

Geog 2030: Environment, Justice, and Society
Department of Geography, Environment, and Geomatics
University of Guelph Fall 2025

Important note regarding course delivery: I recently experienced a serious accident that has limited my mobility. As a result, the first several weeks of the course will be delivered in an online synchronous format. Teaching in person is always my preference, and we will return to in-person meetings as soon as I am medically cleared to return to campus. I currently anticipate a return to in person meetings in early October, but this could change.

Online content during the first several weeks will be facilitated via zoom. Students may join the scheduled meetings from a location of their choice, or from our assigned lecture hall. The call will be available in MCKN 117 during our regular class time. The material will primarily be delivered in an online synchronous format, but may also include discussions, online activities, or media. I will post weekly summaries of key material during the initial online section of the course. These summaries should assist students in isolating core material for review and will assist with coverage of unanticipated student absences.

Instructor: Dr. Ryan Hackett hackettr@uoguelph.ca

Teaching Assistants: Marika Bowrin mbowrin@uoguelph.ca; M Manjurul Islam mmanjuru@uoguelph.ca

Office hours: Unless there is a substantive need to meet in person, all office hour appointments will be held virtually. 10-11 am Thursdays, or by appointment.

TA office hours: by appointment

Email expectations: 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. I will attempt to respond to emails within 48 hours, *excluding holidays and weekends*. Please keep this in mind when contacting me by email.

Course meeting times and format: M/W/F 3:30 PM - 4:20 PM. Guelph, MCKN, 117 LEC.

*Note the above statement about online delivery during September 2025 *

Calander description:

This course examines the changing relations between society and ecology by focusing on relations of power, including intra- and inter-state structures and processes. Environmental movements, conflicts, identities and values are considered along with localization and globalization. Particular attention is paid to ecological and development processes and strategies in the developing world.

Additional description:

Environmental concerns represent some of the most challenging and complex issues facing contemporary society. While often framed in bio-physical or technological terms, environmental issues and their proposed solutions are also profoundly social and political. This course is designed to build students familiarity with geographic approaches to understanding how power and politics shape our definition of environmental problems and the social implications of our proposed solutions to such problems. A series of conceptual, explanatory frameworks and grounded case studies will build

students' ability to critically evaluate the political, economic, and social dimensions of human-environment interactions. Topics will draw from local, regional, and global contexts and will include exploration of the uneven global geographies of environmental risk and benefit.

Course learning objectives:

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify and engage with contemporary debates about environmental crises, risks, and vulnerabilities.
- Be able to identify and explain how human interactions with the environment are processes through which relationships of power are established, maintained, contested, and transformed.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the history, evolution, and theoretical positions associated with environmental justice movements.
- Identify and discuss a series of activist approaches, strategies, and potential alliances.
- Critically apply course concepts in new contexts.

Evaluation:

Participation (ongoing): 5%

Short writing assignments: 45% (10% first assignment, 15% second assignment, 20% third assignment)
Tentatively scheduled for Sept. 26, Oct. 17th, Nov. 15th

Mid term test: 20%

Tentatively scheduled to be held in-class Oct. 27th

Final exam: 30%

Dec. exam period TBA

Course expectations and etiquette:

We will be dealing with subject matter that asks us to examine some core assumptions about humanity, our interactions with each other and with the non-human world. There are not necessarily right or wrong answers to the questions we are grappling with. I do not expect you to agree with me, with each other, or to adopt a fixed approach. I do expect an intensive engagement with the subject matter and a spirit of collegial disagreement and debate. Conflicting approaches to the issues we are studying are expected - so too is reasoned and substantiated argumentation of your position.

Late/Missed Assignments and Penalties:

Assignments are due at the time and date specified unless the instructor has granted a special, personal extension. A late penalty of 5% per day (a letter grade) will be deducted from work submitted after posted deadlines.

Use of Generative AI:

With very limited exceptions the use of generative AI is not permitted in this course. Exemptions include the use of the tool to check grammar, spelling, or style. This sort of use is not dissimilar to editing tools available in well-established writing software. Generative AI should not be used to brainstorm ideas,

write or otherwise complete assignments, exams, etc. We will discuss the practical concerns of AI use in class.

