SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT – UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ENV451 CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS - FS 2020

SYLLABUS

First class: September 11th, 2020 Fridays: 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Location: Online/synchronous

Instructor Dr. Erich Vogt

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TA: Brian Pentz

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Office hours: by appointment only

Course Description

Global environmental dangers are among the most profound challenges facing humanity. They fundamentally undermine the quality of life and threaten the organic infrastructure that supports all life on earth. It is within this context that the course explores the socio-political dynamics of global environmental affairs. The course will also look into the multiple causes of environmental harm and, with students' help, try to identify effective response mechanisms. Finally, it endeavors to examine a number of key challenges - including food and agriculture, water, energy, and climate change – as they are being addressed in both academe and professional practice.

Drawing on both official and informal studies and field work from around the world and diverse sources, academic papers, news accounts and editorial pages of journals and newspapers, major negotiation conferences and informal meetings, as well as the insights of leading thinkers and thinking leaders in both the developing and developed worlds, the course will foster 'deep' learning (as opposed to 'strategic' learning), creative thinking, collaborative learning and critical debate. Students are encouraged to ask probing questions and offer comments, however tentative, in class.

This is a "capstone" course and invites students to draw on their years of studies across all academic disciplines. It is designed for students coming to the end of their undergraduate study of the environment and preparing to move on to the next phase of their academic and professional development and competence. In other words, it calls on and encourages students to synthesize insights gained throughout their academic journey.

Course format/Blackboard Collaborate

The course will be delivered by way of 'Blackboard (Bb) Collaborate'. The delivery of the lectures will take place 'live' at the designated times (Fridays, 1 pm - 4 pm). Attendance and participation in the lectures is expected.

This course, including your participation, will be recorded and made available for your review after each session in the designated Modules on Quercus.

Course videos and materials belong to your instructor and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor. Students creating unauthorized audio recording of lectures violate an instructor's intellectual property rights and the Canadian Copyright Act. Students violating this agreement will be subject to disciplinary actions under the Code of Student Conduct.

For a basic introduction to both Quercus and Bb Collaborate I suggest consulting the following posts:

- https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Participant/Get Started -
- https://qstudents.utoronto.ca/blackboard-collaborate-ultra-student-use/#more-602
- https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/student-quercusguides#h 326108522141535558104934

Course framework

The course material is presented in three ways: course readings, lectures and breakout group discussions. Students will be asked to write three papers (critical review, memorandum to political decision makers, research/policy paper).

Despite the online delivery format, every effort will be made to make the course as interactive and participatory as possible. This, however, requires that students attend, do the assigned readings and follow lectures closely, preferably 'live'.

Learning Objectives

Those who participate fully in this course should by its end:

- Have improved their critical thinking capacity;
- Have a well-rounded and balanced understanding of the multiple causes and implications of a range of current environmental challenges and of different forms of response;
- Comprehend and appreciate the role of science, the state system, the global political economy, and civil society in exacerbating and/or mitigating environmental problems;
- Understand and articulate the difference in perspectives of developed and developing countries and appreciate the tensions between conservation and development;
- Demonstrate proficiency in framing more effectively research questions and approaches, analysis, verbal presentation, and writing skills.

Readings

Readings for each class are listed in the Lecture Topics section below. I have made every attempt to make all of them available electronically, and in some cases also as hard copy. You can find the readings on Quercus in the Library Resources file. Required readings are marked with an "R", all unmarked readings are complementary.

I traditionally do not spend time in class reviewing books' and readings' content; rather I will selectively pick on some of the main themes and hypotheses of writers' works, then test and pick them apart – with your help!!!

Writing Centers' support

Please be aware of the wide range of resources for writing support available in the Faculty of Arts and Science. Undergraduate students in FAS are eligible to seek help at their home college's centre and at other centres for work in college program courses. All seven FAS writing centres will be fully operational, and all will be offering remote instruction. The modality may differ by college. I strongly encourage students to visit each individual centre's site for information on how to make an appointment. The FAS centres are listed at https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science.

Students whose first language is not English are encouraged to make us of UofT's English Language Learning program (ELL)'s offerings. For detailed information consult http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell, or contact the ELL coordinator Leora Freedman at leora.freedman@utoronto.ca.

