



University of Toronto, School of the Environment

ENV 1001: Environmental Decision-Making: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Fall 2023 – Prof. Simon Appolloni,
PhD Wednesday 12-3 pm

Overview

Contact information

Instructor: Prof. Simon Appolloni, simon.appolloni@utoronto.ca

Office hours: By appointment; School of the Environment: ES 1044A

TA: _____

Structure

Weekly 3-hour classes. The course is aligned with the School of the Environment’s Environment Seminar Series, so five of the twelve weeks of class will have an invited guest lecturer. These seminars will be open to the public. Any changes to the schedule will be announced by email and posted on Quercus (UofT’s online course platform). Please note that this is a seminar course, rather than a lecture course; active classroom engagement is expected (and crucial to the value of the course!) Please also note that there is quite a bit of reading and other work outside our weekly classes—full engagement and preparation will make our class sessions better.

Course time and location

The seminar sessions will be in-person: Wednesday 12-3 pm; room EM108. On weeks with guest speakers, these will be delivered online via Zoom, so we will meet in person every other week.

Course Description

ENV1001 is the core course for the graduate Collaborative Specialization in Environmental Studies at the School of the Environment. This course addresses the topic of “environmental decision-making,” which we understand broadly as the challenging process of how humans engage with the natural world, and the many iterative (and sometimes invisible) decisions we make about how to organize human societies and activities. While decision-making is itself a field of study, this course takes a more flexible interpretation of the term, involving choices about, and affecting, the environment.

Methodology: Drawing on insights from across a range of disciplines—throughout the humanities, social sciences, and natural and applied sciences—and with attention to fields beyond academia, **we will listen deeply and consider multiple perspectives on the environment.** This approach, which I call **Five-Blindfolded Academics on an Elephant** approach (**FBAE; hence, the picture at the top of this syllabus of blind-folded people each understanding an elephant from an entirely different and limited perspective**) will guide our engagement with readings and speakers. Our investigation will be carried out through bi-weekly guest lectures, student presentations, group projects, and individual written assignments.

Our methodology will include a **systems thinking approach**, focusing on the whole and how its constituent parts interrelate. This includes investigating **how we know, what we know and barriers to knowing in the process of arriving at decisions on the environment and society.** To this end, we will explore worldviews and values (what assumptions we make about the world that shape the kinds of decisions we can make), conflicting interests and information (at multiple scales), and decision-making processes, along with questions of uncertainty, adaptation, and the iterative nature of some decision-making.

Goals: Students should emerge from the course with a **broader perspective on environmental and social challenges, enhanced communication skills across disciplines, and additional experience working in diverse teams.** In addition, students should also leave the course **more confident about the options for interdisciplinary collaboration.** The central goal in the course and the Collaborative Specialization program is to **enable conversations to take place within and beyond the classroom about the challenges of human-environment relationships, with new ideas on creative and just approaches to social and political decisions.**

Course readings

1. All required readings will be made available through our library system via **Quercus.** While **not required** (apart from two readings, available on Quercus)
2. As a suggested text (not mandatory) to supplement readings (which follows a FBAE approach in many ways) is Simon Appolloni, *Convergent Knowing: Christianity and*

Science in Conversation with a Suffering Creation. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2018. The book maps out a framework for making environmental decisions fostered by shifts in our understanding of science, ethics and ways of knowing. Available through UofT Bookstore; also available in digital format: [Convergent Knowing | 9780773554436, 9780773555624 | University of Toronto \(vitalsource.com\)](https://www.vitalsource.com)

Class outline & readings

Class topics and weekly readings: order of classes may change; advance notice will be given.

Week 1, Sept 13: An introduction to systems thinking & five-blindfolded-academics-and-an-elephant (FBAE) conversing. We will open with discussions about the course, our goals, and interests. Our primary interest in this class (apart from getting to know one another 😊) is to understand not just what it is we are exploring in this course but how that exploration might ensue. To that end, we begin with an examination of a systems thinking approach with a focus on the Gaia theory, followed by a discussion on how we might navigate the complex, multi-valenced conversations that require – for the purpose of this class – insights from science, economics, ethics and values. Readings:

- James Lovelock. “The Living Earth,” *Nature*, 12/2003, Volume 426, Issue 6968, pp. 769 – 770.
- Chad J McGuire. *Environmental Decision-Making in Context: A Toolbox*. 1st edition. Chapter Two: “Science of Environmental Decision-Making,” Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2017, pp. 7-62.

Week 2, Sept 21 – GUEST SPEAKER #1 (remember these are online): We dive deeper into systems thinking and our FBAE approach at both the macro and micro levels, discussing **the connection between nature and infant gut microbiota with guest Anita Kozyrskyj**, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry – Pediatrics at University of Alberta, Principal Investigator of SyMBIOTA (Synergy in Microbiota). Readings:

- Vienna Buchholz, Sarah L. Bridgman, Charlene C. Nielsen, Mireia Gascon, Hein M. Tun, Elinor Simons, Stuart E. Turvey, Padmaja Subbarao, Tim K. Takaro, Jeffrey R. Brook, James A. Scott, Piush J. Mandhane, **Anita L. Kozyrskyj** “Natural Green Spaces, Sensitization to Allergens, and the Role of Gut Microbiota During Infancy.” *mSystems* 8, no. 2 (2023): e0119022–e0119022. <https://doi.org/10.1128/msystems.01190-22>.
- LS Franco, Shanahan DF, Fuller RA. “A Review of the Benefits of Nature Experiences: More Than Meets the Eye.” *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2017 Aug 1;14(8):864. doi: 10.3390/ijerph14080864. PMID: 28763021; PMCID: PMC5580568.

Week 3, Sept 27: Arriving at decisions about the environment is difficult enough, given the integration of multiple disciplines, the limits of the local ecosystems and the scarcity of resources. Add to this the joys, hopes, fears and anxieties of humans and communities across the planet, and the situation becomes decidedly more complex. **In this class, we examine dynamics of conflict and power paying attention to the processes involved in arriving at decisions, notably unequal power relationships,** which can exacerbate conflict thwarting lasting peace and sustainability.