CourseLink:

CourseLink will be used to communicate information regarding the course. All required reading will be available to students on CourseLink, and/or via an ARES reading list. CourseLink will also be used to submit and return assignments.

Weekly schedule of readings and topics

Disclaimer:

The schedule of lecture topics and assigned readings may change. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. Students will be provided ample notice of any changes.

Texts:

Assigned weekly readings for this course are a mix of journal articles and book chapters. All the assigned readings will be available on CourseLink. Supplementary materials related to assignments will be posted to CourseLink or placed on course reserves at the McLaughlin Library.

Additional or substitute readings may be assigned during the course. Students will be provided advance notice of any changes to required readings.

A note on the readings: Some of the assigned readings for this course are quite challenging. It is not my expectation that you will master every detail or demonstrate perfect comprehension. My expectation is that you will do your best and engage with the material. I will spend time in class going over some strategies to assist in your comprehension of the materials and we will spend time in class working through the readings together and unpacking some of the key concepts and contributions.

Schedule of topics, readings, and assignments

Note: Extra class day at end of semester (Nov. 28) to replace Thanksgiving Monday and the Fall Study Break

Weekly schedule of readings and topics

Date	Topic / Assigned reading	Notes
Sept. 5	No assigned reading	
Political vs. a-political ecologies: Population and Eco-modernization		
Sept. 8	Hardin, G. (1974). Lifeboat ethics. Psychology today, September: 800-812. Gibbs, (2017). Ecological Modernization [excerpt]. The International Encyclopaedia of Geography.	
Sept. 10	Harvey, D. (1974) Population, resources and the ideology of science. Economic Geography, 50 (3): 272-276.	

	Joe Turner & Dan Bailey (2022) 'Eco bordering': casting immigration control as environmental protection, <i>Environmental Politics</i> , 31:1, 110-131	
Social Natures 1: The material and discursive production of nature		
Sept. 12	Cronon (1996) or Demerit?	
Social natures 2: Nature, biology, and anti-politics		
Sept. 15	Fletcher Ch. 2. Romancing the wild: Cultural dimensions of ecotourism. Braun, B. (2003). "On the raggedy edge of risk" Articulations of race and nature after biology". Ch. 5 in Moore et al. [Eds.]. <i>Race, nature, and the politics of difference</i> . Duke University Press. Durham, NC.	
Political Economy		
Sept. 17	Robbins, P., Hintz, J. & Moore, S. [Eds.] (2014). <i>Political economy</i> . (pp. 98-118) In <i>Environment and society: A critical introduction</i> . Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford	
Sept. 19	No assigned reading	
Degradation and marginalization		
Sept. 22	Robbins, P. (2012). Degradation and marginalization. In <i>Political ecology: Second Edition</i> (157-175). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. Fairhead, J. & Leach, M. (1997). False forest history, complicit social analysis: Rethinking some West African environmental narratives. <i>World Development</i> , 23 (6), 1023-1035.	
Natural Disasters?		
Sept. 24	Pelling, M. (2001). Natural disasters? (pp. 170-188) In <i>Social Nature: Theory, practice, and politics</i> . Blackwell: Malden, MA. Davis, M. (1995). The case for letting Malibu burn. <i>Environmental History Review</i> , 19 (2):1-36.	
Conservation and Control		
Sept. 26	Neumann, R. (2004). Nature-state-territory. Chapter 7 In <i>Liberation ecologies</i> 2 nd ed. Sandlos, J. (2008). Not wanted in the boundary: The expulsion of the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Band from Riding Mountain National Park. <i>Canadian Historical Review</i> , 89 (2), pp. 189-221.	
Sept. 29	Murray, G., & King, L. (2012). First Nations values in protected area governance: Tla-o-qui-aht tribal parks and	