Communication

Emails are normally responded to within 48 hours, but not during weekends or on public holidays. All official communications and announcements from the instructor and TA will be sent either via the 'Announcement' file on Quercus, or students' official UofT-issued e-mail addresses.

Course Assignments: All papers must be submitted electronically via Quercus

1) Critical review - 25 Percent

Based on the information and insights gained in previous (environmental) courses, you will be asked to critically review a contemporary environmental essay as written by a designated author. Specific instructions will be provided in the lectures and accompanying students' guidance note by the end of the first couple of weeks of classes.

Three (3) pages, 1.5 spacing, TNR 12 font, endnotes and bibliography. A selection of essays will be posted roughly 2 weeks before due date on Quercus, and papers are expected to be submitted electronically on Quercus.

Due: October 9th, 2020

2) Memorandum - 30 Percent

You are the special climate change envoy of a G20 country of your choice. Write a climate change memorandum for the Sherpa of your chosen G20 country and present your arguments for overhauling the existing (part of) policy. More specific instructions will be given in the lectures and students' guidance note. Four (4) pages, 1.5 spacing, TNR 12 font, endnotes and bibliography.

Due: November 6th, 2020

3) Research/Policy paper – 35 Percent

The purpose of this combined research/policy paper is to give students an opportunity to explore and develop a paper that focuses on SDG 13. This five (5) page paper must: (1) examine the chief causes/drivers of the issue(s)/problem(s) - as you see them based on your own critical assessment; (2) outline what the international community has agreed to do about it (targets, indicators); and (3) provide ideas and recommendations of how best to move the solution from concept to practice. More specific instructions will be given in the lectures and students' guidance note.

The paper shall have 1.5 spacing, with 1 inch margins, 12 points font, endnotes and bibliography.

Due: December 4th, 2020

Evaluation criteria of all written work products

The primary criteria used in evaluating students' written work are the following:

- 1) **Content:** Content is Queen/King!!!
- 2) **Mechanics:** Defined as freedom from minor factual errors and spelling and grammatical errors. Where asked, students are expected to include thorough, accurate and consistent references in any bona fide academic referencing style that includes page numbering.
- 3) **Writing style**: It should be appropriate for an academic environment. Beyond that, style will be evaluated primarily in terms of clarity. Proper use of the English language is expected!
- 4) **Structure:** Papers will also be evaluated in terms of their organization and coherence. The structure of the paper must logically flow from the assignment question(s) and must add up to a coherent whole.
- 5) **Precision and accuracy**: Precision means saying exactly and specifically what you mean, avoiding ambiguity and vague generalities. Accuracy refers to absence of major factual errors.

6) **Analysis:** Analysis will be evaluated in terms of success in using evidence in the form of data/information to construct a logical argument which convincingly answers your assignment question(s).

4) Participation in weekly lectures - 10 Percent

Students are expected to attend all classes and actively engage in ensuing breakout group discussions. Participation means making insightful comments, asking probing questions, and being involved in the ongoing discussions in ways that show students have done the readings and are thinking critically about the content and discourse of the class.

Evaluation criteria of all oral contributions

- Success in communicating key concepts succinctly and accurately, thereby demonstrating sound understanding of the work being presented.
- Mechanics of communication, such as manner of speaking (including good diction and tone), structure of the presentation and level of organization.
- 3) **Ability to respond** appropriately and fairly to questions and contribute to and stimulate unstructured discussion among peers.

There will be no mid-term and no final assessment/exams

Late penalties

No due dates will be extended unless discussed with and agreed upon by the TA. Penalty for late work will be 2% of the assignment mark per day late, including weekends. Late papers will be accepted only for one week after the due dates. Papers submitted later will not be reviewed and assessed. The only exemption from this penalty will be for work that is late for health reasons, provided that students submit the proper documentation by way of the Absence Declaration Tool

https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/news/daily-update-undergraduate-students-summer-courses-and-absence-declaration-tool

For students to access the Absence Declaration Tool they must sign into ACORN and click on "Profile and Settings" at the top left corner of the webpage. Absence for other than health reasons must be documented through proper notifications from either UofTs Accessibility Services or the College Registrar. In both cases the relevant documentation must be submitted to the instructor.