Readings:

- Séverine Autesserre. "Island of Peace," chapter 1 of *The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 23-44
- Heather Eaton. "Crossroads and Crosshairs: Violence, Nonviolence, Critique, Vision and Wonder." Chapter 3 of *Towards a Just and Ecologically Sustainable Peace*, Camilleri, Joseph, and Deborah Guess eds., 49–71. Singapore: Springer Singapore Pte. Limited, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-5021-8_3.
- Christopher J. Schell et al. "The ecological and evolutionary consequences of systemic racism in urban environments." *Science* 369, eaay4497(2020). DOI:10.1126/science.aay4497

Week 4, Oct 4 – GUEST SPEAKER #2: How might we rethink and reclaim the nature and depth of diverse relationships in environmental decision-making? **Chris J. Cuomo Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies, and an affiliate faculty member of the Environmental Ethics Certificate Program, the Institute for African-American Studies, the Institute for Native American Studies, and the UGA Initiative for Climate and Society** explores the gendered, feminist, historical, and anticolonial dimensions of care ethics and indigenous ethics to address this query.

Readings:

- Chris J. Cuomo. "Sexual Politics in Environmental Ethics: Impacts, Causes, Alternatives." In *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199941339.013.26>.
- Chris J. Cuomo and Kyle Whyte. "Ethics of Caring in Environmental Ethics: Indigenous and Feminist Philosophies." In *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199941339.013.22>.

Week 5, Oct 11: Does it matter that most of us, when asked about global trends, such as what percentage of the world's population lives in poverty, get the answer wrong? It should, since getting the facts and their interpretation wrong will not help us make sound decisions. What about the pervasive belief among many that human beings are essentially bad. Does that assumption hinder our decision making, and is the

assumption even right? **In this class, we ponder how instincts and distorted views of the reality before us misrepresent our perspectives and actions on global issues.**

Readings:

- Elin Kelsey. "The Power of Expectations and Belief," chapter 1 of *Hope Matters: Why Changing the Way We Think Is Critical to Solving the Environmental Crisis*. Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2020, 9-24.
- Rutger Bregman. "A New realism." In *Humankind: A Hopeful History*. Translated by Elizabeth Manton and Erica Moore. First English-language edition. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2020. 1-20.
- Rutger Bregman. "The Rise of *Homo Puppy*." In *Humankind: A Hopeful History*. Translated by Elizabeth Manton and Erica Moore. First English-language edition. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2020. 50-72.
- Hans Rosling with Anna Rosling Rönnlund, and Ola Rosling. "The Gap Instinct." In *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World-- and Why Things Are Better Than You Think*. London, England: Sceptre, 2018: 19-46.

Week 6, Oct 18 – GUEST SPEAKER #3: What is being asked of us as settlers on this land we call Canada? Our current colonial assumptions of unending economic growth have contributed to many of the problems we experience today. It behooves us to shed our colonial ways. But how do those of us with settler ancestry find a cultural way into what is being asked of us today as our climate of change challenges so many colonial and modern beliefs? **Timothy Leduc, Associate Professor in Land-Based and Indigenous Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University in Brantford, Ontario,** asks these questions. In short, he wants us to ponder how multiple nations can co-exist on common lands in ways that are culturally and ecologically unique, yet mutually beneficial.

Readings:

- Gae Ho Hwako (*Norma Jacobs*). An Introduction. In *Odagahodhes: Reflecting on Our Journeys*. Gae Ho Hwako, and Timothy B. Leduc, eds. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022: 3-12.
- Leduc, Timothy. "An Invitation to Expand the Teaching." In *Odagahodhes: Reflecting on Our Journeys*. Gae Ho Hwako, and Timothy B. Leduc, eds. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022: 18-27.
- Leduc, Tim. "Continuing the Conversation." In *Earth to Tables Legacies: Multimedia Food Conversations Across Generations and Cultures*. Barndt, Deborah, Lauren E. Baker, and Alexandra Gelis, editors. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023: 203-204.

Week 7, Oct 25: Deciding the right course of action on most environmental decisions is difficult. Issue span both temporal periods (past-present-future) and geographical distances, diverse populations, with different epistemologies, and multiple species in multiple bioregions. But is it enough to change just actions, policies or even technologies? **What about changing our mindsets or worldviews that shape our thinking and actions? In this class, we listen to 3 significant philosophies/cosmologies of the last**

half century that challenge the current paradigms or worldviews that undergird our current socio-political structures, from cosmology, social ecology to Deep Ecology.

Readings:

- Thomas Berry. "The New Story," chapter 10 of *The Dream of the Earth*. Sierra Club Books pap. ed. San Francisco, Calif: Sierra Club Books, 1990, 123-137.
- Bill Devall and George Sessions. "Principles of Deep Ecology," in. *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: a Global Anthology*. Foltz, Richard C ed. Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2008. 434-440.
- Stephen M Wheeler. "The Nature of Social Ecology," chapter 7 of *Climate Change and Social Ecology: a New Perspective on the Climate Challenge*. London: Routledge, 2012, 93-117.

Week 8, Nov 1 – GUEST SPEAKER #4 What is the city-nature connection to our wellbeing? And what wisdom on mental health and resilience might psychology afford us in these times of environmental distress? **Lindsay McCunn, Professor at Victoria Island University, discusses our sense of place and urban planning as she discusses these questions.**

Readings:

- Lindsay J McCunn and Robert Gifford, and Jiaying Zhao. "Relating the Importance of Psychological Science in Addressing Climate Change to Cities and Health." *Cities & Health* 6, no. 6 (2022): 1039–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23748834.2021.1939640>.
- Terry Hartig, and Peter H. Kahn. "Living in Cities, Naturally." *Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science)* 352, no. 6288 (2016): 938–40. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaf3759>.

