

Human-Environment Relations

GEOG*6340

Winter 2024
University of Guelph
Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics

Instructor

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Office hours: Please see Courselink

Description

This course surveys key themes and schools of thought in human-environment research across disciplinary boundaries, but with an emphasis on geographical social science. Students will explore theoretical and empirical elements of human-environment research through readings, assignments, and seminar discussions.

Course Objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Engage with key themes and schools of thought in human-environment research
- Identify how different philosophical perspectives inform these schools of thought
- Examine their own research interests in relation to human-environment research
- Enhance their writing skills
- Practice and improve facilitation skills

Assignments

- Weekly reflection posted to Courselink [20%]
 - Each week you'll make a short post to our Courselink discussion board ahead of seminar, reflecting on the week's readings and raising questions about them. The goal of this is two-fold: 1) to ensure everyone is prepared to engage in discussion during seminar; 2) to give everyone an overview and written record of what we found most provoking about the readings.
- Seminars [40%]
 - Leadership
 - You will co-lead two seminars [20%, each at 10%]
 - Participation [20%]
 - You will grade your own contributions to our collective endeavour. These contributions aren't just "minutes spent talking" and include other efforts that contributed to successful discussions and community.
- AAG analysis [20%]



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- You will access a database of abstracts from the American Association of Geographers’ 2023 annual meeting and conduct a mini qualitative analysis of them to: 1) assess the extent to which they touch on the key themes and questions we used to structure the class and that we read about; 2) evaluate what new themes and questions are being presented and debated. You will write up your findings in a brief report.
- Final essay [20%]
 - You will select a current event or topic and analyze it through one of the human-environment lenses we cover in the course.

Schedule

Week 2 provides a historical perspective on geographical approaches to human-environment relations. In the remaining weeks, we will explore ways geographers and others have addressed key questions in human-environment research. Topics and readings will be selected based on students’ interests. The full schedule of readings will be posted to CourseLink.

1. Introduction
2. Overviews
 - a. Zimmerer, K. S. 2010. Retrospective on Nature–Society Geography: Tracing Trajectories (1911–2010) and Reflecting on Translations. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 100 (5):1076–1094.
 - b. Harden, C. 2012. Framing and reframing questions of human-environment interactions. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102(4): 737-747.
 - c. Robbins, P. 2012. Chapter 2: A Tree with Deep Roots. In: *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*. Second Edition. pp 25-48. Wiley-Blackwell.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- Winter Break
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

What you can expect from me

- To help you not only understand but get excited about the material, learning as much as possible! We're all coming from different perspectives and starting points, meaning that it is everyone’s responsibility, but especially mine, to work to provide a respectful and



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engaging learning environment. I'm here to work with you from where you are and build up your understanding of the course content.

- To provide prompt feedback on assignments.
- To give you a sense of the flow of the semester – when the assignment load will be heavier, so that you can prepare appropriately.
- To assist in developing your critical analysis and communication skills, through our assignments.
- To advise you on other elements of grad school and/or your research.

What I expect of you

- To treat each other with respect. Our classroom is a safe space for all students, regardless of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, nationality, ability or disability. Every person is welcome here.
- To communicate with me about what you expect from the course, what you need, and your challenges.
- To put your best possible effort into this class.



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University of Guelph Policy Statements

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible. For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or visit the [SAS website](#).

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

E-mail Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly. E-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students.



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The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

- Undergraduate Calendar - [Dropping Courses](#)
- Graduate Calendar - [Registration Changes](#)
- Associate Diploma Calendar - [Dropping Courses](#)

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Undergraduate Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.