	Pacific Rim national park reserve. <i>Human Ecology</i> , 40(3), 385-395.	
Produced natures: Technology and Property		
Oct. 1	Schnurr, M. (2012). Inventing Makhathini: Creating a prototype for the dissemination of genetically modified crops into Africa. <i>Geoform</i> , 43 (4), 784-792.	
Rights of nature		
Oct. 3	Banks, M. (2018). Aboriginal title or legal personhood for land? The Canadian Society for Study of Practical Ethics, vol. 2. University of Windsor.	
Oct. 6	TBA	
More-than human actants?		
Oct. 8	Robbins, P. (2012). Political objects and actors. In <i>Political ecology: Second Edition</i> (11-24). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. Sundberg, J. (2011). Diabolic <i>Caminos</i> in the Desert and Cat Fights on the Río: A Posthumanist Political Ecology of Boundary Enforcement in the United States–Mexico Borderlands. <i>Annals of the Assoc. of Am. Geographers</i> , 101, (2).	
Environmental subjects and identity		
Oct. 10	Robbins, P. (2012). Environmental subjects and identities. Ch. 11 In <i>Political ecology: Second Edition</i> (11-24). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. Youdelis, M. (2013). The competitive (dis)advantages of ecotourism in Northern Thailand. <i>Geoform</i> , 50: 161-171.	
Oct. 13	Fall Recess – No Class	
Media and Environment		
Oct. 15	Brockington, D. (2008). Celebrity conservation: Interpreting the Irwins. <i>Media International Australia</i> , 127 (1): 96-108. Lunstrum. (2017). Feed them to the lions: Conservation violence goes online. <i>Geoform</i> , 79.	
Environmental crises and “economies of repair”		
Oct. 17	Van Sant, L., Hardy, D., & Nuse, B. (2021). Conserving what? Conservation easements and environmental justice in the coastal US South. <i>Human Geography</i> , 14(1), 31–44 Milne, S. and Adams, W. (2012). Market Masquerades: Uncovering the Politics of Community-level Payments for Environmental Services in Cambodia. <i>Development and Change</i> . Shapiro-Garza, E. (2013). Contesting market-based conservation: Payments for ecosystem services as a surface	

	of engagement for rural social movements in Mexico. Human Geography, 6, 1: 134-150	
Everyday environments		
Oct. 20	Davis, M. (1990). Fortress LA. In City of Quartz. London: Verso. Smith, N., & Walters, P. (2018). Desire lines and defensive architecture in modern urban environments. Urban Studies, 55(13), 2980-2995.	
Oct. 22	The rush for a slice of paradise in Puerto Rico. The New York Times. Bad Bunny/ Bianca Graulau. El Apagón/Aquí Vive Gente. Available via The Smithsonian: Graulau's documentary content runs from about the 4:20 mark.	
Oct. 24	Mid term review and prep	
Oct. 27	Mid Term Test	
Environment, justice, and social movements		
Oct. 29	Montrie, C. (2011). Introduction, Chapter 1 in A people's history.	
Oct. 31	No assigned reading	
Nov. 3	Dewey, S. (1998). Working for the environment: Organized labor and the origins of environmentalism in the United States, 1948-1970. <i>Environmental History</i> , 3(1), 45-63. McGurty, E.M. (1997). From NIMBY to Civil Rights: The Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement. <i>Environmental History</i> , 2(3): 301-323.	
Nov. 5	TBA	
Organizing, strategy, and tactics		
Nov. 7	Hogan, K. (2010). Undoing nature: Coalition building as queer environmentalism. Ch. 8 in Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire. University of Indiana Press.	
Nov. 10	Selections from Woodhouse TBA	
Global Environmental Justice		
Nov. 12	Bellamy-Foster. J. (2002). "Let them eat pollution". Capitalism and the world environment. In Ecology against capitalism. Monthly review press: New York. Okafor-Yarwood, I., & Adewumi, I. J. (2020). Toxic waste dumping in the Global South as a form of environmental racism: Evidence from the Gulf of Guinea. <i>African Studies</i> , 79(3), 285-304.	
Nov. 14	Cavanagh, C. and T. A. Benjaminsen (2014). Virtual nature, violent accumulation: The 'spectacular failure' of carbon offsetting at a Ugandan National Park. <i>Geoforum</i> 56, pp. 55-65.	