Fall Term Reading week: Nov 8 - No class

Week 9, Nov 15: Are our epistemic approaches broad and inclusive of the multiple ways of apprehending reality? Why indeed might broad and inclusive ways of knowing be important? We explore these questions primarily through the lens of Indigenous knowledge systems and traditional knowledge systems and how they differ to the mathimatico-rational scientific, abstract knowledge systems.

Readings:

- Robin Wall Kimmerer. "Mishkos Kenomagwen: The Teachings of Grass," *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013, 156-166.
- Robin Wall Kimmerer. "Windigo Footprints," *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013, 303-309.
- David Orr, "Slow Knowledge," *Conservation Biology* 10, no. 3 (June 1996): 699-702.

- Simon Appolloni. “Between Hope and a Hard Place,” *Convergent Knowing: Christianity and Science in Conversation with a Suffering Creation*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2018, 244-268.

Week 10, Nov 22 – GUEST SPEAKER #5: Trees surround us here in Toronto. Yes, they absorb CO₂ and supply oxygen, especially the old ones. They are homes to multiple species and they provide cover from the sun. **What is the cultural significance of old trees in a city though? They are living artifacts that are critical in the ecological function of our city, says Lesia Mokrycke, a landscape artist and designer and the founder of Tropos.**

Readings:

- Lesia Mokrycke. “The Trees.” In *Generation Laudato Si: Catholic Youth on Living Out an Ecological Spirituality*. Rebecca Rathbone and Simon Appolloni eds. Toronto, ON: Novalis, 2023: 119-121.
- Tropos: visit <https://www.troposcape.com/> to see visual installations.
- Galafassi, Diego, Sacha Kagan, Manjana Milkoreit, María Heras, Chantal Bilodeau, Sadhbh Juarez Bourke, Andrew Merrie, Leonie Guerrero, Guðrún Pétursdóttir, and Joan David Tàbara. “‘Raising the Temperature’: The Arts on a Warming Planet.” *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 31 (2018): 71–79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2017.12.010>.
- Rathwell, Kaitlyn J., and Derek Armitage. “Art and Artistic Processes Bridge Knowledge Systems About Social-Ecological Change: An Empirical Examination with Inuit Artists from Nunavut, Canada.” *Ecology and Society* 21, no. 2 (2016): 21–. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-08369-210221>.

Week 11: Nov 29: What is an economy for? Some might say ‘for prosperity’. But what do we mean by prosperity? A better question might be, what is a good life, asked by philosophers for millenia? An Andean Indigenous philosophy of *sumak kawsay*, as it is called in Quechuan or *suma qamaña*, as it is called in Aymaran (of the peoples in Bolivia – also known in Spanish as *vivir bien*) all translate roughly as “living well.” At times, we seem to forget just how much we are immersed within and tied to an economic system that values competition over cooperation, consumption at all costs, endless growth on a finite planet while at the same time rewards greed. Is this living well? In this last class of discussion, we will ponder, through the guise of this massive system we call the economy, what is a good life?

Readings:

- E. F. (Ernst Friedrich) Schumacher. “Buddhist Economics,” Chapter 4 of *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered: 25 Years Later ... with Commentaries*. Point Roberts, Wash: Hartley & Marks Publishers, 1999, 37-45.
- Tim Jackson. “Prosperity Lost,” Chapter 1 of *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. London: Earthscan, 2009, 1-16.
- The Earth Charter: https://earthcharter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/echarter_english.pdf?x16164

- David Suzuki (with Amanda McConnell and Adrienne Mason), “Home Sapiens: Born of the Earth,” Chapter 1 in *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* (Updated and Expanded version). Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2007, 19-49.

Week 12: Dec 6: Project Imaginariums and wrap up

Assignments

- 1. Class engagement: 15%**
 - i. attendance, active listening & engagement each week (small or large group)
 - ii. weekly participation in online discussion board chats & activities
- 2. Engaging, Communicating and/or Facilitating, employing the FBAE approach (25%);** here you have a **choice of three tasks:**
 - i. **Engaging and Facilitating our 5 speaker talks** (up to 5 students)

OR

 - ii. **Engaging, Communicating, and Facilitating 1 of our class readings** from weeks 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 (up to 16 students)

OR

 - iii. **Communicating a Burning Issue** (due week 8 – no limit of persons)
- 3. Individual one-page reflections on weekly readings (only 3 in all; due each week, one week after reading assigned): 30%**
- 4. Group-based project – Project Imaginarium: 30% (due week 12)**

NOTE: In case of unexpected challenges (guest speaker cancellations, student illness, other emergencies, etc.), grading policies may be changed as follows:

- Deadlines may be moved (as a class or individually; extensions are possible),
- Guest speaker facilitation may be altered to involve shorter/longer student-facilitated discussions, including without a seminar speaker (with discussions to be based on assigned readings and possible supplementary video material),
- Individual students facing challenges may be exempted from group projects, with alternate assignment options and/or grades redistributed to other assignments.

Class engagement – 15% (12 points for attending each of the 12 sessions, 1 point more – up to 3 – for exceptional participation)

With the idea that we learn from one another (me included), and given this is a seminar, discussions are essential. The key is engagement: you can actively participate in class discussions (even if in small group and/or online Quercus platforms), ask questions of the guest speakers and generally be inquisitive. This last part is easy, since we come from different disciplines and backgrounds: so, there is much to inquire about how others think and work.

Engaging, Communicating and/or Facilitating, employing the FBAE approach (25%)

Choice #1 - Engaging and Facilitating our 5 speaker talks (up to 5 students)

The main learning goal is to familiarize yourself with online moderation for when you run your own seminars and online workshops/talks/conferences. You will work as a group, with each taking a turn at different tasks throughout the weeks as outlined below:

- (Pre-seminar talk) help our class engage with the guest speakers talk by preparing a discussion sheet from readings before the day of the talk;
- (During the seminar) welcome, introduce and facilitate discussions for each of our 5 speakers online;
- (Post-seminar talk) facilitate post-speaker class discussions with our class online.