Grading scheme

The course will follow the University of Toronto's undergraduate courses grading scheme:

A+ 90 -100% A 85 - 89%

A- 80 - 84%

B+ 77 - 79%

B 73 - 76%

B- 70 - 72%

C+ 67 - 69%

C 63 - 66%

C- 60 - 62%

D+ 57 - 59%

D 53 - 56%

D- 50 - 52%

F 0 - 49%

More information is available here: https://fas.calendar.utoronto.ca/rules-regulations#grading

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued

as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves. Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) and (https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- In papers and assignments:
- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- Making up sources or facts
- Including references to sources that you did not use
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work
 - o having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing"
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers
- Misrepresenting your identity
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades

You can get further guidance on academic integrity from the website of the Office of Student Academic Integrity at: www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

Accessibility needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible at https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca

CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS

Class topics, activities and readings

Week I: September 11th, 2020

Introduction to the course - Drivers of Environmental Change

Readings

World Resource Institute, The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment - Ecosystems and Human Well-being – Synthesis Report, pp. 1–24, Island Press, 2005 https://www.millenniumassessment.org/documents/document.356.aspx.pdf R Gustave Speth, The Bridge at the Edge of the World, Yale University Press, 2008, "Looking into the Abyss", pp. 17 – 45, and "Modern Capitalism: Out of Control", pp. 46 – 66

Joshua Rothman, "The Big Question: Is the world getting better or worse?," The New Yorker (23 July 2018), pp. 26-32 **R**

Elinor Ostrom, et al., "Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges," Science (April 1999), pp. 278-282 R

Week II: September 18th, 2020

Environmental studies and issues reassessed and redefined – Why are humans causing the ecological crisis?

Readings

Douglas Macdonald, Laura Eastham, "Changes in social coordination as a factor in the evolution of human niche construction", draft unpublished paper, Toronto, July 29, 2020, **R**

Mauris W. Ersten, Christof Mauch and Edmund Russell eds., Molding the Planet: Human Niche Construction at Work. RCC Perspectives: Transformation in Environment and Society - 2016/5

http://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/2016 5 final 0.pdf R For Rio+20 coverage; see The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development/UNCSD, www.uncsd2012.org/index.html

James Gustave Speth, The Bridge at the Edge of the World, 'Modern Capitalism: Out of Control', pp 46–66, Yale University Press, 2008 **R**Jennifer Clapp/Paul Dauvergne, "Brief History of International Environmental Cooperation", pp. 121 – 136, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015 **R**Ellis, Erle C.) "Why is Human Niche Construction Transforming Planet Earth?" in

Guest speaker:

Douglas Macdonald, UofT, School of the Environment, TBC

Week III: September 25th, 2020
Intellectuals reflect and chime in

Readings

Jonathan Rowe "Who is An Economy for? Rethinking GDP, pp. 220 – 227, in Nicholson/ Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015 **R**Jennifer Clapp/Paul Dauvergne, Paths to a Green World, MIT Press, 2011, pp. 1 – 17 **R**

James Gustave Speth: Environmental Failure: A Case for a New Green Politics, https://e360.yale.edu/features/environmental failure a case for a new green politics **R**

Yash Tandon, End Aid Dependency, Pambazuka Publishers, 2008 Charles C. Mann, The Wizard and the Prophet, Alfred A. Knopf, 2018, pp. 39 – 155

Week IV: October 2nd, 2020

The State, Private Sector and Civil Society – who has the (strongest) voice and visibility?