	Lohmann, L. (2015). The Injustices within Climate Science. The Corner House.	
Nov. 17	Horton, J., and Keith, D. (2016). "Solar geoengineering and obligations to the global poor," in <i>Climate Justice and Geoengineering: Ethics and Policy in the Atmospheric Anthropocene</i> , ed. C. J., Preston (Rowman and Littlefield International) 79–92	
Nov. 19	TBA	
Nov. 21	TBA	
Radical right environmentalisms – implications for justice in the early 21 century		
Nov.24	Margulies, M. (2021). Eco-Nationalism: A Historical Evaluation of Nationalist Praxes in Environmentalist and Ecologist Movements. <i>Consilience</i> , (23) Hartman, M. R. (2024). Beyond Climate Denial: White Supremacy and the Growth of Nationalist Environmentalism on the Right. <i>Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture</i> , 18(3), 376–392	
Nov. 26	Living in the Anthropocene: Reasons for optimism	
Nov. 28	Review and exam prep	

Assignment Details

Participation: ongoing 5%

Students are expected to regularly attend classes, be up to date with course readings and material and to come to class prepared to engage. Large classes like ours pose challenges to some forms of participation. With these challenges in mind, active participation, engagement, and preparation will be assessed as follows. On five occasions you will be asked to complete a short task or exercise during class time. Instructions for the activities will be provided in-class. No preparation is necessary other than being up to date with course material including readings for that day. You will not have advanced notice of when these activities will occur, and students will want to come to class consistently prepared so as not to miss this evaluation component. Three of five exercises will be counted toward a participation component, allowing some flexibility for unforeseen absences. This component will also take into consideration your active engagement in class or online discussions and activities.

Short writing assignments: 45% (first assignment 10%, second 15%, third 20%)

On three occasions, students will be asked to complete a short writing assignment related to course material or themes. The assessment values of these assignments are stepped and built to support your progress. Assignments may take several forms. Assignments may involve drafting a short write up on a news article or current event or may ask students to respond to a question and/or provide analysis/evaluation of a text. The responses should effectively answer the question and provide thoughtful analysis and evaluation. Responses should be clear, concisely written, and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Responses need not be more than one page in length. The assignment supports the development of your ability to critically read a text, isolate and summarize key information, and write in a clear, concise manner. These are important transferable skills often sought by employers in a range of

environmental professions. No late assignments will be excepted as the assignments are meant to reflect your thinking about the topic or readings before class discussion. Full instructions, expectations and/or examples will be posted to Courselink.

Mid term test: 20%

The mid term test will test your knowledge and comprehension of all material up to the mid point of the course [late October]. Full details of the test format will be announced in class.

Final exam: 30%

The final exam will be cumulative and will test your knowledge and comprehension of key course concepts and material across the entire course. Full details of the exam format will be announced in class.

Peer support and discussion groups:

You will be organized into small groups to facilitate peer discussion and support. It can be difficult to connect with peers in a large class, and these preassigned groups are intended to overcome some of these social limitations. Please use these groups to discuss content of interest, to ask each other questions, or to develop peer support networks to assist with content coverage in the event of unanticipated absences.

A note on unanticipated absences:

In the event of an unforeseen absence on my part, I will post course materials for the day to CourseLink.

University of Guelph Policy Statements

Academic Integrity

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 outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 business days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

More information: www.uoguelph.ca/sas.

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Accommodation of Religious Obligations](#).

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.

Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for [Dropping Courses](#) are available in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Email 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.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the [Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness](#). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a [Student Wellness Navigator](#) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our [mental wellbeing resources](#). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

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 [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

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](#).

Online Behaviour

Inappropriate online behaviour will not be tolerated. Examples of inappropriate online behaviour include:

- Posting inflammatory messages about your instructor or fellow students
- Using obscene or offensive language online
- Copying or presenting someone else's work as your own
- Adapting information from the Internet without using proper citations or references
- Buying or selling term papers or assignments
- Posting or selling course materials to course notes websites
- Having someone else complete your quiz or completing a quiz for/with another student
- Stating false claims about lost quiz answers or other assignment submissions
- Threatening or harassing a student or instructor online
- Discriminating against fellow students, instructors and/or TAs
- Using the course website to promote profit-driven products or services
- Attempting to compromise the security or functionality of the learning management system
- Sharing your username and password