Pre-seminar talk talk with me?? TA??

- Please post a one-page (~300-400-word) reflection paper on the readings and theme of the week (stated seminar topic or theme) on Quercus by noon the day before the talk along with two or three discussion questions. In this short paper, you might choose to reflect on the questions that arise for you from the reading, how the theme fits with other readings from our course, and/or how your work in your home program relates to the topic of discussion. It is not meant as a summary of the work(s), but something to help others engage with the work (s). You're welcome to read more widely, based on the description of the seminar, and bring in knowledge you have from other classes, research, or work you've done or learned about.

During the seminar

- The framework for this is flexible. For each week, though, chose someone to MC the seminar (keeping things flowing, soliciting and moderating questions, for example, thanking attendees at the end of the seminar, making announcements of next talks) another to introduce the speaker (bios will be provided); someone should also moderate the chat sections on zoom so as to relay questions to the speaker.

Post-seminar talk

- After the public seminar and Q&A, we'll have a short break and then reconvene just with our class for small group discussions. Your group will moderate the discussion with small groups. In general, you'll have 5-6 peers in each small group, and you'll be tasked with moderating the discussions, asking questions to catalyze discussion, drawing links between your peers' comments and questions, and generally leading the discussion.

End of seminars reflection

You'll be asked for a self-assessment of your work for these sessions once (what worked what did not?) so will need to think critically and carefully about moderation styles, what generates good conversations, and how to engage with your peers across perspectives and fields.

- Evaluation will be based on how well you performed the various tasks over time, critically engaging the readings with salient questions and thoughtfully engaging the attendees as well as presentation of voice and preparedness; I will be looking for improvement over the five sessions.

****See Appendix 1 at end for tips on facilitating/moderating (adapted from one of Prof Kate Neville's research assistants at end of syllabus)****

Choice #2 Engaging, Communicating, and Facilitating 1 of our class readings from weeks 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 (up to 16 students)

- On one of the above in-class weeks, you will have chosen one reading (some might be paired) from a theorist. Please see me to confirm your choice.
- You will be prepared to discuss the reading (its main argument along with presenting salient points you uncovered relating to its arguments) to the class on the day of that reading. In most cases, reading one more chapter from the book the reading came or another article by the same author should suffice to come up with salient points relating to the argument(s).
- The point is to be curious and open to engaging what the author (think blind-folded academic) is trying to say. It is NOT a time to critique the work, only engage and to help fellow students engage it.
- The presentation will not be long (5 minutes); presentations will vary each week: from round robins, debates, gallery walks, to hands-on activities, such as having groups identify similarities of authors' messages via Ven diagrams. The methods here are not exhaustive. Been creative is good here!
- The week before the readings are due, all student presenting that week will meet with me to discuss presentation strategies.
 - **Evaluation** will be based on **clarity in presenting** aspect of paper in question, **evidence of critical thinking, evidence of reading more from the interlocutor and presenting with good voice and eye contact**

Choice #3: Communicating a Burning Issue (due week 8 – no limit of persons)

- This is an individual less-conventional assignment focused on course content and interdisciplinary communication. You will communicate a burning environmental issue or question you have related to environmental decision-making. This is not meant to be presented, only handed in to me.
- A **'burning issue' is defined** as an important subject that people are arguing about or discussing, such as: climate inaction / Earth-human relationships / green [which includes peaceful/participatory/just] transition and governance /

global South concerns / ethics / values / economics / hope / the role of art / knowledge systems [other than Western mathematico-rational]). Choose one and communicate it.

- The **aim** of this exercise is to help you convey an issue demonstrating some understanding of the diversity of ways people communicate messages and possible barriers experienced by others in receiving messages.
- You may choose one of the following formats below (an alternate format of your choice is possible with my permission). While conventional writing options (see below) are certainly acceptable, **in keeping with our theme on multiple ways of knowing**, you are encouraged to convey your burning issue using non-conventional methods, such as artwork, poetry, music, drama, ritual. **All material must be original unposted/unpublished work and not something already created:**
 - i. An **op-ed** for a newspaper or other media outlet,
 - ii. A **proposal/plan** for an online interdisciplinary conference or workshop on a topic of current concern,
 - iii. A **ritual** that mourns the loss of something related to the environment,
 - iv. A **poster** (i.e.: one inviting people to participate in a town-hall meeting) focused on taking new avenues on the environment,
 - v. An original **poem, piece of music** (will need to be performed), **work of art**, or (short) **play** that conveys your burning issue.
- For purely **written conventional assignments** (blog, op-ed, proposal), your text should be roughly 1200-1500 words. Shorter is fine, although usually more challenging! Be sure to present in the style appropriate to your medium. Look up how to write blogs, or op-eds to be sure.
 - **Evaluation** will be based on **clarity in describing** aspect of paper in question, **evidence of critical thinking** on that aspect, **writing style & mechanics**. In all instances above (conventional and non-conventional), you are to:
 - i. Specify the outlet you are writing for (for conventional written submission), the audience, for all other works
 - ii. Cite sources using the citation style that is appropriate to the outlet you choose for all claims. If no citations are generally used in the outlet you choose, e.g., in op-eds, poem, please include footnotes or endnotes, so I can track your sources,
 - iii. (continuing from the previous bullet) Draw on course readings as much as possible, showing specific connections.
 - iv. Write in the style or make use of art appropriate to your chosen outlet/audience.
- If your work is a **non-conventional written ritual, a poem, artwork, drama, or musical piece**, the above text lengths do not apply. However, despite the old adage, 'a picture paints a thousand words,' without some explanation behind the work, assessing these works will be difficult. For this reason, a different marking

rubric will be required (see below). Please see me to decide on what precisely will be needed.

