

GEOGRAPHY*3030: MEDIA, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY and ENVIRONMENT

Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Guelph resides on the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. These lands are a gathering place and home to many past, present, and future First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The Dish with One Spoon is an agreement between Hodinöhsö:ni', Anishinaabeg and their allied nations to live peaceably on these lands and those throughout what is now known as the Great Lakes Region. The Dish with One Spoon speaks to interconnectivity and our collective relations with each other and the Earth. Abiding by it means that one should always strive to take only what they need, leave enough for others, and keep the shared dish clean.

Acknowledging the land on which we learn and work recognizes the importance of place-based histories and upholds Indigenous peoples as having been in relation with this place since immemorial. The acknowledgement above is adapted from resource material shared online by the University of Guelph Indigenous Student Centre.

Calendar Course Description

GEOG*3030 examines contemporary transformations in how human-environment relations are monitored and communicated. In particular, it will explore how media firms, digital technologies, and technology users shape responses to challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss. Topics may include media representations of nature, social media and digital devices in environmental campaigns, and new technologies for environmental assessment. Students will develop skills in areas such as discourse analysis, data visualization, and/or social media analytics.

Course Objectives

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

- Describe how media firms, technologies and technology users shape environmental governance, natural resource management, and environmental campaigns, past and present;
- Identify environmental governance, natural resource management and campaigning practices that are changing in 'the digital era';
- Critically discuss contemporary case studies wherein digital technology and media have influenced human-environment relations and outcomes in unanticipated or highly impactful ways;
- Pose feasible research questions and employ ethically and methodologically appropriate techniques to gather and organize social science data from online spaces (e.g., Twitter, Blogs, Online Media Reports);
- Conduct analysis of social science data from online spaces and effectively use different data visualization techniques;
- Communicate literature review summaries and findings from analyses of social science data in written and oral form.

Assessments

Documentary review assignment (Sept. 26):	20%
Online closed-book mid-term (Oct. 10):	15%
Seminar portfolio (Nov. 7):	20%
Concepts portfolio (Nov. 21):	20%
Online closed-book exam (Date/Time on Web Advisor):	25%

Class Schedule

- Un-highlighted topics/content are planned for in-person delivery. On these days, students report to our assigned classroom during the assigned lecture period.
- **Yellow highlighting denotes content that will be delivered/consumed virtually.** Prof. Silver will provide further guidance in class and on Courselink about how/where to login (in the case of our Online Mid-Term & Final Exam) and what to watch/download (in the case of our Asynchronous Documentaries)

TOPICS, TUTORIALS, SEMINARS and DUE DATES	REQUIRED PREP/READING (COMPLETE BEFORE CLASS)
SEPT. 5: Class intro, logistics, & what is digital?	SEPT. 5: Ash, J., Kitchin, R., & Leszczynski, A. (2018). Digital turn, digital geographies? <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 42(1), 25-43. [NOTE: Today's reading is optional]
SEPT. 10: Digital media/environment SEPT. 12: Digital technology/environment	SEPT. 10: Büscher, B. (2021). Sharing Truths and Natures. Chapter 2 in 'Truth About Nature: Environmentalism in the Era of Post-truth Politics and Platform Capitalism'. University of California Press. SEPT. 12: Bakker, K., & Ritts, M. (2018). Smart Earth: A meta-review and implications for environmental governance. <i>Global environmental change</i> , 52, 201-211.
SEPT. 17: Asynchronous documentary (Merchants of Doubt) SEPT. 19: Asynchronous documentary (The Social Dilemma)	SEPT. 17: Merchants of Doubt. Written and directed by Robert Kenner, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2015. SEPT. 19: The Social Dilemma. Written by Jeff Orlowski, Davis Coombe, and Vickie Curtis; Directed by Jeff Orlowsky. Exposure labs & Argent Pictures, 2020.
SEPT. 24: Environmental mis/dis-information: background SEPT. 26: Environmental mis/disinformation: platform capitalism <i>Documentary Review Assignment Due Sept. 26</i>	SEPT. 24: Lewandowsky, S. (2020). Climate change, disinformation, and how to combat it. <i>Annual Review of Public Health, Forthcoming</i> . SEPT. 26: Büscher, B. (2021). Between Platforms, Post-Truth, and Power. Chapter 3 in 'Truth About Nature: Environmentalism in the Era of Post-truth Politics and Platform Capitalism'. University of California Press.
OCT. 1: Intro to the Concepts Portfolio and Seminar Portfolio Assignments OCT. 3: Conservation data in and from the digital	OCT. 1: --- OCT. 3: Simlai, T., & Sandbrook, C. (2021). Digital surveillance technologies in conservation and their social implications. <i>Conservation technology</i> , 239-249.