Readings

Richard Falk, "State Sovereignty Endangers the Planet", pp.144 – 149, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015 **R**

Peter Dauvergne /Jane Lister, "The Promise of Corporate Environmentalism", pp. 154 – 163, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015 **R**Paul Wapner, "Forcing Cultural Change", pp. 192 – 201, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015 **R**

James Gustave Speth, "Environmental Failure: A Case for a New Green Politics"; see

https://e360.yale.edu/features/environmental failure a case for a new green politics

Week V: October 9th, 2020

Biodiversity – let's face up to it, it's all about us

Readings

"The economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, in http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/pdf/teeb_repo_rt.pdf, pp. 1 – 55 only **R**For the Nagoya Protocol, see https://www.cbd.int/abs/doc/protocol/nagoya-protocol-en.pdf

Guest speaker:

Barbara Zimmerman, Director Kayapo Project, International Conservation Fund of Canada, TBC

Critical Review due

Week VI: October 16th, 2020

Climate change – in search of the game changer

Readings

The Paris Agreement; see http://unfccc.int/paris agreement/items/9485.php

IPCC Special Report October 2018; see

https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2018/07/SR15 SPM version st and alone LR.pdf R

Dale Jamieson, Reason in a Dark Time – Why the struggle against climate change failed – and what it means for our future, pp. 11-60, Oxford University Press, 2014 **R**

Erich Vogt, "Current State of Climate Politics", pp. 188–198, in Environmental Policy and Law (42/3), 201

Antholis/Talbott, Fast Forward – Ethics and Politics in the Age of Global Warming, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2010.

"Climate change visualized: How Earth's temperature has changed since 1970", see https://www.axios.com/climate-change-earth-temperature-change-902e2958-451b-4044-a6a3-

<u>8dab46902da6.html?fbclid=IwAR0vIGfdduQ0v4mpzFvEBK8U1qdTQHOQ8YS5gZgJ</u>3keZYbSOXX9vbTtUcNc

Week VII: October 23rd, 2020

Climate change – the North-South divide, the financing instruments, and a higher calling

Readings

World Development Report 2010 – Overview (only): Development and Climate Change; see

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2010/Resources/5287678-1226014527953/WDR10-Full-Text.pdf **R**

Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter LAUDATO SI - "On care of our common home", http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco 20150524 enciclica-laudato-si en.pdf

Task Force 20, Climate Change and Environment, G20 Summit, 2019, Japan, see https://t20japan.org/task-forces/climate-and-environment/

Dale Jamieson, Reason in a Dark Time – Why the struggle against climate change failed – and what it means for our future, pp.178–200, Oxford University Press, 2014 **R**

Week VIII: October 30th, 2020

Food & Agriculture – two sides of a coin?

Readings

Lester Brown, "The Global Food Crisis", pp.68 – 71, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics –From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London 2015 **R**

Homi Kharas/John McArthur, "The world is off track to end hunger, so what's the solution"; see https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-

<u>development/2017/10/23/the-world-is-off-track-to-end-hunger-so-whats-the-solution/</u>

Jeffrey Gettleman, "Disappearance of Fertile Land Fuels 'Looming Crisis' in Africa"; see https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/29/world/africa/africa-climate-change-kenya-land-disputes.html

Raj Patel, "Can the World Feed 10 Billion People?" (May 4, 2011) Foreign Policy, at http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/05/04/can-the-world-feed-10-billion-people/ R "Agriculture Department buries studies showing dangers of climate change", Politico, see https://www.politico.com/story/2019/06/23/agriculture-department-climate-change-1376413

"The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture – 2018", pp. 1-83; see http://www.fao.org/3/19540EN/i9540en.pdf

"The State of the World's Forests - 2018", pp. 1–19; see

http://www.fao.org/3/I9535EN/i9535en.pdf

"The State of Food and Agriculture – 2018, pp. 1–21; see

http://www.fao.org/3/ca6030en/ca6030en.pdf R

Ifad.org "As climate shocks intensify, UN food agencies urge more support for southern Africa's hungry people", see https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/news-detail/asset/41402041

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019 – FAO report, pp 1 – 47, see http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf **R**

Guest speaker:

Bryan Dale, Ph.D., University of Toronto, TBC Brian Pentz, Ph.D. candidate, UofT/UTSC, TBC

Week IX: November 6th, 2020

Plundering the Earth – with energy "to kill"?