- **Evaluation:** rather than imposing a rubric to assess your artwork, I am putting forth a self-curation in which you answer a set of questions about the creative process/experience. It is not meant to be long or onerous (if you go beyond 600 words, you've gone too long). This evaluation will supplant the accompanying written piece we discussed that you were to include. Simply provide this one project discussion sheet (as an email is good), and if you wish to add something not addressed below, please feel free to do so.

Using Word or a Pdf file, please write answers to the following:

1. Give a bit of background of your work by stating the nature of your interest on it and list the goals of your project.
2. Explain why you chose your particular method (ie.: music, art, ritual performance) as a mode of expression your goals above.
3. Provide some details on the experience of the creation of your project.
4. Are there aspects from our course discussions/readings that relate to your project?
5. In all instances above (conventional and non-conventional), you are to:
 - Specify the outlet you are writing for (for conventional written submission), the audience, for all other works
 - Cite sources using the citation style that is appropriate to the outlet you choose for all claims. If no citations are generally used in the outlet you choose, e.g., in op-eds, poem, please include footnotes or endnotes, so I can track your sources,
 - (continuing from the previous bullet) Draw on course readings as much as possible, showing specific connections.
 - Write in the style or make use of art appropriate to your chosen outlet/audience.


Individual one-page reflections on weekly readings (only 3 in all; due each week, one week after reading assigned): 30%

You will be expected to reflect 3 times on one (1) aspect of any of the readings required for our in-person classes.

- The **aim** of this exercise is to have you engage more deeply with readings, to facilitate my gauging your inquiry processes on readings, and suggesting further lines of investigation, and to help you develop skills in writing clearly and concisely (not as easy as it sounds, but crucial for higher academic studies!)
- Think of the reflection more as **'wondering' about a point mentioned in the reading**. This is NOT a time to critique the work. You are listening and engaging with the blind-folded academic. The reflection will be no more than one-page double-

- spaced (with 11-12 pt. font, and margins no smaller than .75 inches). You will begin by clearly describing the aspect in question from the reading (for example, a point raised by Sarewitz in his “Science and Environmental Policy: An Excess of Objectivity” [allot no more than a 1/3 of the page to that], and one fully developed critical inquiry (NOT CRITIQUE) into the author’s point [the remaining portion of page] (for example, tell me what question does the point raise for you? Does the author’s point relate to another point raised in previous readings? What seems missing from the analysis?, etc. For a critical analysis to be ‘fully developed’ (as much as is possible on one page), try to consider the possible challenges or responses to your query; you need not answer your query, just wonder about it (further explanation and examples will be shared in class).
- **NOTE:** critical inquiry is not the same as critiquing. You are not being asked to review the work (find what is wrong or right about the piece), but to reflect on an aspect the reading raises.
 - **NOTE:** this is NOT a summary of the article either.
 - The reflections will be handed in as either a printed hard copy or paper uploaded on Quercus no later than one week after the reading was assigned on the syllabus (in other words, before the subsequent class). Marks will be assigned, and papers returned by the following class.
 - **Evaluation** will be based on **clarity in describing** aspect of paper in question, **evidence of critical thinking** on that aspect, **writing style & mechanics**.

Group-based project – Project Imaginarium: 30% (due week 12)

- Imagine one aspect of the future that is just, regenerative and/or sustainable for Earth and its multitude of communities and entities. Try to be as detailed and specific as possible when specifying your Imaginarium: energy (for home, office, industry etc. ...); transportation (again, home, industry, public, etc.); industry (i.e.: throughput); architecture (residential, other); urban planning/land management (this is broad, so it too would need to be narrowed down); agriculture (such as regenerative); an issue in economics, governance, forestry, (and so on). You are to describe or represent in some medium what you imagine (how that aspect of the future looks, operates) and discuss it. Specifically:
 1. While there is no limit to what can be imagined, when considering aspects like technology in regard to your project, ground your vision in that which is current or at least plausible in the near future (a George Jetson flying saucer is neat, but pie in the sky at the moment – although who knows what  energy and materials it uses and whether those are sustainable 😊! Same goes for dilithium crystals for Trekkies out there).
 2. Your group will present your Imaginarium Project to the class (week 12; maximum 20 minutes) covering four things:
 - When you foresee it coming into practice or built,
 - Why it will be good for Earth and its multitude of communities and entities,
 - What steps (likely an iterative process) will be needed from now until then to make it happen (and the challenges [working with

- communities mainly] presented along the way – and how you foresee getting around them),
- How your Imaginarium addresses one or more aspects raised in our readings and/or guest lectures.
3. Be sure to hand in to me a page citing sources used to help you imagine your project.
- Evaluation for this assignment will be based on **content** (how well the assignment conforms to the above criteria and how well it follows the three UofT 3MT judging criteria, with each component weighted equally: **comprehension; engagement; and communication**.
 - Comprehension
 - Did the presentation: help the audience understand the research/project? Follow a logical sequence?
Did the speaker: clearly outline the nature and aims of research/project? Did speaker clearly indicate what was significant about this research?
 - Engagement
 - Did the presentation make the audience want to know more? Did the speakers: convey enthusiasm for their work? Capture and maintain their audience's attention? Avoid trivializing or "dumbing down" their research? Would the audience want to know more about the speaker's research?
 - Communication
 - Was the presentation communicated in language appropriate for non-specialists? Did the speaker: use sufficient eye contact and vocal range? Maintain a steady pace and a confidence stance? Avoid scientific jargon? Explain terminology that needed to be used? Provide adequate background information to illustrate points?

Policies and Expectations

In general

In this course, you can expect that I will strive to be fair, respectful, prepared, responsive, and enthusiastic. In return, I anticipate you will be respectful of your classmates and of me, be prepared, and be flexible. We are all learning new skills, practices, norms and – as the global pandemic has shown us – doing so amidst a series of personal, community, and global challenges. I hope that together we can foster a safe and engaging classroom, and I will rely on all of you to help create that environment.