TOPICS, TUTORIALS, SEMINARS and DUE DATES	REQUIRED PREP/READING (COMPLETE BEFORE CLASS)
	Toivonen, Tuuli, Vuokko Heikinheimo, Christoph Fink, Anna Hausmann, Tuomo Hiippala, Olle Järvi, Henrikki Tenkanen, and Enrico Di Minin. (2019). Social media data for conservation science: A methodological overview. <i>Biological Conservation</i> , 233, 298-315.
<p>OCT. 8: Seminar #1</p> <p>OCT. 10: Online mid-term (covers all reading and lecture material to date)</p>	<p>OCT. 8: Boykoff, M. T. (2009). We speak for the trees: Media reporting on the environment. <i>Annual review of Environment and Resources</i>, 34, 431-457.</p> <p>OCT. 10: ---</p>
<p>OCT. 15: No class: University reading day</p> <p>OCT. 17: Asynchronous documentary (Angry Inuk)</p>	<p>OCT. 15: ---</p> <p>OCT. 17: Angry Inuk. Written and directed by Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, National Film Board of Canada, 2016.</p>
<p>OCT. 22: Seminar #2</p> <p>OCT. 24: Seminar #3</p>	<p>OCT. 22: Hawkins, R., & Silver, J. J. (2017). From selfie to #sealfie: Nature 2.0 and the digital cultural politics of an internationally contested resource. <i>Geoforum</i>, 79, 114-123.</p> <p>OCT. 24: Hamilton, T., & Cavello, S. (2021). Ethical product havens in the global diamond trade: Using the Wayback Machine to evaluate ethical market outcomes. <i>Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space</i>, 0308518X211029661.</p>
<p>OCT 29: Seminar #4</p> <p>OCT. 31: Seminar group work – no lecture so that groups can collaborate in-person on their portfolio.</p>	<p>OCT. 29: Turnhout, E., & Boonman-Berson, S. (2011). Databases, scaling practices, and the globalization of biodiversity. <i>Ecology and Society</i>, 16(1).</p> <p>OCT. 31: ---</p>
<p>NOV. 5: Seminar #5</p> <p>NOV. 7: Seminar wrap-up & conclusions</p> <p><i>Seminar Portfolio Due Nov. 7</i></p>	<p>NOV. 5: Silver, J. J., & Hawkins, R. (2017). “I’m not trying to save fish, I’m trying to save dinner”: Media, celebrity and sustainable seafood as a solution to environmental limits. <i>Geoforum</i>, 84, 218-227.</p> <p>NOV. 7: ---</p>

TOPICS, TUTORIALS, SEMINARS and DUE DATES	REQUIRED PREP/READING (COMPLETE BEFORE CLASS)
NOV. 12: 'The Digital': transformational, reinforcing the status quo, or something in between? NOV. 14: How do we research the digital? Overview & ethics	NOV. 12: Drakopoulos, L., Silver, J. J., Nost, E., Gray, N., & Hawkins, R. (2022). Making global oceans governance in/visible with Smart Earth: The case of Global Fishing Watch. <i>Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space</i> , 25148486221111786. NOV. 14: Hewson, C. (2016). Ethics issues in digital methods research. In <i>Digital methods for social science</i> (pp. 206-221). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
NOV. 19: How do we research the digital? In-class activity NOV. 21: Course conclusions and wrap-up <i>Concepts Portfolio Due Nov. 21</i>	NOV. 19: --- NOV. 21: ---
NOV. 26: Asynchronous documentary (How to Change the World) NOV. 28: Class cancelled: virtual office hours + exam Part B question list released	NOV. 26: How to Change the World. Written and directed by Jerry Rothwell, Picturehouse Entertainment, 2015. NOV. 28: ---
Online closed-book exam During University Exam Period (date/time posted to Web Advisor)	

Materials

Readings

Listed in Class Schedule above; download PDFs of the readings by going to Courselink Content and/or the GEOG*3030 Library ARES reserve list.