Readings

Wapner, Paul, "Sacrifice in an Age of Comfort" in Michael Maniates/John Meyer (eds.), The Politics of Sacrifice, MIT Press, 2010 **R**Bill McKibben, "Why not Frack?" New York Review of Books, March 2012, see www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/mar/08/why-not-frack/

Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, "Environmental Colonialism: The Perverse Politics of Climate Change", in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015 **R** "World Bank to quit upstream oil and gas projects after 2019"; see https://www.devex.com/news/world-bank-to-quit-upstream-oil-and-gas-projects-after-2019-91736

Chris Feliciano Arnold, "In the Amazon, a Catastrophic Gold Rush Looms"; see https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/opinion/in-the-amazon-a-catastrophic-gold-rush-looms.html

Thomas Biesheuvel, "One of the World's Biggest Miners Is About to Go Coal-Free"; see https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-10/one-of-the-world-s-biggest-miners-is-about-to-go-coal-free

Guest speaker:
 Jochen Bezner, Orange Solar, TBC

Memorandum due

Week X: November 13th, 2020

Reading week, no classes

Week XI: November 20th, 2020

Water – flowing between Cooperation and Conflict

Readings

Maude Barlow, "Where has all the Water gone?" pp. 58 – 67, in Nicholson/Wapner (eds.), Global Environmental Politics – From Person to Planet, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder/London, 2015 **R**Julie Turkewitz, "Corporations Have Rights. Why Shouldn't Rivers?"; see https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/us/does-the-colorado-river-have-rights-a-lawsuit-seeks-to-declare-it-a-person.html

8th World Water Forum in Brasilia/Brazil, http://www.worldwaterforum8.org/node/942

Ken Conca, Governing Water: Contentious Transnational Politics and Global Institution Building, MIT Pres, 2005, Chapters 1 & 6 **R**David C. Victor, "Oceans on the front lines of global climate change", see https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2017/10/31/oceans-on-the-front-

Charles C. Mann, The Wizard and the Prophet, Alfred A. Knopf Publisher, New York, 2018, Chapter 5 – Water: Freshwater, pp. 216 – 250 **R**

Guest speaker:

Lawson Oates - Director, Toronto Water, TBC

Week XII: November 27th, 2020

lines-of-global-climate-change/

Environmental Waste – from rags to riches?

Readings

"Plastic Waste in Canada: A daunting economic and environmental threat or an opportunity for sustainable public procurement?", see International Institute for Sustainable Development/IISD, https://www.iisd.org/library/plastic-waste-canada "What to do about plastics: An interview with Rachel Meidl", McKinsey & Company, 24.6.2019, https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/sustainability-blog/what-to-do-about-plastics-an-interview-with-rachel-meidl?cid=other-eml-alt-mip-">https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/sustainability-blog/what-to-do-about-plastics-an-interview-with-rachel-meidl?cid=other-eml-alt-mip-">https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/sustainability-blog/what-to-do-about-plastics-an-interview-with-rachel-meidl?cid=other-eml-alt-mip-

mck&hlkid=05b9522a6462400080158ed5a7c9600f&hctky=1714176&hdpid=a8cd c149-a88a-4b46-87de-ff28a476eaae

"Irish teenager wins global science award for removing microplastics from water", the journal.ie, see https://www.thejournal.ie/irish-student-science-award-microplastics-4745270-Jul2019/

"Sweden's recycling is so revolutionary, the country has run out of rubbish", see YouTube video https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/sweden-s-recycling-is-so-revolutionary-the-country-has-run-out-of-rubbish-a7462976.html "Canada wants to ban single-use plastics. Here's how that works in Europe", Global News, 10.6.2019, see https://globalnews.ca/news/5372862/european-union-single-use-plastic-ban/

European strategy for plastics, European Commission, 2019, see https://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/plastic waste.htm
"What is e-waste?", electronix redux, see

https://rogersmembercentre.com/rmcapp/remc.html#/registration

"The Wasteland", 60 Minutes, see

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=electronic+waste+60+minutes&view=de tail&mid=182D026AF766EEBAF733182D026AF766EEBAF733&FORM=VIRE "Electronic Waste", City of Toronto, see https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/recycling-organics-garbage/electronic-waste/

Guest speakers:

Ms Elisabeth Perlikowski, SickKids Hospital, TBC Mr. Stephen Miranda, Canada Fibers Ltd., TBC

Week XIII: December 4th, 2020

Students' reflection/evaluation – What went well, what not, what should be done differently?

Readings

None

Research/Policy paper due

Good luck on your upcoming FINALS!!!