Course site

We will have a course website (Quercus) for readings, course announcements, course materials, and discussions. We will use Zoom when online. Please check in frequently with the Quercus site. Please also be patient with our online tools, as we will encounter glitches and

challenges. If/when communication on the site goes awry, please feel free to use email for assignments, questions, etc.

Deadlines and late penalties

I anticipate all assignments will be submitted on time. However, some of you may find yourselves with valid conflicts and challenges, especially in light of your diverse programs and courses of study, and the exceptional challenges of this particular time (illness, caregiving duties, housing and financial insecurity, technological connectivity challenges, etc.). Please contact me as early as possible if you anticipate being unable to meet deadlines. Please also contact your group members if you run into challenges during the group project. As this is a seminar class, attendance is the bedrock of the course, enabling us to build a strong community and develop enriching conversations across weeks—still, we'll need to be flexible and understanding when conflicts and problems arise. If you know in advance you need to miss class, it helps me tremendously to be aware of these absences.

Backups and rough drafts

You are strongly advised to keep rough drafts and backup copies of all assignments and essays you submit. Please take a minute at the start of the term to set yourself a backup strategy. Whether it's a backup external hard drive, a web-based cloud service like Dropbox or Google Drive, or some other option, it's important you have multiple copies of your work in the case of a hard drive failure or computer problem (this is important not only for this course, but also (especially!) for your research and thesis/dissertation projects).

Names

If your name on the official course registration list does not, for any reason, match the name by which you would like to be addressed (and under which you would like to submit assignments and sign emails and be addressed in class) please let me know. I am not able to change official course lists, but I can certainly call you by your preferred name. Also, please let me know the pronouns you use (mine are he/him). I encourage you always to begin your interactions in academic settings with more senior scholars using formal forms of address—especially “Dr.” or “Professor” titles for profs/instructors. That said, as graduate student colleagues, I am happy to have formal or informal exchanges with you: you are welcome to call me Dr./Prof. Appolloni, or Simon whichever makes you most comfortable. (If you use a title for me, though, please choose “Dr.” or “Prof.”, not “Mr.”)

Exceptions and Assistance

The University has many resources to help students who need assistance for any number of reasons, both in and outside of the classroom, including library, academic, and health and counseling resources. Let's aim to work together as a class to help each other find academic support in the midst of challenges. The University remains committed to providing allowances for religious observances, as do I. A few helpful resources:

- <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/gradlife/Pages/Grad-Wellness.aspx>
- <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Writing-Centre.aspx>
- <http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation>
- <http://familycare.utoronto.ca/resources/>

If you are struggling or you encounter unanticipated challenges or crises during the term (whether for academic and/or personal reasons), please seek the support you need as early as possible, as best you can. Some students find themselves facing challenges unexpectedly. If you find yourself in a difficult situation, even if you have not yet gone through all the official channels, it is best to let me know right away that you are seeking university assistance and may need accommodations (you do not need to disclose the details of your situation to me). If you will need accommodation from me for any reason, in the classroom or on coursework and assignments, please let me know as soon as you can.

Academic integrity

The seriousness of academic integrity really cannot be stressed enough. Academic integrity remains **essential** to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, seeing these as serious academic offenses. As graduate students, your academic integrity will be the foundation of your scholarly and practitioner careers.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, through the School of Graduate Studies. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from your instructor or other institutional resources. As some norms differ across disciplines and universities, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with UofT policies.

- <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/facultyandstaff/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx>
- <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>
- www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
- Using someone else's words without using quotation marks
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without instructor permission
- Making up sources or facts
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University

Appendix #1 – How to Moderate Meetings

What does 'moderating' mean?

- If you have ever attended a panel discussion at a conference, a debate or a webinar, you have seen a moderator. The moderator is like a *hiking trail*: guiding people in an interesting direction, helping avoid them getting lost, and occasionally pointing out interesting things along the way. But you're not a tour guide -- you're steering the hike, but you're not providing the commentary.
- The moderator's main role is to keep the conversation lively, on topic and balanced.
- A moderator needs to "read the room". If occasionally someone wanders off the trail, it's okay to encourage them back to it. But if people start leaving the hiking trail en masse, it means the trail is no longer taking them in a direction they want to go.

How can I be a good moderator?

- Be present, engaged, and attentive. Sit/stand comfortably. It's not rocket science, and it also does not have to be perfect.
- Your goal is to facilitate the conversation: we want to reflect on seminar content, dive deeper in the specific topic, and hear people's original ideas, while also meeting peers!
 - If someone answers with a short, vague answer, you can say "Yes, thank you for sharing. We have a bit more time, would you be able to elaborate on that point?"
 - If someone goes off track, you can gently bring back the conversation "This is a very interesting point, but I think it's a little beyond our scope. Could we focus on the initial question, and maybe talk about your point at the end if we have time?"
- Balance is crucial: some folks speak more than others, even though everyone in the class has something interesting to say. Try to pay attention to whom has already spoken a few times and whom has never been able to speak. Notice if the conversation becomes dominated by a smaller group and do your best to restore balance.
 - It is okay for you to say: "Hey [peer name], I think you spoke a few times already. Let's go first to those who haven't spoken and get back to you afterwards!" - it's not rude, it's your "job"!
 - Use your judgment for when to intervene, and when to let things go. This can be hard to do, so do reflect afterwards on whether your judgment calls were effective.
- You don't need to know the answers. If a colleague asks a question, you can answer as a student, open it up to everyone to see if anyone has the answer, and say "It seems like none of us know the answer here, I'll write it down and bring it back to the whole group". Moderation works better if the moderator *doesn't* try to provide the answers.

- Don't feel you need to fill all the silences. Sometimes people need space to think before they speak. But if the silence drags on, be prepared to offer another prompt to get things going again.
- You can establish a system that works for you: you might have those who want to speak raise their hand, or indicate that they'd like to intervene by putting a note in the chat, etc.... whatever works for you, and allows people to have a chance to speak without interrupting each other.
- You are not expected to be an 'expert' -- just an engaged peer who is making sure the conversation has a direction, is participatory, and is coherent.