Documentaries

Merchants of Doubt. Written and directed by Robert Kenner. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2015. Click [here](#) to be taken to video.

The Social Dilemma. Written by Jeff Orlowski, Davis Coombe, and Vickie Curtis; Directed by Jeff Orlowsky. Exposure labs & Argent Pictures, 2020. Available on Netflix for those who have access to an account. For those who do not have Netflix, Prof Silver will provide access instructions in a Courselink Announcement on or around September 16.

Angry Inuk. Written and directed by Alethea Arnaquq-Baril. National Film Board of Canada, 2016. Click [here](#) to be taken to video.

How to Change the World. Written and directed by Jerry Rothwell. Picturehouse Entertainment, 2015. Click [here](#) to be taken to video.

Airborne illness, including Covid-19

Risks for many people, especially fully vaccinated individuals, have lessened since the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, risks have not disappeared. Reinfection and negative health outcome risks remain elevated for people who are immunocompromised or unable to receive vaccines, those with frequent or intense patterns of exposure, and those with certain types of care-giving or family circumstances/responsibilities.

Wellness in our classroom is a shared responsibility. For University of Guelph policy statements and updates on campus health, including the request that anyone who feels sick stay home, please see: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/healthy-campus/>. **Students are very welcome to wear masks any time we meet together, in groups, or for one-on-one meetings.**

Instructor Policies

Video and Audio Recordings

Slides and any video/audio content developed for this course by Prof. Silver are her intellectual property. Students are welcome to cite them in assignments and discuss them with classmates and other students. However, slides and any video/audio content developed for this course by Prof. Silver are not intended for circulation outside of the course and she does not grant permission for students to permanently save, post or publicly share them.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to undertake this course with honesty and integrity, and to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Refer to the Academic Calendar and the university policies below. If you still have uncertainty about how to avoid plagiarism, visit the U of G library guide by [clicking here](#) and/or speak with the instructor or library resource-persons for guidance. Plagiarism and other types of misconduct will not be tolerated; any instances will be treated seriously and are likely to be referred on to the Associate Dean Academic of the College.

Communication

Please check your university email account and the 'news' section of the Courselink page frequently (ideally at least once every 1-2 days). Any important information arising throughout the semester will be communicated by these means and the university mandates that students must check them. The instructor and TA will do their best to respond to emails within 2-3 business days. Emails received after 3pm on Friday will not receive a response until at least the following Monday, and questions that are answered in course documents will receive short replies only (i.e., see course syllabus). Please use proper punctuation and professional language when emailing the instructor or TA.

Assignment submission, grading and grade reviews, and monitoring your Courselink gradebook

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are clear on when, where, and in what format assessments are due, and in the case of Courselink submissions, to double-check that the upload has worked successfully and that uploaded files are not corrupt. Prof. Silver and the TA(s) cannot download corrupt files, which means that we cannot grade them and that regular late penalties will apply.

It is the student's responsibility to check their Courselink class gradebook weekly to ensure that all grades are entered and accurate. If any concerns arise about assignment grades or grading, the student must immediately

contact the instructor. Requests to review or revisit assignment and presentation grades must be made within 10 days after they are released in the gradebook; thereafter, it is likely that the instructor will deny requests and that the grade will stand as final.

If a student would like to request an extension, it is their responsibility to contact the instructor directly and with as much advance notice as possible. To do so, students should send an email or request a meeting to discuss generalities of the situation and to reach agreement about the length of extension.

University of Guelph Required 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. 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.