

GEOG*4220 Local Environmental Management
Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics
University of Guelph

Course Outline: Winter 2026**General Information****Land Acknowledgement**

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Metis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Me'tis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Course Description: This course explores local environmental management from two perspectives: state-driven (where local government agencies or forums created by governments are used) and non-state driven (where local actors come together in new governance arrangements to undertake environmental management). Through comparing and contrasting these broad perspectives in an experiential learning setting, the course builds understanding of a key trend in environmental governance.

Class Schedule: Monday/Wednesday 1:00 pm – 2:20 pm

Location: JTP 2266

Seminars: Hutt 240B Monday 11:30-12:20

Tuesday 1:30-2:20

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Lauren Sneyd

Instructor Email: lsneyd@uoguelph.ca

GTA Information

GTA Name:

GTA Email:

GTA Name:

GTA Email:

Course Content

Detailed Course Description

This course offers a survey of themes and issues in local environmental management and sustainability, with specific attention to the contemporary social and ecological challenges facing people and communities in Canada and around the world. Themes include: place-building, stewardship, resilience, social and environmental justice, urban sustainability, indigenous knowledge and sovereignty, and societal transformations to sustainability and more.

Our weekly meetings will attend to the:

- Root causes of contemporary sustainability problems;
- Ecological and social science concepts, frameworks, and theories that comprise environmental management, sustainability, and resilience;
- Complexities, challenges, and best practices in environmental management and sustainability planning, and decision-making, including roles and initiatives of state and non-state actors.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

- Be able to critically discuss the cultural and behavioral roots of environmental / sustainability problems;
- Knowledge of different management paradigms and issues at local, regional, and global scales;
- Recognize the differences between sustainability and modern, industrial / neoliberal approaches to managing the environment;
- Identify and clarify one's own positionality and values in relation to environmental / sustainability problems;
- Follow societal debates about the values, interests and controversies involved in pursuing local solutions, and
- Be familiar with major concepts and topics in sustainability, including: limits to growth and de-growth; weak and strong sustainability; resilience and vulnerability; social and environmental justice; food security and sovereignty; indigenous knowledge and practices among others.

Course Delivery:

The course will be delivered in a classroom lecture and seminar format. From Week Six of the semester, our in-person course will be following a multi-modal (ie. use some virtual or online components) delivery. Each week we will follow a schedule for seminar and presentations. The course instructor will provide instructional material through PowerPoint presentations and other multimedia sources. Associated resources and other relevant material will be posted in the Content section on the course website.

Members of the class will participate in both informal and formal presentations and other relevant in-class activities. The seminar format will involve group work and group