Appendix #2 – Suggestions for further reading and viewing

Economics/commerce and environment

- . Hawken, Paul. *The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability*. New York: Collins Business, 1993.
- . Jackson, Tim. *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. London: Earthscan, 2009.
- . Korten, David. *When Corporations Rule the World*. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1995.
- . Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*. Vancouver: Hartley and Marks, 1999.
- . Victor, Peter. *Herman Daly's Economic for a Full World: His Life and Ideas*. New York: Routledge, 2022.

Ethics and environment

- . Appolloni, Simon. *Convergent Knowing: Christianity and Science in Conversation with a Suffering Creation*. McGill-Queen's University Press, forthcoming, November 2018.
- . Berry, Thomas. "Ethics and Ecology." Paper delivered to the Harvard Seminar on Environmental Values, Harvard University, 9 April 1996. Accessed June 2013. <https://intuerifarm.wordpress.com/philosophy/ethics-and-ecology-by-thomas-berry/>
- . Berry, Thomas. *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. New York: Bell Tower Publishing Group, 1999.
- . Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Translated by Phillip Berryman. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- . Cheney, Jim, and Anthony Weston. "Environmental Ethics as Environmental Etiquette: Toward an Ethics-Based Epistemology." *Environmental Ethics* 21 (Summer 1999):115–34.
- . Cuomo, Chris J. "Getting Closer: Thoughts on the Ethics of Knowledge Production." Accessed August 2013. <http://fore.research.yale.edu/disciplines/ethics/essays/>.
- . Garvey, James. *The Ethics of Climate Change: Right and Wrong in a Warming World*. London: Continuum, 2008.

- . Guha, Ramachandra. "The Environmentalism of the Poor." In *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South*, edited by Ramachandra Guha and J. Martinez-Alier, 3–21. London: Earthscan Publications, 1997.
- . Jenkins, Willis. *The Future of Ethics: Sustainability, Social Justice, and Religious Creativity*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013.
- . Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966.
- . Scharper, Stephen Bede. *For Earth's Sake: Toward a Compassionate Ecology*. Edited by Simon Appolloni. Toronto: Novalis Publishing Inc., 2013.
- . Schweitzer, Albert. *Albert Schweitzer: Essential Writings*. Selected with an Introduction by James Brabazon. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005.
- . Waldau, Paul and Kimberly Patton (editors). *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religions, Science and Ethics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Psychology (includes topic of eco-anxiety) and environment

- . Davenport, Leslie. *Emotional Resiliency in the Era of Climate Change: A Clinician's Guide*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017.
- . Frankl, Victor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006 (original publication 1959).
- . Kelsey, Elin. *Hope Matters: Why Changing the Way We Think Is Critical to Solving the Environmental Crisis*. Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2020.
- . Louv, Richard. *Last child in the woods: saving our children from nature-deficit disorder (Updated and Expanded.)*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008.
- . Macy, Joanna and Chris Johnstone. *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy*. Novato, California: New World Library, 2012.
- . National Forum and Research Report (2012). "The Psychological Effects of Global Warming on the United States: And why the U.S. mental health care system is not adequately prepared." Available at: <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Reports/Archive>
- . Ray, Sarah Jaquette. *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2020.
- . Roszak, Theodore; Gomes, Kanner, A. D., *Ecopsychology: restoring the earth, healing the mind*. Sierra Club Books, 1995.
- . Wray, Britt. *Generation Dread: Finding Purpose in an Age of Climate Crisis*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2022.

Religion and environment

- . Appolloni, Simon. "The Roman Catholic Tradition in Conversation with Thomas Berry's Fourfold Wisdom." *Religions* 6 no. 3 (2015): 794–818, doi:10.3390/rel6030794.
- . Appolloni, Simon. "Wondering about Wonder as a Possible Antidote to Our Violence against Earth." In *Advancing Nonviolence and Social Transformation: New Perspectives on Nonviolent Theories*. Edited by Heather Eaton and Lauren Michelle Levesque, 265-280. Sheffield, UK.

- . Appolloni, Simon and Heather Eaton. "Religions and Ecology in Canada," *Alternatives Journal*, 1 March, 2016.
- . Berry, Thomas. *The Sacred Universe: Earth Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- . Berry, Thomas. *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009.
- . Delora, Vine. *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. Fulcrum Publishing, 1994.
- . Moe-Lobeda, Cynthia. *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2013.
- . Taylor, Sarah McFarland. *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- . White Jr, Lynn. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." In *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment: A Global Anthology*, edited by Richard C. Foltz, 30–7. Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2003.

Sustainability and environment

- . Angus, Ian. *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the crisis of the Earth System*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2016.
- . Boyd, David R. *The Optimistic Environmentalist: Progressing Toward a Greener Future*. Toronto: ECW Press. 2015.
- . Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. New York: Mariner Book – Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002/1962.
- . Cole, R., Robinson, J., and Westerhoff, L. "Regenerative Sustainability: Rethinking Neighborhood Sustainability", in Moore, S. ed, *Pragmatic Sustainability: Theoretical and Practical Tools*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge. 2016.
- . Gold, Lorna. *Climate Generation: Awakening to Our Children's Future*. New York: New City Press, 2019.
- . Hathaway, Mark, and Leonardo Boff. *The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009.
- . Hawken, Paul. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice, and Beauty to the World We Make Things*. London: Penguin Books, 2007.
- . Hawken, Paul, editor. *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*. New York: Penguin Books, 2017.
- . Klein, Naomi. *The Changes Everything: Capitalism versus Climate Change*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada. 2014.
- . Klein, Seth. *A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency*. Toronto: ECW Press, 2020.
- . Mann, Michael. *The New Climate War: The Fight to Take Back Our Planet*. New York: Public Affairs, 2021.
- . McDonough, William and Michael Brungart. *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. New York: North Point Press, 2002.
- . McKibben, Bill. *Enough: Staying Human in an Engineered Age*. New York, Houghton-Mifflin, 2003.

