   |
| Dec. 5              | Project assessment day! |  | <b>Public communication project DUE</b>             |
| Dec. 7              | Exam review             | Examples of questions and review of material; Essays returned                              | <b>Final peer evaluation DUE</b>                    |

**\*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.
- 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.
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. **Use your Western email account ONLY when contacting your professor or grading assistant.** Personal accounts (*e.g.* [hotchick@hotmail.com](mailto:hotchick@hotmail.com) or [biker4life@yahoo.com](mailto:biker4life@yahoo.com)) might be intercepted by "SPAM" filters and be sent to junk mail folders.
2. **It is important that you include "1021F" 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.

### **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. 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. Assignments less than 10% of the course grade can have the grade weight added to the midterm, if you choose. 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](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>

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.

### **Electronic Submission of Assignments and Essay**

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

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 you 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>

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](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.

### **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](mailto: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/](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/](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](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](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").