- . Shiva, Vandana. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability and Peace*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2005.
- . Wallace-Wells, David. *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life after Warming*. New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2020.
- . Wright, Ronald. *A Short History of Progress*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2004.

Science and environment

- . Ehrlich, Anne, and Paul Ehrlich. *Earth*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1987.
- . Frodeman, Robert. *Geo-Logic: Breaking Ground between Philosophy and the Earth Sciences*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003.
- . Lovelock, James. *The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth is Fighting Back and How We Can Still Save Humanity*. London: Allen Lane, 2006.
- . Lovelock, James. *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- . Mitchell, Alanna. *Sea Sick: The Global Ocean in Crisis*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2009.
- . Sale, Peter F. *Our Dying Planet: An Ecologists View of the Crisis We Face*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- . Suzuki, David with Amanda McConnell. *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature*. Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2002.
- . Swimme, Brian Thomas, and Mary Evelyn Tucker. *Journey of the Universe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

Worldviews and environment

- . Bregman, Rutger. *Humankind: A Hopeful History*. Translated by Elizabeth Manton and Erica Moore. First English-language edition. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2020.
- . Devall, Bill, and George Sessions. *Deep Ecology: Living as if nature Mattered*. Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 1985.
- . Gae Ho Hwako, and Timothy B. Leduc, eds. *Odagahodhes: Reflecting on Our Journeys*. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022.
- . Holthaus, Eric. *The Future Earth: A Radical Vision for What's Possible in the Age of Warming*. New York: HarperOne, 2024.
- . King, Thomas. *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003
- . Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: HarperCollins, 1976.
- . Midgley, Mary. *Gaia: The Next Big Idea*. London: Demos, 2001.
- . Orr, David W. *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004.
- . Rosling, Hans with Anna Rosling Rönnlund, and Ola Rosling. "The Gap Instinct." In *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World-- and Why Things Are Better Than You Think*. London, England: Sceptre, 2018.

- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Ecofeminism and the Challenges of Globalization." In *Ecofeminism and Globalization: Exploring Culture, Context, and Religion*, edited by Heather Eaton and Lois Ann Lorentzen, vii–xi. Landham, Md.; Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation*. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.
- Wall Kimmerer, Robin. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013.

Film and Environment

The following is a short list of movies I have come across that impart adeptly one or more themes tied to the environment, all which provoke deeper reflection.

Don't Look Up, US 2022, dir. Adam McKay

Avatar, US 2009, dir. James Cameron

WALL-E, US 2008, dir. Andrew Stanton

Erin Brockovich, US 2000, dir. Stephen Soderbergh

The Milagro Bean Field War, US 1998, dir. Robert Redford

Mindwalk, US 1990, dir. Bernt Amadeus Capra

Babette's Feast, Denmark 1987, dir. Gabriel Axel

The Truman Show, US 1988, dir. Peter Weir

The China Syndrome, US 1979, dir. James Bridges

The Grapes of Wrath, 1940, dir. John Ford



Documentaries and Environment

Documentaries on the environment are too numerous to list here. Not all, despite their intentions, are completely factual, and some contain dated data. It is wise to approach all documentaries with a hermeneutic of suspicion (viewing the clip with some level of academic skepticism in order to reveal possible hidden meanings or undiscussed agendas). Below are samples of documentaries I have found worthwhile (I used the IMDB tag lines); let me know of others you found worth a look! The list is not, by far, comprehensive. Some might be of interest to you because of the tone concerning the environment they convey.

Anthropocene: The Human Epoch, directed by Jennifer Baichwal and Edward Burtinsky (2018); filmmakers document the impact humans have made on the planet in 20 countries.

Baraka, directed by Ron Fricke (1992); a collection of expertly photographed scenes of human life, religion and how we interact with life.

Before the Flood, directed by Fisher Stephens (2016); Leonardo DiCaprio looks at how climate change affects our environment and what society can do to prevent the demise of endangered species, ecosystems and native communities across the planet.

[The] Biggest Little Farm, directed by John Chester (2018); documentarian John Chester and his wife Molly work to develop a sustainable farm on 200 acres outside of Los Angeles.

[The] Corporation, directed by Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott (2003); looks at the concept of the corporation throughout recent history up to its present-day dominance.

Food Inc., directed by Robert Kenner (2008); an unflattering look inside America's corporate controlled food industry.

Kiss the Ground, directed by Joshua Tickell and Rebecca Harrell Tickell (2020); a revolutionary group of activists, scientists, farmers, and politicians band together in a global movement of "Regenerative Agriculture" that could balance our climate, replenish our vast water supplies, and feed the world.

[The] New Corporation: The Unfortunately Necessary Sequel, directed by Jennifer Abbott and Joel Bakan (2020); exposes how companies are desperately rebranding as socially responsible - and how that threatens democratic freedoms.

There's Something in the Water, directed by Elliott Page (2019); an example of environmental racism in Canada where Black and First Nations in Nova Scotia suffer disproportionate effect of environmental pollution.

This Changes Everything, directed by Avi Lewis (2015); narrated by Naomi Klein, this video looks at seven communities around the world with the proposition that we can seize the crisis of climate change to transform our failed economic system into something radically better.

[The] Race to Save the World, directed by Joe Gantz (2021); a documentary film following the lives of passionate and determined climate scientists, activists, and concerned citizens who are working to shift the world towards a clean energy future and to fight climate change before it's too late.

Sharkwater Extinction, directed by Rob Steward (2018); Filmmaker Rob Steward exposes the illegal fishing industry that threatens the survival of the world's sharks.

Water Warriors, directed by Michael Premo (2017); when an energy company begins searching for natural gas in New Brunswick, Canada, indigenous and white families unite to drive out the company in a campaign to protect their water and way of life.